

TI Z Statement on the International Youth Day

Harare, 12 August 2023- Transparency International Zimbabwe (TI Z) joins the young people of Zimbabwe, and indeed the rest of the world in commemorating the 2023 International Youth Day. The commemoration with the theme ***“Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World”*** presents us with an opportunity to reflect on the complex interconnection between corruption and environmental sustainability. This is based on the idea that present generations must enjoy the world they live in and consume its resources, in a manner that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (intergenerational equity).

We acknowledge that the transition towards a greener world is urgent and that this will partly depend on the development of green skills in the population. However, we emphasise that the strategy towards building a greener, sustainable world can only yield optimum results by fighting corruption in the management and usage of natural resources. The development of green skills must be accompanied by a deeper understanding among the youth of the detrimental effects of corruption on environmental sustainability, as well as their active participation in the global movements for environmental sustainability, and against corruption.

Corruption leads to the misallocation of resources and inefficient decision-making processes, leading to the prioritisation of short-term gains over long-term sustainability. Corruption also undermines environmental regulations and enforcement mechanisms when officials charged with the responsibility of enforcing environmental laws accept bribes or ignore illegal activities taking place under their jurisdiction. Corruption also hinders transparency and accountability in decision-making related to environmental issues. This is accompanied by challenges by citizens and their elected representatives in accessing critical information about environmental projects and the exploitation of natural resources. Lastly, corruption exacerbates social inequalities and impacts on the marginalised communities that rely heavily on natural resources for their survival. This includes perpetuating poverty, inequality and unemployment in the country when citizens do not benefit from natural resource revenues.

In making the connexion between corruption and environmental sustainability, we take the opportunity to highlight concerns from our past analyses on the exploitation of minerals in the country, noting that they constitute just one part of the broader natural resources sector. Zimbabwe’s mining sector is plagued by corruption, despite the passing of some ‘best practice’ legislation and policies to combat corruption. State institutions which are supposed to bring order to this sector are impacted by political interference. The checks and balances on executive power are weak, while external accountability mechanisms have inadequate resources and authority. key areas of vulnerability noted involve the awarding of claims for precious metals. In the mining

sector, tax avoidance and transfer pricing are recurrent key concerns. Further, the poor governance of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in the mining sector compounds corruption.

Several solutions have been mooted regarding the above corruption risks, such as instituting a whistleblowing mechanism in the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development, and capacity building of affected communities to demand transparency, accountability, and integrity (TAI) from mining companies, the government and its various agencies. ***TI Z has also called for the rigorous due diligence assessments of mining license applicants as well as capacity building in the departments presiding over the extractives sector.***

On the commemoration of 2023 International Youth Day, TI Z calls on representative youth organisations to build their capacity to demand TAI in the extractives sector. This will ensure responsiveness by the government and mining companies to the unique needs of their constituencies. We also call for joint multi-stakeholder collaboration for sustainable governance in the mining sector using platforms such as the multistakeholder mining indabas convened by state and non-state actors alike.

End//