

Shamsa's presentation

Good morning ladies and gentlemen

For many years, I was the secretary-general for Tanzania Women Miners Association, known as TAWOMA. But for me and many other women it was hard to mine because I needed big capital. So I decided to work on adding value to the minerals, and work together with small-scale miners.

I, and a few other ladies, we established Fahari Stones which is a unique organisation in Tanzania engaged with mineral value addition. Mineral value addition is wide – but at the moment we start with cut and polish, we make beads from gemstones, we do the tumbling from gemstones. We also make tiles from Tanga stone and do wire-wrapping jewellery.

Fahari Stones also found a missing opportunity for women to make a profit on the different quality of stones they find. Women generally sell the gem quality stones, and throw away those that are not of high quality. In that way, they lose profit. We are finding ways to use all stones, not to throw away any part of the stones. At the moment we train women in making gemstone trees, design gemstone beads and tumbling gemstones.

When we conducted market research, we found our cut stones – those cut in Tanzania – were not acceptable in the market. We were told that they are not cut to international standards. We were told that our stones are beautiful and genuine, so we feel embarrassed that our cutting is not good.

Our main solution to make the success of our dream is to have a modern lapidary and a marketing centre, which can enable us to do our cutting and polish making gemstone beads and other crafts in gemstones and other minerals, and sell them to international buyers who come to Tanzania.

At the moment, we have 110 members in Fahari Stones and 250 members with TAWOMA, but out of that we have about 12 who are role models and can be mentors to others. If they could get training of trainers, they would be better suited to train many more women and youth, especially in mining communities. For example on cutting and polish, beads making, etc.

We have about 12 members who benefitted from the government to get training for cut and polish, but they do not have the machines to do it. They now need to refresh their skills before they go back to work.

If we could have a good lapidary centre, women in Tanzania will change the country's economy. Our finished products will be easy to be marketed and get good sales. Buyers will come direct to our country and employment will be accessible. In that case, women will change their lives for the better and the country will benefit in taxes, and other benefits.

Women miners will be in a good position to sell their products and utilise other stones which are not gem quality and even youth will have opportunity to

learn more about minerals. At the moment, we are working with other cutters and jewellers but the idea is to do it ourselves – and keep more value with our collaborators.

I thank IIED for making it possible for me to be here today. I believe this will be the beginning of our success.

Thank you.