



**Media statement by the Bench Marks Foundation**

---

**Nothing about us without us**

5 February 2015

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Exorbitant fees and omission from the Mining Indaba's programme means that those who have vital input to make, such as civil society and community members, are excluded from discussions that ultimately affect their lives and livelihood, says the Bench Marks Foundation.

"We are tired of this segregation and have decided to scale-up our response to this exclusion," says John Capel, Executive Director of the Bench Marks Foundation.

"In addition to the Alternative Mining Indaba - which is now in its sixth year – we will conduct a peaceful protest action to the Cape Town International Convention Centre on the 9<sup>th</sup> February and will drive around in a bus that will have banners clearly displaying our key messages on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

"Bishop Jo Seoka will lead the action on the 11<sup>th</sup> and will push our demands for amongst other things, an independent fund and recourse to justice for communities. We will have an exhibition on the bus on the 11<sup>th</sup>, and also have some theatrical exhibits related to mining which will take place in various areas and outside the CTICC.

"Throughout the years and especially since Marikana, The Bench Marks Foundation has been very clear that enough is enough and that change is required now," says Capel.

"The only way that the Mining Indaba can really be effective in addressing the true issues surrounding the sector and change, is if they stop talking amongst themselves and start talking to all stakeholders.

"The Alternative Mining Indaba was created to do just that: create a space for everyone from all over Africa and the world to discuss and workshop subjects that are wreaking havoc or working well in the sector".

The Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI) will take place from 9 – 12 February 2015 at the Upper Eastside Hotel in Woodstock, Cape Town.

This year's AMI theme is 'making natural resources work for the people' and includes topics on inclusive, sustainable and resilient development as well as domestic resource mobilisation, transparency and accountability.

"Our hope is that our voices will finally be heard and next year's Mining Indaba will include everyone involved and affected by mining.

"We also hope that like we have at the AMI, the Alternative Mining's 'talk shop' at long last becomes a proper workshop with goals and one where people, companies, organisations and governments are held accountable," says Capel.

The AMI provides an international platform for all interested stakeholders to share experiences, mobilise and motivate mining communities to strengthen their work on advocacy for environmentally and human rights conscious natural resource governance, develop strategic tools that will empower Africa's citizens to meaningfully participate in natural resource governance, facilitate and foster better engagement between mining communities, governments and mining companies, facilitate and foster better engagement between mining communities, governments and mining companies and to provide a voice to the lived experiences of communities affected by mining.

For more information on the AMI, email [alternativeminingindaba2015@gmail.com](mailto:alternativeminingindaba2015@gmail.com).

Follow the indaba on Twitter: @AltMiningIndaba and on <http://alternativeminingindaba.blogspot.com/>.

For more information on the Bench Marks Foundation, go to [www.bench-marks.org.za](http://www.bench-marks.org.za).

ENDS

---

Bench Marks Foundation is an independent non-governmental organisation mandated by churches to monitor the practices of multi-national corporations to

- ensure they respect human rights;
- protect the environment;
- ensure that profit-making is not done at the expense of other interest groups; and
- ensure that those most negatively impacted upon are heard, protected and accommodated within the business plans of the corporations.

The Foundation was launched by the Rt Rev Dr Jo Seoka who chairs the organisation and by member churches of the SACC in 2001.

<b>Bench Marks Foundation Contact:</b>
Mr John Capel, Executive Director 011 832 1743 or 082 870 8861 Email: <a href="mailto:jcapel@eject.co.za">jcapel@eject.co.za</a>