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PeP talk on mining policy

Party to establish Minerals and Oil Exploration Authority

THE Patriots for Economic Progress (PeP) believes mining is a key sector of the economy and, as such, when the party forms government, it will ensure that maximum economic value is derived from the sector for the benefit of all Zambians.

The party's leader Sean Tembo says PeP feels the country has been blessed with abundant precious mineral resources such as gold, emeralds and basic methods such as copper, nickel and manganese which should benefit locals in various ways.

Mr Tembo says the PeP administration will prioritise the policy on remittance of forex revenue from mineral sales.

The party believes that forex revenue is very critical and important in the development of any country, including Zambia.

"In our view, mining is supposed to bring in forex revenue which we will need to improve other goods and services. To this effect, PeP will change the policy for repatriation of sales of minerals," Mr Tembo says.

He says each local company that sells minerals outside the country would have to bring back all the money raised from the sale of minerals into their local bank accounts.

What will be allowed to be repatriated, according to Mr Tembo, will be the profits and dividends which will be declared after the operations of mining companies.

"We are not going to allow a situation where the sale of our minerals is just on paper but the actual forex revenue does not come back to the country as it remains in the foreign countries where the copper is sold," he says.

The party feels that is retrogressive to the economy as well as the overall growth of the nation.

He says the same way the country exports copper is the way that Zambia needs to import various other important products, including fuel, and other factors of production such as machinery, and to do that, Mr Tembo says forex revenue is needed.

"When you export minerals, which are our major forex earner, and that money does not come back to Zambia, then it means that this country will not have sufficient forex revenue to be able to buy the critical things we need to run the economy. Therefore it will limit the growth of the economy," he says.

Mr Tembo says if a mining company's tax liability drops from one year to the next, then the company would have to let go of their foreign workers as their quota will go down.

Unfortunately, he feels that usually the only jobs left for Zambians in the mining sector are low-level ones while management jobs, technical and engineering jobs are given to expatriates where mining companies are coming from.

Mr Tembo says the situation deprives local citizens from gainful employment.

"PeP will ensure that Zambians get employed in senior positions in these mining companies. These minerals will eventually run out and that is the reason we believe that Zambians have to benefit while they can," he says.

Mr Tembo says the PeP administration will also ensure support and promotion of local businesses.

He says the PeP government will ensure that mines are compelled to procure from local companies.

"Establishing a quota for each mining company with regard to the maximum amounts of goods and services that can be imported from outside the country will promote local production and industries. It will also help improve the welfare of the citizens," he says.

Additionally, the PeP administration will establish the Minerals and Oil Exploration Authority that will be responsible for undertaking exploration of various minerals and oils across the country using state-of-the-art technology.

"The PeP administration will also continuously hold talks with potential mine investors and sign tentative agreements for them to take over existing mining operations so that the PeP government is not held to ransom by mining companies threatening to pull out from Zambia," Mr Tembo says.



PEP leader Sean Tembo.

Mr Tembo says the PeP administration will also enforce simplification of tax laws for mining companies by implementing a revenue tax on all copper exports based on prevailing London Metal Exchange (LME) prices.

He says PeP feels there is a lot of tax evasion in the mining sector which has resulted in very little tax being realised from the sector. He says the concept of taxation is supposed to be fair and equitable across all taxpayers.

"PeP will reform that and ensure the mining sector pays a fair share," he says.

The PeP administration will also ensure that it gives quotas to all mining companies for the

Racing with cheetahs at Lavushimanda

FRANCIS CHEWE
Lavushimanda

FOR all its beauty, Lavushimanda was previously a hidden area within Mpika district until 2017.

The new district borrows its name from Lavushimanda National Park, named after the beautiful hills in the area.

Although declared a national park in 1972, wildlife numbers have not been impressive. If anything, they have been limited to mostly antelopes.

But something has changed recently. Cheetah, a species that was locally extinct in the Bangweulu Flats of Lavushimanda for almost a century, has been translocated into the park.

Three cheetahs were flown via Nkondo airstrip and later taken to Bangweulu plains in the company of African Parks and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) officials.

The cheetah is a large cat native to Africa and central Iran. It is the fastest land animal, capable of running at 80 to 128 km/h, and, as such, it has several adaptations for speed, including a light build, long thin legs and a long tail.

The cheetah is the world's fastest land mammal. With acceleration that would leave most automobiles in the dust, a cheetah can go from 0 to 60 miles an hour in only three seconds.

Before unleashing their speed, cheetahs use exceptionally keen eyesight to scan their grassland environment for signs of prey, especially antelope and hares.

This big cat is a daylight hunter that benefits from stealthy movement and a distinctive spotted coat that allows it to blend easily into high, dry grasses.

When the moment is right, a cheetah will sprint after its quarry and attempt to knock it down. Such chases cost the hunter a tremendous amount of energy and are usually over in less than a minute. If successful, the cheetah will often drag its kill to a shady hiding place to protect it from opportunistic animals that sometimes steal a kill before the cheetah can eat. Cheetahs



AFRICAN Parks and Department of National Parks and Wildlife officers load a box carrying a cheetah on a Toyota Land Cruiser. Three cheetahs from South Africa were reintroduced into the Bangweulu Flats in Lavushimanda district in Muchinga Province recently.

PICTURE: FRANCIS CHEWE



ONE of the cheetahs released into Bangweulu Wetlands.

PICTURE: ANDREW BECK

need only drink once every three to four days.

Last month, the Government, African Parks and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) announced the successful translocation of an initial three cheetahs from South Africa.

The reintroduction is being undertaken as a collaboration to help restore Bangweulu's biodiversity and aid efforts to secure safe spaces to promote the long-term survival of the species in the region.

"With the reintroduction of cheetahs to this extraordinary wetland, Bangweulu serves as a paragon for community conservation," DNPW acting director Chuma Simukonda says.

"Our unique tripartite partnership with the community resource boards and African Parks has unlocked an opportunity here to help protect this vulnerable species from extinction in the wild, while helping to re-vitalise Bangweulu and enhance nature-based tourism," he says.

Mr Simukonda says the translocation initiative arises from a long-standing partnership between DNPW, six community resource boards (CRBs) and African Parks, a conservation non-profit which has managed

Bangweulu Wetlands since 2008.

Fitted with tracking collars to enable their long-term monitoring, the cheetahs were safely released into temporary enclosures specially designed to support their acclimation.

The founder population is genetically unrelated and was sourced from three reserves, namely Mountain Zebra National Park (Eastern Cape), Rogge Cloof (Northern Cape) and Welgevonden (Waterberg, Limpopo).

"In many parts of the continent cheetahs face an uncertain future, but today the Zambian government and Bangweulu's communities are providing a chance for their recovery," African Parks country director James Milanzi said.

"Thanks to our 12-year partnership with the DNPW and six CRBs, Bangweulu has seen a dramatic transformation. The reintroduction of cheetahs marks a new ecological milestone and an exciting new chapter for eco-tourism in this region."

At 6,570 km², Bangweulu is of suitable size and habitat to support a viable cheetah population. In 2008, the DNPW, six community resource

boards and African Parks partnered to manage this vital 6,645km² aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem.

Built on a system where local people retain rights for sustainable harvesting of natural resources, the wetland is unique in its governance and is a leading example of community-driven conservation.

Government wants to diversify the economy away from its dependency on mineral resources.

In 2018, the National Park and Wildlife Policy was enacted. It recognises the need to work with the private sector to develop some of the parks to supplement Government's efforts.

"The policy was enacted to recognise efforts of previous governments that signed agreements with African Parks in 2003 in Liuwa Plain National Park and later with the Bangweulu wetlands in 2008," Mr Simukonda said.

The two areas have seen the growth of wildlife populations that are in turn bringing in tourists, both local and foreign.

"African Parks pioneered its business-centred conservation model in Zambia which has now spread to 19 parks in 11 countries. This is an



AFRICAN Parks Lavushimanda National Park scouts with two poachers (squatting) caught with 17kg of duiker and 38kg of bush pig meat in Muchinga Province recently.

PICTURE: FRANCIS CHEWE

achievement that Zambia shares," Mr Simukonda said.

He said the coming back of the cheetahs is not by mistake as Government started preparing for this venture by developing the cheetah management plan in 2017, which made African Parks to approach Government with

the intention to translocate the cheetahs.

Mr Milanzi said the three cheetahs re-introduced form a seed that will eventually spread to other parks, including Lusenga National Park, North Luangwa National Park and South Luangwa National Park, and eventually give Zambia

a competitive advantage with other parks in the region.

Mr Milanzi is urging stakeholders to guard the protected areas jealously to ensure safety for wildlife.

"We need to preserve wildlife for the future so that our country can enjoy the God-given resources," he said.