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Press Release

‘People’s Mining Indaba to examine AMV

Cape Town, February 2017: Over 400 activists who are members of civil society, faith-based organisations, mining-affected and impacted community members, academics and other stakeholders seeking justice in mining and the extractives industry will gather at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel in Cape Town from 6 – 9 February 2017 under the banner of the 8th Alternative Mining Indaba, with the theme “*Making Natural Resources Work For The People: Domestication of the African Mining Vision, from Vision to Reality.*”

Over three days, panel discussions, training sessions and robust debates will culminate in a Declaration spelling out demands addressed to governments and mining companies, as well a march to the Africa Mining Indaba at Cape Town International Conference Centre (CTICC).

The 8th AMI will be shaped around the pillars of the Africa Mining Vision and examining how it can influence better natural resource governance on the continent and how its domestication can benefit the communities most affected by mining and extractives.

Some of the questions to be addressed at the 8th AMI will be:

- “What successes have we had in our communities when engaging with government, companies and fellow citizens in calling for all citizens to benefit from our natural resources?”
- “Extraction of our natural resources: How to promote broad-based sustainable growth and socio-economic development in Africa”
- Impacts of Mining on Communities
- “How can revenues accruing from mineral resource extraction be optimized and managed to spur broad-based sustainable growth and structural transformation”?

- “How can we have a viable and sustainable Artisanal Small-scale Mining sector that contributes to growth and development?”
- “What have been our contributions towards calling for a sustainable and well-governed mining sector that is inclusive and appreciated by all stakeholders including surrounding communities?”
- “What successes have we had in our communities when engaging with government, companies and fellow citizens in calling for all citizens to benefit from our natural resources?”
- ‘The role of South African investment in the region and its linkages to various economies: Case example of SASOL between Mozambique and South Africa’
- “The AMV calls for an mining sector that is environmentally friendly and socially responsible. What does this mean?”
- Country Mining Vision (CMV)- What role could non-state actors play in the development and deployment of the CMV?
- “Implementing the African Mining Vision- How will this ensure Africa’s socio-economic transformation?”

For the past eight years contentious issues throughout the mining value chain have been debated, discussed and have generated spirited recommendations to governments and multi-national companies to improve natural resource governance standards and stem the illicit flow of mining revenues to tax shelters. The call has been for governments to increase accountability, transparency of transactions and revenue spending from mining and for an unrestricted, informed participation by ordinary people in the exploitation and governance of natural resources.

The Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI) has examined such diverse issues as corporate social responsibility; the glaring lack of attention paid to vital elements such as environmental degradation, deepening of poverty and slippages in the quality of life faced by mining-affected communities. The AMI has also delved into the role of traditional leaders (chiefs) who are easily coerced by unscrupulous mining companies into forgetting their historic leadership role as servants of the communities.

Growing in numbers from just 40 in 2010, the AMI has grown to more than 400 participants currently, from within and beyond the continent, and now embraces community struggles from as far as Asia and Latin America. The transgressors are often the same multinational companies whose tentacles cover all three continents. Emphasis has been placed towards

the importance for transparency and accountability on the payment of taxes and levies by corporations.

The international community has mobilised itself to counter the much touted 'race to the bottom' which has resulted in negligible tax rates that deny much needed taxation necessary for national development. The AMI has called for greater transparency among multinational corporations and particularly on the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) to adopt Country-by-Country (CbyC) reporting mechanisms of key financial information for all listed companies. This requires all mining companies to declare their revenues and profits and publish what they pay as taxes, levies, royalties and other payments that may be applicable to governments.

Further the AMI has exhorted governments to comply with principles of Resource and Social Justice in determining the application, usage and distribution of funds gleaned from such inflows. It has urged governments to undertake necessary reforms and mechanisms to enhance accountable governance in the extractive industries. These processes must fully include civil society organisations by giving them due notice and providing adequate documentation for effective participation.

The AMI has called for the urgent strengthening of the weak legislative and institutional environments currently in place to ensure greater returns from the extraction of natural resources. The oversight role of Parliament must be strengthened through legislative review, gathering more information, enhanced interaction between the relevant Portfolio Committees and concerned stakeholders, tracking contributions of the extractive industries to the national budgets and audits thereof.

Local communities living adjacent to extraction areas, including those who have been moved from their traditional lands, are often neglected and there is a need to ensure that they become ultimate beneficiaries through participation and overall empowerment. Governments have been urged to prevent the violation of fundamental human rights that ensue when communities are evicted to make way for mining operations. Such evictions transgress against profound cultural and traditional heritages of communities (places of worship, burial sites, ancestral grounds, etc.) thereby ignoring sacred tenets that prevail, whereby the "dead are deemed to be part of the living". Governments have been strongly reminded to take effective protective measures to safeguard environmental, economic, social and cultural rights of communities affected by mining.

The Alternative Mining Indaba was conceptualised in 2009 by Civil Society Organisations working on Extractive Industries to present case studies of victims of mining activities and evidence of ecological damage as a side event to the annual Africa Mining Indaba. The people's space is aimed at countering the loud voice of profit and greed by mining companies and governments with that of the poor communities affected by mining activities.

The Alternative Mining Indaba is a desire by civil society to articulate the suffering of ordinary people at the time corporations and governments are meeting to form partnerships and design strategies to consolidate their profits. It is a space created to bring to the fore the issues faced by communities and explore areas through which CSOs could support communities affected by mining. It is an advocacy instrument targeting the extractive sector on the continent and explores how policy instruments like the African Mining Vision are a step in the right direction to get many African countries out of the 'resource curse'. It brings new and existing knowledge to address the challenges brought by extractive industries upon local communities.

The Alternative Mining Indaba raises the issues that the Mining Indaba deliberately refuses to raise - the issues about poverty of communities adjacent to mining activities, the lack of adequate job creation, the environmental impact of mining activities on these communities as well as general sustainability after mining operations.

It is important to highlight that women also find themselves at a disadvantage in mining communities. They are often excluded from community negotiations with mining companies and once extraction begins, there are very few employment opportunities for them. Changes brought about by displacement, for example, exacerbate social problems in mining communities such as increased alcoholism, prostitution, drugs and crime.

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