

# **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ZAMBIA: EXPERIENCES AND WAYS FORWARD**

**Allan Chisakula**

*Sumy State University, Sumy, Ukraine*

Zambia is largely a mining country with abundant deposits of copper, cobalt, emeralds, coal, amethyst, gold, lead and zinc. Historically, the industry has been a pillar of Zambia's economy and continues to do so today. It is also the country's largest foreign exchange earner.

In fact, despite the rich endowment of natural resources, Zambia ranks lowly on the Human Development Index. While many empirical studies have been conducted on the impact of mining on sustainable development, hardly any extensive research has been carried out on the impact of mining on the local livelihood of the people and the environment and biodiversity. Existing information does not incorporate macroeconomic trends like economic growth, and the impact of mining on the environment and biodiversity in Zambia.

After the year 2000, the commodity market recorded an upturn in prices mainly due to increased demand for commodity metals in fast growing economies like China and India. This also coincided with a rise in the mineral production in the country and by its nature, mining is a highly disruptive activity. It requires large tracts of land, consumes significant quantities of water and leaves a lot of waste materials.

Addressing the problem environmental and social impacts of mining, the government should formulate clear policies and regulations for the management of natural resources. The formulation process should ensure that policies reflect the interest of a wide range of actors including communities, civil service, workers' representatives, investors and donors.

Sustainable development research in Zambia Despite the economic success of the mining industry in the recent past, a majority of Zambians continue to live under poverty.

The economic reforms experienced in the mining sector led to a loss of 8,000 jobs. It is estimated that the 8,000 individuals supported at least five other family members. Most of these unemployed miners resorted to economic activities like charcoal burning, shift cultivation farming methods and small-scale mining to sustain their livelihoods, leading to further environmental degradation.

The mining community and the surrounding neighborhoods also depended heavily on the mining companies for the provision of social amenities such as health, education, and sanitation. As these services were no longer offered by the new mine owners, it became difficult for most of the locals to meet their basic needs. This undermines the country's efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals by the targeted 2015

UNU-IAS research activities on mining in Zambia is undertaking research to

determine whether the mining industry in Zambia has a positive impact on sustainable development and environmental management. This entails assessing the impact of mining in meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The outcomes of this research are expected to result in:

- 1) Contributing to the ongoing debate on the importance of mining to sustainable development in Zambia,
- 2) Enhancement of economic policies on natural resource extraction to promote equity and transparency,
- 3) Highlighting the impact of mining on the environment, biodiversity and ecosystems as a whole, and;
- 4) Advocating for the adoption of more robust and internationally- accepted and recognized procedures and regulations for environmental management.

Economics for Ecology [Текст]: матеріали XX Міжнародної наукової конференції, м. Суми, 6-9 травня 2014 р. / Редкол.: Д.О. Смоленніков, Л.А. Кулик. - Суми : СумДУ, 2014. - 145 с.