



## **Media Statement by Bench Marks Foundation**

**For Immediate Release [27 July 2009]**

---

### **Standardise legislation to avoid ‘pollution havens’**

The Bench Marks Foundation has called for the standardisation of mining legislation in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region to avoid some areas and countries becoming ‘pollution havens’ for unscrupulous mining corporations.

This call was made in Johannesburg today at the launch of Bench Marks Foundation’s study on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the diamond mining industry on the West Coast of South Africa.

“In the ‘divide and rule’ rush for mineral investments, some African countries may fall prey to abuse and exploitation from dishonest companies that are solely motivated by profit.

“This legislation must have identified monitoring agencies and targets embedded within it. Capacity of monitoring agencies must be effective and targets must be realistic,” said John Capel, the Executive Director of Bench Marks Foundation in presenting the findings of the research.

“Company policies and contracts must not override national legislation. The South African mining legislative structure must give guidance to what is to be achieved by whom, where, how and when, and the Act must also provide fitting (effective and suitably severe) punitive directives for non compliance,” he said.

The comprehensive research by Bench Marks Foundation recommends that mining companies should do more in the area of CSR reporting and practice. Companies operating on the West Coast must aim at regularly disclosing issues relating to sustainability, CSR strategies and policies in a uniform and truthful manner.

Previous studies on mining in southern Africa by the Bench Marks Foundation have also covered the issue of CSR reporting and practice.

“The government, together with other stakeholders in the mining communities, should set up strategies for effective community engagement as an important part of the sustainable development process of CSR. Clear communications channels are essential at all levels,” Capel added.

This research on the diamond industry on the South African West Coast is a continuation of the broader SADC research initiative into the extractive industry. The main focus is CSR practice of mining companies in respect of the three basic dimensions of sustainable development – economical, social and environmental – in the areas in which they operate.

**ENDS**

---

**Issued by Quo Vadis Communications on behalf of Bench Marks Foundation**

Bench Marks Foundation is an independent organisation monitoring corporate performance in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with the focus on social sustainability and economic empowerment. The organisation encourages CSR that goes beyond reporting mechanisms and focuses on the gap between policy and practice, thereby assisting civil society groups and corporations to move beyond philanthropy to more strategic interventions that benefit both the corporations and society. Central to Bench Marks' agenda is how CSR is integrated into companies' operations and ensuring that it is at the core of every decision making process.

<b>Media contact:</b>	<b>Bench Marks Foundation Contact:</b>
<p>Khumbulani Mpofu Tel: 011-487-0026 Cell: 083-695-2025 E-mail: <a href="mailto:khumbulani@quo-vadis.co.za">khumbulani@quo-vadis.co.za</a></p> <p><i>QUO VADIS COMMUNICATIONS AND ITS STAFF MAY NOT BE QUOTED ON BEHALF OF BENCH MARKS FOUNDATION</i></p>	<p>John Capel Chief Executive Bench Marks Foundation Tel: 011-832-1750 E-mail: <a href="mailto:jcapel@eject.co.za">jcapel@eject.co.za</a></p>