

## **AFREWATCH Implores the United Nations CRC to Urge Anglo American to Take Responsibility for Children Poisoned by the World's Biggest Toxic Lead Mine**

- *Children in Kabwe, Zambia Face Serious and Ongoing Violations to Article 6 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- *Anglo American's Failure to Address the Damage to the Health and Environment of the Kabwe Communities Does Not Accord with Its Group Human Rights Policy*
- *AFREWATCH Supports the Class Action Filed in South Africa on Behalf of Over 100,000 Kabwe Claimants Against Anglo American*

**LONDON AND KINSHASA – [15] JANUARY 2021** – Africa Resources Watch (“AFREWATCH”), a Congolese human rights NGO with over two decades of experience monitoring the impact of the mining sector in the DRC and wider Southern Africa region, has sent the enclosed letter to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (“CRC”) regarding the serious and ongoing violations to the development of the children in Kabwe, Zambia, owing to toxic pollution emanating from the lead mine previously controlled by Anglo American South Africa Limited (“AASA”), a subsidiary of London-headquartered multinational mining company Anglo American Plc (LSE: AAL, JSE: AGL). The CRC is scheduled to convene on Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

According to the letter, the situation in Kabwe represents a violation of rights to health and development – one of the founding principles of Article 6 of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). The letter also cites the Committee’s General Comment 16, which extends the duties and responsibilities with respect to the rights of children to “private actors and business enterprises”.

AFREWATCH maintains that because of Anglo American’s alleged negligence, young children are suffering from alarming levels of lead poisoning – a condition likely to cause serious and permanent physical damage to their bodily organs, neurological systems and fertility. The children will also suffer psychological, intellectual and behavioral damage. Many are at risk of brain damage and death.

**Emmanuel Umpula Nkumba, Executive Director of AFREWATCH, said:** “The situation in Kabwe is extremely concerning and we strongly urge the CRC to investigate the claims made against Anglo American by the claimants in the class action lawsuit. Anglo American’s conduct during its 50-year management and supervision of the mine led to today’s conditions, whereby the lives of countless children are at serious risk – including the risk of death. The failure by Anglo American to take action to address the ongoing damage to the health and environment of the Kabwe communities does not accord with its publicly-stated commitments. This must change immediately.”

AFREWATCH claims Anglo American’s conduct cannot be reconciled with its [Group Human Rights Policy](#), which makes several commitments to respecting, upholding and advancing the human rights of the citizens in its areas of operation. Accordingly, AFREWATCH implores the CRC to:

1. Closely investigate the allegations made against Anglo American by the claimants of the class action lawsuit; and
2. To urge Anglo American to act consistently with its publicly stated human rights commitments as a business.

In the letter, AFREWATCH strongly supports the ongoing class action lawsuit against Anglo American, which was filed in the Gauteng Division of the High Court of South Africa in October 2020. The legal action is on behalf of a class estimated to comprise more than 100,000 Kabwe children, and girls and women who have been or may become pregnant in the future, who are believed to have been poisoned by lead. The lawsuit is brought by Johannesburg based law firm Mbuyisa Moleele Attorneys led by Zanele Mbuyisa in conjunction with Leigh Day, a leading international law firm specialising in human rights and mass environmental tort claims. More information about the victims and the case is available at [www.childrenofkabwe.com](http://www.childrenofkabwe.com).

-ENDS-

### **Media Contacts**

#### **AFREWATCH**

Emmanuel Umpula Nkumba

[emmanuelumpula@afrewatch.org](mailto:emmanuelumpula@afrewatch.org)

#### **Mbuyisa Moleele Attorneys / Leigh Day**

Sard Verbinnen & Co.

Jon Aarons / Rory King

[ChildrenOfKabwe-SVC@sardverb.com](mailto:ChildrenOfKabwe-SVC@sardverb.com)