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## **“The overflow of chemicals from the Ruashi Mining’s tailings pond is a threat to local communities”**

African Resources Watch (AFREWATCH), a nongovernmental organisation advancing human rights in the sector of natural resources is concerned about the damage of farms in the township of Lwano following the overflow of chemicals and mud from the Ruashi Mining’s tailings pond of chemicals. The victims depend on their farms for a living.

The incident occurred on January 28<sup>th</sup> in the night when the rain caused the outflow of acid from the tailings pond. AFREWATCH’s investigations reveal that many farmers have been impacted including the « *Groupe d’Appui aux Femmes Mal nourries* » which is an association of local farmers supporting women in need.

An anonymous woman stated: *“Our township has existed for many years, we make a living out of our farms which help us support our children school fees; unfortunately Ruashi mining has brought us misery”<sup>1</sup>*

To date Ruashi Mining and municipality officials have visited the site of the incident twice without bringing a sustainable solution. Victims stated that the company *“washed out acid traces using a motor pump though some of them are still visible”<sup>2</sup>*.

In addition, AFREWATCH notices that this is not the first time the Ruashi Mining’s tailings pond overflows. A 2015 CORDAID’s investigation revealed the worry of communities concerning the overflow the tailings pond and the running rain waters coming from the backfill to the farms<sup>3</sup>.

AFREWATCH condemns the passivity of officials who so far have taken no efficient measure to safeguard the environment and community’s farms despite the gravity of the incident

Given the above, AFREWATCH recommends:

- a) Ruashi Mining , to:

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with farmers on February, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>

<sup>2</sup> IDEM ; farmers claim that Ruashi Mining’s intention consisted in hiding acid marks instead of depolluting the affected area

<sup>3</sup> CORDAID, L’exploitation minière au cœur des zones rurales : Quel développement pour les communautés locales ? Comprendre pleinement la perception, les attentes et les priorités des communautés locales ainsi que l’impact de l’exploitation minière au sud Katanga, République Démocratique du Congo (RDC), 2015 P.28

- Stop definitely the outflow of the chemicals the soonest to prevent environment degradation;
- Identify and compensate the victims of chemicals damage;
- Relocate farms that are near the tailings pond;

b) the Government, to :

- Request mining companies to comply with legislations relating to the protection of the environment;
- Ensure that farmers who are victims are compensated;
- Facilitate the relocation of farms located in the neighborhoods of the tailings pond;

c) Civil society NGOs, to:

- Spread and support the demands of the victims who have been suffering from Ruashi Mining's operations

Lubumbashi, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**AFREWATCH**

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