



### NGO COALITION APPEALS TO ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT TO HALT CONTROVERSIAL MINE

*Lusaka, 02 September 2021:* A powerful coalition of NGO's and stakeholders has called on newly elected Zambian President, Hakainde Hichilema, to urgently halt a controversial open-pit copper mine that was recently given the go-ahead in the Lower Zambezi National Park.

The NGO Coalition says: "We congratulate His Excellency The President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr Hakainde Hichilema, and the United Party for National Development on the election. We welcome the comments the President made in his inaugural speech on the need to ensure environmental sustainability and inclusiveness in our development agenda. We are fully aligned with the President's comments that we must mitigate against climate change and strive to build a green economy."

The Coalition is calling on President Hakainde Hichilema and his Cabinet to halt the controversial proposed open-pit copper mine in the Lower Zambezi National Park, which is yet to break ground.

"We are appealing to His Excellency The President as we know he fully understands the large environmental, social and financial costs our country will incur if this mine is allowed to go ahead. We believe mining activities should be restricted to happening in mining areas of the country and should not be allowed in tourism and wildlife conservation areas that have their own ecological and economic value to the country," says the Coalition

The Coalition says it trusts the views of the President on not mining in the pristine Lower Zambezi National Park remain unchanged and looks forward to engaging in overturning the decisions that have been made in this regard, which will have devastating consequences on the environment, communities and ecosystem of the Lower Zambezi National Park and beyond.

President Hichilema previously indicated on social media that he was opposed to the open-pit copper mine approved by the former ruling party, the Patriotic Front. "#lowerZambezi stays untouched," said President Hichilema in a Twitter post in 2014. Hichilema, leader of the United Party for National Development, was elected President of Zambia during the August 2021 general elections, defeating Edgar Lungu of the Patriotic Front.

The Coalition recently launched a hard-hitting social media campaign called #SaveZambeziSafeZambezi to raise awareness of the issue. The Coalition says the mine, called Kangaluwi and owned by Mwembeshi Resources Ltd, will have a potentially devastating impact on people, water, the land and the environment in the entire Southern African region.

The Lower Zambezi National Park is an integral part of the wider Zambezi basin, which is the most significant shared resource that contributes to the economic, environmental and social development of southern Africa. Sustainable management of this resource is crucial in securing the futures of over 250 million people in the broader region that depend on it.

The Zambian Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA) recently approved a highly controversial Environmental Impact Study, opening the way for the mine to go ahead. The NGO Coalition has expressed deep concern that if the mine goes ahead, it will not only risk contaminating water for communities in Zambia and Zimbabwe but for the whole Zambezi delta, destroying farming and fishing livelihoods and one of the largest tourism destinations for Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

River pollution caused by the mine could threaten the Zambezi rivers 2 000-ton subsistence fishery, which provides food and protein security to 20 000 people along the river's banks. Eco-tourism in the area depends largely on the renewable wildlife and habitat resources and contributes significantly to the local and national economies around the Lower Zambezi National Park.

Tourism establishments in the park and surrounding areas employ more than 1 000 local people, generating a local wage bill of \$4 million annually that indirectly supports thousands more people at a local community level.

"The Coalition renews its call on all Zambians, and everyone who cares about the future of this region, to sign a petition to halt the Kangaluwi mine. You will find the petition on the website [change.org](https://www.change.org/SaveZambeziSafeZambezi), and you will find the petition under the name SaveZambeziSafeZambezi."

Sign the petition <https://www.change.org/SaveZambeziSafeZambezi>

Join the movement <https://www.facebook.com/savezambezi>

**For further information, please contact:**

*World Wide Fund (WWF) for Nature*

Mweene Chaambwe

Tel: +260762439368

Email: [mchaambwa@wwfzam.org](mailto:mchaambwa@wwfzam.org)

*Conservation Lower Zambezi*

Estella Snowden

Tel: +260 973 529 094 (Estella)

Email: [estella@conservationlowerzambezi.org](mailto:estella@conservationlowerzambezi.org)

