

CEPA reports substantial progress in Mining Governance Project



Participants at a mining policy advocacy training workshop that CEPA conducted in Phalombe.

By Marcel Chimwala

A local civil society organization, Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA), says it is coming up with encouraging results in its “Strengthening Mining Governance in Malawi” project which it is implementing with funding from the Tiltonse Fund.

Programme Officer, Cynthia Simkonda, explains that since inception, CEPA has made progress towards strengthening policy and institutional framework for

regulating the mining sector. In particular, CEPA has worked with Natural Resources Justice Network (NRJN), an umbrella network of CSOs working in the mining sector, to influence the review of policy and legal framework for mining in Malawi. “Through research and analysis, recommendations have been made to the current draft Mines and Minerals Bill 2015 (MMB) to ensure that the Bill provides for an effective legislative framework for stakeholder engagement in mining activities.”

The project whose overall goal is “making governance in the mining sector more inclusive and accountable” is

being implemented at national level, with three districts (Phalombe, Karonga and Kasungu) selected to generate evidence for policy advocacy. CEPA collaborates with Action Aid International Malawi to facilitate policy dialogue sessions in the impact districts. In this regard, CEPA has facilitated the training of three local structures in policy advocacy to equip the local structures with skills to advocate, lobby and influence policy and decision making processes in the mining sector. The structures namely Ufulu Wathu Community Based Organization (CBO), Tipone Development CBO (TIDECO) and Uraha Foundation of



Chanza: CEPA Executive Director



Stakeholders listening to a presentation of CEPA-commissioned study on mining policy implementation

mining in their localities through the Reflection Action Cycles. The Reflection Action Cycles have so far been able to interact with media to report on different mining experiences and issues in their vicinities through the print media and Nyengo ndi Chilengedwe radio programme on MBC radio 1.

Recognizing that the issuance of licenses and mining activities in Malawi progressed alongside the review of the mining legislation, CEPA undertook an assessment of mining policy implementation to understand the extent to which ongoing mining activities comply with the existing regulatory framework. Simkonda says the assessment report has helped in analysing the extent to which mining activities comply with the current Mines and Minerals Policy 2013 and the Mines and Minerals Act of 1981. The report was also envisaged to promote effective

Phalombe, Mzimba and Karonga respectively have since been able to use their knowledge to speak for themselves and even represent the community on issues regarding

policy development and implementation in the mining sector. The report can be accessed on <https://mining-malawi.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/2015-08-implementation-of-mining-policy-in-malawi.pdf>. The research findings were presented to the stakeholders in the mining Sector at Crossroads Hotel in Lilongwe. Among other key findings, the survey cited the need for robust infrastructure in terms of data, roads and energy supply for the development of the mining sector.

The study, which CEPA conducted, using the services of a private consulting firm Geomine Services, pointed out the existing gaps in energy and transportation sectors, as some of the shortfalls that are stifling growth of the sector. Welton Phalira of Geomine Services, who presented the study findings, also noted that participation of local Malawians in medium to large scale mining investments was still low as there was no effective vehicle (implementation strategy) for their engagement and support. The report recommended the need to work towards developing requisite technical and financial capacity amongst Malawians in order for them to

competitively venture into mining business. It also called for initiatives towards acquiring expertise as regards mineral development and research.

But on positive note, the report noted of the increased interest and engagement of the private sector in mineral development and increased discourse on mineral development. It was also observed that there has been active participation of the civil society, a development which will enhance transparency, accountability and good governance of the sector. This far, government and CEPA have been able to conduct joint inspections in the northern region of Malawi to assess mining companies’ compliance with the legislations.

CEPA’s Executive Director William Chadza commends government for the direction it has taken towards regulating the mining sector for the mutual benefit of both the investors and local people.

“Let me also applaud government for initiating measures that would curb the exploitation of Artisanal and Small Scale Miners (ASMs) by unscrupulous middlemen who always take advantage of the current legal framework,” he says.

Chadza says the initiative that government has rolled out of sponsoring regional trips for ASMs for experience sharing and learning is quite encouraging, but he further urges government to spearhead formation of cooperatives for ASMs, so that they speak with one voice and deal as a block to avoid being duped by middlemen ■



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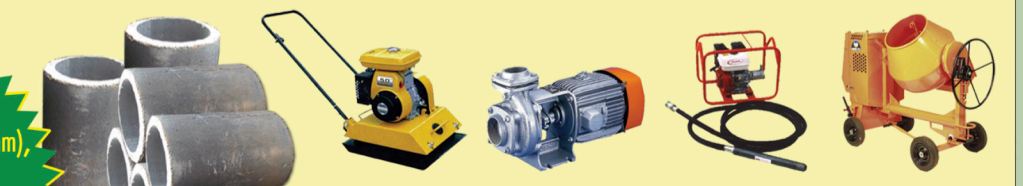
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