



12th Alternative Mining Indaba AMI Declaration

8 -12 February, 2021, held virtually

Preamble

We, and the more than 832 delegates who registered for the 12th Edition of the Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI) 2021 which, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to convene virtually from the 8th to 12th of February 2021 under the theme: Building forward together, pivoting the extractives sector for adaptation and resilience against COVID-19; comprising multiple stakeholders from faith based organisations (FBOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), trade unions, mining impacted communities, artisanal and small scale miners, representatives from large scale mining companies, academia, community leaders, parliamentarians, the youth and women formations among others who spoke out against corporate abuse and government neglect, united and said to all that the Alternative Mining Indaba will not be muted!

We met during the COVID-19 pandemic which has resulted in the deaths of thousands of Africans and over two million world-wide, ravaged our communities and pushed millions into further poverty whilst exacerbating the levels of inequality. These co-morbidities of racism and capitalism have their roots in colonialism and imperialism which has served to benefit the wealthy Northern Nations to the detriment of the Global South. The capitalist mining model has played a critical role in the formation and functioning of our “democracies” . Many African countries continue to be subjects as their natural resources are extracted for the benefit of the wealthier nations. This has resulted in a global divide between poorer nations and wealthier nations which is playing itself out as we met. The wealthy global powers have sought to monopolise the vaccines for their populations – ignoring the truth of our common humanity. They seem to prefer things to people.

Despite these socio-economic and epidemiological challenges, we have declared that we will not allow adversity to mute us and we refuse to be muted! hence our overarching slogan: #The revolution will not be muted

Noting that:

2.1 Resource-rich African countries have had their fiscal and political capacities limited over decades at the hands of international financial institutions. This has rendered them weakened in responding to the various pandemics as well as the climate catastrophe. Amidst the crisis, the scourge of illicit financial flows (IFFs) and toxic debt, with resource-backed loans, being a case in point. Africa is losing \$40 billion



annually through IFFs from the extractive sector alone, nearly half of the total annual loss of \$88.6 billion which could otherwise be channeled towards addressing emerging challenges such as the COVID19 pandemic. The AMI remains extremely concerned that the time of crisis presents an opportunity as imperialism will use debt imposed on poor nations to further appropriate and extract their natural resources (as indebted states turn to more extractivism for debt servicing and to access new loans).

2.2 Under COVID-19 conditions, large scale corporate mining was uniformly and hastily categorised as an essential service in many countries which meant they were spared some of the restrictions placed on people and some other sectors of the economy. In a few countries, mining corporations provide some much-needed social services such as hospitals but generally, if any support was provided, it was for those in their employment to the exclusion of mining families and the wider community. In many cases workers who were asked to return to work were “accommodated” on site to ensure that operations continued unabated. In the process, labour and environmental rights were violated, whilst the profits to the management and shareholders continued unabated. Yet many mining corporations have asked for tax breaks without extending any goodwill to their workers and host communities. We have observed increased applications and requests for significant reduction in company taxes from the mining sector.

2.3 There has been a negative impact on basic social services, leading to an upsurge in unpaid care work borne by women who have come in to save the day by taking care of the numbers of people who fell sick amidst crashing health infrastructure on the African continent. This exacerbated the burden of women who had already been over-extended with reproductive work. The closing down of the schools also added pressure on parents who had to play an unfamiliar education role, and this role also fell on women.

2.4 Further to that, during the imposed lockdowns, there has been an increase in violence against women and girls whilst children, particularly from rural communities, have been effectively denied an education because they could not afford the infrastructure for quality e-learning.

2.5 The second wave has witnessed an increase in infections in Africa and we are worried about what will happen to the already impoverished mining communities as national lockdowns have become a key measure to slow the virus.

2.6 Mining has resulted in vast health, safety and epidemiological challenges among mining communities and cases of respiratory illnesses associated with coronavirus have remarkably increased. And with the advent of the virus, more problems have emerged concerning the use of non-standard PPE, wearing disposable masks for many days as well as lack of social distancing in mine hostels,

2.7 Communities living and eking a living around mines, already excluded from health and safety protections and quality homes, continue to suffer air and water pollution and thus suffer disproportionately. Whilst minerals are extracted from these mines around are essential for communications, these communities remain at the bottom rung of the digital divide.



2.8 Parliamentary oversight has been weak and ineffective to keep the executive and powerful corporate interests to account from their role in the lethargic and often corruption ridden response to COVID-19 pandemic.

2.9 What has been called vaccine nationalism is the continuation of the monopolisation of power, scientific knowledge, which was enabled by the exploitation of these powerful nations of the Global South. Those most vulnerable communities worldwide – black, ethnic minorities in the developed North, working class and poor, as well as indigenous communities – continue to risk death until solidarity will take the place of greed and chauvinism.

2.10 Coronavirus lockdowns around the world have placed working people and the poor in a greater and unprecedented crisis, which has prompted massive government rescue spending in an effort to soften the blow from what is expected to be the worst economic contraction since the 1930s. Unfortunately, this has only served to benefit those at the top – the corporations and elites linked in corrupt relations with power. The lockdown had already disrupted and exacerbated those living in the margins of society who work in the “informal sector” as well as artisanal and small-scale mining. Women’s work and those in low paid work continue to suffer disproportionately, as the supposed rescue packages in most countries do not reach those they were meant to serve.

Re-affirming:

3.1 Natural resources such as minerals are God-given resources, therefore, communities and citizens deserve to benefit fairly without harming others including plant and animal life. We believe if mining has to take place, it has to benefit the majority and not the few, and quality health care, education and social economic infrastructure must be used for people and not profits.

3.2 The call of communities of faith is to ensure that the option for the poor remains enshrined in our work. Where false promises deny people the promise of a better life, we will speak out and condemn those perpetrators.

3.3 FBOs, CBOs and CSOs have a role to educate and advocate for equity and equality where they operate and also support communities to ensure constructive multi-stakeholder engagement.

3.4 The principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is integral to the exercise of the right to self-determination of indigenous people and communities who are entitled to demand sufficient information, transparency, and consent before granting of social licenses. We reiterate the “Right to Say NO” and withdrawal of consent to mining operations that damage people’s livelihoods and the environment. We reiterate the need for governments to domesticate the FPIC ideals into national laws and provide the much-needed oversight role to ensure the right to community consent or withdrawal is respected. Where enforced displacement of communities occur, these will be resisted and we will demand these resources back as well as fair and just compensation for the social dislocation.



3.5 Africa loses twice from illicit financial flows (IFFs) as much as it gains from investment and aid, thus it is fundamental to curb IFFs to mobilise much needed finance for development in line with SDG target 17.1 to ensure sustainable development and to build fiscal shock absorbers for climate change disasters and pandemics like COVID-19.

3.6 Women are entitled to land ownership rights as well and the right to inheritance and we need to do away with patriarchal customary laws that preclude the enjoyment of this right.

3.7 The trust deficit the corporations have is largely because they do not speak directly to the needs and concerns of communities. Instead of laying off workers during this pandemic, no effort must be spared in negotiating with organised workers in unions to ensure that they maintain employment. We hope to strengthen our relationship with the organised workers to ensure that no mining takes place in historic sites and where water and community history and heritage is likely to be destroyed.

3.8 The legislative arms of governments in the continent should play an oversight role in addressing growing poverty, inequalities and corruption in the mining sector while the executive arms of the governments are mandated to equally and fairly redistribute the revenue generated from mining.

3.9 We reiterate our struggle for decriminalization of ASM and strongly demand for policy and legislative reforms that recognize that the sector provides livelihoods for many poor households. ASM provides jobs to 13 million people in 80 countries worldwide. Therefore, we demand full participation of mining impacted communities across the entire value chain of ASM including access to mining claims, improved technical skills, financial inclusion, value addition and beneficiation, fair market access and diversification. It is time our governments consider practical steps in enfranchising this sector as opposed to criminalizing it.

To governments:

4.1 We call for a global social compact that guarantees availability, universal access and equitable distribution of the vaccine is seen as the best way of ending the pandemic. We agree that COVID-19 vaccines, treatments and tests are provided free of charge to everyone, everywhere, with priority given to frontline workers, vulnerable people and poor countries with the least capacity to save lives. How we deal with this virus will reflect our commitment to putting health and people's lives before profits and the institutional framework for that will be quality public health care for all.

4.2 To beef up their capacities to ensure that a more coherent and concerted effort to leverage oil, gas and minerals for domestic resource mobilisation (DRM) in line with the Africa Mining Vision and the AU/UNECA High Level Panel report on Illicit Financial Flows:

a. Strongly participate in the ongoing global process on reform of taxation rules. African governments must vigorously participate in the Inclusive Framework (IF) under an OECD guided reform process while



pushing for firm leadership of a strengthened UN Tax Commission on global tax reforms. It is important to advance the interests of Africa in such platforms by calling for a unitary taxation system that focuses on MNEs as a whole instead of country- by- country tax assessments of subsidiaries.

b. Implement the recommendations of the high-level panel report on IFFs out of Africa – weeding out harmful tax incentives, ensuring parliamentary oversight on negotiation and performance of mining contracts, curbing transfer mispricing, addressing under-invoicing, smuggling of minerals and corruption.

c. Strongly invest in institutions of learning to substitute foreign consultants that are back door policy makers in the fight against IFFs and the promotion of strong tax linkage from extractives.

d. Pay special attention to tracking and recovery of resources lost through IFFs.

4.3. There must be progressive policy and institutional frameworks in place that foster greater public participation, transparency and accountability in the governance of Resource-Backed Loans (RBLs)1

4.4 Call for a post-COVID Debt Jubilee where there will be a clearance of debt from public record across the nations and this must come into effect in 2021. During the past year, many of the poorer nations have been unable to recover economically because they were unable to collect taxes as a result of lower productivity during the lockdowns, destabilisation of the markets and large-scale company closures.

4.5 Establish resilient safeguards to insulate the labour market and protect labour incomes for workers in the ASM sector. There is need for social security policies and measures to support ASM, mining impacted communities and children in times of crisis such as witnessed under the COVID- 19 lockdowns in which many households were deprived of their livelihoods, sources of income and start-up capital following re-opening of mainstream economies.

4.6 Long-term planning using what has been learnt from previous pandemics to develop early-warning systems; responsive interventions; uphold supply chains and logistical arrangements during pandemics.

4.7 Ensure small subsistence and small agroecological farming initiatives are given precedence over mining projects. We demand that the government officials and traditional leaders ensure that they protect the rights of the communities and desist from serving the interests of mining companies at the expense of communities. We demand the 100% preservation of all fertile and suitable land for small scale farming. In addition, we demand that women small-holder farmers from mining affected areas should be included in the formulation of agriculture development strategies. We demand that agreements with mining companies in our communities be renegotiated with respectful and full participation of communities for purposes of adhering to the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent and to enable the communities to exercise the Right to Say No or Yes to mining in our areas.

4.8 The effectiveness of governments in responding to the challenges posed by the pandemic will depend on their respect for human rights, transparency, accountability and civic engagement, which can be facilitated by technology, innovation and digital governance that they must invest in. Governments



should promote discussions on the contemporary integration of technology in the mining sector: looking at how technological advancements and Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be harnessed to serve humanity and not to destroy humanity economically by ensuring the protection of jobs (incomes) for workers at the same time, looking at how artisanal and small -scale miners can be supported to access technology.

4.9. Importantly, states must invest more on technology, innovation and digital governance to render public services and goods. To do so, states in collaboration with the private sector, CSOs and international development partners, must put in place measures to ensure that the digital divide is addressed².

- a. ¹ A policy must be developed to prevent secrecy and /or the clandestine signing of development funding loans
- b. Contract terms of the loans must be made public
- c. Any loans made by the state must be approved by Parliament
- d. State officials who sign RBL or any other loan without following due process must be subjected to life imprisonment
- e. Debt Management policies must be developed by all African states
- f. African states must introduce and / or strengthen institutions that have independence and oversight over the State and the Executive.
- g. Work must be done to address the disparities related to geopolitics and political economies of mineral-rich countries
- h. Develop alternative praxis

² Governments should listen to the independent voices and implement some of the recommendations prescribed by indices such as Corruption Perception Index and Policy Perception Index to improve the governance of the extractives industry.

To Corporations:

5.1 The issue of opening up the economy is important and mining companies need to look at ensuring social cohesion with mining host communities. However, we cannot open the economy when workers use public transport or live-in overcrowded hostels or shacks where they cannot adhere to the protocol on social distance.



5.2 Mining corporations must stop eroding the tax base by shifting profits from countries where they extract resources to lower tax- or tax-free jurisdictions.

a. Embrace a unitary tax system that focuses on taxing multinational enterprises as a single unit instead of country-by-country assessments of their subsidiaries. Unitary tax can then be allocated based on indicators of economic substance like employment and asset value, for instance.

b. Negotiate fairly with governments and stop triggering a race to the bottom by asking for tax incentives.

5.3 Mining corporations should ensure that they adhere to the principles of do no harm, the polluter pays and undertake these with the deepest transparency and accountability. The best form of obtaining this is to ensure that unions and community organisations living around the mines be the ones who have the right to monitor corporate conduct. This must start by their role and contribution towards addressing the novel COVID-19 virus measures but later moving ahead to include corporate misconduct and impunity.

5.4 Measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 must address the chronic or systemic poverty and inequality working people and the poor have endured before, during and after COVID-19 recovery period.

To the mining impacted communities and civil society organisations

6.1 Civil Society should rise to the occasion and take up the role as members of the fifth estate and continue providing on-going capacity-building and technical support to educate and build the capacities of mining impacted communities, policy-makers and parliamentarians on debt, illicit financial flows, climate change, and ecology. The pandemic has shown us that answers should come from us and there is benefit in developing our own networks, guidelines, experts. Thus, Civil society in Africa must provide technical input for thought leadership at the African Union (AU).

6.2 CSOs should continue with activism whilst maintaining the protocols set by national departments of health. This includes digital advocacy that must push governments to introduce policy, legislative and fiscal reforms that benefit the majority and not the few. It is vital that parliamentary oversight of these measures is accompanied by the work of civil society organisations.

To the Alternative Mining Indaba

7.1 A post COVID recovery economy to be inclusive must be feminist. As such an economy will include the poorest where most women are to be found. Most importantly, communities must view the pandemic as a catalyst for change from a capitalist model of mining to a just, inclusive and socialist economy. This economy is not artificially separated from our social concerns, but intricately linked hence should



respond to these. In this political economy, the reproductive aspect (the care work) is not ignored, but is brought into the centre of the economy. Capitalist economic arrangements have been patriarchal, competitive, inhuman, alienating and it is time we consider alternative practices in response to realities of the current economic outlook.

7.2 Technical expertise access must be built between AMI, CSOs, NGOs and Academia to produce, review and share knowledge. We are cognisant of the fact that knowledge for us is a product of struggle and to defend our rights we must become better organised. We commit to exchange the lessons of resistance amongst ourselves. To do this effectively we must provide support for poorer communities to speak for themselves so that they are not muted!

7.3 Solidarity with Mozambique: we discussed the insurgency in Cabo Delgado Province, northern Mozambique, and agreed that whilst it is complex we must agree that the Steering Committee will keep a watching brief on it and discuss with the wider movement how we can deepen our solidarity with the comrades in their hour of need.

7.4 AMI must develop guidelines with mining impacted communities, labour unions, CSOs to ensure the building of a genuine force for the improvement of the living conditions of the mining impacted communities and mineworkers. The guidelines must also include information on solidarity in movement and network building.

Conclusion

Social change is not an event but a process that requires strategic direction and a proactive citizenry, particularly in these times of crisis and pandemics to lead the struggles for bottom-up alternatives.

Whilst COVID-19 has been devastating upon the poor and working people worldwide, it has presented opportunities to reflect on the growth-greed model of capitalism and the role of mining within it.

Many of our delegates support the small-scale artisanal mining and oppose the TNC unsustainable mining which damages the planet, community well-being and common goods.

TNC mining is exploitative and undemocratic and pay lip service to community wellbeing whilst dividing communities. In times we recommit ourselves to struggle for African and international solidarity, and economies that serve people and not elites.



Signed:

Date: 22 February 2021

N. Mutorhoni

AMI Chairperson

AMI Secretariat

On behalf of the 700+ members of the Alternative Mining Indaba

Countries represented: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, eSwatini, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Australia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America