Presentation to Mining Houses

Introduction

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to be with us here today. We know how valuable your time is and the difficulty you have in interrupting your busy schedule. We must however assure you that what you have done and your presence here is very important and for that we thank you very much.

The purpose of this meeting is two fold. First we want to report to you on our findings in the study we did in the North West Province where you are mining Platinum and secondly to listen to what you have to say to us in response to our report. So we will not waste your time unnecessarily.

Bench Marks Foundation and the *Policy Gap* study

Now back to the reason of being here. Historically the churches have played a leading role in dismantling apartheid and to advocate for economic justice. In the 80's the churches called for the boycott of South African products and disinvestment by Multinationals, particularly those who did not have a good track record of human rights and those companies which supported the Apartheid regime. We asked them to at least subscribe to the Sullivan Code of Principles. People like Archbishop Desmond Tutu and other leading Church leaders were at the forefront of this campaign.

Corporate Social Responsibility is a consequence of such social action begun here in SA and spread through the Church to the USA, Canada and the UK where a historical relationship has existed with Anti-apartheid Solidarity Groups. Today the issues of responsible business practices are high on the international agenda, and with internationally legitimate efforts such as the Global Compact and the Global Reporting Initiative operating at the level of the United Nations you may question our credentials for operating, and the need for our existence. We have three reasons: location, necessity, and experience. People are our business and our experience enables us to bring this mechanism for economic justice purpose to where it is needed, for those that need it.

Collaborating with the world wide church we have developed a tool called the "Bench Marks Principles for Global Corporate Responsibility: Bench marks for Measuring Business Performance" to assess CSR initiatives. This tool was launched globally, 12 years ago, by Church based organizations in both the global south and north. [Interfaith Centre for Corporate Responsibility in New York, the Ecumenical Center for Corporate Responsibility in London, and the Task Force on Churches and Corporate Responsibility in Canada, Christian Centre for Social Responsible Investment in Australia, the Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee and Friends of the Earth in Columbia].

These 'Principles for Global Corporate Responsibility: Bench Marks for measuring Business Performance' are tried and tested and have informed many corporations on their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

So, while the tool is used to measure corporations' social responsibility it also has the responsibility to advise investors within the churches and international communities on which companies to invest in and which not to invest in. But it also enables communities to assess corporate performance in terms of their Human Rights and environmental concerns.

The Bench Marks Foundation Approach to CSR

We do all this because we believe that the starting point of economic life is the community. Economies must serve the people and contribute to human development that respects their life and culture, and the environment where business is carried out.

As a faith community we are concerned about the moral and ethical considerations that businesses need to take into account given our young democracy. These social challenges include dealing with high unemployment, growing poverty levels, and economic exclusion. Central to our contribution is how mines can address their negative social, economic, and environmental impacts in a sustainable, job creating and empowering manner.

It is for this reason that the Bench Marks Foundation promotes the following:

- Corporations have a responsibility to ensure that all aspects of their production cycles cause minimum harm to people and the environment.
- Responsible corporations properly consult stakeholders, and not just shareholders, before making final decisions about activities that affect them.
- Responsible companies/corporations employ comparable standards across all of their operations. They do not use legal requirements in host countries that are worse off than their home countries to avoid being responsible.
- Effective corporate codes of conduct are drafted with input from those who will be affected by them and by those who have to implement them.
- Clear lines of responsibility and accountability are necessary for companies to properly implement corporate responsibility policies and practices.
- Responsible companies have clear systems for monitoring their environmental and social impacts and enable civil society and communities to contribute to this.
- Responsible companies provide publicly available and externally verified reports, giving comparable information about the social and environmental impacts of each of their operations.

Motivation for the study

Therefore we set out to do a study on the Mining houses in Rustenburg in order to see how they carried out their Corporate Social Responsibilities. To look at what they were doing and see how they were practicing their CSR we looked at how they complied with the legislative overview of Black Economic Empowerment, their social license obligations, and how they measured up to the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development (MMSD) framework.