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Towards sustainable development through mineral policy: Southern Africa

Chiomba, Rejoice Farisisai

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ABSTRACT

National mineral policy is a fundamental tool that can be utilised to orient the mineral sector of a nation towards sustainable development. The results of mining activities lead to “sustainable development” in the nation through “economic growth” and “social development” while the environment is preserved and protected.

In Southern Africa certain key components need to be addressed within a nation’s mineral policy document to ensure that it orients the mining sector towards sustainable development. These are environmental, social and economic concerns. Some of these are: mine closure plans, environmental rehabilitation, gender imbalances, local community concerns, HIV/ AIDS, regional integration and value addition.

The mineral policy documents for Namibia, Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia were evaluated through the eye of sustainable development. This evaluation found that every policy had aspects and policy statements that built up the environment, social and economic pillars of sustainable development. Thus all the policies are oriented towards sustainable development.

A comparative analysis was done using these mineral policies. It was based on compliance to the key components. The Minerals Policy of Namibia, 2003 was found to be the policy most oriented towards sustainable development. The Mineral Resources Development Policy, 2013 of Zambia was found to be the least oriented towards sustainable development.