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FUND

Youth Development Initiative Trust (YDIT) in partnership with Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA) and Centre for Research for Peace And Development in Africa (CRPDA) celebrated Youth Day 2024 under the theme, “Positioning Youth Empowerment and Development towards Achieving Vision 2030”

PRESS STATEMENT



Picture taken in Penhalonga, Mutare, Zimbabwe portraying artisanal miners at a gold ore mill in a farming field along Mutare River with substandard and malfunctioning equipment without protective clothing.

The partnership recognizes the utmost importance of commemorating this day as it provides us with an invaluable opportunity to shed light on the pressing issues plaguing the mining sector and the urgent need for change.

One of the foremost concerns that must be addressed is the lack of safety protective equipment in artisanal mining. Artisanal mining plays a significant role in Zimbabwe's economy, providing employment opportunities for numerous young people. This grave issue not only puts the lives of young miners at risk but also undermines their right to a safe and healthy workplace. The absence of adequate safety measures demands urgent action, as young lives should never be compromised for the sake of profit. Our collective responsibility lies in advocating for and demanding robust regulations that prioritize the well-being and security of all individuals involved in the mining sector.

Another issue that requires immediate action is corruption within the mining circles. Corruption not only undermines the sector's efficiency but also deprives the country of its rightful revenue. This corrosive practice diminishes the sector's potential and siphons valuable resources away from the country's development initiatives. Young individuals often suffer the most from corrupt practices, as their aspirations for a prosperous future get hindered by unfair systems driven by self-interest. We call on the government to intensify its efforts to combat corruption, establish transparent governance systems, and hold accountable those involved in corrupt practices.

Additionally, the lack of employment opportunities in the mining sector further exacerbates the challenges faced by young people in Zimbabwe. The absence of viable job prospects often leads to



frustration and desperation, which can manifest in anti-social behaviors. The lack of employment opportunities in the mining sector has forced many young people to engage in anti-social behaviors. Unemployment breeds frustration and despair, leading individuals to resort to activities detrimental to themselves and society. It is imperative that policymakers and industry leaders prioritize youth inclusion by creating more employment avenues, enhancing skills development programs, and fostering entrepreneurial support within the mining sector. Empowering young individuals with meaningful employment opportunities not only addresses the issue of unemployment but also cultivates a sense of purpose, positive engagement, and societal stability.

However, amidst these critical negative points, we must also recognize and celebrate the immense potential and energy that young people bring to the table. The Youth Day signifies the strength, resilience, and determination of the youth in driving positive change. It reminds us of the power and creativity of young minds in shaping a sustainable and equitable future for the mining sector in Zimbabwe. By harnessing their innovation, ideas, and perspectives, we can create a more inclusive and prosperous society, where the benefits of natural resource governance are equitably distributed.

Lastly, the partnership remains steadfast in its commitment to collaborating with stakeholders to address the challenges faced by Zimbabwe's mining sector. We urge the government, mining companies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to recognize the potential of young people and to actively involve them in decision-making processes. By doing so, we can collectively work towards a safer, transparent, and youth-inclusive mining sector that contributes to the sustainable development and well-being of all Zimbabweans.