

Extractive Industries and Women in Southern Africa

By Theresa Moyo

This article focuses on mining, which is an important part of the economy in southern Africa. It discusses the role of women in mining and the impact of the sector on their lives. The importance of mining is reflected in its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), foreign exchange earnings, and employment. According to SADC (2000: 1), mining contributes about 60 percent of total foreign exchange earnings, 10 percent of total GDP (though in some member states it goes up to 50 percent), and about five percent of direct formal employment. The region is also an important player on the international minerals market, with between 11 percent and 45 percent of the world supply of eight major commodities, namely, gold, platinum, diamonds, copper, uranium, cobalt, manganese, and chromite. South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Angola, Zimbabwe and Zambia are known to have vast mineral resources. Until 2007, when China emerged in the gold industry, South Africa was the world's largest gold producer. South Africa supplies about 80 percent of the world's platinum. The mining industry is also South Africa's biggest employer, with around 460,000 employees, and another 400,000 employed by the suppliers of goods and services to the industry. Botswana, DRC and Namibia have large diamond resources. Zimbabwe also has a rich mineral resource base, which includes gold, platinum, asbestos, platinum group metals (PGM), and recently-discovered diamonds in the Chiadzwa area. Zambia's economy has been sustained by the copper industry for many years.

Despite such rich resource endowments, it is ironic that these countries still have a high prevalence of poverty and inequality, even in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia, which the United Nations classify in the Medium Human Development (MHD) category of countries. With regard to women, the mining sector is an injustice. Based on the evidence which was reviewed, the

majority of women in the region are largely excluded or marginalised from participating in or benefiting from the vast mineral wealth of the region. They are at the *periphery* of the industry. They have limited access to mineral wealth in terms of ownership or equity participation and they are marginalised in terms of governance and management of the industry, as reflected in the tiny minority of women who are on the boards of directors of mining companies and in senior management and supervisory positions. In terms of employment, women constitute a very small proportion of the sector total. Although it should be acknowledged that, to some extent, women have benefited from the corporate social responsibility expenditure of mining companies, the evidence seems to suggest that these benefits are limited.

The main objectives of this article are to assess the participation of women in mining in southern Africa and to assess the underlying factors which limit participation. It also examines the impact of mining activities on women. Finally, the paper explores strategies to improve women's participation in ability and to benefit from, the sector, and to reduce the negative impact on their lives.

The paper raises a number of questions. What role are women playing in the sector? What factors have determined their participation or non-participation? What is the impact of mining activities on the lives of women? What policies and strategies are required in order to promote greater and more meaningful participation of women?

The study is based on secondary data drawn from a number of sources on women and mining in the region. The challenge, however, was the limited amount of documented information on the extent of women's involvement in the sector.

Historical background

A number of factors explain why women have largely been marginalised from participating in and benefiting

from mining. Historically, the evolution of the mining industry during the colonial era institutionalised discrimination against women. The migrant labour system in most of the mineral-rich countries employed males and introduced laws that prohibited spouses from living together at the mines. The notorious hostel system in South Africa is well known. Women lived in rural areas and worked on the land. It has been argued that the separation of families was a deliberate strategy by the colonialists to keep mine wages low. Women essentially subsidised mining companies. Thus, women were actually exploited through the use of their unpaid labour in agriculture to subsidise mining operations. Even when the migrant labour system was dismantled with the attainment of political independence, allowing women to join their spouses on the mines, few were able to get jobs there. Colonial policies of discrimination against women, coupled with negative cultural and paternalistic attitudes towards them, made it difficult for women to get jobs.

Another factor was that women had less access to education and training and did not have the skills required in the mines. The historical imbalances in terms of women's access to education, particularly in science and engineering fields, are well documented. Throughout the region, women are under-represented in institutions of higher learning (colleges and universities) and fewer women are enrolled in technical and science disciplines. This means that women are not prepared for some of the more technical positions within the mines. Women throughout the employment range state that skills and development training are not freely available to them, and they are seldom specifically targeted for bursaries and scholarships.

As recently as the beginning of this decade, legal systems impeded the employment of women on an equal basis (Hoadley, 2003). For example, in Zambia, until shortly before that time, the law did not allow women to work underground except by virtue of an exemption, which could be granted upon application.

The marginalisation of women in mining is to an extent a reflection of the failure of the state to prioritise and integrate women in mining agreements. Or in the case where agreements already have equity clauses, companies are not monitored to ensure that they comply with the regulations, which reflects the failure of the state in terms of protecting women and furthering their interests. Governments wield some influence in determining the extent to which a country's mineral resources are ex-

ploited for the benefit of the citizenry. It is they who enter into agreements with mining companies, and negotiate mining investments in terms of tax holidays, payment of royalties and corporate social responsibility. They also develop policies and legislation, which govern mining activities, wages, employment equity, environmental protection, mineral beneficiation, and community development.

The mining sector in southern Africa is largely controlled by foreign and private capital. This is because, historically, nationalisation has failed to yield positive results and also because it is acknowledged that mining requires heavy investments of capital and technology, which the countries in the region do not have. In addition, the shift from state control to market-based economies under the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s has led to a shift from state control of mining towards privatisation and the greater participation of foreign investment in the sector. At the regional level, the SADC Protocol on Mining, which came into force in February 2000, states that the region has abundant mineral resources and that the development of mining industry has a lot of positive multiplier effects on the social and economic transformation of the region and provides the quickest impact in terms of improving the standard of living for the local people. It advocates that the private sector should be the driving force for the generation of wealth from the sector, and that local and foreign investor participation in the sector should be the driving force of the industry. SADC also emphasizes that the role of government should be to facilitate private sector participation. That role includes information exchange, enhancement of technological capacity, establishment of common standards, promotion of private sector participation, promotion of small scale mining, environmental protection and occupational health and safety.

Whilst there is general acceptance of private sector participation in mining, there is concern that SADC should ensure that the region's mineral resources improve the standards of living of everyone in the region and protect women from the negative consequences of mining activities.

The model that seems to have been adopted is that mining companies have to pay royalties and taxes to governments, and then it is the ultimate responsibility of the government to invest such resources in social and economic development. In the last few years, however, the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as an alternative model whereby

mining companies (as with other companies) have to plough profits back into the communities in which they operate. In that regard, mining companies are expected to contribute towards infrastructure development (building of housing, schools, health facilities, roads and bridges) and education (through the provision of bursaries/scholarships to students from disadvantaged communities around them), provide sustainable jobs, and also protect the environment from the negative or adverse consequences of their mining activities. It would appear that it was on the understanding that investors in mining would contribute to local development in the manner described above, that governments in the region embraced the model of a mining industry driven by private sector investment. The evidence in most parts of the region, however, shows that the model has failed to deliver on its social and development mandate, particularly with respect to women. Radical critics of the market-based private-sector/foreign-investor-driven approach argue that mining companies are simply exploiting the region's mineral resources in the interests of private and foreign capital, and that the benefits to southern African economies are still limited. There are some exceptions, however, such as the case of Debswana, a partnership between the Botswana Government and the diamond company De Beers, and the case of Impala Platinum Mines Plc in South Africa. These companies have been cited as successful cases of mining companies contributing to local development and also to the social and economic empowerment and development of women.

A review of the evidence

Women's participation in mining

According to studies by the Southern Africa Regional Office (SARO) of UNIFEM, women in the mining sector in the region engage in a variety of small-scale mining activities such as gold panning, dealing in gemstones, mining and selling industrial minerals such as limestone, dolomite, clay, and many others. Yet, despite their contribution to small-scale mining they remain insignificant in the mainstream mining industry.

The UNIFEM SADC Gender Programme conducted a study to determine the constraints faced by women in the mining industry. The study focused on Zambia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The study identified key factors as a lack of know-how and the technical skills required for mining, the haphazard and unsafe conditions under which most mining activities take

place, the lack of knowledge on mineral beneficiation, and the lack of financial resources to invest in mining operations.

In Zambia, women are reported to be involved in small-scale gemstone mining. A story by Zambian journalist Hanyona in *EarthTimes* reports incidents of women gemstone miners being tricked by “crafty foreign investors”. The article carries the story of Mary Mambwe, a woman amethyst and gemstone miner in Mapatizya in Zambia's Southern Province. The woman was swindled out of some money after selling her gemstone to a foreign investor with whom she had entered into a partnership agreement. She was bitter when she said, “I [should have only allowed] an investor to help me with mining equipment instead of entering into a partnership.”

Mary's experience shows that women still need to be trained on negotiation and partnerships in mining in order to ensure that they obtain maximum benefits from their work.

The International Press Service (IPS) presents the story of Namakau Kaingu, a Zambian woman who owns three mines in Zambia where she mines aquamarine, a precious stone. Kaingu now heads the SADC Women in Mining Trust. She has overcome many obstacles since she discovered the gemstone.

Kaingu explained that cultural beliefs still had a negative impact on women's participation. Speaking to IPS, she said,

“In certain instances, cultural norms say that women are not supposed to go into the mines. There are some myths that if a woman goes underground, the stones (minerals) will disappear.”

Another member of the Trust told IPS:

We face a lot of rejection and we are not taken seriously by people in the field. There are a lot of traditional obstacles along the way. Chiefs feel undermined when they see women coming to mine in their areas. They are hostile.

This speaker, Rita Mittal, is also secretary of the Association of Zambian Women Miners (AZWM), which was formed in 1996.

Martha Bitwale, Chairperson of the Tanzania Women Miners Association, has been mining for 10 years. She told IPS: “We didn't know what we were missing. There is lots of money to be made from mining.”

This point was also supported by Namakau Kaingu:

If you go to the ministries of mines in the region, you find that geologists are men, engineers are men, metallurgists are men, surveyors are men and the people in charge of explosives are all men, so these are the imbalances we want to change. ... Women can actually do all the other works that men are doing.

In Zimbabwe, there is evidence of very limited cases of women in small-scale mining. Most are involved in illegal gold panning in the Zvishavane area. When diamonds were discovered in Chiadzwa, men and women from the Marange communal area flocked to the fields to mine the surface diamonds. Many women (no estimates) went out to dig for the mineral, which they sold to traders who also flocked to the area. But their fortune was short-lived as the army moved in and cordoned off the area, making it illegal for anyone to mine. It is understandable that the government had to secure the fields and make arrangements for the legal and safe mining of the diamonds. The big problem, however, was the brutal manner in which villagers and people from other areas were treated by government forces. There have been reports of murder, rape

and other forms of violence against those who continued with their 'illegal' mining of the diamonds.

A Zimbabwean writer, Chenjerai Hove (2010), depicts the situation thus:

They sneak out in the dark of night and insist on extracting their precious stones. Stories of horror and humour abound in Chidzwa. Stories of Marange old women out-running the police as they escape with a little shiny something in their hands or under the tongue. Stories of young, adventurous men who delve deep into the earth whenever the police and army guards blink for a second.

Evidence from research conducted by the Southern Africa Resource Watch (SARW), one of the projects of the Open Society Institute of southern Africa (OSISA), reveals that South African mining companies in Southern Africa have done very little to promote women's participation in the sector. Some of the key findings of the study that relate to women are presented in Box 1.

However, despite these broader failings there are cases where mining companies have improved the living conditions of women in the areas where they operate – as shown in Boxes 2, 3, and 4.



Source: Chenjerai Hove; The mining of diamonds at Chiadzwa. www.newzimbabwe.com 2010/04/30.

Box 1: Women's Participation in South African Mining Companies in the Region

Boards and Management

Women are grossly under-represented in the governance and decision-making structures of mining companies. This was evident in the studies on companies such as Zimplats and Mimososa in Zimbabwe, Chibuluma mine in Zambia, Sasol and Mozal in Mozambique, and Namdep in Namibia. Where women are employed in senior management positions, they tend to be white women. There are very few black women on the boards of the companies.

Employment

Women constitute a small percentage of total employment. Unfortunately, the available data from the annual reports of the companies is not disaggregated according to gender. Writing on Chibuluma Mine Plc in Zambia, Lungu (2010: 85) says:

"Employment in the copper mines in general is male-dominated, with many women taking nursing, secretarial, accounting and computing jobs. Women are not allowed to work underground in terms of legislation. However, Chibuluma has employed three women to operate dump trucks which go underground."

In Mozambique, the evidence based on a study of South African-owned Sasol and Mozal was that the employment of women was low because of the use of technology. Moyo and Hwenga (2010) also found that the South African-owned Zimplats in the Ngezi area of Zimbabwe employed mostly male workers.

Although some companies like Zimplats provided housing for their employees, the research team was told that upon retirement or resignation from the job, the employee was no longer entitled to that benefit. Women would therefore also suffer the consequences of loss of accommodation unless they had made other arrangements during their spouses' tenure of work.

Procurement

There was no evidence of the mining companies procuring from women-owned businesses. Part of the reason could be that there were no women's businesses producing goods and services which the mines needed.

Community social responsibility

Women could benefit from CSR but that depends on the amount which companies chose to invest in such spending, and the nature of the expenditure. CSR in the form of improvements in education, health and infrastructure, for example, are likely to have a positive impact on women's lives. The evidence from the SARW research showed mixed results. The Chibuluma mine provided many services to the community such as education, health clinics, and sporting facilities; the latter, however, were not a priority for women. In the case of Zimplats, the company provided good services only for its employees. The services included housing, education and infrastructure development. The communities around the mine,

however, were very bitter that the company was not doing much to help the villagers. Even in terms of jobs, the company was accused of employing people from outside the area despite the promises they made when they started mine operations. Except for those who have spouses employed by the mine, women in the area have not benefited from the CSR activities of the company.

Nhancale and Vilanculo (2010: 157), in their study of Mozal's and Sasol's operations in Mozambique, argue that:

"In terms of economic impact, large-scale projects such as Mozal and Sasol generate very limited impact on the balance of payments, wage and fiscal linkages. For example, a beverage firm producing a small fraction of these companies' outputs pays far more taxes than either of these companies."

The authors acknowledge that the companies have contributed to the construction of infrastructure such as schools, clinics, roads and water supply. This expenditure totalled about US\$10 million per year (p. 137). However, the authors argue that the amount is less than half of what a 1 percent increase in turnover taxes of the companies would contribute to the state budget. They recommend that Mozambique would be better off taxing the companies and reducing the tax holidays or scrapping them altogether. The revenue resources, if channeled to development, would have a much larger impact than CSR activities.

Environment

The SARW study in Zimbabwe (Moyo and Hwengam, 2010) found evidence of pollution. Villagers complained about the pollution of the Ngwazani river, a source of water for several villages in the area. They claimed that poor handling of sewage from the company's housing scheme polluted the river and that the company did little to assist the communities until pressurised to do so, and even then the company sank very few boreholes in the area. The women in the area described the damage to their water source in these words: "They have killed us." Their lives were seriously affected by the pollution of their major water source.

Health and safety

Although most of the companies included in the study had acceptable safety records, health is still an issue of concern, particularly with regard to the prevalence of HIV and AIDS. The failure by some companies to provide adequate and appropriate housing for unskilled workers, so that they cannot live with their families, essentially recreates the conditions of the migrant labour system, which destabilised families and created conditions for commercial sex work activities. HIV and AIDS was said to be a problem in the Copperbelt area in Zambia. It was also cited as a problem in the Ngezi area where Zimplats operates. In the case of Chibuluma mine, Lungu (2010) reports that, despite the challenges of disease, the company did not have an HIV and AIDS policy until recently when it started to develop one.

Box 2: The Case of Debswana

Debswana is a joint venture between the Botswana government and De Beers, a diamond mining company. The government holds a 50 percent stake in the company. Debswana is widely recognised as one of the most successful public-private partnerships in the world in terms of its contribution to national and community development, with something in the region of 80 percent of all gross profits realised by Debswana going into government revenues. As such, "Debswana's direct contribution to community development in Botswana vastly exceeds even the most stringent benchmarks for social investment," according to De Beers.

Apart from the taxes and royalties paid to the Botswana government, Debswana is also making direct investments into community development. In 2007, Debswana and De Beers established the Diamond Trust as a non-profit making entity. The Trust has contributed resources for community development. For example, the Botswana Press Agency recently

reported that the Trust donated BWP 10 million (US\$ 1.42 million) to a trust fund which administers a number of community development projects around the world heritage site of Tsodilo. The project funding, which covers a period of five years from May 2009 to May 2014, will support the development and management of about 16 000 hectares of land surrounding the Tsodilo Hills. The Letloa Trust Fund will manage the project in collaboration with the Botswana National Museum, local communities and representatives from central and local authorities.

However, an independent study by a non-profit organization called the Bench Marks Foundation, whilst recognising De Beers' positive record in corporate social responsibility, has raised the concern that the Botswana government has failed to safeguard some of its indigenous communities against the harmful effects of mining activities (Van Wyk, 2009).

Box 3: The Case of Impala Platinum Holdings Limited and the Royal Bafokeng Nation in North West, South Africa

Impala Platinum Holdings Ltd (Implats) is a South African mining company. It has operations in the Bushveld Complex, predominantly in the Bojanala district of North West province, and equity in Zimplats, which operates along Zimbabwe's Great Dyke.

Implats is in the business of mining, refining and marketing platinum group metals (PGM). As at 2009, the company reported that it employed 53, 000 people across its operations. No information was available on the proportion of women employed. Implats' socio-economic development activities in South Africa are managed under the auspices of the Impala Group Sustainable Development Forum. (www.implats.co.za 26/04/2010)

The Royal Bafokeng Nation is an estimated 300, 000-strong community of Setswana-speaking people in South Africa, based largely in North West. They own some 1, 200 km of land in the province's Bojanala district, which partially hosts the world renowned Bushveld Complex, the richest known reserve of platinum group metals and chrome in the world. The nation has leased most of the land to large mining companies such as Implats, Anglo Platinum, and Xstrata.

In 1996, Implats agreed to pay 22 percent of its pre-tax profits as royalties to the Bafokeng. That royalty revenue has since been used for the economic upliftment of the nation, much of it going to infrastructure and education. (www.miningmx.com accessed on 26/04/2010)

More recently, the RBN and Implats agreed to establish the Impala Bafokeng Trust (IBT), which became operational in 2007. The partners are committed to contributing a total of R170 million each over an eight-year period, from 2007 to

2014, to the social and economic development of the residents of the Bojanala district. *The Trust places a specific emphasis on the empowerment of women.* The vision of IBT is "a self-sustaining community, where people living and working in the Bojanala district ... experience economic wellbeing and quality of life." Unemployment in the district, in spite of extensive mining activity, is estimated at more than 40 percent more than 67 percent of households earn less than R1 600 a month and only seven percent earn more than R6 400 a month. Some 39 percent of the population is aged 19 or younger, with 53 percent falling within the economically active category of 20 to 60 years of age. As much as 15 percent of the population who are older than 20 years of age have not received any form of schooling and a further 20 percent only some primary education. This implies that about 35 percent of the total adult population may be regarded as functionally illiterate. Only 20 percent of the adult population has completed high school and little more than five percent has obtained some form of tertiary education. (www.bojanala.gov.za accessed on 26/04/2010)

Some of the development initiatives funded by the IBT include:

- Improving access to education, particularly early childhood development;
- Improving access of the community to health services;
- Supporting initiatives to promote a vibrant local economy, including boosting the spirit of entrepreneurship and skills for sustainable livelihoods; and
- Building capacity for sustainable livelihoods.

Box 4: The Case of Lonmin Plc in South Africa

With support from the International Financial Corporation (IFC), South African-based Lonmin Plc, the world's third largest platinum producer, has developed innovative solutions over the last two years to enable Lonmin to increase its female workforce, as required by South African Mining legislation. IFC (2003) reports that: "women miners are increasingly working side-by-side with their male counterparts, blasting through rock deep underground, transporting tones of ore in enormous vehicles, or working as highly-skilled engineers and metallurgists." Since 2007, IFC has helped Lonmin increase the number of women it employs at its South Africa operations by 46 percent. Women today comprise about 6.8 percent of Lonmin's total

workforce, still short of the 10 percent required by South African law, but a number that is steadily increasing, especially as the novelty of being a woman in a male-dominated industry fades.

IFC and Lonmin have used this experience to publish the *Women in Mining Manual* to help mining companies and other extractive industries incorporate women into their workforce and increase the benefits women and their families receive from these industries.

The manual provides a conceptual framework and a step-by-step approach to integrating women into the mining sector. The guide also focuses on how companies can create a culture that recruits and retains women.

Recommendations

Addressing the marginalisation and exclusion of women from the rich mineral sector

Governments, civil society, human rights groups, trade unionists and other stakeholders who are committed to an agenda for an inclusive and equitable development strategy in the region should spearhead a campaign for economic justice for women with regard to access to the region's mineral resources. They should bring the debate on women and mining to the fore. A Southern Africa Regional Summit on Women and Mining should bring together governments, mining companies, civil society organisations, human rights groups, women's enterprises involved in mining activities, development agencies, women's networks in the mining field, environmental agencies, the media and researchers. The main objective of such a summit would be to highlight the virtual marginalisation and exclusion of women from the mining sector – a sector which, as argued above, has the potential to contribute to the eradication of the poverty faced by women, empower them economically and, in the process, enhance their participation in the political arena.

The subsequent recommendations outline specific areas for action.

Taking advantage of the SADC Protocol

SADC has established a Mining Investment Forum as an interface between SADC states and prospective investors. In the past, such forums have been used to communicate the opportunities in the region's mineral sector and the incentives offered. It is important for governments to communicate their expectations about the responsibilities of mining investors to communities in the areas around

the mining areas. Governments should also make it clear that they will prioritise those investors who are willing to commit themselves to development targets.

Southern African countries should take advantage of the SADC Protocol on Mining. Member States should ensure that policies and legislation are in place to maximise the benefits of the industry to the people of the region. They should also ensure compliance by having effective monitoring and evaluation systems.

Introducing and enforcing policies and legislation to address women's participation in mining

Policies and laws in the region should be improved in order to promote women's participation in the sector. In South Africa, for example, the government has introduced employment equity legislation and black economic empowerment policies, and has set targets for the increased employment of women. An enabling environment has been created by legislation on women and mining, which is more progressive than existing international norms and practices. The minerals sector has not risen to the challenge in respect of women.

Changing patriarchal values and attitudes

As argued at the beginning of the paper, at the root of the exclusion and marginalisation of women is a deeply entrenched patriarchal system, which continues to view women as being subordinate to males and therefore continues to define what women should or should not do. Education and awareness programmes are critical in order to change the still dominant mindset that looks negatively at women doing business in mining or being employed in mining, particularly in jobs which involve

going underground. The few cases where some mining companies have trained women to work underground should be widely publicised, so that society begins to appreciate that women can do any job that men do in mining, provided they are accorded the opportunities and the training that prepares them for the task. For example, the initiatives which Lonmin Plc has started should be emulated by other companies. Implats has also started a programme to train women to do underground jobs.

Support for small-scale women miners (formal or informal)

To promote women's participation in the sector, there is a need to recognise what they are currently doing, and to provide the necessary support. It will be necessary to develop comprehensive and coordinated national and regional strategies to support the small-scale mining sector where women are dominant. In accordance with the SADC Protocol on Mining (Article 7), countries in the region should:

- Promote policies which encourage and assist small-scale mining;
- Facilitate the development of small-scale mining by providing support, technical extension services and establishment of marketing facilities;
- Encourage the establishment of appropriate training institutions to provide capacity for small-scale miners (this includes universities and technical colleges); and
- Provide financial support to facilitate such training.

UNIFEM SARO has been actively supporting the inclusion of women in mining. Its original objectives were to encourage women to become entrepreneurs in the sector, by supporting them visibly, providing them with skills and tools, and also working towards gender-sensitive mining policies and programmes in the region.

UNIFEM SARO has also supported the formation of national associations to mobilise women in the mining sector. It supported the creation of the SADC Women in Mining Trust (WIMT), which now engages with SADC governments in order to promote the participation of women in the mining sector.

Joint ventures between foreign and local or indigenous mining ventures

Governments should promote the establishment of joint ventures in mining. These should contribute to the transfer of skills. A legal, regulatory and logistical environment for the creation of mutually beneficial partnerships between foreign and local ventures in mining should be promoted. Such ventures should ensure the participation of women.

Investment in mineral beneficiation

Governments should support initiatives for value addition – the processing of minerals (beneficiation) – in the region. This would increase job opportunities through small, medium and micro enterprises (SMME) sector development. Policies should encourage local procurement in order to strengthen SMME and other local suppliers to the mining industry. Women should have equal opportunity to participate in these activities. Support should be in the form of access to business loans, training and market access.

Creation of networks or associations

Governments should also support efforts to assist the creation of national associations or networks which bring together women in mining. For example, in 1999, with support from the SADC WIMT, women involved in mining in all nine South African provinces met to form the South African Women in Mining Association (SAW-IMA). The aims are:

- To identify, through research, meetings, seminars and workshops, the needs, interests and problems faced by women miners and thereafter establish programmes to redress them;
- To lobby for the support and recognition of women in mining, both provincially and nationally;
- To identify training, administrative and technical needs of women in mining and – in collaboration with relevant and interested organisations – organise training to deal with the needs;
- To collaborate with relevant organisations for the purposes of training women in informal mining (e.g. gold panning) and in the appropriate mining methods, so as to minimise environmental degradation;
- To work with established financial institutions to enable women to access credit;
- To interact and network with institutions involved in mining which will lead to the sharing of expenses and interests with other associations; and
- To establish a database and a resource centre that would contain information on mining locally and internationally, to enable women in mining to access and use the information.

Conclusion

It is evident from the above analysis that although southern Africa is very rich in mineral resources, and the mining sector contributes significantly to the

economies of the region in terms of GDP, government revenue, and employment, there is a serious concern that the impact of the sector on poverty eradication remains limited throughout the region. With regard to women, evidence abounds that women are still largely excluded from participating in the sector and ultimately obtaining benefits from it. The reasons for this anomaly range from the historical factors of colonisation, apartheid, and racial and gender discrimination to the dominance and perpetuation of patriarchal, paternalistic and cultural attitudes, which dictate whether or not women should work, where they should work, how much they should earn, how they should use their income, where they should live, and so on.

The evidence shows that a number of obstacles hinder greater participation in the sector, namely, women's lack of access to education in the past, lack of access to training in technical and engineering fields and entrepreneurship, lack of access to finance, cultural barriers and attitudes, and generally the dominance of a patriarchal system that undervalues women.

Although there are instances where women's lives have been impacted positively, for example, through the CSR activities of the companies (and perhaps indirectly through the revenues generated from mining), the evidence reviewed indicates that CSR is very limited in many countries, and some have called for changes to the tax regime to reduce tax holidays and increase tax rates for mining companies. It is suggested that the revenues collected from such sources, if properly channeled into development, would benefit women more than CSR.

The paper argues that the general marginalisation of women from the mining sector is an injustice, which must be urgently redressed. To achieve this goal will require a multi-pronged and multi-stakeholder approach, where regional bodies like SADC, national governments, civil society organisations, women's organisations, networks of women in mining, trade unions, community-based organisations and mining companies will need to engage in further dialogue. ❖

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