



# AMI 2024 Final Communiqué

15<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI)


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## ***Energy Transition Minerals: Putting Communities First for an Inclusive Feminist Future***

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### **1. Preamble**

Commemorating the 15th Anniversary of the Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI), we, the 450 delegates, gather once again for our annual assembly. Our shared purpose remains steadfast – to reaffirm our dedication to a **people-centered and just energy transition**. The pan-African platform we have cultivated serves as a unifying space for diverse voices, fostering collaborative efforts to address and redress the structural inequalities inherent in the extractive industry across the African continent. Representing mining-affected communities, mine host communities, artisanal and small-scale miners, faith-based organisations, women, children, youth, environmental activists, waste pickers, academics, researchers, traditional leaders, trade unions, LGBTIQ+ individuals, those living with disabilities and civil society organisations, we remain resolute in amplifying our guiding principles of "**people and planet first, not profits**." Our collective call advocates for an inclusive and feminist-responsive energy transition, encapsulated in our overarching theme, "**Energy Transition Minerals: Putting Communities First for an Inclusive Feminist Future**." This theme aims to underscore the transformative role of transition minerals in shaping a more egalitarian society.



We envision a mining sector where the concerns of affected communities shape policy, ushering in a paradigm of justice and inclusivity. Gender equity future where women own factors of production that is the land, are not subjected to violence and get a voice on key decision making on social, economic, political, environmental, and technological decisions at all levels (local, national, regional and global).

Recognizing the paramount importance of mining communities and their active involvement in extractive-induced development, we reiterate our long-standing principle that the just energy transition (JET) must prioritise community needs, fostering equality while steering away from decades of structural exclusion and mineral exploitation that have plunged many African societies into irredeemable poverty. The conversations for this year's Alternative Mining Indaba that are centered around putting communities first for an inclusive feminist future resonates with the Christian concept of "The preferential option for the poor". Where there is a demonstrable preference given to powerless individuals who live at the margins of the society.

Building upon the foundations laid during the 14th Edition of the AMI, which focused on the Just Energy Transition (JET) and the terms of participation for marginalised communities, our 2024 gathering charted a new but related course – one focused on transition minerals. This journey acknowledges the intricate interplay of history, economics, environment, and society within Africa's extractive economy. Therefore, we re-assert our commitment to advancing an equitable, inclusive, and feminist path. Concurrently, we have established a systematic and continuous engagement platform, ensuring ongoing communication and collaboration between communities and industry. This commitment extends beyond our annual gatherings, promoting transparency, accountability, and open channels of communication throughout the year.




## **2. Noting that:**

- 2.1** The 2023 AMI took place under a defined context of intersecting poly-crises, characterized by climate catastrophe, conflicts, and wars threatening food security. A 2023 World Bank report noted the worsening poverty levels in sub-Saharan Africa, with 462 million people enduring extreme poverty. These challenges are disproportionately distributed and largely affect women and children.
- 2.2** Women and youths remain at the periphery in the exploration and beneficiation from critical minerals in this new age of green energy and climate justice despite bearing the brunt of the effects of resource extraction. Renewable energy minerals are being heavily promoted as critical for low-carbon economy. The increasing dependence on battery technology, especially for electric vehicles is among the drivers of transitional mineral demands.
- 2.3** In response to the poly-crisis, the AMI platform continues to provide a safe and inclusive space for communities and non-state actors to engage in meaningful dialogues, critiques, and analyses of their interactions with the extractive industries. Accordingly, the discussions paved the way for exploring pathways toward a just green energy transition, with a focus on enhancing lives and livelihoods.
- 2.4** Faith leaders have an important role to play in sensitizing and mobilizing young people about energy transition minerals.
- 2.5** There are still knowledge and skill gaps among young people about energy transition minerals. The mining industry is riddled with illicit financial flows and tax evasion which is affecting the continent particularly women and youths from benefitting fully from critical mineral resources.
- 2.6** For the first time, the AMI successfully hosted the Women and Youth Symposium focusing on their role in extraction of critical transition minerals.
- 2.7** Africa is endowed with key transitional minerals such as cobalt and lithium, but the challenge is to ensure that the continent benefits from the transition minerals.



### **3. Cognizant of:**

- 3.1** The multiple challenges that lie ahead of us. We are living in times of crises (era of poly-crisis) where climate crisis, and endemic poverty, coupled with geopolitical tensions, necessitate an urgent response for sustainable and responsible natural and mineral resource governance and management. Economic inequality, exacerbated by the ongoing global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, calls for a reimagining of the mining sector, for radical transformation that ensures shared wealth and well-being.
- 3.2** Our 15<sup>th</sup> Edition theme which encapsulates the aspirations of a continent that yearns for a transformed extractive economy, that prioritizes women and marginalised communities. One where economic gains are equitably distributed, and where environmental stewardship is non-negotiable. We believe that a just and inclusive extractive sector can catalyse broader social transformation, challenging and dismantling archaic power structures that have perpetuated inequality.
- 3.3** The principle that gender equality is not only a matter of ethics but also a catalyst for improved decision-making, sustainable practices, and equitable development within the mining industry. It seeks to foster a deeper understanding of the specific challenges' women face in mining-affected communities, acknowledging that a feminist lens is essential for creating lasting change.
- 3.4** The centrality of capacity-building and the exchange of knowledge and information, we equipped communities and non-state actors with essential tools to make informed decisions regarding the energy transition and the extractive industries in Africa.
- 3.5** This is not the first energy transition for before we experienced coal, water, hydrogen transition. The current is a shift from fossil fuels, and we need to understand and analyze this through the lens of the AMV. Again, we need to review the FPIC in its granular form, for if we go granular then we can be able to determine what we want!
- 3.6** The history of the extractive industries is linked to Africa's economic development,




offering opportunities for growth and prosperity. Yet, all too often, these opportunities have been abandoned for capitalist interest, benefiting the few at the expense of communities. Often women, are relegated to the margins of decision-making and benefits. **The anticipated rush for transitional minerals without fully transforming the sector to the benefit of the host nations, will more likely further entrench the paternalistic economic patterns inherent in extractivism.** The AMI is cognisant of the urgent need to eradicate the stubborn patriarchal tendencies deeply rooted in the extractives industry.

**3.7** In addressing the imperative for renewable energy sources, it is crucial to acknowledge that the call for the eradication of fossil fuel does not eliminate the necessity for mineral extraction in Africa. Transitional minerals like cobalt and lithium remain pivotal within the commodity value chain of renewable energy sources (AMI, 2023). **Artisanal and small-scale miners, largely comprised of women and children, play a significant role in extracting critical transition minerals like cobalt in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and lithium in Zimbabwe.**

#### **4. Deeply Concerned that:**

**4.1** The surge in mineral extraction has led to a sharp rise in social conflicts and excessive security related to mining. Particularly impacted are rural communities, predominantly inhabited by women, bearing the brunt of this issue in rural Africa where extraction sites are situated. The pursuit of rare transition minerals has resulted in restricted access to community lands, mines, and rivers crucial for sustenance. Women, primary contributors to farming and food provision for families, are disproportionately affected as these areas face encroachment due to mineral extraction activities.

**4.2.** Women in mining communities suffer the physical and emotional toll of environmental degradation caused by extractive activities. This leads to a loss of progress and development, resulting in a socio-environmental crisis. Mining-induced poverty puts women at risk of engaging in sex work and facing sexual abuse. The negligence of socio-environmental responsibility by



companies and corrupt governments exacerbates violence and exclusion in mining areas.


- 4.3** Research revelations which show that **over 80% of lithium projects** are taking place where indigenous people live. The same goes for projects which are mining nickel, copper, and zinc. Many mineral projects relevant to the energy transition are **either on, or near, indigenous territory, farmlands that face a combination of water risk, conflict, and food insecurity.**
- 4.4** Most resource rich African countries are economically depressed and have been entangled in high external debts whose servicing has more than doubled resulting in most countries failing to honour their debts. This has seen most resource rich African countries pledging their resources as bonds to secure new loans for investment. Mining companies prefer debt financing which reduces taxes they pay to governments as debt servicing is treated as an expense.
- 4.5.** Asymmetrical power relations between government, business and communities exacerbate the poverty and inequalities among mining host communities. Governments often view critical resources as avenues for immediate financial gains, prioritising these benefits over the well-being and interests of the mining communities. With the rush for the transition minerals, the principles of the Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC) are more likely to be undermined, thus rolling back the gains over the years.
- 4.6** Child labour remains prevalent with approximately 50% -60% women and children involved in manganese artisanal mining in Zambia and along the Great Dyke in Zimbabwe. Child labourers are exposed to respiratory diseases in the abandoned shafts or riverbanks where they operate.
- 4.7** In Zimbabwe, for example, women living in remote mining areas along the Great Dyke are exposed to maternal health challenges. For example, women give birth in their homes as primary health facilities located at least 22 km away from the local hospital and worse, there are no ambulances. Again, the children born in private homes have limited access to immunization. In addition, those involved in sex work use expired condoms and have limited access to





contraceptives and thus, exposed to HIV and STIs in addition to mining-induced respiratory ailments.

- 4.8** Water bodies are polluted, and communities and animals depend on open mine pits as the sources of water. Key question remains, is the transition just or are we still to realise the just?
- 4.9** Large mining companies' sub-contract artisanal miners popularly known as "*amakorokoza*" in Zimbabwe and pay them at a paltry rate of \$30 per month and far short of a living wage.
- 4.10** Some chiefs in parts of Africa still receive a token of appreciation on behalf of communities and this should stop! The traditional leadership systems should not be repurposed to further exploitations of power imbalances, which ultimately affect ordinary people.
- 4.11** Africa is still talking up exports not beneficiation and this means we have not yet acknowledged ourselves as the potential for renewable energy sources. The conversation for mineral value addition from source countries need to be built in the talks on renewable.
- 4.12** Minerals are depleted and not renewable. We need to look at the possible contribution and value add of artisanal miners. With over 6000 abandoned mines in South Africa, about 270 tailing facilities in Witwatersrand covering approximately 400 Km<sup>2</sup> in Surface area, there is a need for comprehensive mine rehabilitation and to create income through small and medium scale mining and community involvement. We never planned for a post-mining economy.
- 4.13** Revenue distributions to local communities have not yielded any development outcomes, as is the case of Nigeria with the 13% derivation fund. This means that a mere increase in these allocations would not make a difference. This is because the reality is that these revenues never really get to the communities.
- 4.14** The just energy transition assumes that "Energy Transition" and "critical minerals" are the concepts under which we must re-imagine our future. The question remains, "Do our communities need energy transition? Those



concepts were created in other contexts according to their own needs and vision. What are the African contexts which should shape African futures?

**4.15** ASM occupies a central role in the Just Energy Transition (JET) debates, primarily due to the indispensability of minerals like cobalt and lithium in renewable energy sources. Yet, artisanal miners involved are criminalised and work under very risky health & safety conditions and in worst cases, their activities are criminalised.

## **5. Re-affirming:**

**5.1** The AML platform as a vessel of ideas, a forum for innovation, and a launchpad for collective action. It is where thought leaders, activists, policymakers, industry experts, and communities converge to co-create a vision for a future where extractives benefit communities.

**5.2** Our long-standing ideal to promote the people-centred pathways to leverage transition minerals required for the global transition to clean energy remain sacrosanct. This is to ensure that these transition minerals uplift, rather than exploit, the communities that host them.

**5.3** The “**Right to say NO**” and our position should not change merely because of the new narrative of the just energy transition and critical transition minerals. We reiterate the supremacy of meaningful community consultations in the spirit and letter of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)


**5.4** Our unequivocal support for the oppressed and victims of violence in all forms; gender-based violence and wars. We prayed for peace and solidarity with the victims of violence and accordingly, demand an end to war and cease fire in the brutal attacks on the Gaza Strip and Palestinians.

**5.6.** Our strong emphasis on beneficiation and that African governments invest enough in adding value to minerals mined in Africa not only to create jobs but also for sustainable social and economic development.

## **6. Recommendations:**

An inclusive feminist future in the context of the extractive industry entails a vision






where gender equality is fully integrated into policies, practices, and decision-making processes. It recognizes the agency and leadership of women within affected communities and seeks to address power imbalances that perpetuate gender-based disparities. This future envisions equitable access to resources, opportunities for economic participation, and meaningful involvement in shaping the development trajectory of extractive industry areas. Thus, we offer our key policy proposals below categorized according to the targeted audience. Resource justice for communities is only possible with tax, climate, and gender justice because these challenges are interrelated.


**6.1 To African Governments:**

- 6.1.1** African countries have been at the receiving end when it comes to debt servicing which has seen them defaulting and, in some cases, ceding huge mine claims to lenders to further borrow, thus, there is need for a clear legal framework to safeguard the rights of both borrowers and lenders.
- 6.1.2** African governments should make mineral resource audits (geological surveys) to be at a better footing when negotiating mining concessions as evidence has shown that most African governments due to lack of knowledge on the quantities and types of resources, they own have been under negotiating contracts. For example, in some instances, countries have agreed to platinum concession, but the mining companies end up extracting other minerals such as gold, rhodium and palladium.
- 6.1.3** Unmanaged health impacts from mining and lack of awareness on health impact assessment is a critical process that should be legally binding and align with respective countries national Health & Safety laws. On a different but related note, it is important to engage artisanal miners on health and safety not only for those directly involved but also, communities where they operate.
- 6.1.4** African governments should closely examine tax relief and expenses declared by mining companies to combat tax evasion. A just transition should prioritize eradicating poverty and fostering social development within communities. Furthermore, efforts should be directed towards addressing




excessive consumption in privileged sectors. Concrete mechanisms for dialogue, reporting corruption, and addressing human rights violations in mining areas is crucial for ensuring transparency and accountability.

- 6.1.5** Governments should prioritise value addition for critical minerals to address issues of unemployment and to broaden the tax pool. Laws to empower effective participation of communities in the value chain (Local Content Policies) and punitive clauses to defaulters.
- 6.1.6** African governments, CSOs, community organisations and all development partners should come up with laws that empower effective participation of communities in the critical minerals value chain (Local Content Policies). The legal pieces should also have punitive clauses for defaulters.
- 6.1.7** Governments should make deliberate and significant investments in the value addition of minerals mined in Africa.
- 6.1.8** Policy makers ought to prioritize the interests of young people in the communities while negotiating mining contracts with corporations especially when it comes to the distribution of royalties and what happens to the people in the communities after the completion of the mining.
- 6.1.9** Ensure enforcement of national, regional, and international laws on Health & Safety. Children involved in artisanal mining need protection from sexual exploitation in addition to natural problems such as snake bites.
- 6.1.10** Establish Mineral Funds derived from mine closure bonds to support community economic and social development for mine host communities.
- 6.1.11** Civil society space should operate freely with guaranteed protection, monitor the space to ensure sub-national disbursements are made timeously and in full. For instance, the EITI as part of their reporting can compute expected disbursements and actual allocations to local communities to keep government in check.
- 6.1.12** Align national mining laws and policies to the AMV and amplify the voices of vulnerable groups involved in artisanal mining particularly as women, children, LGBTIQ+ and those living with disabilities from an intersectionality framing.

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- 6.1.13** Demilitarise and decriminalize the ASM sector and uphold the human and labour rights of artisanal miners as key stakeholders in job creation. They should be entitled to social security and compensation for occupational injuries and death. The products from ASM end up in mainstream commodity value chains and it is critical that artisanal miners enjoy the same labour rights as their counterparts in the formal economy.
- 6.1.14** Raising and redistributing revenue from the extractive industries are two sides of the same coin: governments need to stop companies from tax dodging and we, the people, must ensure tax revenues are not stolen and work for us, the people, especially for women and children in mining communities.
- 6.1.15** Ratify relevant regional protocols such as the African Mining Vision (AMV) which serves as the blueprint and point of reference for developing policies on critical transition minerals.

## **6.2 To Business:**

- 6.2.1 Corporate Accountability:** Holding corporations accountable for their social and environmental impacts is essential. This involves transparent reporting mechanisms, adherence to human rights standards, and proactive efforts to mitigate negative consequences on communities.
- 6.2.2 Ethical Resource Governance:** Promoting ethical business resource governance frameworks that prioritize community consent, fair benefit-sharing arrangements, and ecological stewardship is fundamental to fostering an inclusive feminist future within extractive industry contexts.
- 6.2.3** Encourage civil space in jurisdictions where ASM takes place and stop human rights violations, Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPs) and targeting of human rights defenders in the mining industry.
- 6.2.4** Reparations are key to tackling intergenerational plunder and inherited inequality for mining communities: polluters must pay, many of them former



colonisers, who are still among the biggest enablers of multinational corporate tax abuse.

**6.2.5** Transform the civil society/ communities/workers versus industry engagement strategies by looking outwards to pioneer dynamic inclusive methods.

### **6.3 To The AMI & Civil society**

**6.3.1** Sensitization of young people about energy transition minerals and their relevance to day to day lives. Providing platforms for young people to generate and share ideas and solutions about how to make energy transition minerals affordable and accessible to their communities.

**6.3.2** Encourage their governments to initiate a just energy transition planning process in their country and/or region to address questions around domestic energy access, socioenvironmental impact of the extractives sector, and revenue sharing, benefits, and value addition associated with any transition mineral projects.


**6.3.3** Civil society to encourage governments and companies operating in their countries and/or regions to urgently develop a strategy to address corruption in the mining sector or their operations. This strategy should include identifying key corruption risks and mitigation plans.


**6.3.4** Evidence-based research to influence policy enactment and reforms towards accessibility and affordability of energy transition minerals.

**6.3.5** Build and strengthen a youth and feminist movement which advocates for accessibility and affordability of energy transition minerals in communities. Equally important is to promote women in decision-making to ensure provision of clean energy that is compatible to their own national contexts.

**6.3.6** Engage communities and children and raise awareness; information outbreak, working groups, multi-stakeholder platforms.

**6.3.7** Build capacities and alliances with key stakeholders like unions, governments, faith-based organisations to demand transparency on signed deals related to critical transition minerals.

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- 6.3.8** Links with key civil actors, legal, professional, and state agencies to apply findings of health impact assessments.
- 6.3.9** Consider compiling a historical booklet of the AMI from a people's perspective on the issues that bind us. Thus embarking on a process of 15 years evaluation of the existence of AMI.
- 6.3.10** There is need for a barometer to assess and monitor the social realities and consequences of mining.
- 6.3.11** Communities are broken and there is need for therapeutic healing and psycho-social support programmes.
- 6.3.12** The future is not only feminist but very young. Involve children affected by mining as advised by the young activist from Zambia, "*The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children doesn't say adults should speak on behalf of young people. Although we are young, we can still take responsibility if we are guided accordingly*".
- 6.3.13** Consider a regional class action to demand reparations for health impacts suffered by communities across the continent.
- 6.3.14** Build capacity of communities for monitoring of critical minerals and establishment of strategic bilateral and continental alliances such as the between Zambia & the DRC (Amoja). The situation has changed, and we need to move from the colonial model of extractivism.
- 6.3.15** The voices of children impacted by mining must be amplified through for example, storytelling and dialogues. Communities and civil society need to ensure children from other African countries join the movement of child rights advocates in championing the rights of every child in Africa and the whole world to ensure enjoyment of rights as children, and as well pronounced in the oral submissions from the Child rights activists who participated in the session, "**we do not want to work in the mines as labourers!**"
- 6.3.16** Engage in massive advocacy campaign and capacity-building initiatives for communities to reclaim the space and authority that is currently invested in top government offices so that there is a bottom-up initiatives to benefit local



communities. Again, CSOs should engage governments and offer technical expertise in crafting laws meant to enhance effective participation of communities in the critical resources value chain.

**6.3.17** Need to reflect on for example, COP29, RECs the BRICS, G7 policy proposals on critical transition minerals and ensure full participation of communities and African governments in promulgating international regulatory instruments.

**6.3.18** Promote regional integration and solidarity economies to fight xenophobia particularly, in the Southern African region given the history of labour migration. Thus, we need to educate our communities on pan- African principles and, extend studies on ASM to focus on labour sending countries.


**6.3.19** The AMI Steering Committee to organise space for strategic dialogues at the Mining Indaba to communicate communities' pertinent issue emanating in the annual convenings.

**6.3.20** Considering the poly-crises (especially wars and conflicts in counties such as the DRC/ Rwanda boundary conflicts) we are facing today; we need to strengthen our solidarity networks. In addition, we need a binding ethical code to ensure we support for each other as African communities impacted by mining.

**6.3.21** The concept “just energy transition” is relative and means different in diverse contexts. As delegates to the AMI2024, we have noted that the concept ‘just energy transition’ can be viewed in two lens: as **international and domestic justice**. As international justice, our demand is to ensure that those who have contributed the least to climate change are compensated and supported financially, technically and with human resources to transition. As domestic justice, our call is that respective mine host countries themselves minimize the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the energy transition.

**6.3.22** Civil society needs to prioritise concrete action orientated engagements with companies and speak with a collective voice, clear and unambiguous





messages. Accordingly, the engagements should link stories and lived experiences from communities with concrete action.

**6.3.23** Mobilise for the establishment of a Pan-African co-operative mechanism for critical minerals governance and mediation body. Through policy development, there is need to democratise the mineral value chain including beneficiation of our minerals to create jobs and address the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty, and inequality.

**6.3.24** That the AMI convenes a few working groups on thematic areas of concern to those constituting the platform. Some of these burning areas include the following:


- land theft and use for people and other life forms.
- the rush for critical, strategic raw materials
- building faith community- worker-community-youth (student) power / movement building
- Feminists' alternatives to extractivism and mining

## **7. Conclusion**

We wish to remind our governments, captains of industry and the world at large, that the AMI platform transcends the notion of a conventional conference; it is a collective voice of solidarity across Africa advocating for a departure from the prevailing capitalist extractive economic model and mere feminist rhetoric. As bell hooks, an African feminist scholar wrote:

The formation of a liberatory feminist theory and praxis is a collective responsibility, one that must be shared. Though I criticise aspects of feminist movement as we have known it so far, a critique, which is sometimes harsh and unrelenting, I do so not to diminish feminist struggle but to enrich, to share in the work of making a liberatory ideology and a liberatory movement.

Our declaration signifies a call to move beyond exploitation, exclusion, and environmental degradation towards a liberatory and radical feminist agenda. In this renewed AMI journey hinged on the just energy transition, we accentuate our long-standing principle of placing women at the forefront, recognising that genuine



justice and sustainability require a feminist perspective. The status quo must be challenged by prioritising the marginalised and speaking truth to power. Our shared goal is to envision a decolonised extractive industry rooted in justice, inclusivity, and feminism, paving the way for a brighter and more equitable future for Africa. As the journey unfolds, we invite all interested parties and stakeholders to join us in embracing and sharing our vision for a transformative and feminist-responsive just energy transition. For sustainable development calls for inter-generational solidarity among all affected communities across the African continent as well as active inclusion of rural women, young people, LGBTIQ+ and those living with disability in the just energy transition. We remain steadfast in the work we do and persistently keep guard. Appropriately, we need to keep our eyes open, and the basics are simple - human rights and social justice in the energy transition!