

MINING FOR GREATER KITUI DEVELOPMENT

A. Background:

Cement making minerals, iron ore and coal, found in Greater Kitui has attracted several companies. They offer to buy land from wananchi and claim that they will rehabilitate such land so that people can come back to their land at the end of mining. From public sources, the best offer is Ksh. 60 thousand per acre.

B. Problems:

The mining activity is likely to cause serious economic, social and environmental disasters to the Kamba community if it does not ensure that the development is done systematically.

1. Economics of land sales

Since the desired land is not adjudicated, there seems to be no mechanism to assure that acreages are properly measured before sale. Further it is clear that the prices offered cannot buy alternative land for prices neighboring the desired areas are much higher than the best offer of Ksh. 60,000 per acre.

2. Social impacts

There appears to be no mechanism to assure that family land sale proceeds accrue to all members. It is men who sell the land, typically to brokers. When men sell land and other assets, families get destitute since the money is not re-distributed to family members and is typically spend in the local towns. This no doubt will lead to major social dislocation, with attendant impacts to the wider Kamba society.

3. Environmental degradation

Some of the materials to be mined are found to a depth of 20km. If mining takes place to levels of even less than one kilometer, the ground water system for Greater Kitui will be affected negatively. Ground water will flow from the higher areas to these pits thereby drying the district more. Localized surface drainage will also change. The resulting stored saline water will also have other negative impacts. Therefore there will be less water for the population. Further, it is not realistic to expect mined land to be returned to its pre-mining state so as to facilitate agro-pastoral uses as is the case today.

C. Solutions:

- Systematizing the land acquisition system so that families get at least market price for their land and attendant developments is the first priority.
- Payment for land can be a mixture of cash for relocation and/or shares in the companies. These can be administered by trusts of the families affected.
- Resettling people before mining starts is critical. The areas currently occupied by North and South Kitui National Reserves are resettlement candidates.
- Setting parameters on how the companies will limit negative ecological impacts, especially on water, for the Greater Kitui should be part of licensing.
- Setting up company social responsibility systems to prevent degradation of the affected population should be in place prior to mining operations.
- **FINALLY GINGERING KAMBAWIDE FORA TO DISCUSS AND TO CREATE AN INSTITUTION TO ENSURE SOCIAL STABILITY, FAIR PRICE PURCHASE OF LAND, LOCAL VALUE ADDITION AND REGION WIDE ECOLOGICAL**

**PROTECTION IS RECOMMENDED TO THE ELDERS. SUCH AN INSTITUTION
WOULD ENSURE THAT INTEGRATED MINING BECOMES GREATER KITUI
DEVELOPMENT DRIVER.**

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