



MEDIA STATEMENT BY BENCH MARKS FOUNDATION

Ex-employees and community members to march to ArcelorMittal

Wednesday, 24 October 2012

For immediate release

Community members of the Vaal, ex-employees of ArcelorMittal South Africa (AMSA) and supporting organisations of Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance (VEJA), will march to ArcelorMittal's Vanderbijlpark premises today, 24 October 2012 to hand over their demands to management.

The march, organised by the Working Class Coordinating Committee in conjunction with the community, will commence at 11h00. The marchers will congregate on Delfos Boulevard in Vanderbijlpark and the journey will end at AMSA's main gate at the company's steel mill.

The marchers' demands will be aimed at both AMSA and the Department of Labour and covers issues around misleading information regarding environmental impacts, air quality, medical issues, and compensation for occupation-related illnesses.

Many of the ex-employees who will be marching have waited in vain for over a decade for their grievances to be addressed and now demand that ArcelorMittal resolve the issue of compensation for occupation-related illnesses immediately. Several workers have died waiting for their compensation payout.

A report will be published by the Bench Marks Foundation regarding the corporate social responsibility practices of AMSA's Vaal operations toward the end of this year.

Following the information gleaned from the research by the organisation on the steel-producing company, the Bench Marks Foundation supports the community's call to action and urges AMSA to meet the marchers' demands by their given date in order to mitigate any further action by the aggrieved parties.

Notes to editors:

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.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu launched the Foundation in 2001 and the Rt Rev Dr Jo Seoka chairs the organisation.