

Kansanshi Mine explains job cuts

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KANSANSHI Mining PLC a subsidiary of First Quantum Minerals says it has become necessary to disengage various workers that had been engaged by various contractors in the construction of the smelter following its completion last December.

The Mining firm says construction of the copper smelter at Kansanshi Mine was completed in December 2014, and that the demobilization of contractual staff kicked then and has continued.

In a statement issued by Company Public Relations Manager Godfrey Msiska, management says the demobilization had to be done systematically and in phases as the smelter was commissioned and various processes at the smelter being tested for efficacy.

Mr Msiska says in view of concerns expressed by various stakeholders, Kansanshi Mining Plc has seen it necessary to clarify the issue of demobilization of workers who had been engaged by contractors.

He has stated that the contractor demobilization plan was shared with the Provincial Administration and the Provincial Labour Office late last year .

Mr Msiska says 343 contractors' workers are earmarked for demobilization this week .

On Thursday, government disclosed that Kansanshi Mine in Solwezi retrenched 93 workers and plans to retrench 400 more.

Chief Government Spokesperson Chishimba Kambwili has revealed this in a statement released in Lusaka.

Mr Kambwili who is also Information and Broadcasting Services Minister appealed to Kansanshi Mine to reinstate the 93 workers as the right procedure has not been followed.

He says all mining companies are aware of the standing order which obliges them to consult government through the Ministry of Labour before retrenching any worker.

The Minister says government's position is that if mining companies embark on the retrenchment exercise the first workers to retrenched should be expatriates.

Mr Kambwili says government has been extremely flexible and magnanimous on the issue of the mining tax.

Meanwhile, ZNBC's Brian Mwale reports that government says it will continue to dialogue with mining firms in the country as partners in economic development of the nation.

Deputy Minister of Finance Christopher Mvunga says there is no challenge that is insurmountable where dialogue is at the centre of issues.

He says Zambia has not reached the cross roads in the management of the national economy as is being portrayed in some sections of society.

Speaking after a tour of Kalumbila Minerals' Sentinel Mine in Solwezi under its Trident Project, Mr. Mvunga assured management that government is investor friendly.

He says the US\$2billion investment by First Quantum Minerals in the Low Grade Copper mine is a reflection of how much confidence foreign investors have in the country.

Mr. Mvunga who is accompanied by Bank of Zambia Deputy Governor Dr. Bwalya Ng'andu says he has had fruitful discussions with management at Kalumbila Mine to understand challenges faced.

He says there is also need to empower local Small and Medium Enterprises through setting up of small industries in the

new town currently under development.

Mr. Mvunga says unemployment can only be addressed by allowing more Zambians to participate in investments in the country.

And Kalumbila Minerals Limited General Manager Rudi Badenhorst says it is important that the Ministry of Finance also understands its operations because the investment will be contributing to government coffers.

Meanwhile North Western Province Minister Dawson Kafwaya is happy with the investment which he says is in line with government's goal of creating employment through promoting private sector participation.

Mr Kafwaya has assured the mine of government's support in addressing some of the challenges the mining giant is faced with.

The Provincial Minister has since called on Zambians to support government's developmental projects as opposed to mixing investments and politics.

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