ANNUAL REPORT
2019

Advocates4Earth

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FROM THE DIRECTOR’S DESK

The Year 2019 in Brief

The year 2019 holds a special place in the institutional memory of Advocates4Earth. It was the year Advocates4Earth was conceived and legally registered as a campaigning non-profit environmental law, climate and wildlife justice organisation.

Globally, 2019 was a critical year for wildlife rights, climate emergency as well as general environmental rights and justice. It was the year the organisation fought against wildlife capture and trade in Zimbabwe and globally. It was the year Cyclone Idai destroyed homes, property and lives in Southern Africa. It was the year the Donald Trump government in the United States initiated the process of pulling out of the Paris Agreement. It was the year the Amazon Rainforest in Brazil, Latin America and the bushfires in Australia burnt. Not to mention the pollution, deforestation and species extinction. And the drought and climate-induced migration around Africa. What an *annus horribilis*, a horrible year!

However, in 2019 we upped the campaign for the environment, climate and wildlife at home and abroad. From Harare to Cape Town to Geneva to Madrid. As a new, youth-led organisation, Advocates4Earth in line with its inaugural Strategic Plan and Programming Model carried out some central strategic interventions. These were mainly conducted under the following thematic areas:

“In 2019 We upped the campaign for the environment, climate and wildlife at home and abroad. From Harare to Cape Town to Geneva to Madrid.”

Lenin Chisaira, Environmental Lawyer and Director, Advocates4Earth
Wildlife, Biodiversity and Nature

As an organisation greatly concerned with environmental, climate and wildlife justice, Advocates4Earth was at the forefront of campaigning against the climate crisis and against wildlife capture and trade. We embarked on a public interest litigation action against the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority. Though the case dragged on within the courts, we also sought alternative strategies. Hence, we embarked on advocacy initiative with the Parliament of Zimbabwe.

With the gracious support of our allies, we managed to have two representatives, the Director and our Animal Lawyer to participate in the 18th Meeting of the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) CoP18 in Geneva, Switzerland.

At the global level, we worked with organisations such as the Born Free Foundation, Network for Animals, EMS Foundation and Zimbabwe Elephants Foundation. We became one of the founding members of the global Pro-Elephants Network (PREN) where we seat in the Steering Committee.

Climate Justice, Extractives and Renewable Energy

We worked with like-minded organisations and an army of environmental justice volunteers in Zimbabwe and abroad to campaign for climate justice and against the climate crisis. We received a number of reports that can constitute climate litigation and with the availability of resources we hope to take action in 2020.

We participated in the UN Climate Change Conference (CoP 25) in Madrid, Spain. We also participated in Climate actions around the world such as the Climate March in Spain and another Climate Strike in Germany. Our efforts to conduct a Climate March in Zimbabwe were frustrated by the security situation.

We trained young people, students and faith leaders on environmental and climate justice advocacy and volunteerism in Harare and Bulawayo.

We undertook legal and policy research at the beginning of the year following the Battlefields Mines disaster in Zimbabwe where over 20 artisanal gold miners lost their lives. Advocates4Earth released a critical preliminary report titled ‘Gold Capitalism and Disaster Preparedness in Zimbabwe: A Preliminary Critical Report on the Battlefields Mines disaster.’ The report received intense coverage in both the State and private media. The report was shared with the Civil Protection Department, Environmental Management Agency, Ministry of
Mines and Mining Development and private sector miners with unused gold claims such as RioZim.

**Built Environment, Human Rights and Access to Water**

We campaigned against the continued exploitation of wetlands in Zimbabwe and globally. Wetlands are protected under the Ramsar Convention and various environmental legislation. In terms of human rights and environmental justice awareness, we hosted the 2nd Annual Youth Symposium on Human Rights and Socio-Ecological Transformation.

**Organisational Development, Networks and Media**

We continued to use media, publications, productions and ICTs innovatively to link up activists, researchers and lawyers as well as to communicate our messages to the world. We consistently update our work on social media (Twitter: @Advocates4Earth; Facebook Page: Advocates4Earth.org) as well as on our official website (www.advocates4earth.org)

Our work was covered by global and local media houses such as CNN, BBC, Guardian, News24, The Herald, NewsDay, Daily News, ZiFM, Africa Legal News, Voice of America and many more. We also used our expertise to train journalists on environmental reporting. We look forward to working with all progressive environmental advocates, lawyers, volunteers, institutions and activists as we march on undeterred into the 2020s decade.

*Regards,*

*Lenin Tinashe Chisaira*

Environmental Lawyer, Founder and Director

www.advocates4earth.org
FROM THE BOARD

Think about it. See it. Do it!

These three words perfectly summarize what the year 2019 has been for the new kid on the global environmental and climate change front, Advocates4Earth. The vision came to life and the team hit the ground running with our first preliminary report on the unfortunate Battlefields Mining disaster. The report came with key recommendations for various stakeholders and is the first step towards facilitating policy dialogue. The inaugural strategic planning meeting saw the board meeting to map the organization’s future, with the following thematic areas being identified, “Climate Change, Sustainable Energy, & Extractive Industries”.

The catastrophic Cyclone Idai which had devastating effects in Mozambique and parts of Zimbabwe further pushed Advocates4Earth to interrogate the country’s disaster management and response strategies in the time of climate change. We are thankful for the support of the local media, both print and radio, for creating platforms for dialogue and inviting Advocates4Earth to be part of these pertinent discussions.

On the global front, I had the opportunity to join the September 2019 Global Climate strike, as part of an estimated 270 000 crowd in Berlin Germany. The series of international strikes, bridged generations as adults joined in the school children-led movement, bringing together over 6 million people across 4500 locations in 150 countries. Advocates4Earth Executive Director participated in the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP18) and the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP25) meetings in Geneva, Switzerland and Madrid, Spain respectively.

As we begin the new year, Advocates4Earth is committed to continuing engaging in research and policy dialogue in our cause for sustainable use of natural resources. As I write this from one the world’s most polluted cities, New Delhi, India, I realize that a simple breath of fresh air, is far from reality for millions of people, and unless we change our ways, this may become the reality of more people in the years to come. The Advocates4Earth team continues to unlearn and relook our approach, as we look forward to collaborative efforts with all who share our vision for the Mother Earth.

Regards,

Christine Juta
Deputy Chair, on behalf of the Board of Trustees

www.advocates4earth.org
ABOUT US

Advocates4Earth

Advocates4Earth is an activist-oriented non-profit environmental law, climate and wildlife justice organisation. The team is made up of environmental advocates, volunteers, lawyers, policy researchers, technical people and activists standing up for environmental, climate and wildlife justice in Southern Africa and the Global South. The organisation is primarily based in Harare, Zimbabwe but concerned with global issues.

Our History

The idea for an organised vibrant network of activist environmental lawyers, community organisers, public intellectuals, journalists and researchers was built after the realisation that
there was a great void in critical environmental, climate and wildlife justice campaigning in Zimbabwe and the Global South. The organisation was found by environmental lawyer and activist, Lenin Tinashe Chisaira and was originally known as the People and Earth Solidarity Law Network (PESLawyers). From inception, the organisation was registered as a non-profit trust with the Ministry of Justice’s Deeds Registry in Harare, Zimbabwe in January 2019 under Deed Number: MA 0000133/2019.

The organisation has initiated public interest litigation on sensitive issues such as wildlife capture and trade in Zimbabwe. Representatives have participated in local and global forums such as the UNFCCC Cop24 (Katowice, Poland), CITES CoP18 (Geneva, Switzerland), the Alternative Mining Indaba (Cape Town, South Africa), Elephants in Captivity Indaba (Hermanus, South Africa) as well as the SADC Peoples Summit (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania) and the UN Climate Change Conference (CoP25) in Madrid, Spain.

In September 2019, the Board of Trustees resolved to change the name of the organisation to Advocates4Earth. A deed of amendment was subsequently filed with the Deeds Registry. This change was hoped to better reflect the organisation’s role as environmental, climate and wildlife legal advocates representing Zimbabwean and Global South communities, species, environmental activists, researchers, lawyers and non-lawyers, volunteers and affiliates.

**Our Vision**

Our vision is to see an environmentally just and more equal world where people and species have legally-protected environmental, climate and wildlife justice rights especially in Southern Africa and the Global South.

**Our Mission**

Advocates4Earth aims to build and strengthen a global movement for environmental law, climate and wildlife justice. We are concerned with societal inequality, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and climate injustice. The team remains keen to interrogate the link between law, policy and science.

**Our Board**

In terms of our organisational governance documents, the Board of Trustees is officially responsible for Advocates4Earth’s operations. The founding board is youthful, gender-sensitive
and diverse. The number of Trustees at any time is supposed to be at least three and at most five. The current Board of Trustees is made up of five members, three of them female. In terms of occupation, three of the board members are lawyers, one is a renewable energy engineer and the other is a development studies researcher.

**Our Activities**

Advocates4Earth’s work across its thematic areas consists of the following:

1. Public Interest Environmental Litigation
2. Legal, Scientific and Policy Research
3. Campaigns and Movement Building
4. Media, Communication and Environmental Dialogue

**Our Thematic Areas (2019-2024)**

Advocates4Earth’s work is guided by its First 5-year Strategic Plan. The Plan will last from 2019 to 2024. In this 5-year period, the organisation focuses its campaigns for environmental law, climate and wildlife justice under the following three thematic areas:

1. Wildlife, Biodiversity and Nature
2. Climate Justice, Extractives and Renewable Energy
3. Built Environment, Human Rights and Access to Water

The report details the work carried out under each thematic area from January to December 2019.
THEME 1: WILDLIFE, BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE

OVERVIEW
Wildlife and biodiversity are some of the significant and usually silent victims of modern society and modern capitalism. As an organisation, we sought to ensure that the Earth and her species, wildlife, natural products and the climate are afforded the best legal and advocacy services. Our main focus in 2019 was on the capture and trade in live wild animals.

PUBLIC INTEREST ENVIRONMENTAL LITIGATION
Public Interest Environmental Litigation on Wildlife Capture and Trade in Zimbabwe
Advocates4Earth seeks to provide legal advice and assistance in the public interest to protect animals, biodiversity and nature.
In 2019, an indeterminable number of young elephants were earmarked for export from Zimbabwe to the Peoples Republic of China. This resulted in legal action in the High Court of
Zimbabwe between Advocates4Earth (then known as the People and Earth Solidarity Law Network) and the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) and the Ministry of Environment, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (Case Number: HC 4249/19).

The case was based on the premise of linking environmental and access to information rights. Advocates4Earth and like-minded organisations were convinced that wildlife were critical resources that could not be traded without popular participation, transparency and accountability.

**Case monitoring on the slaughter of Donkeys on Gweru**

Linda Masudze, the programs lawyer for Wildlife, Biodiversity and Nature was involved in a case monitoring following the slaughter of donkeys in the Gweru City Council. The case is still ongoing in the courts. The organisation collaborated with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Network for Animals and Mathonsi Ncube Law Chambers.

**Meeting with the ZimParks Director-General**

In November, Advocates4Earth and the Director-General of the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, Mr Fulton Mangwana met at the Zimparks Headquarters to discuss the prevailing differences in opinion between the two institutions. The meeting resolved to achieve better transparency and information sharing on wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe.
CAMPAIGNS AND MOVEMENT BUILDING

Participation in the UN Wildlife Conference (CITES CoP18) in Geneva, Switzerland

Advocates4Earth participated in the 18th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES COP18) in Geneva, Switzerland from 17-28 August 2019. The organisation, in collaboration with fraternal wildlife organisations globally, was at the forefront of campaigns against ivory trade and trade in live elephants.

Lenin Chisaira and Linda Masudze, environmental lawyers from Advocates4Earth (then People and Earth Solidarity Law Network) at the CITES Cop18 in Geneva, Switzerland

The main reasons why we appeal to the CITES parties to vote against ivory trade and exports of live animals from Zimbabwe and Africa at CITES Cop 18 were on the basis of cruelty involved in the forced separation of wildlife from their families since elephants are social animals, the lack of transparency involved, lack of benefit to local communities, lack of access to information and the desire to prevent the rapid reduction of the African elephant in Africa and the world. Advocates4Earth also called for the involvement of local communities in CITES Processes.

A video from Geneva, Switzerland posted on the organisation YouTube-Account showcases our address in the session discussing communities' participation: Click to watch here. Or visit the link: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BY___eNy8KzY)
Elephants in Captivity Indaba

On 6 September 2019, Advocates4Earth participated at the Elephants in Captivity Indaba convened by the EMS Foundation in Hermanus, Western Cape Province in South Africa.

This was an international Indaba and Panel Discussion with national and international elephant behavioural specialists to discuss the issue of elephants in captivity and to develop a framework as well as policy guidelines for dealing with elephants in captivity.

The Indaba was the first consultative gathering of elephant specialists and elephant interest groups in Africa specifically dealing with elephants in captivity, the role Africa has in sending elephants into captivity and what we need to do to get them out of the metaphorical room.

In order to enable frank exploration of the issues and practical proposals, the Indaba was conducted under the Chatham House Rule and with a number of “ground rules” which aimed to ensure open, respectful dialogue, and maximum participation.

The overwhelming message was that elephants belong in the wild and must be returned to the wild in all cases where this is a legitimate possibility. Given what we know about who elephants are and the conditions under which they thrive, there is no reason to keep them in captivity.

Advocates4Earth made a presentation on the laws and policies concerning wildlife capture and trade. The conference drew together global and Africa experts and practitioners on animal rights.

Some of the organisations present included the EMS Foundation (South Africa), Advocates4Earth (Zimbabwe), Wildlife Direct (Kenya), Animal Law Reform SA, Humane Society International/Africa, Elephant Specialist Advisory Group, Elephant Voices, Bring the Elephant Home and many others.

The formation of the global Pro-Elephants Network (PREN)

As part of Advocates4Earth’s campaigns and movement building work on wildlife rights, we coordinate and join up national and international campaigns for the protection of wildlife, biodiversity and nature.

The major outcome of the Elephants in Captivity Indaba was the formation of the Pro Elephants Network. In 2019 the network wrote to various governments such as the Government
of Zimbabwe, China, Nepal against the mistreatment of animals worldwide. Advocates4Earth is part of the Steering Committee of the network.

**Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Symposium 2019**

The Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Symposium was held on 22 May 2019 which was also the International Day for Biological Diversity. The symposium also saw the official launch of the Zimbabwe Youth Biodiversity Network (ZYBN). The symposium was organised by ZYBN in collaboration with Advocates4Earth and Action24. The venue was The Nexus, Batanai Gardens in Harare.

![Image of the symposium](image)

The Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Symposium held on the International Day for Biological Diversity 2019

**Human-Wildlife Conflict Stakeholders Meeting, Matabeleland North Province**

Matabeleland North province holds some of the biggest wildlife populations and hence there are increased reports of human-wildlife conflict. The province also has the Hwange and Victoria Falls national parks.

A human-wildlife conflict stakeholders meeting was conducted in Matabeleland North Province on 5 October 2019. The meeting was organised by Advocates4Earth and Sibanye...
Animal Welfare and Conservancy Trust. The meeting brought together traditional leaders from rural communities and enabled them to interact with parliamentarians who seat in the Portfolio Committee on the Environment.

At the Human-Wildlife Conflict Meeting in Matabeleland North. From left, Advocates4Earth Director Lenin Chisaira, Hon MP Kucaca Phulu, Hon MP Prince Sibanda, Hon MP Temba Mliswa, Hon MP Nicola Watson and Sibanye Trust Director Alfred Sihwa
The media, both mainstream and alternative proved to be a great ally in 2019. Our work was amplified and shared with broader audiences by hardworking as well as probing reporters, environmental journalists and other media practitioners.

The media work was led by our Press and Communications team

LEFT: Advocates4Earth’s Lenin Chisaira with Steven Sackur from the BBC Hard Talk at Mukuvisi Woodlands after discussing wildlife rights

Short Documentary: Wild-caught African Elephants Destined for China

A short documentary produced by the Wildize Foundation captures our views and participation at CITES CoP18.

Click here to watch or Visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8w5QS87_9s
Press Conference: Zimbabwe exports Elephants despite Court processes

We conducted a press conference as news reached us that Zimbabwe was going on with the export of elephants to the Middle East and Asia despite our ongoing lobby and litigation efforts.

Coverage on CNN, BBC, News24 and other media houses

Media work is a critical aspect of any organisations that operate with limited resources and yet still seeks to influence national and global initiatives on Advocates4Earth’s work on wildlife was also covered by mainstream media such as CNN, BBC, News24wildlife. The organisation responded to interview requests and also issued a number of press releases on wildlife.

Some of the reports are as follows:

‘Zimbabwe activists bid to stop alleged plan to export 35 baby elephants’ CNN (16 October 2019)
‘Animal activists fight translocation of jumbos’ CITE (19 October 2019)

On World Wildlife Day, Lenin Chisaira wrote a blog on “Rethinking Zimbabwe’s Role in the Conservation of Wildlife” The blog touched on aspects such as Zimbabwe’s and the CITES governance system is construed. The blog pointed out how Zimbabwe has been in the books mostly due to controversial decisions; for instance, the export of live baby elephants to zoos in China. The exporting is problematic for several reasons; there are no strict safeguards that the same elephants will be treated appropriately when they get to Asia. The removal of baby elephants from their families also negatively affects the well-being of these species. The blog indicated that this finding was reached by psychologists Professor Karen McComb and Dr Graeme Shannon of the University of Sussex. They discovered that human activities like relocation and culling of elephants have long term negative impacts upon these animals.
THEME 2: CLIMATE JUSTICE, EXTRACTIVES AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

OVERVIEW

The era of climate change is upon the world and yet one of the critical issues to discuss is socio-ecological transformation and energy. Access to energy is one of the principal means to service the most basic needs. Family life, health, education and general societal well-being would not thrive in the absence of energy. Without energy, life as we know it would cease to exist. However, environmental concerns also come into the forefront of access to energy concerns. Most African countries, with the inclusion of Zimbabwe, rely heavily on fossil fuels for energy generation and production. Furthermore, in Zimbabwe, 83% of urban households have electricity compared to only 13% in rural areas. Statistics also show that 65% of rural households use firewood for cooking while 30% use other forms of energy.

Advocates4Earth participated in both the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Conference of Parties (COP24) in Katowice, Poland and COP25 in Madrid, Spain where declarations included a complete move from fossil fuels, which has detrimental effects on the environment through a high concentration of greenhouse gas emissions, and a call for climate action, and use alternative sources like renewable energy. In Katowice, Parties were given until 2030 to ensure that grid and off-grid power supplies are based on one or more sources of
renewable energy. Although Zimbabwe has shown concern in the past on its heavy reliance on fossil fuels, the draft Renewable Energy Policy presents a new thrust in power generation and production which not only benefits urban communities but has the potential to lift many rural communities from the pit of poverty.

In terms of extractives, the global extractive industry is the chief cornerstone of most developing States’ economies, be it in Africa, South America and Asia. Africa as a continent is endowed with a natural resource base, be it agricultural land, mineral wealth and oil reserves. However, even though the continent is endowed with mineral wealth, the economies of the continents mentioned above still top the bottom list of developed nations. Other than that, there has been a noticeable deterioration of the physical environment as a result of the extractive processes which are being carried out by both multinational corporations and small-scale artisanal miners. The thematic area aims to look at how the political economy of the extractive industry in Zimbabwe has been contributing to environmental degradation and the negative impact this will have on future generations.

CAMPAIGNS AND MOVEMENT BUILDING

Participation at the Alternative Mining Indaba, Cape Town

The Alternative Mining Indaba was held in Cape Town, South Africa. Advocates4Earth joined participants drawn from around African civil society, extractives activists and journalists. The organisation was represented by the Director Lenin Chisaira and Volunteers Manager Winnet Chindudzi where they shared their experience with fellow environmental activists and lawyers concerned with the impacts of the extractives industry in Zimbabwe.

A video from Winnet Chindudzi posted on the organisation YouTube-Account showcases the objectives of the participation: [Click to watch here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loHxFE-OV98)

Participation at UN Climate Change Conference (CoP25) in Madrid, Spain
From 2-13 December 2019, the 25th Conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held in Madrid, Spain. CoP25 was held at a critical time when people in the Global South are suffering from the real effects of climate change, amid lack of initiative or action from policymakers and duty bearers. The CoP25 meeting attracted around 27000 people. Advocates4Earth participated together with civil society organisations from around the world.

COP25 was symbolic in that it was held in Spain after the original venue, Santiago (Chile) has been moved due to social unrest. The motto for the meeting was “Time for Action”. The motto was to encourage States to take tangible action on greenhouse gas emissions and nationally defined contributions (NDCs).

Advocates4Earth Director (second from left, kneeling) with fellow civil society delegates at CoP25 in Madrid, Spain
COP25 in 2019 took place against a backdrop of global acceptance and recognition of the impacts of climate change and the need to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In 2019, climate change became a matter of grave concern for all States. In Zimbabwe and Southern Africa, there were additional effects of climate-induced disasters such as Cyclone Idai. All over the world activists and organisations took to the streets to protest and call upon global leaders and governments to be serious about minimising greenhouse emissions as well as assisting the developing world to be capable of dealing with climate change shocks. Climate change is increasingly a topic for civil protest with the rise of movements including Extinction Rebellion and the teenage climate campaigner Greta Thunberg after inspiring strikes by school students worldwide at the global stage. At the local scene, Advocates4Earth made efforts to bring climate change and climate justice issues to the fore.

Our participation at CoP25 consisted of attendance and discussions in various side events and making inputs relevant to Africa and the Global South. We also participated in daily briefings and discussions led by Climate Tracker journalists’ group. We also had the opportunity to pose questions to the Africa Group of Negotiators about the progress, if any was emanating from the UN Climate Change Conference.

We also participated in the annual March for Climate, which involved over 500,000 people from around Spain and the world. The march was held on 6 December 2019 in Madrid. This march was meant to send a clear message to negotiators to take the matter of climate change and climate action seriously.

“Galvanizing Climate Action.” Presentation at the UN 74 Commemoration

The United Nations Team in Zimbabwe organised the 74th Anniversary of the UN in October 2019 with calls for climate action to boost ambition and accelerate actions to implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The anniversary featured a UN Week Exhibition and Panel Discussions on Climate held at the National Art Gallery in Harare.

Advocates4Earth.org
SOLIDARITY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
Advocates4Earth was invited to make a presentation on climate action during the commemorations. The organisation participated in a panel discussion.

*Lenin Chisaira makes a presentation during the UN 74 Anniversary Commemorations under the theme: Galvanizing Climate Action*
SADC Peoples Summit 2019

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Peoples’ Summit was convened by the Southern Africa People Solidarity Network (SAPSN) at the National Museum of Tanzania, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania from 13-17 August 2019 under the theme “Rebuilding Peoples Movements Within Southern Africa’s Climate, Political and Socio-Economic Emergencies: Towards radical democratic alternatives and a just transition.”.

Advocates4Earth’s Winnet Chindudzi attended the summit as part of the civil society groupings that make up the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development. The Summit was held under heavy police presence and interference attracted more than 700 delegates drawn from grassroots social movements, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, small scale food producers, women’s organisations, labour, students, youths, children, economic justice, human rights, people with disabilities and other various sectors of social movements.

LEGAL, POLICY AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH


The night of Tuesday 13th February 2019 was the starting point of an inevitable disaster in Zimbabwe, as artisanal gold miners in the Mashonaland West settlement of Battlefields who had gone underground for their usual tasks of digging for ore became trapped. Within the following few days, the magnitude of the disaster was to be felt by the nation and the world as media houses reported of over 20 miner deaths as well as reports of between 50 and 100 trapped miners.

Advocates4Earth (then People and Earth Solidarity Law Network- PESLawyers) released a critical report on the disaster. The report indicated that mine accident exposed many issues concerning economic and environmental justice in Zimbabwe. These issues ranged from lack of disaster preparedness by the State and local authorities as well as the culpability of large-scale gold miners who retain yet underutilise gold claims. The painful accident hence invited the need for a critique of the current nature of gold capitalism, disaster preparedness and the unequal and class nature of environmental and economic justice in Zimbabwe and by extension on developing States in the Global South. This preliminary report pieced together the
reports of on the ground volunteers and activists aligned to Advocates4Earth, media coverage as well as miner groups and concerned individuals and institutions.

**Faith Leaders Environmental Initiative Presentations**

Faith leaders under the banner of the Southern African Faith Leaders Environmental Initiative were trained on environmental laws and policies in Zimbabwe. The training was conducted at Cresta Lodge in Msasa.

**MEDIA, COMMUNICATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIALOGUE**

*Press Conference on the Battlefields Mines Disaster (from left) Advocates4Earth Board Chair Tinashe Makuyana, Director Lenin Chisaira and Deputy Chair Christine Juta*

**Battlefields Mines Disaster Preparedness Report in the Media.**

The Battlefields Mines report was shared with government departments as highlighted above. The report was released to the media and generated interested in both the public and private media as well as in mainstream and alternative media. Here is a list of some of the news reports:

![Click Here](image_url)
‘Zimbabwe’s ailing economy tarnishes gold’s glitter.’ Today Nigeria (28 February 2019)
‘Large scale mining companies culpable in the Battlefield disaster.’ The Herald (25 February 2019)
‘Local NGO pushes for commission of inquiry on the Battlefields mines disaster’ Radio VOP (25 February 2019)
‘PES Lawyers Report on Battlefield Mines Disaster Exposes Loopholes In ASM,’ Spiked (24 February 2019)
‘Lawyers call for commission of inquiry to look into Kadoma mine disaster.’ Report Focus News (24 February 2019)

**Blogs: Things Every African Must Know About Climate Change**

During the UN Climate Change Conference, CoP25 in Madrid Spain, we came up with 10 points that we felt should be shared with all Africans to enable them to better understand what climate change and the CoP25 process meant for Africa.

**Vlogs: Africa at CoP25**

We compiled the views and statements released by African Environmental ministers as well as the African Group of Negotiators during CoP25. This was meant to consolidate and link policymakers’ views and information access to the ordinary people at home. These were published on our blog as well as on online news sites such as [www.spiked.co.zw](http://www.spiked.co.zw) and [www.africalegalnews.com](http://www.africalegalnews.com).
THEME 3: BUILT ENVIRONMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO WATER

OVERVIEW

The urban environments in Zimbabwe and most parts of the Global South have been affected, mostly by population growth and the resultant lack of efficiency by local authorities to provide essential services and amenities. These problems range from lack of access to water, waste collection and management as well as the development of private construction projects on wetlands and green spaces.

Communal areas in Zimbabwe are initially supposed to be insulated from the private property tendencies in modern capitalism. Hence communal land is held as a public good. Communal members usually only possess use rights and not ownership rights. This arrangement, while it is useful in spirit, possesses several challenges when developmental and investor projects come into the communal areas. Usually, the land is parcelled out without adequate free prior and informed consent of the affected communities. This grab violates the human, communal and land rights of many rural-based people and community in Zimbabwe, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Global South.
Advocates4Earth in partnership with the Zimbabwe Youth Leadership Training Program Alumni Association (ZYLTP) hosted the 2nd Annual Youth Symposium to ensure that youths actively participate in Human Rights and Socio-Ecological Transformation issues.

The Symposium held at Cresta Oasis Hotel on 18th October 2019, consisted of 3 panels of speakers who shared well-researched paper presentations under the topics: The Laws and Political Economy of Sustainability and Environmental Justice; Biodiversity and Sustainability; and Sustainability, Energy and Extractives.
The key issues coming from the Symposium included the participation of African youths in sustainable development, energy and land distribution. Land distribution was highlighted as a major concern among the youth who are advocating for a fair land distribution as was highlighted by a case study of Chiredzi District Ward 18 cited by Ward Councilor Gilbert Mutubuki.

The symposium also focused on Environmental and Climate Justice with Advocate4Earth founder and director Lenin Chisaira pointing out the need for people to assess environmental impact and laws before conducting business.

“I believe everything in the environment has a right to live on its own hence there is the need for most people to assess the environment before they conduct business,” said Chisaira.

“Human activities such as building infrastructure and houses, cutting of trees for energy supply are the main cause of climate change and global warming.”

Environmental change and International development researcher Trish Gombe said degradation of wetlands facilitate global warming through government and city council main concern for development while affecting the environment.

Lack of energy supply in rural areas was the main cause of deforestation noted environmental consultant and former environmental officer Kudzaiishe Seti.

Through the annual symposium, Advocates4Earth aims at reflecting its role as environmental, climate and wildlife legal advocates working within Zimbabwean, Sub-Saharan Africa and Global South communities, species, environmental activists, researchers, lawyers, volunteers and affiliates.

The first Annual Youth Symposium was held on the 18th of December 2018. The papers from the two annual symposiums will be compiled in the organisation’s *People and Earth Journal.*

“Political, social and economic struggles cannot be alleviated unless the youth get organised to have constructive conversations around the issues they face especially with sustainable development,”

Jean Claude Nsabimana,  
Department of Philosophy and Humanities at Arrupe Jesuit University during the  
2nd Annual Youth Symposium on Human Rights and Socio-Ecological Transformation

Solidarity with Cyclone Idai Victims Initiative

The effects of Cyclone Idai were undoubtedly disturbing. Though Advocates4Earth has no capacity to participate in direct humanitarian assistance, we embarked on a Solidarity with
Cyclone Idai campaign to gather material, contributions such as food and clothing for the cyclone’s victims. These were delivered to the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society.

Advocates4Earth’s Winnie Chindudzi packing boxes with contributions meant for Cyclone Idai victims as part of our Solidarity with Cyclone Idai initiative

2nd National Citizens’ Convention
The 2nd National Citizens Convention was held on 24 and 25 September. Advocates4Earth was one of the civil society organisations that at on the Convening Committee and participated in the planning processes. Furthermore, the organisation presented a paper entitled: Zimbabwe’s Environmental Governance, Climate Change and Protection.

Click to download the paper or visit: http://citizens-manifesto.org/2019/09/12/zimbabwes-environmental-governance-climate-change-and-protection/

PUBLIC INTEREST ENVIRONMENTAL LITIGATION
Reports received for environmental rights, wetlands protection and climate litigation
The organisation received reports from communities affected by the climate crisis and environmental injustice. With the availability of resources, Advocates4Earth will action on the reports with the support of like-minded experts and organisations.
Awareness on Wetlands

Advocates4Earth, as a non-profit environmental law, climate and wildlife justice organisation continued to note with concerns the escalating attempts and development of private construction and mining projects on wetlands around the world. The organisation released statements to commemorate the World Wetlands Day. The day is held each year on the 2nd of February each year to commemorate the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. The theme for the 2019 World Wetlands Day was “Wetlands and Climate Change”. Development decisions informed by economic and profit considerations, however, continued to threaten wetlands and biological diversity around the world.

In Zimbabwe, the Ramsar Convention entered into force on 3 May 2013. However, the environmental justice sector continued to monitor and note with apprehension, the attempts and efforts to carry out construction projects in the Borrowdale, Eastlea, Mabvuku, Budiriro, Ashbrittle and Monavale Wetlands, the latter of which is one of the seven declared wetlands of international importance in Zimbabwe under the Ramsar Convention. Above these, there was evidence of massive pollution around Ramsar sites in the Lake Chivero area.

We continued to remind politicians, business, communities and civil society that every person, species and nature are entitled to environmental rights both at the international and domestic law levels. Furthermore, it is a trite environmental principle that the environment must be protected for both present and future generations hence our wetlands deserve protection. As Advocates4Earth we resolve to pursue several courses of action in order to ensure the continued protection of wetlands, and we urged concerned individuals and groups to get involved.
ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND NETWORK BUILDING

OVERVIEW

To make Advocates4Earth an innovative and efficient campaigning non-profit environmental law organisation, the organisation continuously builds itself, through a thorough internal assessment of capacity needs. Furthermore, the organisation is conscious that it does not exist in a vacuum, therefore it is part of broader local and global networks such as the Pro-Elephants Network, Law Society of Zimbabwe, Young Lawyers Association of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development, National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations, Zimbabwe Civil Society Constitutional Consortium and the Citizens Manifesto among others. There were efforts towards the following internal capacity development as well as networking activities:

UPDATES

Board Meetings

Board meetings provide strategic direction for the organisation. The Advocates4Earth board met regularly throughout the year to discuss the implications of global events on the environment. A huge board decision was reached in September 2019, to change the name of the organisation to Advocates4Earth from People and Earth Solidarity Law Network. The Board felt that the change better reflected the work of the organisation as both a campaigning platform for environmentalist lawyers and non-lawyers.
Environmental Justice Volunteers Capacity-Building Meetings

As an organisation who work depends on the efforts of volunteers and donated labour, Advocates4Earth always seeks to build the capacity of its Environmental Justice Volunteers. An environmental justice volunteer’s capacity building meeting was conducted at the Forestry Commission Building in Bulawayo.

Zimbabwe Civil Society Constitution Consortium

Together with like-minded organisations, Advocates4Earth participated in the activities and meetings of the Zimbabwe Civil Society Constitutional Consortium. The consortium aims to monitor the level of implementation of laws to the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe. The consortium is coordinated by the Zimbabwe Institute. In 2019 a number of meetings sought to get feedback on the work of the Attorney General’s Office as well as on progress reports from the Inter-ministerial Taskforce on alignment processes.
Law Society of Zimbabwe's Lawyers in NGOs Luncheon 2019

The Law Society organised meetings for lawyers in non-governmental organisations and public interest work. We participated to share our views on challenges facing lawyers in public interest work in Zimbabwe. These ranged from funding constraints to general problems associated with legal practice in Zimbabwe such as the oftentimes breaking down in the rule of law.

Lawyers March for Justice and the Rule of Law

As a law organisation staffed by young lawyers, Advocates4Earth also participated in solidarity events organised by Concerned Zimbabwe Lawyers and the Young Lawyers Association of Zimbabwe. These were critical to call for respect of the rule of law in Zimbabwe and the end to police brutality. We believe that environmental rights don’t exist in a vacuum but are part of human rights and the rule of law as well.

ZIMCODD Social and Economic Justice Activists Training

Winnet Chindudzi, the Advocates4Earth Volunteers Manager attended the meeting for social and economic justice activists held in Kariba and organised by the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development. Advocates4Earth is a member of the ZIMCODD coalition.

National Association of NGOs (NANGO) Annual General Meeting

The organisation also participated in the Annual General Meetings of the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations.
PEOPLE & EARTH JOURNAL

Following our two annual symposiums held in 2018 and 2019, the organisation decided to set up an annual journal. The journal, whose first two volumes, are undergoing final edits and typesetting before publications will contain both academic and non-academic peer-reviewed work.

The title of the journal is: “People & Earth: Journal on Environmental, Climate and Wildlife Justice.”

In the course of 2020, the journal will be available online. The first two volumes will be published under the following themes:

- People & Earth: Journal on Environmental, Climate and Wildlife Justice Vol 1: 2018 “Extractives and Human Rights”
- People & Earth: Journal on Environmental, Climate and Wildlife Justice Vol 2: 2019 “Sustainability”

Submissions for the journal will be open throughout the year, with a specific thematic call being done for papers to be presented at the organisation’s Annual Youth Symposium on Human Rights and Social-Ecological Transformation.
OUR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS IN 2019

We are grateful to the following organisations and institutions whom we worked with at various levels in 2019.

1. Africa Legal News
2. African Youth Initiative on Climate Change
3. Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe
4. Born Free Foundation
5. Citizen’s Manifesto
6. EMS Foundation
7. FES
8. Green Hut
9. GreenGovZw
10. Humane Society International
11. Jiti Law Chambers
12. Law Society of Zimbabwe
13. Magamba Network
14. Network for Animals
15. Pro-Elephant Network
16. Radio VOP
17. SEATINI
20. SPCA
21. Speak Out for Animals
22. UNDP
23. Wildize Foundation
24. Youth for Innovation Trust
25. Zi FM
26. Zimbabwe Association of Community Radios
27. Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development
28. Zimbabwe CSO Constitutional Consortium
29. Zimbabwe Elephants Foundation
30. Zimbabwe Youth Biodiversity Network
31. Zimudzi and Associates Legal Practitioners
32. ZYLTP Alumni Association
33. Instinct Africa
Advocates4Earth depends on donated resources, labour and volunteers for its work to protect our environment, climate and wildlife.

To **collaborate** or to **donate** please **contact us** using the details below:

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