

# MAYA

The Voice For Environmental And Climate Justice

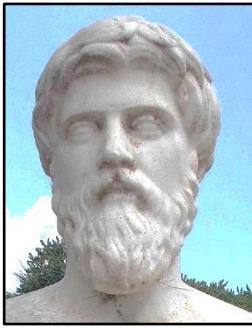


## DEMANDING

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE JUSTICE IN OUR LIFETIME.

# BULLETIN

4<sup>th</sup> Issue  
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PLUTARCH

# A CALL TO FIGHT AND END INEQUALITIES

by **Jussa Kudherezera**  
Co-ordinator of the Manica Youth Assembly

25<sup>th</sup> January 2022



JUSSA KUDHEREZERA

The Greek philosopher Plutarch (CE 46-119) wrote:

**“An imbalance between rich and poor is the oldest and most fatal ailment of all republics.”**

Is it not true that the Republic of Zimbabwe has both extreme poverty and excessive wealth?

The Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA) together with her partners in the Fight Inequality Alliance (FIA) have since the 15<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021 rolled out the Fight Inequality Campaign across Zimbabwe spreading awareness of this scourge afflicting citizens.

The Global Week of Action Against Inequality is commemorated annually to bring to attention to world the negative consequences of inequality in all its forms.

It is ironic that despite the centuries old wisdom as shared by Plutarch, there is nothing that is as ubiquitous and so common in the world today as inequality and is only challenged by its other siblings — poverty and death — for it is everywhere, it is a lived experience for billions of people across the world. Inequality knows no race, geography, or gender — but our continent, Africa, remains one of the most affected. Africa is considered the second most unequal continent on earth trailing only South America despite the fact that the mother continent is brimming with resources which never seem to benefit her citizens.

A large chunk of the inequalities faced in Zimbabwe are linked directly or indirectly to resource extraction by multinational entities.

With the advent of COVID-19, the gap between the rich and poor has grown exponentially. With vaccine nationalism at its peak, the rich nations have stocked up on COVID-19 vaccines denying the people of poor countries the necessary jabs and basically condemning them to die.

1% of the world’s population have it all and the rest have nothing. The rich 1%, by creating this unequal society where a tiny minority have it all but therefore have everything to lose. On the other side we have the majority with nothing to lose at all. This contradiction has made the world a very dangerous place to live in!

MAYA, acknowledges the historical truths such as the slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism did create, facilitate and contributed towards the state of inequality that Africa, especially sub-Saharan countries are experiencing. We further acknowledge that neo-liberalism has further robbed the continent of its dues, benefitting others in the process. However, we believe that inequalities are man-made, they are unnatural, therefore it is man who must deal with this plague.

MAYA further believe that despite the rough history, Zimbabwe can still fight and win the inequality battle by focusing on its internal capacity rather than blaming only the external factors such as neo-colonialism and foreign monopoly capitalism.

Small nation states such Zimbabwe may not be able to stop globalisation or reform the UN, the AU or even SADC. Zimbabwe may not be able to control the billion-dollar vaccine multinationals or the vandalism of huge extractive and mining multinationals, but Zimbabwe can and should be able to deal decisively with those things which cause inequality internally.

This can be achieved through thrift resource management, tax reforms, ending privatisation and commercialisation of public services, and investing in social protection. It is also very possible to plug the bleeding caused by illicit outflows due to corruption and rampant smuggling of precious minerals such as gold and diamonds, tax evasion and tax holidays for the rich so that these resources are directed towards wealth creation and fighting poverty.

Why not tax the rich and rather than the poor?

There is no reason for government to assume debts on behalf of the elites such as the recent announcement by Government of Zimbabwe that it will be taking over the US\$3 billion debt caused by government is ill advised policy of pretending that the Bond Note could be issued 1:1 with the US dollar. Settlement of wage agreements in US dollars but the paying workers in Bond Notes has increased poverty while the rich continue to trade among themselves only in US dollars.

There are too many structural issues that further the inequality gap instead of reducing it, such the land tenure system which respects the rich and relegates poor rural communities to second class citizens who can be uprooted from their ancestral lands to pave way for the so-called investors usually without compensation at all.

There is need for wealth to be shared and desist from the greedy paths where wealth has tended to be concentrated in the hands of the few, from the heyday of the Egyptian Pharaohs to the Roman Emperor Augustus Caesar and the Mongol warlord Genghis Khan to the current elites who continue on their destructive paths. The world has not learnt the lesson that inequality is unjust and a human rights issue.

As MAYA, we hasten to say that for us as a nation, as a continent, as people of the world to conquer inequality, it will take more than taxing the rich but there should be political will and this will can only be caused by citizen agency. If citizens can demand it, so it should be.

## Let's EQUALIZE



MEMBERS OF FIGHT INEQUALITY ALLIANCE: GLOBAL WEEK OF ACTION AGAINST INEQUALITY IN SAKUBVA, MUTARE (15<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2022)

# SPEAK OUT ROADSHOW CAMPAIGN



The Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA) with the support from Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) under the “Speak Out Loud Campaign” held its commemoration of the International Woman’s Day on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2022. The 2022 theme of the International Woman’s Day was titled “Break the Bias”.

The major objective of the campaign was to:

1. Show solidarity with survivors of Gender Based Violence (GBV).
2. Speak out loud against GBV and all forms of gender stereotypes and prejudices.
3. Awareness raising
4. Provide an opportunity for duty bearers, stakeholders and public to engage.

MAYA chose to commemorate the International Women’s Day through a Roadshow. A Roadshow was chosen since there was an opportunity to engage with more citizens. It also provides visibility to MAYA, VSO and other stakeholders. A Roadshow is a perfect platform.

Apart from MAYA and VSO which were represented at the highest level by Jussa Kudherezera, MAYA Co-ordinator and Madam Irvis from VSO, the following stakeholders were present:

1. Ministry of Women Affairs
2. Police Victim Friendly Unit (VFU)
3. Ministry of Social Welfare
4. Padare/Enkundleni/Men’s Forum on Gender (known as ‘Padare’)
5. Environmental Management Agency (EMA)

All stakeholders managed to share with participants their services and the steps at survivors of GBV should take to get redress and preventive remedies including how they can easily use the referral pathway. Police VFU urged women, girls and young boys to be on alert for possible abuse from close relations and should report such cases promptly.

Cases of GBV, Child marriages and abuse have been on the rise in Manicaland because victims and witnesses fail to report these cases. Padare also gave solidarity speeches denouncing GBV and encouraged men to use their masculinity not to hurt but to protect, promote and uphold the rights of women and girls. Real men are not afraid of equality so they said. Padare further urged abuse victims especially women and girls never to suffer in silence but “speak it loud”. Even men who are abused were encouraged to speak out loud as well.

Ministry of Women Affairs represented by Mr Zimunya said that the Ministry takes seriously the International Women’s Day and its objectives and government is working very hard to make sure that Zimbabwe attains gender justice through facilitating a conducive environment for women and girls. Some of the initiatives include legislation such as the recently enacted Marriages Act which now puts the age of marriage to 18 in an effort to protect young and vulnerable girls from ravenous men who sexually abuse them.

The Roadshow went from Mutare Central Business District (CBD) making hourly stops at Sakubva OTS Mangenje shops then went to Sakubva Mwamuka Business Centre. The main event was at Zimunya township. The Roadshow managed to directly reach around 2000 people who thronged the roadshow at the three pit stops in Sakubva and Zimunya. In Zimunya, there was a huge turnout and there was a lot of camaraderie punctuated by music, dance, a quiz and speeches from the stakeholders.

## Conclusion

The objectives that we set out to achieve especially bringing stakeholders and duty bearers to engage with citizens. Visibility of MAYA, VSO and other stakeholders was also increased by their participation at the Roadshow. The process itself being an awareness raising platform managed to reach directly more the 2000 people and indirectly double that figure.



# YOUNG PEOPLE TAKE THE LEAD IN PROTECTING OUR PLANET A



**There is only one planet which sustains human life, that is the Earth on which we live. There is no Planet B for us to move to. Earth is therefore 'Planet A' and we must protect it by all means necessary.**

**by Tinashe Muzama**



Young people are leading the way in taking action to stop climate change. Climate change is the greatest threat facing people and the planet today. It is a public secret that young people are increasingly being seen as leaders in the effort to undo that damage.

Young people under the banner of Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA) have kick-started the year 2022 by embarking on an afforestation programme to respond to the massive deforestation crisis around the City of Mutare. This is in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG 13) which advocates for climate action.

In this Decade of Action, young people are the drivers of Global Goals. We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and who will be the last generation to be able to mitigate its worst effects. And climate change is already having a disproportionate effect on people living in marginalised communities in which the majority of the world's young people live.

Climate impacts on all 17 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. Young people have been and are increasingly active in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. Climate action will fail without the inclusion of the voices of the younger generations. People are experiencing changes to their environment and climate — from droughts and high temperatures to flooding. These changes have diverse effects on people's livelihoods from farming to non-agricultural businesses, climate change is causing fluctuations.

Youth voices are vital in addressing climate change, especially as the majority of the world's young people are those from countries most severely affected by climate change. However, people are adapting and responding to climate change by adapting farming practices, like planting trees to create shelter from harsh winds, identifying multiple water sources.

Young people in particular are worried about the future. Their fear is compounded by what they perceive as government inaction to address climate-related disruptions. While some governments worldwide are taking action, we see very little from our own government.

Locally, there is a paramount need for Mutare Urban to take advantage of the offcuts from commercial timber plantations to provide energy for domestic use rather than use the indigenous trees that take time to grow and have cultural significance to the lives of people. It is said that Zimbabwe is losing forests at a rate never seen before through deforestation. The major drivers of deforestation are brick molding, charcoal making, firewood selling, and the use of fuelwood for cooking. From 2001 to 2020 Mutare lost 8,59kha of relative tree cover, equivalent to a 100% decrease since 2000 and 6.3% of the global total, and on that note from 2001 to 2012, Mutare gained 1.45kha of tree cover region-wide equal to 3.2% of all tree cover gain in Manicaland.

Trees provide direct and indirect benefits, which include firewood, sawn timber, pulpwood, building material, wood for crafts, fodder, fruits, honey, mushrooms, madora, bark for ropes, medicines, watershed protection, arrest development of gullies, provide windbreaks, climate change mitigation, prevention of soil erosion, wildlife habitat, property value appreciation and the general beauty of our landscape.

We need to protect and even expand natural woodland in the interests of biodiversity while at the same time also expanding the amount of land used for sustainable commercial tree cultivation of various types. Growing of trees around fields, along roadsides and around population centres also has a significant effect.

Young people are approximately 67.7 percent of the population in Zimbabwe and they have a paramount role to play in environmental and conservation efforts that will improve livelihoods. Present-day youth know that this is not the time to sit back and expect things to change by themselves. It is encouraging that almost every day we hear about a new movement or story of youth participation ranging from deforestation, disaster management, or discouraging animal ill-treatment.

Engaging youth in an organised effort to promote environmental sustainability has implications for youngsters themselves as well as for their communities. Youth participation in environmental protection has to be increased. The participation of youth can be utilised at all levels ranging from grass root activism to influencing government policy-making bodies to working with non-Governmental organisations (NGOs). The deterioration of our natural environment is one of the principal concerns of young people as it affects their well-being both now and in the future.

**The natural environment must be maintained and preserved for both present and future generations.**

**[Corrective note from the Editor:** *We do not need to protect our Planet Earth. It will go on spinning around the Sun for at least another 1.75 billion years.*

**WE DO NEED TO PROTECT LIFE ON EARTH**

*Planet Earth does not care whether there is life on its surface or not. WE should care. And if we get it wrong? There is no 'Planet B' to go to.]*



NICOLETTE  
NYIKADZINO

# DISABILITY: BRIDGING THE GAP

by Nicolette Nyikadzino

Being able bodied is not a guarantee in life, everyone is likely to experience disability and it can be temporary or permanent. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), 15% of Zimbabwe's population are people with disabilities and they are being left out of developmental issues.

My question is therefore: Is there adequate inclusion of people with disability in our society?

Bringing it closer at our day-to-day life, our society and our duty bearers are not fully including people with disability. The structures of our public offices such as the city council and government buildings are built in a way that they are not user friendly. For instance, Mutare Civic Centre building is not in any way friendly to those who are not able-bodied, and council rented houses cannot accommodate those who are not able-bodied.

Securing appropriate accommodation is a major challenge for people with disabilities and their families. They face many physical and attitudinal barriers.

For example, some wheelchair users are unable to get in or move around independently whilst inside the houses they live in due to lack of physical accessibility. Hence there is need for immediate change as disability is not something that you foresee.

Also, our education system should adjust and cater for those who have hearing impairments. Sign language should be considered a national language and should be taught to everyone in school from the teachers to the students so that we bridge the gap between those who can hear and those who have hearing impairments. There is need for action in our public offices to make sure that there is someone who can assist those who have hearing impairments.

1 out of 20 people have hearing impairments, and when this is severe, these have become wonderers as being unable to communicate other than by sign language, they move from city to city to find friends they can communicate with. However, according to the Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe Section 56, the non-discrimination clause, explains that we are all equal before the law.

Our transport system is not user friendly to people living with disability. Looking at our common mode of transportation our ZUPCO buses they are not in any way friendly — even to those who are able-bodied! Buses do not have reclining stairs are they cannot cater for those who use wheelchairs. Section 83 of the Constitution specifically explains the right of people with disabilities, including the right and freedom to move from one place to another.

**Disability does not mean inability.** Most people with a disability are also to do work for themselves, hence there is need for inclusion in the development issues. They should be empowered and be employed. Section 120 of the Constitution states that there should be at least two people with disability in the Parliament.

People with disabilities are one of the vulnerable groups; the term 'inclusive' is frequently understood to be a synonym of gender parity and as such, addressing the situation of women and girls is often regarded as the end goal of 'inclusive'.

Inclusive policy must, of course, address the situation of women and girls, but it must also address the situation of all the minorities in society. Housing, Education is a fundamental human right that everyone

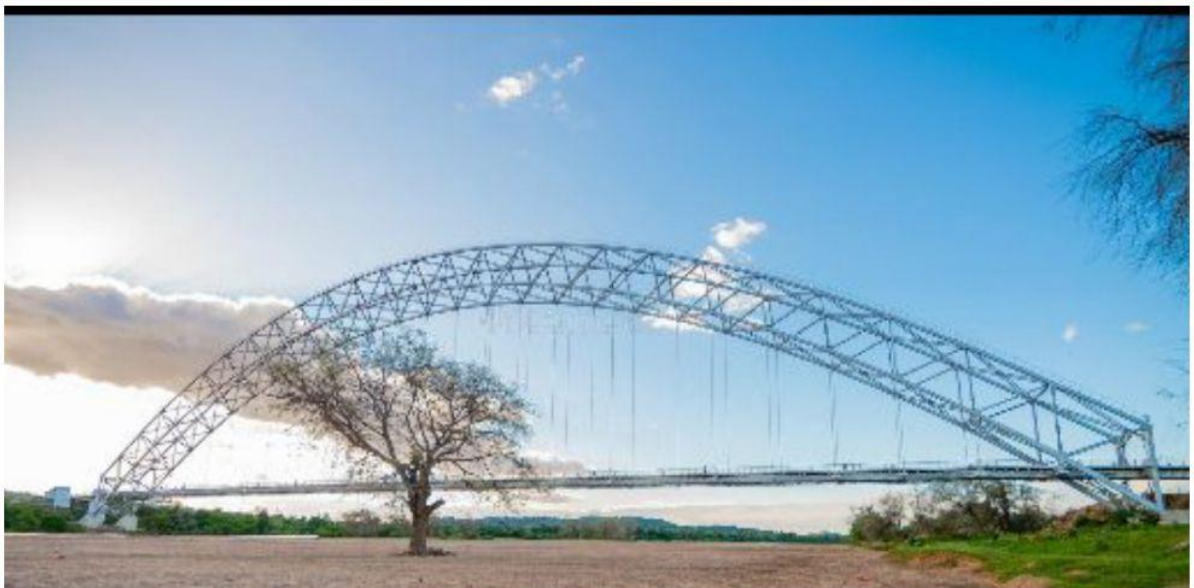
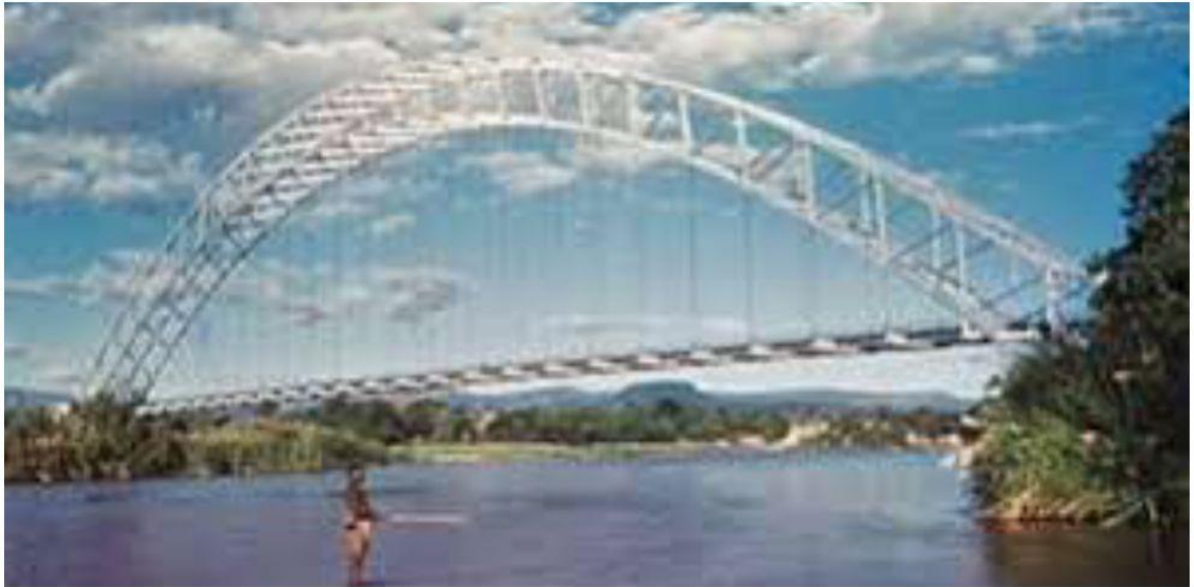
should enjoy irrespective of their gender, sex, colour, race or disability. Section 1.0.1 of the National Housing Policy 2012 also calls for the promotion of an inclusive housing policy.





# THE NEXUS BETWEEN CLIMATE CHANGE AND MENTAL HEALTH

by Tatenda Dutiro



**BIRCHENOUGH BRIDGE CROSSING THE SAVE RIVER: THEN AND NOW**

Climate change refers to the long-term shifts in the average weather patterns (United Nations 2018). The blame for the change can only be directed to the failures of humanity to care for the once beautiful planet Earth. The effects of climate change have proved to be grave so far, as they are mainly bringing harm upon the habitats of the planet Earth. Due to climate change, extreme weather events like floods, cyclones, heat waves, droughts, storms have intensified over the past years and this has negatively affected the agricultural sector as the land is now unproductive, with the death of livestock resulting in compromised food security.

Climate change and its affect on the varying habitats inhabited by different groups of people has been affecting their physical and mental health of people. Mental health is the wellbeing of the mind and emotions, the state of mental stability.

Extreme weather conditions like storms and cyclones have been leading to forced evacuations, loss of life and property and these unpleasant events are causing psychological disorders such as depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). When a person is forced to leave a place to which he or she is connected, negative feelings and emotions develop which have a negative impact on that person's mental health. Losing a relative or friend can cause depression and may also take away a person's social support. Surviving a tragedy like a cyclone can leave a person with PTSD as seen in the case of most cyclone Idai victims — although in many of these cases, counselling has been proving to be effective.

Furthermore, through using fossil fuels for our cars and industries; unsustainable farming and mining methods; deforestation for timber to build our homes, clearing land for farming and in search of firewood and our massive technological advances, we have arrived at an era characterized by droughts due to climate change. One school of thought defines, drought is a period of drier than normal conditions which results in water related problems as water levels in lakes, wells or dams drop, stream flows decline and the water table drops.

Droughts have been affecting Zimbabweans over the past few years. Rainfall levels had dropped with the exception of the 2019-2020 farming season. Crops are failing and not even the irrigation system can save them as most water reservoirs have dried up and the animals are being affected by various diseases which are worse in the dry season and are dying from dehydration due to water problems. This therefore brings severe stress to the people as production is now low, threatening the food security paving way to climate change induced hunger and poverty. As a popular phrase goes "a hungry man is an angry man", people can only be angry when their mental stability is disturbed because anger is a reaction given to stress.

Before the effects of climate change it would take a few meters to reach the water table when drilling a borehole but now borehole drillers have to drill deeper into the earth just to get water, thus making it harder and more expensive, yet water is a necessity of life but has now become an increasingly expensive commodity.

In the rural areas many people are now travelling for more than 5km just to get water and this has been wreaking havoc in the people's mental state causing mild stress to severe stress.

Many people are now engaging in high-risk coping behaviours like alcohol and drug abuse due to the stress they go through and these behaviors are a threat to their health.

To deal with the stress and anxiety people are encouraged to keep themselves informed about the issues around climate change and then take necessary measures to lower the risks, like planting trees, practicing sustainable farming and mining activities which can actually make people feel safe and have hope for a better tomorrow. Community based organisations like Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA) has been gathering youth for tree planting as it brings renewed hope and a sense of safety by combatting climate change and in the process, improving mental health. People are encouraged to talk about the issues around climate change, and in talking one can find a solution and regain hope for tomorrow.

Heat waves are now common-place, high temperatures cause agitation and this can help explain the increase of violent behaviour during summer. These high temperatures have a very negative impact on a person's mental health. The anticipation of extreme weather events as a result of climate change is causing eco-anxiety. Eco-anxiety is the constant fear and worry about the dangers which the environment will bring. To deal with this anxiety we must encourage people to get as much information as they can get about the dangers of climate change and how to take action to combat it.

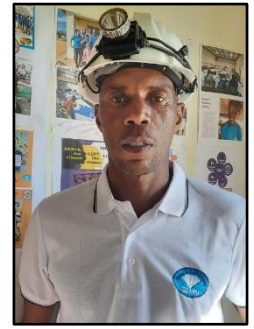
**Climate change is already with us. But we can slow it down. We can combat its effects.**

**The world can be improved if people are encouraged to participate in activities that support the Sustainable Development Goals 13 agreed by the UN General Assembly in 2015. Climate change has devastating effects on a person's mental health and a person's overall health.**

**We can care for mental health by caring for the environment.**

# CONDITIONS FACED BY TRADE UNIONS IN THE MINING SECTOR IN ZIMBABWE

by Cosmas Sunguro



**President of the Zimbabwe Diamonds and Allied Workers' Union (ZIDAWU)**

9<sup>th</sup> MAY 2022



Trade unions in Zimbabwe are working under very difficult political and economic conditions with a strong state machinery operated by the ruling parasitic bourgeoisie in control. The de-industrialisation which began in 1991 with ESAP and accelerated after 1999 with the beginning of sanctions and again after the hyper-inflation of 2008-2009 has created an economy in which most of the labour which would otherwise be employed in industry has either left the country or is now in the informal sector. The unemployment rate is therefore difficult to determine. ZimStat (Zimbabwe Statistical Agency) maintains that the unemployment rate is only 11%, but some independent economists put it as much as 85%. In any case, people in Zimbabwe are so desperate for regular employment that they become prone to abuse, prone to accept any conditions demanded by the employers. This makes negotiations very difficult for the trade unions.

When it comes to disciplinary procedures, according to our Zimbabwean labour laws, a worker is supposed to be given 72 hours before attending a disciplinary hearing. This rarely happens.

Most of our union activity is concentrated in the Marange diamond fields, Chiadzwa, just outside Mutare in the province of Manicaland on the eastern side of Zimbabwe. At the Labour Court in the City of Mutare, we are inundated with cases and there is a long backlog of cases. Justice delayed is justice denied.

The terms given in employment contracts given out by mining companies in Zimbabwe are not usually clear, more especially those issued by Chinese mining companies. 'Limping contracts' are the norm. These are contracts which are not complete and in which features like the grade, remuneration, hours to be worked and length of contract are omitted; sometimes these are added in when a Labour Officer appears; again this practice is common among Chinese and smaller mining companies. Most are short, 3 month contracts: permanent contracts are rare. Remuneration in any case is low, and there is continuing high inflation in Zimbabwe.

With regard PPE-Personal Protective Equipment, most is sub-standard and is often renewed after a long period of time. Long sleeved overalls are also supposed to be issued. Safety shoes are a necessity in mining, but we had one case of a Chinese employer issuing tennis shoes! Disposable masks are another necessity in the dusty conditions in mining, but often they are only replaced after 3 days. Dust removing equipment should be used, especially after blasting takes place but is rarely used.

Workers' rights guaranteed by the Constitution are rarely adhered to. Around 15% of the workforce are women, but gendered clothing or separate ablution rights are never taken into account.

The Chinese Anjin Mining Company which was expelled from Zimbabwe by President Robert Mugabe for allegedly illegally exporting billions of dollars is now back and has an arrangement with the Zimbabwean military. As trade unionists we know that government employees and representatives are colluding with the mining companies in illegal export of money and in tax evasion.

Corruption runs deep.

# DANGAMVURA MOUNTAIN SAGA: FREESTONE WITHDRAWS AS MAYOR IS RECALLED

by Jussa Kudherezera

CONFIDENTIAL: NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CITY OF MUTARE



VENUE: Council Chamber

DATE: 22 February 2022

**TOWN CLERK'S REPORT TO THE BUSINESS INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

1. SUBJECT: NOTICE FOR CANCELLATION OF AGREEMENT FREESTONE MINES.
2. REPORTING HEAD: ACTING TOWN CLERK
3. OTHER HEADS CONSULTED: ALL

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 That Council accepts the notice by Freestone Mines (Pvt) Ltd for cancellation of lease agreement No: MU/S23/2019.

5. **RELEVANT INFORMATION**

Management has received a letter from Mushoriwa Pasi Corporate Attorneys who are acting on behalf of Freestone Mines (Pvt) Ltd.

Freestone Mines has, through its lawyers, given a written notice of its intention to cancel the lease agreement No: MU/S23/19. The said the basis for the same is that in terms of clause 10 (a) of the lease agreement the lessee shall inform the lessor in writing, a month in advance, if he or she is no longer in a particular site.

Freestone Mines entered into a lease agreement with Council on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2021, after being awarded the tender to carry out Quarry Stone Mine activities at Stand Number 13415 Mutare Township, Mutare.

Freestone Mines took note of the resistance from different people and stakeholders who are totally against the project.

Freestone Mines Pvt Ltd was awarded Tender to carry out Quarry Mining Operations for a period of five years. This followed an advert flighted on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August 2020 and Daily News on Sunday on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2020.

Attached is the notice for cancellation.

6. I therefore recommend as per paragraph four (4) above.

**FOR CONSIDERATION**

CHAFESUKA, K.B.

**ACTING TOWN CLERK**

SM/dsm  
22 February 2022

In November 2021, we reported on the controversial Dangamvura Mountain quarry mining deal that was made between the City of Mutare and Chinese Company called Freestone Mining. The quarry mining deal for stone used in concrete and for road-building was said to be 'above board' by the then Mayor of Mutare Councillor Tandi and Mr Ruoxin Qibut of Freestone Mining, but as we reported then, the project had the hallmarks of being an irresponsible, opaque and corrupt deal.

The deal caused an uproar across many sections of the community with a broad alliance of civic society and citizens being formed to fight the proposed mining or quarrying project on Dangamvura Mountain. The anti-quarrying initiative transformed into a movement with more than forty civic society organisations, community based organisations(CBOs) and residents all coalescing together to fight for a single common cause. This anti-quarrying movement gathered under the banner of '#Gomoaribatwi' with the purpose that no quarrying or mining should take place at the proposed site under any circumstance. Protracted struggle required maximum participation.

The facts are that the City of Mutare flighted a tender in 2019 calling for interested companies to apply for lease of Council land at stand number 13415 Dangamvura on Dangamvura Mountain for quarry mining purposes. According to council, Freestone Mining was the only company that tendered and subsequently won the tender in 2020. In August 2021, the deal was signed in which the City of Mutare was to lease 6.7 hectares of land to Freestone for a meagre US\$ 7500 per annum.

Yes, US\$ 7,500 per annum!

Early in November 2021, Freestone moved onto site and commenced earth works albeit **without an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) certificate from Environmental Management Agency (EMA).**

In opposing the quarrying deal, residents have raised the following critical issues:

- ✓ That the mine is less than 100 m from the main Dangamvura water pipeline
- ✓ That there are two huge water reservoirs/tanks 200m away which may be affected by the blasting activities.
- ✓ There are two major roads 400m away namely Dangamvura link road and Chimanimani Road
- ✓ There is a new residential location, Natao/Destiny 500m away from the mining location.
- ✓ Dangamvura is 600m away from a school.
- ✓ Why did the City of Mutare agree to the contract?

In the absence of an EIA and a technical report from the municipal authorities there is no means of verifying how Freestone Mining carry out its mining operations without adversely affecting infrastructure and the health of residents.

# IS CHINA GOOD OR BAD?

by Jussa Kudherezera

Many times, the great revolutionary Vladimir Ilyich Lenin  
(1870-1924) said:

**“History does not move in a straight line. It zig-zags.”**



We would like everyone and everything to be either ‘good’ or ‘bad’. Real life is not always like that.

## **Communist Party Victory**

The Chinese Communist Party took power in 1949 after a protracted war which had started in 1927m Japan had invaded China in 1937, they were resisted by the corrupt Chinese Nationalist Kuomintang government forces and by the Communist People’s Liberation Army (PLA). After the Second World War the better disciplined PLA took the Communist Party to victory and the Kuomintang government fled to Taiwan where they remain to this day under the protection of the USA.

## **Population And Poverty**

The population of China is greater than that of the whole of Africa. In 1949, China was just as poor as India which had won independence from Britain in 1947. In 1947 Pakistan broke away from India on religious grounds, some Muslims wanted an Islamic state, whereas the majority in India are Hindu. Bangladesh then broke away from Pakistan in 1971. These religious differences coupled with corruption have kept the majority on the Indian subcontinent very poor. China, on the other hand, has abolished extreme poverty. Until 2017, there were still 30-40 million people still living in extreme poverty in China, through a government decision, people have now been removed into new housing from economically unviable regions, while elsewhere the local economy has been improved. For instance the Kazakh people of western China have long been reliant on the two-humped Bactrian camel for meat and milk. Improved scientific methods have now been introduced there.

## **Early Reconstruction**

Early on, China organised the people in large numbers to build dams and to develop food production through co-operation. In the early days the Soviet Union helped them to build basic industrial infrastructure.

## **1980**

By 1980 China had abolished hunger but life was at a very basic level. They decided that they needed technology transfer and went partly back to capitalism in order to achieve this, allowing foreign companies to operate in special industrial zones, but in doing so, they never lost control of the process their objectives. The learnt from the foreign companies.

In the race to catch up with the West, China gave up environmental controls. Dense smog covered all major cities and China made a big contribution to climate change.

## **One Child per Family Policy**

By 1980, the population of China had reached 1 billion and on average women were having 2.7 children each. It was clear that without drastic measures, rapid population increase would prevent any increase in prosperity. Government then introduced a one child per family policy. This was not enforced among ethnic minorities or in remote rural areas, families with twins were not penalised and a woman whose child had died was allowed to have another. This policy was in force from 1980 until 2013 when it was relaxed.

Currently, families are allowed 3 children per family, but now they are used to small families, the fertility rate is 1.7 children per woman. Even so, the population has increased to over 1.4 billion. Due to better health care, people are living longer. The population of China is expected to rise slowly for the next 2 to 3 years after which it will go into decline as older people die.

### **Population, Ecology and Climate Change**

As we are interested in the ecology and climate change, we should be aware that a continuously rising human population is not sustainable and that pollution and climate change are a result of too many people producing too much waste in all forms (including greenhouse gasses) and that in Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole we are in danger because of the high birth rate.

### **Reforestation**

China has by far the biggest reforestation programme of any country in the world. The growing population has for centuries been cutting down forests in order to grow crops. Until very recently, mudslides were common across China killing many people.

Although there had been tree-planting from the time of Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the first serious move from the Communist Party of China came in 1979 when it proclaimed 12<sup>th</sup> March as National Tree Planting Day. The whole population of China came together to plant trees. Since then some 50 billion trees have been planted across China but with special attention being paid to the Great Green Wall in northern China which has stopped the encroachment of the Gobi Desert. Desertification is now being pushed back and land reclaimed.

China now has the biggest reforestation programme on Earth, India and other countries have followed suit and in Africa, China has assisted Ethiopia which has also suffered extensive deforestation.

## **Carbon Emissions**

In total, China is still the biggest emitter of greenhouse gasses in the world, but given that the population is more than 1.4 billion, carbon emissions **per head of the population** are now less than half those of the United States, Canada, Australia or the Gulf States. Also, the amount of emissions have been considerably mitigated by the extensive reforestation. China is trying hard to reduce emissions further and plans to have seriously reduced the problem by 2030, after which most of the polluting factories will have been replaced.

### **Clean technology**

China is the world's biggest producer of solar panels, wind technology and electric cars.

THUS CHINA, ALTHOUGH IT HAS PROBLEMS, THROUGH STATE PLANNING AND INTERVENTION, IS SOLVING THOSE PROBLEMS.

## **CHINA IN AFRICA**

From the 1960s, China began to take an interest in Africa. In the early days China assisted the liberation movements, but because of the split with the Soviet Union began to support dissident groups. For instance it supported ZANU when it split from ZAPU in 1963, PAC against ANC in South Africa and UNITA against MPLA in Angola.

From the 1950s, China has had a policy of non-interference in the politics of other countries but has tried to develop peaceful relations with all regardless of their political system.

Since the growth of the Chinese economy from 1980, Chinese companies, mostly privately owned, have been looking for minerals needed for the growing Chinese manufacturing sector. Africa, in particular, is the source of raw materials for most of the world. In its bid to win over African governments, China has provided infrastructure and, unlike its western counterparts, has not tried to topple governments it does not like. It has not started any wars in Africa.

However, as Zimbabweans and other Africans are aware, the behaviour of Chinese companies on our continent has, for the most part, been rapacious and racist. They have shown no interest in the ecology of Africa, they have been blatantly racist towards Africans, have been instrumental, with often with the assistance of the Zimbabwean state, in the removal of peasants from their land, They have consistently underpaid workers, ignored labour laws and safety regulations. They have behaved like colonisers.

In every corner of Zimbabwe we have well-documented stories of peasants being removed from the land to make way for mining contracts as well as regular reports of ill-treatment of workers. When the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions has complained, the Embassy of the Peoples' Republic of China has claimed:

**“All these accusations ultimately target China-Zimbabwe co-operation and China’s foreign policy towards Zimbabwe,”**

This refusal to recognise reality by officials representing the Chinese government, makes it very difficult for the people of Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole. The bullying of the USA and Europe on the rest of the world and sanctions against countries not following their line — even to the extent of using proxy war as in the invasion of the Democratic Republic of Congo (1998-2003). [The USA armed Rwanda and Uganda to invade]. Or as in Libya in 2011, NATO, led by the USA bombed Africa’s most prosperous country out of existence. Africa cannot be dictated to by the USA and Europe any longer, but neither can Africa accept the gross, exploitative and often racist conduct of Chinese companies on our continent.

However, MAYA has shown that organisation by the people can prevent abuse of the environment, likewise strong trade unions can force companies to abide by wage agreements, labour laws and safety regulations. Workers and peasants may be abused and exploited by various companies both local and foreign. We need the militancy of those workers who staged the General Strike in 1948 and started the struggle for Independence in 1957, mainly through the trade union movement, eventually overthrowing the white-racist settler regime in Rhodesia.

The employers, regardless of origin, will always seek to make the maximum profit at the expense of the workers and anyone else they see as ‘getting in the way of profit’.

Can the present generation show the same unity and militancy of their grandfathers?

So to answer the question, “Is China good or bad?”. China, led by its Communist Party has done extremely well, their achievements of the Chinese people are more than good. But the general behaviour of most Chinese companies in Zimbabwe is bad and must be addressed.



**CHINA: RECLAIMING THE DESER**



# YOUNG PEOPLE PRIORITISE COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP ACTION IN THE DECADE OF ACTION

by Tinashe Muzama

First and foremost noticing that litter is a problem is the first step in taking action to create a cleaner, more sustainable planet. Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA) kick-started 2022 with a vibrant clean-up activity on Sakubva bus terminus to raise awareness on the importance of keeping our environment clean and also complementing the Government's efforts of achieving a smart city. We noticed that soon after the festive holidays a lot of litter was left lying around and unattended so a clean-up activity was needed with immediate effect.

Clean-ups are very important as they advance climate action which is catered for by Sustainable Development Goal 13.



The activity was a success as there was a high turn-out of volunteers and there was positive energy from the people who were around the bus terminus. The youths showed great interest in the activity and it showed their level of commitment, their work also attracted other youths and women who were interested in knowing more about MAYA. Young people are the future of society hence cleaning the environment creates a positive mind-set and a healthy living environment. This shows that the future is bright as young people have development at heart. We are in the decade of action and it is our duty as young people to drive change in the communities that we reside in.

**Climate change is real and fighting it needs everyone on board, leaving no one behind.**

The Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and the Mutare City Council (MCC) graced the activity by donating brooms, picking rods, plastic bags and gloves to be used for the clean-up activity. EMA fully supported the initiative that was done by MAYA as it is Entrenching Circular Economy in Waste Management. It was of paramount importance to encourage unsustainable consumption and the generation of more waste while shifting to a circular economy that has tangible benefits of resource efficiency and waste minimisation.

Against this background, the act of dropping litter is a social behaviour which can only be remedied through social measures.

**Litter can persist in the environment and cause harm for years.**

Clean-up campaigns raise awareness about the scale of the litter problem and get people thinking about changing their behaviour.

Clean-up actions are also an effective way to bring communities and young people together and, by enhancing social bonds, make people more appreciative of their common environment.

Clean-ups are important for supporting tourism and local economies, protecting wildlife, and raising public awareness of the threat of litter to both wildlife and communities. Prolific litter in underserved communities and neighbourhoods can misrepresent the area and contribute to health risks and low levels of self-image. Environmental clean-ups also promote general cleanliness and combat diseases such as cholera caused by dirt. As the younger generation, the young people have a role to play in climate action.

**Utilizing the 5Rs to manage waste that is Refuse Reduce Reuse Rot and Recycle must be normalized.**

The clean-up activities embrace the President's declaration that the First Friday of each calendar month will be the National Environment Cleaning day. This was an initiative coined to turn Zimbabwe into one of the cleanest countries in the region. The move sought to ensure that the country had vibrant sustainable environmental management and waste disposal systems. The clean-ups are largely helping in conscientising individuals and organizations on the importance of cleaning up the country. Young people are proving they have what it takes to make their communities healthy, beautiful, and prosperous and they are agents of social change thus helping their communities understand the importance of clean and green spaces. At this juncture, young people must strive to become active agents of the community by ensuring the cleanliness of their communities, engraining a sense of ownership of the environment.





# YOUNG PEOPLE AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN ZIMUNYA

by Chiedza Manyumwa



Young people receive their most effective and satisfying sports experiences when they are supported by Government experience goodwill and co-operation from all stakeholders. Regular participation in physical activity and sport is important for young people's health and wellbeing and it is important and necessary for Government and communities to encourage sport at all levels.

According to Zimbabwe Demographics (2020), young people in Zimbabwe cover approximately 67% of the and the majority of them, 67% are unemployed.

Lack of well-developed recreational facilities in Zimbabwe has led to an increase in drug and alcohol abuse, mental health issues and early childhood marriages. It is an indisputable fact that a lot of young people in our community are talented in sports as can be seen by watching them at primary and secondary school levels. Despite this fact, because of underdeveloped sports facilities, many talented young people become discouraged, leading to a nation with a crippled sporting and athletics environment. Government has turned a blind-eye to these needs and because of this we are not creating a nation of healthy, motivated and empowered individuals but rather er are creating narrow-minded, corrupt, unhealthy and unmotivated young people.

As a country if we manage to foster sport and recreational activities in schools and at a community level, it is going to create a healthy mindset and employment opportunities thus leading to economic growth through business investment, employment, major events and tourism.

In Zimunya Township after finishing secondary education, there is little to do except roam around doing nothing whilst abusing drugs. The substance abuse is therefore leading to high crime rates in the township.

According to the junior sport policy (2010) from the law and sport article states that, "a major objective for junior sport is the development of lifelong participation in sport. Sport and recreational

activities empower, inspire and motivate individuals. They also create positive alternatives to youth engaging in anti-social behaviour and crime”.

COVID-19 restrictions have led to an increased number child marriages and mental health issues. If we had functional sport and recreational centres in our communities, children instead of engaging in unprotected sex and abusing drugs and alcohol, could be busy developing their talents since recreational activities provide a sense of belonging and a healthy lifestyle. Moreover, no one was ready for such a tragedy like COVID-19. It took the lives of our beloved ones, many lost their jobs, many businesses were paralyzed, crime has increased, children have been abused and mental health issues are still increasing.

Sport and recreational activities help to galvanise communities. In addition, sport and recreation clubs become the hub of community life as they bind families through shared experiences whilst providing a vehicle of inclusion drawing together people of different ethnic groups, backgrounds and cultures.

Reflecting on the Warriors AFCON performance, we witnessed a poor show from our national team. In this vein of analysis, it was not their fault because we have poor sport and recreational services in our country. It is sad that very few schools in our country take sport seriously. There is so much talent in this country but it is not developed or harnessed. In Mutare the few remaining recreational centres are being transformed into flea markets or vegetable markets. Therefore one tends to wonder whether as a country we have decided to deprioritise one of the most important activities for young people.

It seems as if we are focused on the present without looking at how we are destroying the future. Sport and recreational facilities help to shape a nations character and pride because they bring people together and provides opportunities for social interaction.



# AFRICA IS CREATING ITS OWN GREAT WALL — AND IT'S GREEN

by Andrea Willige

**Andrea Willige is a Senior Writer for the World Economic Forum  
for which this article was written**

6<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2021



- **The Great Green Wall initiative aims to restore an 8,000km strip of savanna along the southern edge of the Sahara desert.**
- **100 million hectares of land are to be restored, 10 million jobs created and 250 megatonnes of carbon sequestered.**
- **The initiative has just received a funding boost from donors including France and the World Bank to help achieve its goals by 2030.**

Green is not the first colour you typically associate with the arid Sahel region in Africa. But a pan-regional initiative could change this significantly by 2030, following a pledge for new funding of more than \$14 billion.

Stretching coast-to-coast from Senegal to Djibouti, the Great Green Wall is aiming to regenerate one of the region's most seriously affected by land degradation and desertification in the world. It's hoped the completed Wall would be a new Wonder of the World — overtaking the Great Barrier Reef to be the largest living structure on Earth.

The Great Green Wall initiative aims to restore an 8,000km strip of savanna along the southern edge of the Sahara desert. 100 million hectares of land are to be restored, 10 million jobs created and 250 megatonnes of carbon sequestered. The initiative has just received a funding boost from donors including France and the World Bank to help achieve its goals by 2030.

The semi-arid Sahel, between the dry Sahara to the north and the belt of humid savannas to the south, suffers from recurrent droughts, lack of rainfall and deteriorating soil quality and biodiversity. Disease outbreaks, food, water and energy insecurities impede its development significantly. These are set against the ramifications of geopolitical conflict in the region and an expected tripling of its population to more than 1.5 billion before the end of the century, the FT reports based on UN estimates.

Addressing these challenges is the goal of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative (GGW), which launched in 2007. It aims to restore and sustainably manage an 8,000km strip of savanna, including trees, grasslands, vegetation and plants, along the southern edge of the Sahara desert. Along with restoring 100 million hectares of land and creating 10 million jobs in rural areas, the GGW vision for 2030 also includes sequestering 250 megatonnes of carbon, so the region can play its part in meeting global climate goals.

As Ibrahim Thiaw, the Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), told the World Economic Forum during Davos Agenda Week:

**“Anytime you restore land, you actually have it as a carbon sink. And it turns out that land is the largest carbon sink that we have right now on Earth.”**

Progress so far has been slow, with the UN reporting last year that the initiative had only covered 16% of its target area. But it has already benefited close to 500,000 people, both through training and job creation.

In Ethiopia, 15 million hectares of land have been restored, while in Senegal, 12 million drought-resistant trees have been planted in less than a decade.

In January 2021, the project received a pledge for new funding from donors including the African Development Bank, the government of France and the World Bank. The Great Green Wall Accelerator announced at the One Planet Summit for biodiversity will cover around 30% of the \$33 billion needed for the GGW to meet its 2030 goals.

In 2020, the project received a cultural boost, when Malian musician Inna Modja and Oscar-nominated director Fernando Meirelles made a documentary about its ambition.

Given the expected population growth, putting the region on a more secure, equitable and sustainable footing is an opportunity not to be missed, according to Ibrahim Thiaw, the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD.

**“There is room for public and private investments, there is room for large investors, there is room for small shareholders,”** he told the Davos Agenda. He added that securing the necessary funding for GGW will create opportunities for people **“to stay home, to do business at home, to grow at home, to actually enjoy living with their families”**, addressing pressing geopolitical issues including migration.



**TREE PLANTING  
IN SENEGAL**



# THE MAYA TEAM



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