



## **Mines going into suspension need to provide social grants**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Mining companies going into a state of suspension should establish a system of social grants to support the mineworkers they are retrenching, according to the Bench Marks Foundation.

Responding to news that the Bokoni platinum mine in Limpopo has been placed in a two-year period of care and maintenance to regain its financial strength, Bench Marks said that responsibility to workers and communities does not end when a mine suspends its operations.

Such mines and their owners – Bokoni is owned by Atlatza Resources (51%) and Anglo American Platinum (49%) – could not simply ignore the impact that their action will have on the communities around them and on the workers they are retrenching.

Bench Marks Executive Director, John Capel, says that, having taken the land from people living on it in the first place, the onus was on mining companies to ensure sustainable life for affected communities.

“Communities such as Monametse, Sefateng, Mosotse and other nearby villages are going to be deeply affected by Bokoni’s decision.

“The mine has failed to help people in these villages generate a sustainable income. Most of these villagers’ ploughing fields have been denuded by mining operations, and there are still a lot of people living in abject poverty,” he said.

Capel said that one of the biggest fears of communities is that the mine will use this “suspension” as a way of avoiding its requirement to rehabilitate the land.

“There are many unanswered questions around the Bokoni mine. Once a mine’s operation is suspended, what onus is on it to continue operations once the suspension period has passed? How can we be sure that the same workers will be employed? How will infrastructure such as boreholes be maintained in good working order? What about the state of the roads that are used to take children to school, for example?” Capel asked.

He called on Bokoni management to provide a full and detailed account of its plans to address these issues during the suspension period.

ENDS

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.

The Foundation was launched in 2001 by the Rt Rev Dr Jo Seoka who chairs the organisation and by member churches of the SACC.

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