

3rd Annual Junior Mining & Exploration Conference & Exhibition: Press Release I ~ Social investment and sustainability partnerships between the junior mining fraternity and mining communities



Social investment and sustainability partnerships between the junior mining fraternity and mining communities

Now in its third year, the Junior Mining & Exploration Conference & Exhibition, has firmly established itself as an important industry gathering for junior miners in South Africa. This year's programme has been carefully developed in consultation with the members of the 2014 Junior Mining Advisory Board ~ a process which will ensure relevance of the topics and presenters alike.

The theme of this year's event is in line with shaping the future of the industry, by facilitating an understanding of the opportunities available to junior miners. Junior miners face numerous and often harsh challenges when operating within this diverse landscape. Kgomo Tshaka, Executive Sustainability, Wesizwe Platinum Limited, will be sharing her expert views and focusing on the issues pertinent to sustainable community development, and the role junior miners can play in it.

"The stability of the mining industry depends on a conducive operating environment. This environment has a number of influencing issues, including the mining regulatory regime, socioeconomic factors and the industrial relations environment, which all interact with one another, as is evidenced by recent events in the platinum industry."

~ Adv. Ngoako Ramatlhodi, Address by the Minister of Mineral Resources on the occasion of the Budget Vote 32: Mineral Resources, National Assembly, Cape Town, 15 July 2014.

Says Tshaka, "It is this backdrop, which has compelled the industry to creatively explore innovative ways of ensuring that there exists a harmonious environment and relationship between the mining fraternity and mining communities. Ignoring this can lead to dire consequences. The approach one adopts is irrelevant ~ whether you are a junior or major miner; the resultant consequence can be detrimental to the company, regardless. The severity is compounded for a junior minor, as it has limited resources to expand. Junior miners are exposed to capital risks and financial challenges ~ especially post the financial meltdown, as most drive a one project concern. Junior miners thus have to run lean operations, with little capacity.

"Social issues are time-consuming; however they are a business imperative, especially in relation to the regulatory framework in SA. In order to maintain a social license to operate, it is essential to empower communities to make the right choices and to manage expectations. This is critical in the exploration phase and beyond. From the day a mining operation starts, it is immediately in a closure phase. Once the mine closes, the social impacts on employee households, communities and regions are mostly severe and long-term, leaving thousands of people impoverished. This is a legacy that must not be repeated nor perpetuated. Therefore, an impactful and compelling social investment strategy, which responds to creating a sustainable future ~ is key. This strategy must incorporate economic, legal and ethical aspects, as well as a sound stakeholder management plan. It should encompass a holistic approach to sustainability and deliver measurable outcomes for all participants.

"Collaborative partnerships and pooling of resources are pivotal in unlocking sustainability; consequently ~ proper stakeholder identification is paramount. The use of partnerships has great benefits but is not always successful. This approach does however draw diverse competencies and enables the pooling of resources, which can prove advantageous. To ensure effective collaboration, all affected parties should be clear on process and / or outcome ~ for a prosperous intervention."

Concludes Tshaka, "Several initiatives can be explored to develop economic capacity in the communities, thereby ensuring an improved economic future and quality life, for all. Miners should educate communities that mining is, by its very nature, a limited-term operation. It should not be accepted as a dependency. For this very reason, communities must be encouraged to harness the multitude of opportunities, which mining projects create, and expand upon them."

To be hosted at The Forum, The Campus, Bryanston, Johannesburg from 4 to 6 November 2014 ~ the Junior Mining & Exploration Conference & Exhibition endeavours to assist with supporting the future stability and profitability of the industry by:

- Bringing together key stakeholders and experts to discuss emerging issues and trends
- Creating a forum to discuss the strategies necessary to move the industry forward
- Providing an independent platform to ask questions, hear insights and keep up-to-date with the latest investor information, regulatory requirements and innovations within the sector

Register today!

****** TO REGISTER:**

Call +27 (0) 11 771 7000

E-mail: registrations@iir.co.za

Visit: www.juniormining.co.za

ends

word count: 722

Compiled by and to contact on behalf of the 3rd Annual Junior Mining & Exploration Conference & Exhibition:

Angela Groom

Louise Churches

Glass Slipper Communications

Glass Slipper Communications

E-mail: angela@glass-slipper.co.za

E-mail: louise@glass-slipper.co.za