



Raising the Community Voice in the Extractive Sector

Press Statement by the CRD

The CRD response to Vice President Phelekezela Mphoko's call for lifting of ban on River bed mining in Mutare River.

Insinuations recently made by Vice President Phelekezela Mphoko and Minister of State for Manicaland Province Mandi Chimene that DTZ-OZGEO Mining operations must resume in Mutare River are regrettable, self centred and illegal. By its nature river bed mining is unsustainable because it has catastrophic effects on the environment. DTZ-OZGEO mining operations have destroyed Mutare River and degraded agricultural land at Premier yet the community has largely remained alienated from the benefits accrued from the mining project over the years. The failure by DTZ-OZGEO to account for environmental damage in Mutare River was inevitable because of the prohibitive cost associated with rehabilitating a riverbed where large scale alluvial mining operations have been undertaken. The Centre for Research and Development is on record for fighting against river bed mining in Zimbabwe. This position was galvanized when Parliament enacted statutory instrument 92 of 2014 of the Environmental Management Act (Chapter 20:27) banning alluvial mining on river beds, wetlands and any land within 200 metres of naturally defined banks. As such, Environmental Management Agency (EMA) immediately went on to effect the ban and gave mining companies including DTZ-OZGEO reasonable time frames to rehabilitate the damaged environment. Against this background the CRD calls upon the Environment Minister to familiarize his new colleagues in government with the country's environmental laws in order for them to carry out state duties from an informed position. We also expect the officials concerned to retract their earlier pronouncements in the interests of our communities, our environment, our economy and indeed Justice.

Suspension of Rehabilitation by DTZ-OZGEO

The CRD condemns move taken by DTZ-OZGEO to suspend the rehabilitation of Mutare River on the pretext that the company was facing financial constraints. We believe this is a ploy by the company to force government to lift the ban on river bed mining and allow destructive mining operations to continue in Penhalonga. The mining company made a decision to explore and mine alluvial gold in the riverbed with full knowledge of the statutory requirements to rehabilitate the environment at each level of extraction. Their failure to account for their finances is an administrative issue that cannot be used as a scapegoat to violate the country's environmental laws. The CRD calls for the Ministry of Environment to take drastic measures that compels the mining company to commit to the rehabilitation exercise or face the full wrath of the law.