



## **MEDIA STATEMENT BY BENCH MARKS FOUNDATION**

### **Miners want Bishop in talks with Labour Department**

**Monday 27 August 2012**

#### **Update on talks in Marikana:**

There has been some progress in the discussions between the miners in Marikana and the executive management of Lonmin weeks after the crisis began, says South African Council of Churches president and Bishop of Pretoria, Bishop Jo Seoka.

Following yet another meeting with striking miners and Lonmin management on 27 August 2012, Seoka says that it is encouraging that discussions around the wage issue continue.

“But,” says Seoka, “the Minister of Labour, Ms Oliphant, has intervened in the dispute between the mine and the miners regarding the wage dispute, and wants Lonmin to go through the Department of Labour regarding this issue.

“Lonmin have said they will comply with this request.”

Bishop Seoka says that whilst government intervention is inevitable following the massacre, unfortunately the reality is that miners are not happy with this decision as they do not have much trust in government processes.

“They have indicated that they would like me to remain as mediator in the ensuing talks. I am happy to do whatever it takes to prevent what happened in this area from occurring again,” he said.

Although Bishop Jo Seoka is also the Chairperson of the Bench Marks Foundation that recently released research on the effect of platinum mining in the North West Province in the Bojanala District on surrounding communities and its employees, he is acting in his capacity as president of the SACC and Bishop of the area.

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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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