

Call for mines to invest in African health systems

Health Minister, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, has called for mining houses to invest in centres for disease control to help fight Tuberculosis and Ebola in African regions where they mine...



(Image: GCIS)

The Minister said this when participating in a panel discussion at the Investing in Africa Mining Indaba at the Cape Town Convention Centre in Cape Town, on Monday.

"I propose that mining houses, because they have got the financial muscle, assist us in strengthening the health systems... where they mine.

"We need an African centre for disease control and believe me if we had it, it would not have taken so long for us to detect that there is Ebola.

"So where do the mining houses come in? To help us establish them and train people, train the human resources," he said.

The Ebola disease has, ever since it broke out, killed thousands of people in West African countries.

The Ebola outbreak led to the African Union setting up a fund to fight the disease through vaccine research and the dispatching of health personnel to the affected regions.

The Minister said if mining houses can partner with government to set up these centres, it would help with prevention instead of responding after the outbreak.

Community-based health workers could have seen the Ebola outbreak, the Minister said - an outbreak that also affected the mining operations in the regions where the disease spread out.

Motsoaledi said what was also sad is that while mining houses take precautions and implement health measures in developed countries before they drill for mineral resources, the same standards were not applied in Africa.

"We need to do something extra-ordinary, something that is radical which means there needs to be a change of mind set by the mining companies.

"Unless we strengthen health systems in Africa, until such a time that Heads of State don't go to Europe or the East when they are sick, until they are treated right here on the continent and die on the continent, we won't improve health care systems.

"I have seen this happen around the world, but I don't see it happening when the same companies come to Africa to mine.

"That kind of mentality that mining companies have must come to an end," he said.



(Image: Public Domain)

The Mining Indaba attracts governments, mining houses and labour organisations from around the world to converge to one meeting to discuss issues affecting the industry, which is a big contributor to many economies.

The Indaba ends on 12 February.

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