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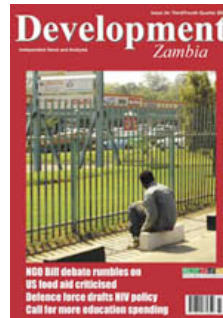
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Money secured to tackle pollution

A consortium of donors pledges support on waste Zambia has secured US\$50 million from a consortium of Western financiers including the World Bank to clean up hazardous mining areas in the country and protect thousands of people from poisoning. The majority of the money is being provided by the World Bank, which has given Zambia's Copperbelt Environmental Project (CEP), which is running the clean up campaign, a US\$21 million loan and a US\$19 million grant. The Nordic Development Fund (NDF), which promotes economic progress in developing countries, has given US\$10 million to the campaign. A large part of the US\$50 million will be used to clean up the Central Province town of Kabwe, where lead levels remain critically high and are currently believed to be threatening the lives of 60,000 people. Kabwe was named the fourth most polluted place in the world last October in a report by US think tank the Blacksmith Institute, after Chernobyl in the Ukraine, Dzerzhinsk in Russia and Haina in the Dominican Republic. Mining and smelting operations in Kabwe, which is rich in lead, were running almost continuously up until 1994. But with smelting operations unregulated at that time there was significant mine seepage. The report found the lead content in the blood of Kabwe residents to be often five to ten times above permissible levels in the US, with many children also recording dangerously high contamination levels. Lead poisoning can lead to vomiting, diarrhoea, muscle spasms and kidney damage. Joseph Makumba, an official at ZCCM Investments Holdings, which runs the CEP, said the funds would be used to clean up waste and resettle people living in hazardous areas like Kabwe around the Copperbelt.