

RSZ complains over paying fuel levy for road maintenance

By Justin Katlungu in
Kabwe

THE Railway Systems of Zambia (RSZ) has complained that it has continued to pay fuel levy to the government which money unfortunately goes towards the maintenance of roads at the expense of reinvestment in the rail infra-

structure.

And RSZ has donated K10 million to the Kabwe flood victims that are currently squatting at the Kabwe City Council recreation centre.

RSZ chief executive officer Benjamin Even said the company had paid more than US\$4 million in fuel levy to the government since the concession of Zambia Railways in 2003.

He was speaking in Kabwe at the weekend during a media tour of the company.

"This itself creates unfair

competition between road and rail as it distorts structures and tariffs leading to the current unfortunate situation of road trucks congesting roads which are seen to be cheaper than rail," he said.

Even complained that the current situation was contrary to the government transport policy objectives, which advocated for a level playing field between road and rail.

"It makes economic sense to use rail than road because one train load of 1,200 tons

using one locomotive translates into 40 road trucks carrying 30 tonnes each damaging the roads at great cost to the government in repeated annual maintenance costs," he said.

Even said that RSZ had continued to operate smoothly despite the negative publicity it continued to receive from the media.

Even said that the company had since invested US\$30 million in its operations and it was working hard to realign the railway system in Zambia.

"It is sad that from inception we ignored the part of public relations of the company which had cost as dearly. We have continued to be viewed negatively by the media, hence the idea to invite the media today so we show you what we have achieved since the concession in 2003," he said.

Even said that RSZ had through its corporate social responsibility dished out over K1 billion and that it was also supporting an orphanage in Kabwe.

"We have repaired most of the wagons we took over from Zambia Railways and even bought new ones to enhance our operations and we have also worked on some coaches for the passenger train.

"We have remained committed to paying tax to the government and we have not failed to meet our obligations to our workers," he said.

Even said RSZ was diligently serving the Southern African region and that the outlook future for the company was bright in terms of trade.

As a social responsibility, Even said he could not hesitate to make a donation to the Kabwe flood victims when a request from the government reached his office.

"It is not so much money but I believe that it will assist our friends that have been afflicted by floods. It is our obligation through our corporate responsibility to plough back to the community," said Even.

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