



# MEDIA STATEMENT

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**For immediate release**

## CHAMBER'S NON-ATTENDANCE AT JOBURG INDABA DINNER

**Johannesburg, 4 October 2017:** Chamber of Mines CEO, Roger Baxter, today confirmed that Chamber of Mines executives and office bearers decided not to attend last night's Joburg Indaba banquet at which Mineral Resources Minister Mosebenzi Zwane was the guest speaker.

It was not an impetuous decision. It was not a decision based on personal animosity towards the Minister. It was a carefully considered decision based on the current regulatory and judicial situation.

It was also something we resolved to do without fanfare or comment. We regret that the conference organiser chose to publicise our decision, which was conveyed to him purely as a matter of courtesy to assist his organisational considerations.

However, we are now in a position where we have to explain what lies behind the decision. The following are the points that led us to the decision we made:

- Not only has Minister Zwane *unilaterally* published a charter whose full implementation would destroy the industry; he also recklessly sought to introduce a moratorium on approving new rights or amending rights. He did so on the basis of *his* refusal to engage on the issues.
- His gazetted charter establishes an agency that would administer billions of rands a year appropriated from the industry with no indications of plans for good governance.
- This comes on top of a very questionable history:
  - He came in as Minister seemingly with the primary task of strong-arming a legitimate rights holder of a major mining asset, conspiring with then Eskom leadership to apparently force the sale of a mine to a well-known family that has systematically



- robbed SA of public funds. The story has been comprehensively documented by the Public Protector. The Minister has done nothing to explain his role in this.
- Prior to that, in his previous position as Free State Agriculture MEC, his alleged role in channeling hundreds of millions in state funds to the same family for the establishment of a dairy at taxpayers' expense has also been comprehensively documented with, again, no attempt at an explanation by him.
  - This pattern of behaviour makes it impossible for the industry to engage with any confidence with him on the industry's future.
  - We know that a new charter has to be developed. We stand ready to do so with government leaders of integrity and with all other stakeholders. We have been seeking to do this for the past two years without success.
  - Right now, we are focused on legal remedies because it is the *only* currently available course of action in which we can have confidence.
  - For us to have attended last night's event would have forced us to engage with the Minister on specific regulatory issues in circumstances that are simply not conducive to any constructive engagement at this stage, other than through the courts. The last time the Chamber shared a platform with the Minister – in Perth, Australia – the outcome was not at all constructive.
  - The conference organiser decided to involve Minister Zwane in this event, as is his right. However, we would have expected Mr Swanepoel to understand why, in the circumstances, Chamber leaders chose to avoid exacerbating a situation where, again, the outcome would inevitably have been unconstructive.

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