

Teusday, Sinazongwe (26th March, 2024)



FOLLOW RESETTLEMENT POLICY DURING DISPLACEMENTS - GOV'T

Government has paid tribute to Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) for enlightening mining communities in Sinazongwe District, Southern Province, against exploitative displacements, land and environmental rights.

Sinazongwe District Commissioner Nchimunya Siakole said mining investors must fairly compensate communities by using the laid down resettlement process and not underpay host communities like we witnessed in the past with some coal investors.

Mr. Siakole said the 8 years of CEJ working in Sinazongwe has helped citizens to get enlightened adding that they now inform Government officials if investors act irresponsibly especially on displacements.

The Senior Government Official made the remarks during a Multi-stakeholder Dialogue in Sinazongwe District, Southern Province.

"Today's Dialogue carries profound significance as we collectively address the pressing issues surrounding environment land rights, community displacement, resettlement, and compensation within our community. As we convene under the banner of the Resilient Initiatives for Sustainable Environment (RISE) Project, facilitated by the CEJ, we recognize the imperativeness of fostering open dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders from various sectors. This dialogue serves as a testament to our unwavering commitment to uphold the principles of justice, fairness, and inclusivity in all our endeavors," he said.

The Sinazongwe District Commissioner said there is need to address the challenges faced by community members affected by displacements by ensuring that their voices are not only heard but also respected and acted upon.

"A call for recognising of environmental and land rights, issues of displacement, resettlement, and compensation are complex issues that demand thoughtful consideration, empathy, and collective problem-solving. It is incumbent upon us, as Representatives of Government, civil society organizations, community leaders, and concerned citizens, to work together in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity to find equitable and sustainable solutions," he said.

Meanwhile, Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ) Executive Director Maggie Mwape said her organization, established over a decade now, has been working in Sinazongwe since 2018 to date.

"Today's Dialogue holds deep significance as we come together to address critical issues surrounding environmental rights, land rights, community displacements, and the crucial topics of resettlement and compensation," she said.

The CEJ Executive Director said that next month April, CEJ will launch another Project in Sinazongwe District with the support from the European Union commission, to be implemented till 2027.

Ms Mwape said other districts to benefit from this project includes; Kabwe, Mufulira, Lufwanyama and Serenje Districts.

"The Initiative will focus on strengthening environmental rights, justice and investor-community collaboration. The European Union Commission has been a great partner with the Zambian Government. Their support to the Centre for Environment Justice and its consortium partners under this Project, these are HIVOS and ZIEM, demonstrates the European Union Commission commitment to strong partnerships for environmental justice and meaningful business investment," she said.

The CEJ Executive Director said President Hakainde Hichilema has been instrumental in protecting the environment.

"Equally, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, has been a strong advocate for environmental justice, impactful investments, and building strong partnerships that will contribute to the sustainable development of our beloved country Zambia. This meeting reflects our unwavering commitment to uphold justice, fairness, and inclusivity in all our endeavors. Issues of environmental and land rights, displacement, resettlement, and compensation require our thoughtful consideration, empathy, and co-create solutions.

Issued By: CEJ Communications Unit

.....
Centre for Environment Justice (CEJ)

Plot 269, Off Twin Palm Road, Ibex Hill, Lusaka -Zambia
Visit CEJ website: <https://cejzambia.org/> and Facebook: <https://facebook.com/cejzambia.org>
Call: +260 954 713003 / +260 964 244255 / +260 973 389859
Email: info@cejzambia.org