



**Media release by the Alternative Mining Indaba,
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Mining power to be challenged by community voices

For immediate release

A unique platform for communities gathers tomorrow in Cape Town, determined to continue its quest for the parallel African Mining Indaba to hear the voices of civil society and people impacted and affected by mining.

The Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI) was created in 2010 by faith based organisations to provide a podium for one of the most important stakeholders in the mining industry – that of communities directly impacted by mining activity – who are not invited to the African Mining Indaba which takes place at the same time in the city. The AMI represents a multiplicity of different voices and divergent views made up of more than 50 countries, some with a long history of mining, others facing new or prospecting mining, and others resisting any mining.

Every year the Investing in Mining Indaba conference, which some call the “looters conference”, takes place in Cape Town. For years the voices of communities and African civil society have not been heard. So called investment deals are entered into leaving communities suffering externalities, such land and livelihood destruction, severe health impacts, along with water and air pollution. The costs are externalised and the profits privatised. Organisers say that where mining is operational, communities want a new model that centralises people and communities and benefits that truly lift Africa out of the resource curse.

The AMI says that it has been engaging with the African Mining Indaba since 2015 to include sustainability and centralise this issue in the main indaba.

Organisers say a significant step forward has been made where the AMI has managed to move sustainability day from falling outside the Indaba into the main programme. It now takes place on Tuesday 6 February with a focus on making mining work for the people. During last year’s Indaba, robust discussions with the organisers took place to influence the agenda and have the voices of communities and civil society heard, according to the steering committee of the AMI.

“We are aware of the dangers of being seen to give legitimacy to the Indaba and achieving no concessions. We will not compromise our mandate, and continue to campaign for just mining, that brings real change to those who are the poorest; say no to mining alongside communities who are resisting mining, and conduct robust campaigns to ensure Africa’s minerals belong to Africa’s people.

“While we have to some extent influenced the agenda of the main indaba to focus on sustainability, we now need it to address the issues of skewed power relations, address access to social justice and embrace a radical approach to change. During the week, we will

be tabling the Alternative Mining Indaba's key demands and alternatives with the main Indaba, thus proclaiming loudly and clearly that we are serious about driving a new agenda that puts people first."

Since its inception, the AMI has advocated for equity and justice in the way in which the benefits of mining resources are shared, as well as calling for good governance, transparency and accountability in the sector.

The AMI has also become a platform to strengthen advocacy work and develop strategic tools to address challenges faced by the sector.

Over the past seven years, the AMI has grown significantly from hosting slightly over 40 participants in 2010, to over 400 participants in 2017. The AMI is receiving increasing recognition and acceptance as a legitimate platform for key non-state actors in the extractive industries with 500 delegates attending this year's AMI.

AMI is also viewed as the first platform for the continent where community voices are given space to air their views on an international platform, on issues that directly affect and or have an impact on them. Community groups and African civil society organisations are now also able to speak on their own and are being heard, without having to rely on other groups do so on their behalf.

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)

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Norwegian Church Aid
Mozambique Christian Council
Diakonia Zambia
Zimbabwe Council of Churches

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