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PRESS STATEMENT

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Youth Development Initiative Trust (YDIT) in partnership with Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA) and Centre for Research for Peace And Development In Africa (CRPDA) condemn the tragic accident that occurred at Redwing Mine, Manicaland.

The partnership expresses deep sorrow and utter condemnation of the tragic accident at Redwing mine in Penhalonga, Manicaland on the 4th of January 2024. From our site visit, the devastating incident at the Tsapauta 1 section of the mine is feared to have claimed at least 15 young miners, excluding unregistered mining syndicates and sneakers who are still trapped underground. The collapsed mining shaft with several tunnels is reported to be 60 meters in depth and 180 meters in stretch. The actual cause of the incident is yet to be officially reported, however, community sentiments revealed that the mining company(s) were aware of the approximately 5km ground crack stretching from the Old West to the Mozambique border, yet they continued mining operations in the hazardous area. The sad event is reported to have occurred between 5 am and 6 am on the 4th of January 2024. We stand in solidarity with the affected families and community during this difficult time in demanding accountability and transparency from the responsible mining company(s), relevant key players and stakeholders regarding the incident. We believe this unfortunate accident could have been prevented if responsible authorities had taken appropriate action. It is a clear reflection of the dire conditions faced by youth miners resorting to dangerous mining activities due to poverty, unemployment, and unregulated mining practices by mining company(s).

We call upon the Government, responsible mining company(s), and authorities to take immediate action on this urgent matter.

Firstly, we urge the government to create sustainable empowerment projects that provide alternative avenues for youth to engage in, rather than solely relying on mining. A diversified range of opportunities and support mechanisms are crucial in alleviating poverty and reducing the dangerous reliance on small-scale mining, which often carries significant risks. Furthermore, the government has to formalize artisanal miners in order to regulate and monitor the mining activities.

Secondly, we demand that the mining company(s) be held accountable for the loss of lives in this tragic incident. A thorough investigation must be conducted to determine the exact causes of the accident. Those found responsible, whether due to negligence or inadequate safety measures, must face the appropriate legal procedures. We call for transparency and justice in the handling of this matter.

Thirdly, we urge relevant recovery stakeholders to meaningfully engage the illegal artisanal miners and community traditional structures in conducting recovering efforts as they are well vested with the mining area. This recommendation follows the concerning 62 hours that has passed by without any tangible recovery efforts from responsible recovery teams.

Lastly, we insist that the families of the miners who are trapped receive just compensation from the government and responsible mining company(s). Both have the mandate to support these families during their time of grief and must ensure that compensation is promptly and diligently disbursed. The mining company(s) must provide Corporate Social Responsibility to the affected community and the government should demonstrate its commitment to the welfare of its citizens by providing the necessary financial assistance and support to the affected families.



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The partnership will closely monitor the progress made in resolving the issues above. We will continue to advocate for the empowerment and protection of young miners in Zimbabwe. We urge all stakeholders, including the government, mining companies, citizens, and community leaders, to take swift action to prevent such tragedies and support the sustainable development and wellbeing of our youth in mining.



Figure 1 Rescue team assessing the accident site



Figure 2: Wives and family members of the trapped miners gathered approximately 100m away from the site