



MEDIA STATEMENT BY BENCH MARKS FOUNDATION

Underlying causes of unrest must be addressed to avoid more violence

Wednesday 22 August 2012

For immediate release

A memorial service will be held at the Lutheran Church hall in Marikana at 11am tomorrow morning for those miners who were killed in the violence that erupted as a result of strikes at the Lonmin Mine last week.

The Bench Marks Foundation's Executive Director, John Capel in a statement released today, says that the Foundation hopes that Lonmin shows sensitivity and respect towards the grieving families through concrete actions in recognising the cultural institutions that accompany funerals in African societies.

In addition, Capel says that Bench Marks is encouraged that discussions between Lonmin and the workers are underway and the Foundation hopes that these lead to a swift resolution of the conflict.

"But," he says, "The underlying structural causes of unrest in the Bonjanala district must be addressed by all the platinum-producing companies if further eruptions of violence and conflict are to be avoided.

Capel says that the Bench Marks Foundation, in its report, Policy Gap 6, have made a number of key recommendations to all the platinum-producing companies and strongly encourages Lonmin, Anglo Platinum, Impala Platinum, Aquarius, Xstrata and Royal Bafokeng Mining to take up these recommendations in collaboration with key stakeholders.

"Increasing levels of conflicts in the area cannot be understood without looking at the economic, social and environmental impacts of platinum mining.

"Mine labourers work under dangerous conditions in the mines, and live under appallingly poor conditions in shacks and informal settlements.

"The lack of local employment opportunities is creating increasing resentment, especially among youth. The surrounding areas experience little of the massive wealth that is extracted through platinum mining.

"It is essential that the parties involved in the tensions on the mine are brought together, and we are pleased that religious leaders such as the Bishop of Pretoria, the Rt Rev Dr Jo Seoka is involved in moving this process towards healing and peace.

"We sincerely hope that Lonmin will play a crucial role, both in the resolution of the current conflict, and in dealing with the long-term impacts of platinum mining in the Bonjanala district," says Capel.

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.

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