

The Weekly

A Weekly Newsletter by CNRG

Issue 16

21 May 2026



Africa Day Feature page 4

Zimbabwean Youth Push for Climate Justice and Resource Accountability

Young people from across Zimbabwe gathered in Mutare for a symposium on climate justice, natural resource governance, and peacebuilding, highlighting growing youth demands for accountability, community rights, environmental protection, and inclusive participation in shaping Zimbabwe's extractive and climate future.

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Rural community energy options amid climate change

In this article, researchers examine how rural communities in Zimbabwe's Mbire and Muzarabani districts are navigating worsening energy insecurity amid climate change, unreliable electricity supply, and the global energy transition, highlighting growing dependence on solar energy, firewood, gas, and other locally accessible energy alternatives.

Mining Activities Raise Alarm Over Tsvingwe Community Water Source



By Fortunate Black

Residents of Tsvingwe Community in Mutare are raising serious concerns over mining activities taking place near the area's main water supply infrastructure, amid growing fears of contamination, restricted access, and environmental degradation.

The concerns emerged during a monitoring visit conducted on 21 May 2026 under the Just and Fair Share Campaign Mutare, an initiative focused on strengthening community participation and accountability in natural resource governance.

During the visit, community monitors observed that mining activities are being carried out only a few metres away from water tanks supplying the entire Tsvingwe community. A boom gate has reportedly been erected by the mining company, restricting public access to the site and heightening tensions among residents.

Attempts to document the situation through photographs were reportedly blocked by individuals manning the area, who claimed that the water tanks now fall within the mining claim.

Community members interviewed during the visit expressed frustration over the lack of consultation prior to the commencement of mining operations. Residents stated that they were not informed or engaged despite the direct impact on their water source and livelihoods. They further alleged that no Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) process was undertaken before operations began.



Of greatest concern to residents is the potential contamination of the community's water supply. Community members fear that chemicals associated with mining activities, coupled with environmental degradation around the site, could compromise water safety and expose residents to serious health risks.

Residents also questioned why mining activities were allowed to proceed before measures were put in place to protect or relocate the water infrastructure.

According to local accounts, the mountain where the water tanks are situated was previously under council authority before mining operations commenced. However, residents allege that decisions by higher authorities facilitated the takeover of the area for mining purposes.

The situation reflects broader tensions increasingly emerging in mining communities across Zimbabwe, where extractive activities continue to collide with community rights, environmental protection, and access to essential resources.

Community members are now calling for urgent intervention from relevant authorities to investigate the matter, ensure transparency, and protect the wellbeing of residents whose access to safe and clean water may be under threat.

Report by Fortunate Black, freelance journalist, generated under a recent monitoring visit to Tsvingwe Community in gold rich Penhalonga under the Just and Fair Share Campaign Mutare has raised alarm over mining activities taking place dangerously close to the community's main water source.

The campaign by Centre for Natural Resource Governance is under a project Minerals for People and Planet funded the Open Society Foundation to empower youths to advocate for transparency and accountability in the extractive sector.

Rural community energy options amid climate change

Sustainable development goal 7 (SDG 7) envisions universal access to affordable and clean energy by 2030 — a key driver of communities' health, well-being and sustainable development.

However, as noted by the United Nations, progress remains slow, with a significant part of the world's population, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa's rural communities, still lacking reliable access to this critical resource.

Findings from October 2025 fieldwork supported by the Southern Africa Trust (SAT) and undertaken by Good Governance Africa (GGA) and the Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) in Zimbabwe's Mbire and Muzarabani districts underscore the depth of these challenges.

This research sought to ascertain rural communities' experiences in navigating everyday energy needs amid rapidly shifting trends driven by climate change and the global energy transition.

The Mbire and Muzarabani districts are located in Zimbabwe's Mashonaland Central province. In this region, Australian company Invictus Energy is exploring for potential oil and gas reserves estimated at 9.25 trillion cubic feet of gas and nearly 300 million barrels of oil.

The research findings highlight critical, community-centred insights for government and investors to build more inclusive and robust benefit-sharing frameworks with host communities.

Focus group discussions and key informant interviews revealed that sustainable, clean household energy options are limited, with energy use mainly determined by what is within reach and affordable for each household.

Communities are creatively navigating their local experiences of the energy transition through various energy mixes to meet their cooking, lighting, heating and gadget-powering needs.

These sources include electricity from the national grid, solar energy, gas, coal and firewood.

Electricity supply from the national grid was deemed unreliable because of persistent power cuts resulting from dilapidated infrastructure, faults and load-shedding. These findings resonate with the 2024 Afrobarometer survey, which highlights Zimbabwean citizens' dissatisfaction with electricity provision.



Solar Panels are increasingly popular in rural Zimbabwe as challenges to energy access bite

Some key survey findings revealed that a “slim majority (52%) of Zimbabweans live in zones served by the national grid ... [with] fewer than one in 10 rural residents (8%) connected to the grid, compared with a large majority (69%) of urban residents.

“Among those who are connected to the grid, only four in 10 say their electricity works ‘most of the time’ (34%) or ‘all of the time’ (6%).”

This unreliability was echoed by a respondent from Mbire's Mushumbi Pools who, during an interview with GGA, stated: “Despite being connected to the electricity grid for many years, I primarily rely on solar power and gas for my household cooking and lighting needs. The national electricity supply is down for much of the year.”

Solar energy use is common throughout Mbire and Muzarabani communities, with a panel or two installed around the yard or atop homestead buildings. Discussions revealed that for most households, solar energy is used for lighting, powering radios and charging cellphones but only a few can afford high-capacity systems that enable them to meet household cooking needs...

This is excerpt of an article which first appeared in the Mail and Guardian, by Sikhululekile Mashingaidze, researcher in Good Governance Africa (GGA)'s Peace and Security Programme, Farai Makururu an experienced Governance Research Consultant with a strong background in Afrobarometer research and Donald Takudzwa Nyarota a media and project management specialist currently leading media and advocacy work at the Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG).

Africa Day 2026 _ Why Africa's Water Future Depends on Women

By Kudzanai Chimombe

As Africa commemorates Africa Day and reflects on the aspirations of Agenda 2063, the continent's 2026 African Union theme, "Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of Agenda 2063" arrives at a critical moment. Across Africa, climate change, urbanisation, population growth and environmental degradation are intensifying pressure on water resources and sanitation systems. Yet within this challenge lies an opportunity to place African women at the centre of building a water-secure, climate-resilient and prosperous continent.

The newly adopted Africa Water Vision 2063 and Policy recognises that water is not only a natural resource but also a strategic foundation for economic transformation, peace, food security, public health and social justice. The policy explicitly states that empowering women and youth is imperative to achieving water security and inclusive development.

For African women, water is not an abstract policy issue. It is deeply connected to daily survival, caregiving, food production, sanitation and health, entrepreneurship and community resilience. Women are therefore not merely beneficiaries of water policies they are already leaders, innovators, protectors and economic actors in Africa's water future.

Across rural and urban Africa, women bear the primary responsibility for collecting, managing and using water for household needs. The Africa Water Vision 2063 notes that universal access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene services is fundamental to dignity, inclusion and equity. When women and girls lack access to safe water and sanitation, girls miss school, women lose productive time, communities face increased disease burdens, and families become more vulnerable to poverty. Conversely, when women have reliable access to clean water and sanitation, communities experience improvements in education, nutrition, maternal health and household income. The policy acknowledges that "advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls are critical for effectively reducing poverty; sustaining growth; and building a more inclusive, peaceful and prosperous Africa."

This aligns strongly with the goals of the African Union's Agenda 2063 Aspiration 6, which envisions "an Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth."



African women are central to agriculture, which remains one of the continent's largest employers and economic sectors. The Africa Water Vision 2063 emphasises that water is essential for food production, climate resilience and economic growth. Women farmers are already adapting to changing rainfall patterns, droughts and environmental degradation through rainwater harvesting, conservation farming, sustainable irrigation, wetland preservation, and climate-smart agriculture.

The policy promotes integrated water resources management, groundwater protection, green water productivity and nature-based solutions as key responses to climate pressures. African women are often the first practitioners of these approaches at community level, drawing on indigenous knowledge and intergenerational environmental stewardship.

Women are also critical actors in protecting ecosystems "from source to sea" through sustainable farming, forest protection and local conservation efforts. Their leadership is indispensable to safeguarding Africa's rivers, wetlands and aquifers for future generations.

The Africa Water Vision 2063 calls for a "sanitation economy revolution" that transforms waste into economic opportunity through circular economies and innovation. This presents enormous opportunities for African women entrepreneurs.

Women across the continent are already leading sanitation and recycling enterprises, including ecological sanitation initiatives, menstrual health innovations, organic fertiliser production, plastic recycling businesses, wastewater reuse initiatives, and community hygiene enterprises.

Bikita Women Speak: Mining Expansion and the Struggle for Survival.



Women living with disabilities in Bikita share how lithium mining is affecting their livelihoods, environment, and daily lives during a focus group discussion with the author.

By Dr Valerie Rumbidzai Jeché

For many women and families living in Bikita's mining-affected communities, mineral wealth has failed to translate into improved livelihoods. Recent field engagements revealed growing concerns over water insecurity, displacement, environmental degradation, and the erosion of social and cultural life.

Community leaders, women, and young people described a widening gap between mining expansion and local development.

Residents reported persistent shortages of clean water, damaged roads, unsafe school environments, and limited access to healthcare, despite the presence of large-scale mining activities in the area. Some villagers now walk long distances to access water, while others rely on unsafe sources located near slime dams.

Women noted that the burden of these challenges is not shared equally. With reduced access to firewood, water, and farming land, many women and girls spend longer hours travelling to secure basic household needs. They also expressed concern over unsafe roads, damaged homes caused by blasting, and exclusion from decision-making processes affecting their communities.

Young women further described mining spaces as increasingly unsafe. Reports of school disruptions caused by blasting, pressure from mine workers, rising child marriages, and growing gender-based violence featured prominently during discussions. Many argued that poverty and unemployment are deepening vulnerability among girls and women.

Also striking were the experiences of VIM women, whose livelihoods depend on collecting and trading the mineral by-product. Women reported declining access to VIM, reduced quantities, and growing allegations of gatekeeping and informal payments. VIM remains a crucial income source, but many acknowledged the health risks associated with dust exposure and said they would prefer safer and more sustainable employment opportunities.

Across the conversations, one message remained consistent: communities want development that includes them. Their demands are simple but urgent, water, safe infrastructure, employment, accountability, and meaningful participation in decisions shaping the future of Bikita.

Zimbabwean Youth Push for Climate Justice and Resource Accountability at Mutare Symposium

By Staff Reporter

Young people from across Zimbabwe gathered in Mutare last week for a landmark symposium on climate justice, natural resource governance, and peacebuilding, signaling a growing youth-driven movement demanding accountability in the country's extractive sector.

Hosted by the Centre for Natural Resource Governance, the two-day Youth Climate, Natural Resources and Peacebuilding Symposium was held under the theme “Beyond Vulnerability: Youth as Architects of Climate Justice, Natural Resource Accountability, and Peacebuilding in Zimbabwe.”

The event brought together youth leaders, activists, students, and community representatives to discuss the future of Zimbabwe's resource governance amid expanding mining investments and intensifying climate pressures.

In the keynote address to the youth Farai Maguwu, CNRG executive director, called on the youths to move beyond being seen as victims of climate change and become leaders, innovators, and peacebuilders driving solutions for climate justice and community resilience.

“Today we are thinking outside the box, we are talking about youth as entrepreneurs, youth as solution givers, youth as leaders in innovation and technology. We are looking at Youths as catalysts for peacebuilding, because climate change also contributes to conflict in communities,” he said.

Opening the discussions, Donald Nyarota, Communications and Advocacy Officer at CNRG, challenged participants to rethink the relationship between mineral wealth and community wellbeing.

“Zimbabwe's natural resources should not enrich a few while communities remain trapped in poverty and environmental destruction,” Nyarota said. “Young people have a responsibility to become active participants in demanding transparency, accountability, and environmental justice.”

Nyarota's presentation focused on Zimbabwe's rapidly expanding extractive industry, particularly the lithium boom, and explored how weak governance structures continue to expose communities to displacement, pollution, and exclusion from decision-making processes.



Peggy Tavagadza from ZLHR, leads a session at the Youth Symposium on Climate Natural Resources and Peacebuilding in Mutare

The symposium also featured a presentation by Peggy Tavagadza from the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, who addressed the growing competition between mining operations and communities over land and water resources.

“Communities are not obstacles to development,” Tavagadza said. “They are rights holders who must be consulted, protected, and included in decisions affecting their land, livelihoods, and environment.” Her presentation highlighted concerns around forced displacement, water contamination, and ecosystem destruction affecting mining communities across Zimbabwe.

Freeman Bhoso of the Zimbabwe Natural Resource Dialogue Forum joined the symposium virtually, delivering a presentation on natural resource governance, community rights, and extractive justice. Drawing on case studies from Marange, Bikita, Penhalonga, Hwange, and Mutare, Bhoso warned that poor governance and lack of transparency continue to deepen inequality and social tensions in resource-rich areas.

“Youth are not future leaders only,” Bhoso told participants. “Youth are leaders now.”

Throughout the symposium, participants emphasized the importance of youth-led advocacy, digital storytelling, and community organizing in promoting environmental accountability and peacebuilding.

As Zimbabwe positions itself as a key player in the global energy transition through critical minerals such as lithium, discussions in Mutare reflected a growing call for a “just transition” that places communities, environmental protection, and youth participation at the center of development.

Africa Day 2026 _ Why Africa's Water Future Depends on Women

The Africa Water Vision 2063 strongly emphasises inclusive governance, accountability and participation. It calls for “broad, inclusive and active stakeholder engagement and participation with clear gender objectives.”

Women's leadership in water governance is essential because they possess direct lived experience of water insecurity and community needs. Yet women remain underrepresented in many water institutions, decision-making bodies and infrastructure planning processes.

This must change.

From community water committees to national ministries and transboundary basin organisations, women must occupy leadership spaces where policies, investments and resource allocations are determined.

Women also play an essential role in peacebuilding around shared water resources. The policy recognises that water basins can become engines of “regional integration, peace and political stability.”

Across Africa, women frequently act as mediators, community organisers and protectors of social cohesion during droughts, floods and resource conflicts. Their inclusion strengthens trust, accountability and long-term sustainability in water governance systems.

Africa's future water security depends on innovation, science and technology. The policy calls for investment in digital tools, smart systems, research, early-warning systems and youth-led entrepreneurship. African women and girls must therefore be empowered not only as users of water systems, but also as engineers, scientists, climate researchers, hydrologists, policy experts, innovators, and technology entrepreneurs.

The AU's broader gender commitments, including the African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol), affirm women's rights to sustainable development, participation and equal access to resources. Expanding opportunities for girls and women in STEM education and green industries is therefore not optional but it is central to achieving Agenda 2063.



The Africa Water Vision 2063 introduces the concept of “hydro-social contracts for intergenerational equity,” where communities, especially women and youth, are empowered to protect water resources as shared public goods.

This vision recognises a fundamental truth, sustainable development cannot be achieved without gender justice. When women are excluded from water access, land ownership, financing, technology and leadership, Africa loses enormous social and economic potential. But when women are empowered, entire communities thrive.

The Africa Water Vision 2063 presents a bold continental blueprint for “a water-secure and resilient Africa with safe sanitation for all.” Achieving this vision will require more than infrastructure and financing. It will require recognising African women as central architects of the Africa We Want.

Women are already sustaining households, protecting ecosystems, driving agricultural productivity, building community resilience and leading local innovation. The task ahead is to ensure that African institutions, governments and development partners intentionally invest in women's leadership, agency and economic participation across the entire water sector.

Africa Day therefore offers an opportunity to recommit to policies and investments that place women at the centre of climate resilience, water governance, sanitation innovation, food security, environmental protection, and economic transformation.



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**CATEGORIES FROM : MAT NORTH &
BULAWAYO**

- MUSIC AND DANCE
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SUBMIT BY 28 MAY 2026

**SUBMIT CV & LINK OF
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