



**Media release by the Alternative Mining Indaba,
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Mine bosses told: Change your attitudes

Immediate Release

A leading non-government organisation today told mining bosses at the African Mining Indaba to change their attitudes and shift their mind-sets and defensiveness.

Speaking at a session on the second day of the African Mining Indaba, Executive Director of the Bench Marks Foundation John Capel said good neighbourliness for mines begins with the recognition that there are losers, and that the losers are the communities whose social, economic and cultural life has been destroyed.

The Bench Marks Foundation is a key sponsor of the Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI), taking place in parallel to the main indaba at the same time in Cape Town. The AMI's aim is to achieve sustainable extraction of minerals in Africa and equal distribution of revenues from natural resources.

The AMI has been meeting annually since 2010 at the same time as the African Mining Indaba. In 2017, it was allowed for the first time to present its declaration to the main indaba in 2017, having previously been refused permission to do so.

Capel told the main indaba on its sustainability day that mining corporations needed to go beyond mere philanthropy to address the real challenges.

"Mines need to support an independent capacity building fund that allows communities to have access to specialist expertise and improves their ability to organise.

"Stronger, better organised, and empowered communities lead to level playing fields, and ensure better relations and outcomes. On the other hand, unequal power relations lead to disempowered, unknowledgeable, and angry communities," he said.

Participation by mines in an independent problem-solving service, such as the one being set up by the Bench Marks Foundation, would result in impartial facilitators and provide multiple ways to resolve problems.

"This service is based on the United Nations' guiding principles on access to remedy."

Capel added that the problem-solving service had been recognised by the UNGP in 2017 as a very important contribution "going beyond the abstract to practical ways to address remedy."

He told delegates that dialogue was not possible in an unequal power relationship.

“Dialogue among equals opens the way to solutions which in turn flow from capacitated communities and a social justice vision.

“Such solutions will lead to improved relations and sustainable mines and communities,” he said.

Ends statement

The Alternative Mining Indaba presents an alternative voice - the voice of communities - to that of corporates, governments, investors and financiers who meet yearly during the African Mining Indaba. Through effective advocacy, the AMI aims to enhance transparency and accountability in the governance of natural resources and lead to a continent that extracts minerals sustainably and distributes natural resources revenues equitably.

The objectives of the AMI are to:

- Provide a platform to empower communities affected and impacted by the extractives industries to reclaim their rights through the formulation of alternatives;
- Advocate for transparent, equitable and just extractives practices in the management, governance and distribution of national resources through policy and legislative reform;
- Create meaningful decision-making processes for communities, advocating for just national and regional policies and corporate practices;
- Provide space for engagement for the inter faith communities, governments, CSOs and private sector to share information and experiences; and
- Provide space for the inter faith community to lead and accompany affected and impacted communities.

The AMI is organised by the Economic Justice Network of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (EJN of FOCCISA) in collaboration with:

[Bench Marks Foundation](#)

[Christian Council of Mozambique](#)

[IANRA \(International Alliance on Natural Resources in Africa\)](#)

[Tax Justice Network Africa](#)

[Zimbabwe Environmental Lawyers Association \(ZELA\)](#)

[Publish What You Pay](#)

[Norwegian Church Aid](#)

[Mozambique Christian Council](#)

[Diakonia Zambia](#)

[Zimbabwe Council of Churches](#)

Issued by Quo Vadis Communications on behalf of the Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI)

Media contacts:

- Malcolm Damon 083 654 5282
- Moreblessings Chidaushe 072 730 5845
- Felix Ngosa 083 323 0280
- Brown Motau 073 655 6269
- John Capel 082 870 8861
- Hassen Lorgat 082 362 6180