

Beat: Business

Commissioner Acyl calls for Shared Benefits from Mineral Resources

Between Member States and Private Sector

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USPA NEWS - The 2nd Africa Mining Summit came to a close today in Dar es Salam. The Africa Mining Summit was comprised of a two-day conference including extensive presentations and panel discussions on all aspects related to the continent's ongoing mining and mineral resource development efforts, an exhibition,

The 2nd Africa Mining Summit came to a close today in Dar es Salam. The Africa Mining Summit was comprised of a two-day conference including extensive presentations and panel discussions on all aspects related to the continent's ongoing mining and mineral resource development efforts, an exhibition, a matchmaking 1-2-1 sessions, various networking breaks and a cultural dining experience. The objective of the Summit was to enable delegates to establish valuable connections and relationship in a relaxed and professional environment. On the margins of the Summit, the African Union Commission (AUC) held an interactive African Union Ministers Symposium under the leadership of the Commissioner for Trade and Industry, H.E. Mrs. Fatima Haram Acyl.

The First-Ten Year Plan of the Agenda 2063 stated that the Africa Mining Vision, within the framework of the Agenda 2063 aims for "a transparent, equitable, and optimal exploitation of mineral resources to underpin broad based sustainable growth and socioeconomic development on the continent". This is to be achieved through creation of downstream (manufacturing), up stream (mining capital goods, consumables and services industry), side stream (power, logistics, water, communications) linkages for mineral beneficiation; building of mutually beneficial partnership between the state, private sector and civil society in the exploitation of mineral wealth and developing capacity for building a comprehensive knowledge base of member states mineral resources and development process. It is with this in mind that the AUC co-organised the AMSII.

In her keynote speech the Commissioner pointed out that Africa is at "Crossroads" as people in Africa are still poor even though countries are rich. She evoked the fact that countries are not homogeneous as some are fragmented or rushing into middle class economies, some embroiled in conflicts or land-locked or others considered as LDCs. She also mentioned two key things that unite Africa, namely the growing young population and abundant resources (human and natural). According to Mrs. Fatima Haram Acyl, these abundant resources are underutilized and the challenge for Africa is not about poverty but the countries' inability to turn the abundant resources into wealth and assets. For the Commissioner, regional Integration with no borders, harmonization of policies, legal, fiscal regimes and regulatory framework to harness the abundant resources are still a challenge. "Africa must re-write its narrative and walk the talk", she said. For Commissioner Acyl, Africa's known mineral reserves stand at 30% of the Global Mineral Reserves but at the same time she acknowledged that almost four fifth of Africa's Mineral Resources are not yet explored. "In this regard, the African Minerals Geoscience Initiative (AMGI) that was developed by AUC working with the World Bank and AMDC and adopted by Heads of State in 2015 is expected to support Member States in their exploration efforts. There are other geological information initiatives and Programmes operational on the continent such as the €20 Million- 6 Year African Geological Information (PANAFGEO) programme. The first €10 million, 3-year phase of PanAfGeo was launched in August this year and AUC working with OAGS to launch a programme that will build the capacities of all African National Geological Surveys. It is estimated that by the end of three years it will have built the capacities of 1200 African Geologists in various areas of geological information and geosciences. Others include West African Exploration Initiative (WAXI) and one Geological among others", she said. In this regards, the commissioner announced that AUC Working with the AMDC, developed a Geological and Minerals Information System GMIS Strategy to coordinate the implementation of all these continental geological information Initiatives and Programmes stated above.

COMMISSIONER ACYL EXPLAINED HOW AUC DEVELOPED AN AMV-PRIVATE PUBLIS SECTOR COMPACT-----

Commissioner Acyl also pointed out that there are a number of mining laws on the continent that are not aligned to the continent as well as Countries' own development agendas. In the area of Legislation framework, she underscored the fact that AUC is working with the World Bank and African Legal Support Facility to support Member States review their mining laws. "The Africa Mining Legislation Atlas (AMLA), is working in key areas of dissemination and sharing of existing mineral or mining laws and mining codes through an on-line interactive platform as well as capacity building for mining law review and home-grown well researched policy guidance for mineral resource Development", she stressed.

Mrs. Fatima Haram Acyl informed the gathering that AUC has developed an AMV-Private Sector Compact that targets mining companies including oil and gas, Chambers of Mines and other mining associations, to ensure responsible investment and curb illicit financial flows today are hindering Africa's efforts in mobilising domestic resources. The Compact is based on principles that can be aligned with corporate core values, policies, strategic plans and mission statements of companies in the extractive sector. "The Compact provides a platform of cooperation for mutual benefits and for the industry, shared benefits in implementing the AMV that include: Cost reduction, Business opportunities, Transparency and social license to operate as well as Corporate image "" environment and social responsibilities just to mention but a few"[7], she concluded.

The Commissioner then chaired a High Level Panel Session composed of Government Ministers and Private Sector Precedents to explore the process of the AMV Implementation and the process to date.-----

On Wednesday 14th, the Commissioner for Trade and Industry also had an opportunity to visit and inspect the African Minerals Geoscience Centre AMGI, formerly the Southern and Eastern African Minerals Centre (SEAMIC) based in Dar es Salam. H.E. Mrs Fatima Acyl who was accompanied by Ministers from Uganda, South Sudan and Zambia was briefed by the Director General Mr. Ibrahim Shaddad about the history of the Institution and its relevance in the Implementation of the AMV particularly in providing services to Member States in the areas of Geological information, Geosciences, small-scale mining capacity building, environmental scientific analysis ceramic as well as gemstone cutting among others. Later the Commissioner and her entourage conducted a tour of the facilities and laboratories and was amazed by the huge potential the 39-year Institution has in supporting member States if it can perform at full capacity. Currently the Institution operates at less than 20% capacity and Commissioner Acyl reiterated the commitment of AUC under her office to support AMGC to become a full-fledged African Institution that can effectively provide services to AU Member States. Source AUC

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