



Revolutionizing Rwanda's Mining: REWU, RMB, RTB, and Enabel Commended for Unleashing Partnership and Sustainability!

Rwanda's Minister of Public Service and Labor expressed gratitude to the Rwanda Extractive Industry Workers Union (REWU) partners, including Rwanda TVET Board (RTB), Rwanda Mines , Petroleum and Gas Board, (RMB), and the Belgian Agency for Development Cooperation (Enabel Rwanda), for their ongoing collaboration in promoting the Mining sector.

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Miners Certified through RPL program

The Minister of Public Service and Labor, Bayisenge Jeannette, made the remarks while addressing the Public at the IPRC Kigali Stadium on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, during the graduation of 2000 Mineworkers who received certificates after an assessment that was conducted through the Recognition of Prior Learning Program (RPL). These certificates were awarded to 2000 workers who had successfully passed an inspection conducted by RTB in collaboration with REWU, RMB, MIFOTRA, and with the support of ENABEL.



good work and workplace safety in the mining industry.” She continued to explain that significant efforts have been made to ensure that the mining sector is recognized for its contributions and its commitment to enhancing performance and overall improvement.



Minister Bayisenge commenced by commending the diverse institutions that had convened at the event, emphasizing the significance of their collaboration in furthering the labor sector’s development in Rwanda and enhancing workers’ welfare. She stated, “I appreciate the progress made in enhancing efficiency, increasing awareness, and adhering to regulations that govern

Minister Bayisenge explained that “The contribution of mining companies in cultivating the necessary skills for the labor market is invaluable. We encourage you to collaborate with various partners to enhance knowledge, productivity, and foster improved working conditions in the mining sector.” “This will benefit both employees and employers, leading to increased productivity. Consequently, we are confident that these efforts will enhance our country’s labor market and overall development.” She added.

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Commenting on RPL program in Mining Sector, Minister Bayisenge emphasized that such a program to provide training and assess the knowledge of employees who already work in a certain field but did not have the opportunity to learn it in school, so that they have documents confirming their learning, is very important, adding that “It enables employees to obtain certificates that demonstrate their successful acquisition of knowledge and skills, providing them with opportunities to seek employment, pursue further training, enhance their abilities, and improve their professional performance.”



“So we thank the various institutions that participated, please allow me to name them, including the Rwanda TVET Board (RTB), we saw that there were 2,000 certificate recipients in addition to the 200 who received certificates last year, and they are determined to continue assessing more.” Minister Bayisenge said

She added, “We are grateful to the Rwanda Extractive Industry Workers’ Union (REWU), ENABEL, and other partners I have not listed here.” She believes that this activity will help to take another step in the mindset change among the mineworkers



“When you have the opportunity to attend school and learn about the profession you aspire to pursue in the near future, it is important to ensure that the purpose of attending school is not merely to obtain a certificate, but rather to acquire knowledge. This knowledge should be practical and fruitful, which necessitates effort and understanding. Similarly, when you are employed, it is crucial to comprehend the distinction between performing a job based on personal perception versus carrying out the job in a professional manner.” Minister Bayisenge tells Mineworkers graduates.

She said, “You know that work is one of the most important values that our country upholds, but not all types of work are readily valued. This implies a necessity to shift attitudes. We want that in the future, individuals obtain





Minister Bayisenge also reminded workers to save for their future.

certificates to differentiate between ordinary work and exemplary work. Let us strive to excel in our endeavors until we are assured of the quality of our work.”

To those who received the certificates, Minister Bayisenge said: “You have been given confidence and you have confidence in what you usually do, but the certificates you got will help you generate profits and I believe that we will come back here to hear the testimony of your achievements, and I would advise you to improve what you do in your daily work and increase the productivity of those you work for, but also create your own because we have seen that you do not have to stay employed, but you can also create your own jobs.”

She said, “In order to accomplish everything, I would like to remind all the mining employers present here to provide their workers with written contracts. We appreciate those who have already done so. Additionally, it is crucial to pay the salaries and bonuses of the workers through financial institutions. It is also important to be prepared for the potential risks and accidents that may occur in this line of work. I urge the workers to prioritize their safety and have the foresight to take necessary precautions.”

Mr. Laurent Preud’homme, Deputy Head of Mission/Head of Cooperation at the Belgium Embassy in Kigali, expressed his gratitude to the Government of Rwanda and its partners for their commitment to promoting decent work and social protection in the mining sector. He emphasized that access to jobs with fair wages and better working conditions is fundamental for a dignified life.

He commended the achievements made by REWU, Enabel, and the different partners involved in the mining sector, such as the Rwanda TVET Board (RTB), the Rwanda Mining, Petroleum and Gas Board (RMB), the mining companies, and the employers’ association.

He highlighted the importance of social dialogue, collective bargaining agreements,

and the Recognition of Prior Learning in improving the conditions for mine workers.

Mr. Preud'homme also emphasized the significance of certification in providing employees with an official document, like a skills passport, to present to employers.

“This certification not only boosts employees' confidence in negotiating collective agreements but also leads to a boost in production, an increase in wages, and the transformation of informal employment into formal employment.”

Furthermore, Mr. Preud'homme addressed the issue of gender-based violence and misogyny, stating that it is time to end violence against women and girls and ensure that women's voices are heard in all sectors, including the mining industry.

He highlighted the importance of achieving parity between male and female graduates and called for continued efforts to challenge gender-based violence even beyond the 16 days of Activism.



THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF RWANDA TVET BOARD, ENG. PAUL MUKUNZI, SPEAKING AT THE EVENT

Finally, Mr. Preud'homme congratulated the 2000 mine workers who were graduating that day and expressed Belgium's commitment to partnering with them and supporting REWU in upgrading the skills of mine workers, promoting fair wages, and improving working conditions. He acknowledged the vital role of mine workers in providing essential goods and pledged to continue working towards ensuring their decent working conditions.

Mineworkers received certificates through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Program in Mining which is implemented by the REWU Trade Union in partnership with Mining Companies, Rwanda Mines Petroleum and Gas Board (RMB), Rwanda TVET Board (RTB), MIFOTRA, and with support from the Belgian Development Cooperation (Enabel Rwanda.).



Probe names safety hazards affecting Miners

A study to assess factors and causes leading to poor occupational safety, health, and working conditions in the mining sector has revealed that out of 13 types of hazards assessed, six of them, equivalent to 46 per cent, have a high level of risk, and seven of them, equivalent to 54 per cent, have a medium level of risk.



The study was conducted by the Rwanda Extractive Industry Workers Union (REWU) under the funding from the Belgian Development Agency (Enabel) in Rwanda which is providing support to ensure health and safety measures are applied in mining sector.

The study report shows that the types of hazards with high levels of risk that need special attention include falls of rock at the working face, the collapse of the working face and landslides, stripping and slipping, heavy loads, awkward working positions, working under pressure, dust, noise, and darkness.

Regarding compliance status, the study revealed that out of 31 legal requirements assessed,



six of them, equivalent to 19 per cent, have a high level of compliance, 10 of them, equivalent to 32 per cent, have a medium level of compliance, and the majority, 15 of them, equivalent to 48 per cent have a low level of compliance.

Overall, the report shows, the sector has an average level of compliance of 49.5 per cent putting it in the low compliance category.

The legal requirements with a low level of compliance include the availability of washrooms separate for men and women, availability of a passage for wheelchairs, guardrails, and other devices that may serve as support passage for persons with disabilities, availability of an emergency plan which is in place and regularly revised based on the potential risks at the workplace.

They also include employees' training on occupational health and safety matters at work at least once a year, employees' medical checkups at least once a year, conducting occupational safety and health risk assessment at least once a year, and payment of employees' social security contributions to the social security organ in Rwanda.

The level of compliance is also very low in terms of the availability of occupational safety and health policy, issuance of written employment contracts to all employees who have exceeded ninety (90) consecutive days in an enterprise, existence of occupational safety and health committee which is trained, and having a register for occupational injuries recording, recording and reporting of occupational safety

and health committee which is trained, and having a register for occupational injuries recording, recording and reporting of occupational hazards, diseases and deaths to RSSB and labour inspection.

Payment of all employees' salaries through banks or in a recognised financial institution, availability of fire prevention and fire-fighting measures, as well as the availability of a written document indicating protective mechanisms in a clear and understandable language for employees, also has low levels of compliance.

Payment of all employees' salaries through banks or in a recognised financial institution, availability of fire prevention and fire-fighting measures, as well as the availability of a written document indicating protective mechanisms in a clear and understandable language for employees, also has low levels of compliance. "Persons exposed to excessive dust for prolonged periods may suffer from permanent lung diseases, such as silicosis," the study has warned, recommending that it should be controlled or suppressed by using wet drilling techniques and water sprays during mineral getting, loading, and crushing.

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STATISTICS

Mining is still ranked high amongst the formal economy sectors for leading fatality rates in many countries.

RSSB statistics

754

Occupational Injuries in
fiscal year 2017/2018

1,467

in fiscal year 2022/2023

ILO Numbers

2.3 million

According to International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates, every year over 2.3 million women and men die at work from an occupational injury or disease. Almost two million deaths are due to fatal work-related diseases.

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The labour inspection report of 2022/2023 indicated that the mining sector covered 66 per cent of all occupational injuries which occurred in all economic activities.

Andre Mutsindashyaka, Secretary General of the Rwanda Extractive Industry Workers Union (REWU) stated: “We decided to undertake this study because we often encounter the issue of lacking concrete evidence to support our claims when advocating for mine accidents. The study’s findings will aid our advocacy efforts for miners and assist relevant institutions in addressing the identified issues and finding solutions.”



Narcisse Dushimimana, Head of the Mining Regulation and Inspection Department at Rwanda Mines, Petroleum and Gas Board (RMB) said: “This study will help us in several ways. There are certain issues that are widely acknowledged but lack tangible evidence. This study will provide us with the necessary proof. Based on the findings, we will be able to develop strategies to address each identified problem systematically.”

He said some of the problems identified by the study are primarily found in mines where traditional mining practices are still dominant, and this is mainly attributed to the low level of investment.

Patrick Kananga, Chief Labour at the Ministry of Public Service and Labour, said there are failures to abide by labor laws.

“Additionally, there are issues concerning working conditions, such as the scarcity of women due to inadequate care, resulting in low female participation in mining. One possible solution is to promote professional mining, encourage investment, and bring in mining engineers who can handle the job professionally,” he said.





REWU Officials Advocate for Long-Term Employment Contracts at Decent Work Dialogues

In August, 2023, the Secretary General of REWU, Eng. Andre Mutsindashyaka, and Deputy Secretary General, Bwanakweli Jean Marie Vianney, participated in separate dialogues on Decent Work and Job Creation.

During their presentations, REWU staff emphasized the importance of long-term employment contracts in providing a secure and beneficial environment for employees.

These contracts not only ensure a safe working environment but also include provisions for pensions and coverage for accidents and work-related incidents.

Additionally, having a contract enables workers to access loans and create job opportunities, aligning with the country's goal of becoming a middle-income nation by 2035 and achieving economic self-sufficiency by 2050.

The dialogues were organized by the Ministry of Public Service and Labour, Enabel, and district partners, with similar events being held in all districts of the country from August 14 to 31, 2023. The main objective of these dialogues is to collectively address labor issues and identify potential solutions, with a specific focus on creating job opportunities for youth.

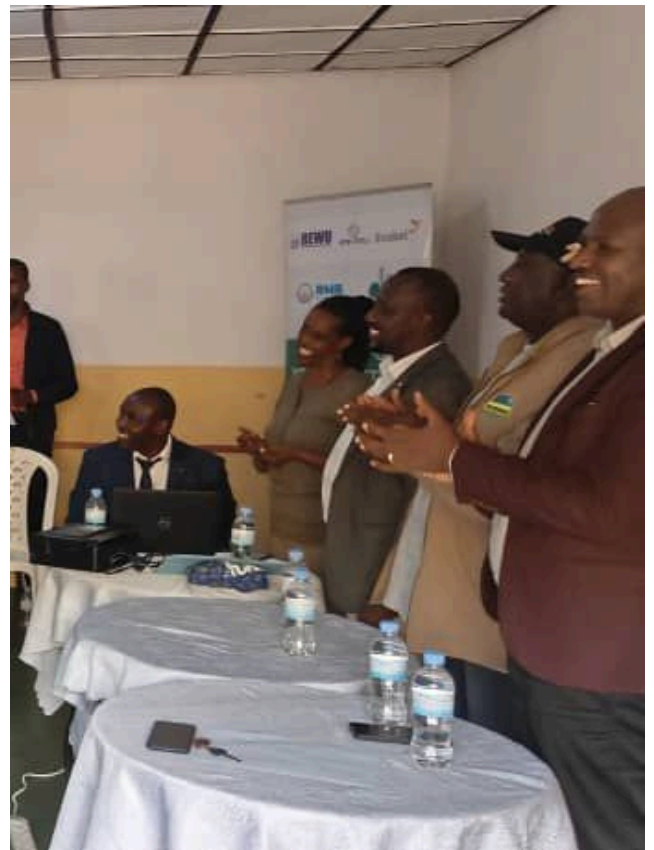


Rwanda Extractive Industry Workers Union and FES Rwanda Host Training for Trade Union Leaders

The Rwanda Extractive Industry Workers Union joined forces with FES Rwanda in October 2023, to organize a training session at Trinity Nyakabingo. The training was specifically designed for trade union leaders and covered a variety of important topics such as collective bargaining, labor law enforcement, the advantages of trade union membership, and toolkit skills shared by ToT.

One of the main focuses of the training was to assess the impact of the recently signed Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) among other crucial matters. Participants of the training expressed their appreciation to REWU for successfully negotiating the CBA, which resulted in a three-fold increase in remuneration compared to before the agreement was reached.

The General Manager of the company also took the opportunity to thank REWU for their commitment to enhancing the productivity and welfare of their employees. The training session was a valuable opportunity for trade union leaders to enhance their skills and knowledge in order to better represent and advocate for the rights of workers in the extractive industry.



FOOT BALL FOR UNITY

VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING THE RWANDA MINE, PETROLEUM, AND GAS BOARD (RMB), THE RWANDAN MINERS ASSOCIATION (RMA), THE FEDERATION OF MINING COOPERATIVES IN RWANDA (FECOMIRWA), THE MINING WORKERS UNION IN RWANDA (REWU), AND PACT RWANDA ORGANIZATION, HAVE COME TOGETHER TO ORGANIZE THE INTER-MINING SITES FOOTBALL COMPETITION. THIS COMPETITION NOT ONLY SHOWCASES SPORTING TALENT BUT ALSO SERVES AS A CATALYST FOR FOSTERING UNITY, PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY, AND ENHANCING THE OVERALL WELL-BEING OF MINING COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE NATION.

Fostering Unity and Camaraderie:

The Inter-Mining Sites Football Competition provides a unique opportunity for mining workers from different regions to come together and celebrate their shared experiences. By participating in spirited football matches, the participants build camaraderie, strengthen relationships, and create a sense of belonging within the mining community. This unity fosters a supportive environment, where ideas can be shared, challenges can be addressed collectively, and solutions can be developed collaboratively.

