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**Mining Minerals Sustainable Development
Southern Africa**

Research Topic 3: Mining and Society
GENDER AND MINING: WORKPLACE

Input to:

MMSDSA Regional Research

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for:

African Institute of Corporate Citizenship

August 2001

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this report is to investigate gender issues within South Africa's mining sector with a view to understanding how these issues impact on Sustainable Development imperatives in the mining and minerals industry as part of a broader study of the Mining and Minerals for Sustainable Development initiative.

The South African, and the SADC mining industry remains a very male-dominated industry, and compared with other industries, the integration and participation of women has been slow. Because of the male-dominated nature of the industry, in trying to better understand the gender issues at play, this study has focused on women's experiences within the industry.

While women have never been forbidden from working above ground, the number of women employed above ground has traditionally been low.

Over the past few years with changes in government policy and legislation, discriminatory laws forbidding women to work underground have been repealed, and women are now free to work underground, but very few women are indeed working underground.

The report considers how the mining industry could contribute to sustainable development by promoting women's economic advancement and reducing women's poverty, by ensuring greater women's involvement in the mining sector. Reducing women's poverty and promoting women's economic advancement are critical areas of concern as stated in the SADC Heads of State Declaration on Gender.

At present, no industry strategy for integrating women in to the sector exists – in SADC, or in South Africa in particular.

The report notes that the mining industry is a job-shedding one, and so strategies to integrate women need to take cognisance of this reality. The report recommends a focus on growth areas within the mining sector as a key pathway to women's participation.

Key findings of the report include:

- There is an urgent need for an industry-wide strategy for the advancement of women. Such a strategy would need to be developed in partnership with mining companies, SADC governments and trade unions;
- While there may be male scepticism and suspicion of women working underground initially, the benefit of women working alongside men is quickly recognised and welcomed;
- Women's employment on mines has brought positive benefits to the entire mining community, contributing the normalisation of the mining community;
- The costs of integrating women into mining are low, while the benefits are high;
- The South African political environment is a conducive one for promoting greater participation of women in mining, but there is a need for greater monitoring and evaluation capacity to track and measure progress. Similarly, the SADC-wide commitment to achieving gender equality provides an enabling environment for setting targets and achieving substantive change towards greater women's participation in the regional mining sector.
- Policy commitment exists within government, the trade unions and within SADC. Translating policy commitment into practice is a key challenge;
- In order to achieve sustainable development objectives, there is a need to rapidly upscale the integration of women into mining – at all levels;
- Small-scale mining represents a window of opportunity for women to enter the industry, but there is a need for a great deal more support and capacity to make SSM a sustainable and viable sector for women.
- The issue of gender and mining in all its facets is under-researched. There is a need for greater research attention to be paid to the race and gender dimensions of the mining industry, the health and safety implications for women working underground, and a need for baseline data on gender and mining in the SADC region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the support and assistance of the following people in making this report possible: Boni Nkwandla and Emile Roux at the Department of Minerals and Energy, Cathy Fazey, Andries van Zyl and David Magagula at AngloGold.

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GLOSSARY

BPA	Beijing Platform of Action
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DME	Department for Minerals and Energy
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EEA	Employment Equity Act
HDR	Human Development Report
LRA	Labour Relations Act
MEPC	Minerals and Energy Policy Centre
MMSD	Mining and Minerals for Sustainable Development
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAWIMA	South African Women in Mining Association
SADCWMT	SADC Women in Mining Trust
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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1 GENDER AND MINING – WORKPLACE REPORT

1.1 Introduction

The objective of this report is to investigate gender issues within South Africa's mining sector with a view to understanding how these issues impact on Sustainable Development imperatives in the mining and minerals industry. This study focuses on the South African experience as it is the one country in the SADC region where, due to constitutional changes securing gender equality, policy and legislation has been amended on an ongoing basis.

There is not much recorded involvement of women's participation in the formal South African mining industry. The mining industry has been called the 'last bastion of exclusive male employment' with women's participation in the industry limited to work as above ground administrative staff, or nursing injured mineworkers.

Over the past few years with changes in government policy and legislation, this situation has gradually began to change. Discriminatory laws forbidding women to work underground have been repealed, and women are now free to work underground.

For at least the last fifteen years, the South African mining industry has been a job-shedding industry, and so the enabling policy and legislation allowing women to participate in mining, has not been matched with job-creation opportunities in the sector.

Compared to other employment sectors, women's integration into mining has been slow, and while some progress has been made, women working underground are very much a novelty in South Africa, with images of women mineworkers grabbing headline news.

The situation described above is of the large-scale mining sector, which is the focus of this study. On the other hand, women have long been associated with small-scale mining (SSM). This sector is often associated with unsafe working conditions, an

historically unregulated policy environment and a lack of appropriate mining technology. Women enter small scale mining primarily as a means of survival.¹

While the terms of reference has called for an investigation into the gendered nature of the mining sector, at the initial stages of the investigation it became clear that the sector is overwhelmingly male dominated, and that in order to make useful recommendations on gender issues within the mining sector, a focus on women's experiences within the sector was necessary.

"Gender," refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities connected to being male or female in a particular society. The way a particular society is organised impacts on how women and men relate to each other, are perceived and what roles and responsibilities are assigned to them. The experience of being gendered thus differs from one society and context to another.

In the mining industry, the historical gendered roles played by men and women have been quite traditional. Men have entered the public sphere (the mine workplace), while women have remained in the domestic sphere (the home). Men have been breadwinners, while women have been responsible for maintaining the family. On the mines, women have also provided sexual services to male mineworkers. Moving from such traditional and relatively static gender roles, into a space where women and men can be seen as people of equal worth and dignity, equal workers and earners, is a big step away from the conception of male breadwinner and female household maintainer. This requires a significant shift in gender roles, relations and responsibilities from both women and men.

1.2 Gender and Sustainable Development

At the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the UN said that 'poverty has a woman's face', and that 70% of the world's poor were women.² While a reliable statistic for women's poverty in the SADC region is not available, the UN Regional Human Development Report for SADC argues that women in SADC suffer from disproportional levels of poverty compared to men³. Poverty is a complex issue, linked not only to lack of income, but also to lack of access to resources, services

¹ South Africa Women in Mining Association, 2000, DME, Pretoria

² Human Development Report, 1995, UNDP, NY

³ Regional Human Development Report, 2000, UNDP, Namibia

and opportunities in the economy, in political life and in society in general. All poor people lack access to these assets, but across the world, women and girls are more vulnerable to poverty than men.

The Beijing Platform of Action (BPA) set out twelve critical areas of concern as a basis for a global Platform of Action. The BPA states, “the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms”.⁴ The BPA sets out a powerful framework for international agreements in the pursuit of gender equality, calling for fundamental transformation in the relations between women and men to unlock the full potential for economic, social and human development for all.

The BPA called upon governments to take action in the following 12 critical areas of concern identified as barriers to women’s empowerment: poverty, education, the economy, power and decision-making, health, violence, armed conflict, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights, media, environment, and the girl-child.

Many of these critical areas of concern have direct relevance to the mining industry. If the mining industry wishes to contribute to sustainable development in the region, then increasing women’s participation in the economy, reducing women’s poverty, increasing access to educational opportunities and enhancing women’s access to power and decision-making have direct bearing on the way the industry currently operates, and points to areas where there is scope to support women’s advancement through a proactive recruitment, promotion and skills building policy.

A number of arguments can be made for why women should be equitably integrated into the development process. A persuasive argument is found in the UN’s rights based approach – which posits women and men’s equal human rights, and by extension women’s right to be treated equally in access to education, employment, remuneration and promotion. Another popular argument is an efficiency based approach which posits that integrating women into development will lead to greater market efficiency. This argument suggests that keeping women out of the economy means not making use of all of society’s productive assets, and so by integrating

⁴ Beijing Platform for Action, 1995, UN, Beijing

women into the productive work force, economic activity and growth prospects will be enhanced. In the research for this study, when mining companies were asked why they were employing women, there was a stated commitment to rectifying previous imbalances, in line with national priorities, and that employing women would contribute to a more equitable work force, and a more equitable society by extension. This response suggests a rights-based response to women's participation in mining. Such an approach takes a more holistic view of women's participation, and looks beyond the narrow efficiency argument which only considers women's productive potential.

Gender discrimination is embedded in and reinforced by institutions across all sectors of society. For example, globally women have a very small share of access to credit from formal banking institutions despite a better track record at making repayments, across the world women have a smaller share of national income than men, even when performing the same work.⁵

1.3 Women and work

Across a range of cultures and levels of economic development, women tend to be concentrated in unpaid reproductive work compared to men who are concentrated in paid work. Although it is often claimed that the poor's most valuable asset is their labour power, women are relatively time poor and much of their work is socially unrecognised since it is unpaid.⁶ Women are less mobile than men because of their reproductive/caring labour activities and because of social and cultural norms which may restrict their mobility in public. Even when women do enter the labour market, because of their primary responsibility to domestic work and childcare, it is likely that they will be confined to casual work and badly paid work. Even then, women's combined paid and unpaid labour time is greater than men's.⁷

In all societies, women work longer hours than men do, and in all societies women are responsible for the bulk of domestic responsibility. Based on data from 31 countries, women work longer hours than men in nearly every country.⁸

⁵ Poverty Eradication and the Empowerment of Women, 2000, DFID, London

⁶ Beneria and Bisnath, Gender and Poverty, UNDP, NY

⁷ Human Development Report, 1997, UNDP, NY

⁸ Human Development Report, 1995, UNDP, NY

The patterns and nature of household labour division clearly restrict the capacity of women to be economically active outside the household, thereby increasing women's susceptibility to poverty and adversely affecting their quality of life.

2 WOMEN IN MINING – THE REGIONAL PICTURE

2.1 Gender, Poverty and Sustainable Development

The SADC Heads of Government Declaration on Gender states, "the integration and mainstreaming of gender issues into the SADC Programme of Action and Community Building Initiative is key to the sustainable development of the SADC region."⁹ This statement provides a key starting point for transformative interventions in the SADC region.

All the governments in the SADC region, excluding Swaziland have signed the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. This means that all of these governments have committed themselves to systematically ensuring women's equal rights to men in both policy and practice.

Six countries in the region; Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe have identified the elimination of inequality in women's access to, and participation in economic structures and policies as a national priority area of concern. Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia on the other hand, included reduction of poverty among their national priority areas of concern. This illustrates that increasing women's access to economic opportunities and reducing women's vulnerability to poverty are critical concerns throughout the SADC region.

For this reason, any initiative aiming to contribute to regional sustainable development would need to consider how it would contribute to increasing women's access to economic opportunity and reduce women's poverty. The regional large-scale mining scenario is very much a male-dominated sector. Women are better represented in the small-scale sector. A vision of the SADC Women in Mining Trust

⁹ SADC Heads of Government Declaration on Gender, 1997

is for women who are currently engaged in SSM activities, to be able to move up the ladder to become big players in the large-scale mining sector.

2.2 Institutional Mechanisms to promote women in mining

The SADC Women in Mining Trust was established in 1996 with the support of UNIFEM. Its aim is to consider the needs, problems and constraints faced by women in mining, to ensure greater participation of women in decision-making and planning processes.¹⁰

Current members of the SADC Women in Mining Trust are drawn from Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. According to Namakau Kaingu, Chairperson of the Trust, national women in mining associations have been launched in all of these countries¹¹.

According to the Trust, the majority of women miners in the region are concentrated in artisanal and small-scale mining.¹² The work of the Trust focuses on women working at these levels and does not consider women working in the large-scale sector.

According to the Trust, key challenges facing women miners in the region are:

1. Access to finance
2. Access to training and skills development
3. Mine safety
4. Knowledge of environmentally sustainable approaches to mining

The Trust has called on governments in the SADC region to collaborate with financial institutions to facilitate better access to credit for women miners. They have recommended the African Development Bank create a special window for women to access low interest ADB loans.

¹⁰ Namakau Kaingu, 1999, speech at the launch of the South Africa Women in Mining Association

¹¹ Contact details for the national women in mining associations are attached.

¹² Namakau Kaingu, 1999, speech at the launch of the South African Women in Mining Association

The Trust has also called for a review of national mining policies to take stock of efforts to promote gender equality in mining. The Trust has secured high-level buy-in and now forms part of the SADC Mining Cluster and participates in meetings of SADC mining ministers¹³. At the time of writing this report, no information to measure the success of the Trust's initiatives was available.

According to their programme of activities, the Trust serves as a key link between women engaged in the mining sector (largely small-scale and junior miners) and governments in the region. After reviewing the programme and mission of the Trust, there appears to be a gap in their approach in that they are not prioritising the mining industry, but rather governments. An effective and holistic strategy to ensure women's advancement in the mining industry would need to include the buy-in of both governments and the large-scale mining industry. This requires a great deal more collaboration between governments and the mining industry on the assumption of a joint commitment for transformation.

It is clear that women miners in the SADC region feel somewhat marginalised from the mainstream of the industry. In order to make significant progress, there needs to be a great deal more collaboration which could be mutually beneficial to both the Trust and the large-scale mining industry.

In terms of the key challenges for women in mining identified by the Trust, some of these challenges, such as access to finance and skills development and training, are not specific to women in the mining sector, but affect women entrepreneurs across all sectors. Because of structural gender inequalities in the region, and globally, women entrepreneurs in most sectors struggle to access finance, and generally have access to fewer education and skills development opportunities than their male counterparts. These gaps point to broader societal gaps, which are echoed in the mining industry.

While it is appropriate and necessary that such issues be taken up within the mining industry and the relevant SADC structures, in part to rectify the very male-biased industry, these issues need to also be taken up in institutions not directly part of the mining industry, such as banking institutions, development agencies and learning institutions e.g universities. In attempting to redress some of these gender gaps, the

¹³ Namakau Kaingu, 1999, speech at the launch of the South African Women in Mining Association

mining industry should be more proactive in its recruitment of women, in offering training and skills development opportunities to women, to targeting women for bursaries and scholarships, and considering women for promotion and advancement within the industry.

The chairperson of the Trust, Namakau Kaingu acts as an adviser on small-scale mining on the SADC Committee of Mining Ministers, and is frequently invited to contribute her expertise at international and regional conferences and workshops. In November 2000, she contributed to the MMSD workshop on Small Scale Mining, Women's Involvement and Gender Issues, and in December 2000 she participated in the African Mining Ministers Conference where she presented a paper on "Mineral Resources and Poverty Alleviation"¹⁴.

Yvonne Mfolo of the South African Department of Minerals and Energy, who works on regional gender issues was unaware of legislation in SADC countries which either prohibits or explicitly promotes women entering the mining sector. She advised that a meeting of SADC Mining Ministers was taking place in Angola at the end of June 2001, at which there were plans underway to include a clause in the SADC mining protocol, which will further engender mining projects. The current SADC mining protocol (1997-2001) does not make any mention of gender issues¹⁵.

2.3 Attitudes to women miners in the region

Rita Mittal of the Association of the Zambian Women Miners, formed in 1996 says, "we face a lot of rejection and we are not taken seriously by people in the field. There are a lot of traditional obstacles along the way. Chiefs feel undermined when they see women coming to mine in their areas. They are hostile."

"In certain instances, cultural norms say that women are not supposed to go into the mines. There are some myths that if a woman goes underground, the stones (minerals) will disappear," Namakau Kaingu said.

"If you go to the ministries of mines in the region, you find that geologists are men, engineers are men, metallurgists are men, surveyors are men and the people in charge of explosives are all men, so these are the imbalances we want to change," says Kaingu. "Women can actually do all the other works that men are doing."

¹⁴ www.iiied.org.uk

¹⁵ SADC Mining Protocol, 1997

Although there are no exact figures on how many women are involved in mining, Kaingu estimates that there are more than 600,000 in the region.

Martha Bitwale, chairperson of the Tanzania Women Miners Association, says that in her country, more than 100,000 women are in mining.

A former teacher and accountant, Bitwale, who is also vice- chairperson of the SADC Women in Mining Trust, has been mining for 10 years now. "We didn't know what we were missing. There is lots of money to be made from mining." But like most women miners in Africa, Bitwale has found her share of problems.

"Being a woman, there are some natural hazards in the bush. There are wild animals; sometimes you need to climb a tree to run away from an animal. And because you are with men out there in the bush, you fear being raped," says Bitwale.¹⁶

3 WOMEN IN MINING - THE LOCAL PICTURE

The South African mining industry is very much a male domain. In 2000, women made up only 2,3 % of the workforce in the mining industry.¹⁷

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) argues that women are largely doing "women's work" in the industry. This is in part explained by a legacy of the legislation, which prohibited women from working in a mine.

That the mining industry does not employ many women does not mean the industry does not impact on women's lives. Because of the migrant labour system, the mining industry has shaped the lives of women in rural Southern Africa for many generations. The important role women play in maintaining families in the rural economy continues to be a key feature of the total picture of the mining industry. The legacy of the migrant labour system means in rural areas women – the wives, mothers and children of mineworkers, play a crucial role in maintaining the household economy¹⁸.

¹⁶ extracted from an interview by Lewis Machipisa, Inter Press Service, 1997

¹⁷ NUM Gender policy, 1998

¹⁸ For more information on gender issues in mining communities, see the Gender and Communities report.

The lack of women on the mines also creates a living and working environment that is heavily male-dominated; the gender imbalance on the mines makes it difficult to develop a genuine 'mining community', and has a wide range of social consequences that are negative for both men and women. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is high across mining communities in the region. Because of the single-sex hostel system, mineworkers were away from their families for prolonged periods of time. Many families across the SADC region were split, and many men started new families in the hostel towns. Sex work was also rife, often under unsafe conditions, encouraging the spreading of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. These have been some of the social consequences of the migrant labour and single-sex hostel arrangements on the mines.

3.1 Where are women located in the SA mining sector?

In addition to structural gender divisions within the South African mining industry, racial divisions persist in terms of where which women are located. Because apartheid education structurally undereducated black South Africans and privileged white South Africans, there are racial divisions evident in who works in professional and unskilled positions. This is reflected in gender breakdowns too. The National Union of Mineworkers notes that professional women in mining are likely to be white, while unskilled women in mining are likely to be black¹⁹.

As in other economic sectors, women in the industry are largely doing jobs which have traditionally been seen as women's work such as clerical, secretarial, catering, adult education, human resources, nursing and other health work. This means women are concentrated in pockets of support services in offices on mines, at head offices, laboratories and in mine hospitals. Whereas a small number of women are in managerial positions, they are largely white women²⁰.

While there is policy commitment on the part of government, to increasing the number of women engaged in the mining sector, it must be remembered that mining is a job-shedding sector with very few new job opportunities. The mining industry

¹⁹ NUM Gender Policy - Employment statistics with gender and race breakdowns to verify this statement were not forthcoming from the mining industry. However, in all the interviews conducted, I was advised that women are better represented in above-ground occupations than underground/

²⁰ Women in Mining: Increasing Access and Participation, 1999, MEPC, Johannesburg

itself has been hesitant in its commitment to actively increasing the numbers of women in its ranks. **Andries van Zyl of AngloGold** pointed out that while the company is committed to employing women, there are not many new jobs opening up, and this impacts on how rapidly the gender demographics of the company can change. On the other hand, it must be remembered that there are sectors of the mining industry, which are growing, such as platinum, and so the scope to transform gender relations in the growth industries should be closely monitored. Other areas where growth potential exists, creating space for women's participation include outsourcing and contract labour.

3.1.1 Pioneering Women

One of the most high profile women in the South African mining industry is **Bridgette Motsepe-Radebe**. She is the executive chairperson of **Mmakau Mining**, a contract mining company which owns 10% of Mvelaphanda Platinum which in turn owns 22.5% of Northam, South African's fourth largest platinum producer.

Motsepe-Radebe says there is still resistance to having women work in the mining production environment. "A factor in the maintenance of prejudices against women in this environment is that we are dealing with working class people who adhere to the traditional belief that a women's place is in the home". She says this belief crosses black and white workers.²¹

East Rand Proprietary Mine (ERPM) has received significant media attention for employing women on the mine. Twelve new women recruits were chosen out of 1000 applicants to shovel mud and rock to hoppers between 1000 and 2000m underground at the south east vertical shaft. Handre Mining, a subcontractor to ERPM decided to employ women after subtle pressure from the NUM and the South African Women in Mining Association (SAWIMA).

According to **Angeline Kotze**, administrator at Handre mining, many of the women came to mining in search of a secure income, while others aim to excel at mining as a career. A third of the women are former administrative employees ERPM. This reality speaks to other existing research, which finds

²¹ Mining Weekly, 15-21 September 2000

that the majority of women, particularly unskilled women, enter the mining industry as a means of survival. More skilled women tend to enter the sector to build a professional career²². Basic criteria for employment of the women at ERPM were: to be under the age of 35 and to pass a heat tolerance test. The group works a nine-hour shift, and work alongside male co-workers.

Kotze says that the male miners were initially mocking of the women miners, but began to respect the women as they realised the women were working as hard as the men were. Kotze says older employees were particularly resistant to having women underground, and in particular resisted the setting up of facilities for women underground. These facilities included setting up separate ablution facilities and change rooms for the women.

One of the women employees, Jabu Mchunu said she looked for work on the mine because of a lack of employment opportunities. She said, "half a loaf (of bread) is better than nothing and jobs are very scarce. When you find one, you keep it". She commutes to work, leaving home at 4am each day.²³

According to van Zyl, of AngloGold, the company has 13 mines on which women are employed. Van Zyl said it was difficult to give an accurate picture of where exactly women are located because the situation changes all the time. He said AngloGold employs two women engine drivers at the Kopanang mine. One woman engine driver was employed at Bambanani mine. Her husband was also employed there, and when he was transferred, she had to leave too. This example illustrates the difficulty working women face, between balancing family and work commitments. Van Zyl added that ten women loco operators were employed at a mine near Klerksdorp. He said the company also employed women geologists, engine drivers, conveyer belt operators and engineers.

Two years ago, at Joel Mine, an AngloGold mine in the Free State, 12 women went to work underground for the first time in SA history. According to Marietjie Nel, a Joel Mine spokesperson, the decision to employ women underground was taken after discussions with unions and trade associations.

²² Women in Mining: Increasing Access and Participation, 1999, MEPC, Johannesburg

²³ extracted from an article in Mining Weekly, 4-10 May 2001, and additional interviews

A push factor was that the Employment Equity Act requires employers to ensure their workforce is reflective of the community in which they operate. “There was an enormous demand for work on the mine from women, and they are supporting families in the community in the same number as men,” she said²⁴.

Van Zyl said AngloGold does not claim to be champions in terms of employment equity, saying they have too few women on the mines to be champions. He felt the company had made a proud start, a small, but successful start. “We are committed to involving more women in the mining industry and where we are at is only the start,” he said.

According to van Zyl the initial twelve women at Joel mine are still employed there and doing well. He said the company employed many women at its headquarters in Johannesburg. “Women are moving into the industrial relations sphere – something they were not involved in before. For a long time we have had women working in the communications department, and there is a senior woman manager in the Finance department,” he said.

Chamber of Mines President, **Rick Menell** says there has been significant growth in the number of women involved in artisanal mining, especially in quarrying and surface mining. He adds there are increasing numbers of women being employed by the formal mining houses in administrative, corporate and technical functions, although there are only a handful of women to be found underground.

In 2000, AngloGold employed 17 women as geologists, senior geologists, mineral resource evaluators and management trainees, with the majority of them being AngloGold bursars. The company has employed women geologists since the 1970’s, moving them into the field in the 1980’s and underground in the 1990’s²⁵.

3.1.2 Case Study: Tau Tona Mine

At the Tau Tona Mine, an AngloGold mine in Carletonville there are 5196 men and

²⁴ Mining Weekly, 7-13 January 2000

²⁵ Mining Weekly, 15-21 September 2000

34 women working on the mine. According to the Human Resources officer, David Magagula, women are concentrated in the costing and bonus departments, jobs “historically held by white women with accounting skills”.

Magagula said women were employed on the mine to begin to “address imbalances of the past by affording them opportunities to enter all jobs where they are academically qualified and declared physically fit as per occupational health practitioner’s pre-employment medical assessment”.

He said the value of employing women on the mine was that having women and men employees helped to focus on individual potential rather than on gender, and that it contributed to a more “socially normalised mining world as a place for all”. He said employing women in the mine challenged the mindset of viewing mining as a men’s world. Magagula said there was one woman employed in a production fitter and turner position, something not thought of as women’s work, and that this actively challenged gender stereotypes on the mine.

While there were very few women on the mine, they were doing a range of work including “secretarial jobs, onsetter, assist accountant, production fitter and turner, draughts person, assistant safety officer, senior valuator, accountant, senior asset protector, engineering planner and winding engine driver”. Magagula said that there were seven women in management and six in middle management in the mine.

He said “a large amount of our work force initially viewed the appointment of women in some historically men’s work as a joke. The picture has since changed”.

Practical changes to accommodate women included adjustments to the change house and the employment of a female senior asset protector to conduct security checks on her counterparts. “There is however a need to establish more toilet facilities underground”.

Magagula said there were no problems with employing women on the mine “as the majority of our workforce perceive these changes as necessary and appropriate and that they also in line with the long awaited changes in the country”.

Benefits of employing women on the mine have included:

- men are exposed to new challenges/ competition in the work place
- a new culture is slowly coming into effect as men realise the increasing amount of women around them e.g. swear words are diminishing as men realise that some of their mining swear terminology is no longer relevant.
- the culture of caring for one another (team effort) tends to come easy in the environment where male and female co-exist.

According to Magagula, women and men earn the same amount on the mine as they are subject to the same grading system.

Magagula said the only women-specific occupational health issue relates to pregnant underground employees who should not be exposed to radiation and other strenuous underground conditions.

3.1.3 Women in small-scale mining

With the increasing trend in the industry towards small scale and artisanal mining and sub-contracting, women are entering into mining production through these avenues. While women may be entering small-scale mining as a desperate means of survival, the potential for growth in the small-scale mining industry is great, and could pave the way for greater integration of women into mining.

Because SSM requires low levels of investment compared to large-scale mining, Reinoud Boers of the Chamber of Mines argues that this allows a window of opportunity for women. He says small-scale miners are able to mine certain reserves more profitably than large-scale mines. Another gap is the possibility of small-scale companies providing contract labour to large-scale companies.²⁶ While the possibilities for women to sustainably exploit the potential for small scale mining to create jobs, support women's empowerment and fight poverty must be explored,

²⁶ Boers, 2000

small scale mining should not be equated with women, and become the sector of mining in which women belong, to the exclusion of large-scale mining.²⁷

In terms of access to finance for junior and small-scale miners, the deputy minister of minerals and energy, Susan Shabangu announced in July 2000 that government and industry were starting a joint initiative called Bakubung, a financing mechanism for small-scale and junior miners.²⁸ No follow up information on the initiative was available at the time of writing this report.

3.2 Legislation and policy which impacts on women in mining

Section 9 of the South African constitution precludes discrimination based on gender. With the adoption of the **Mine Health and Safety Act** in 1996, restrictions on women working on mines, including underground, were lifted. At the time of writing this report, SADC-wide information on whether women were allowed to work underground in other countries was not available.

Current South African legislation on women and mining is more progressive than existing international norms and practices. The ILO's Convention 45 states that no female should be employed underground on any mine, but it does allow for national laws to provide for exemptions²⁹. The assumption behind the ILO ban on women working underground is the perceived danger of women working underground. The NUM argues that this argument is outdated. According to the South African Medical Research Council, they have no information that would support a blanket ban on women working underground. According to research conducted for this study, most mines do not allow pregnant women to work underground due to potential health risks.

South Africa's **Employment Equity Act** aims at "implementing positive measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by black people, women and people with disabilities, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce." and requires an employment equity plan (S17) and monitoring thereof (S21).

²⁷ For more information on women in small-scale mining, see the SSM report

²⁸ Enterprise, July 2000

²⁹ Boers, R, 2000, Opening Access to Mining for Women

This Act is aimed at redressing apartheid labour discrimination. According to the ILO, women's incomes are lower than men's in SA, but the average income of a black man is less than that of a white woman.³⁰ The mining houses surveyed for this study advised that women and men were paid equally for equal work as per South African labour legislation. It was beyond the scope of this study to verify this information through a detailed study.

Implications of the Employment Equity Act for the mining industry include the need for training opportunities to be extended more proactively to women, and the active promotion of qualified women within the mining hierarchy³¹. Implementation of the Act to the mining industry will ensure over time that the mining industry will gradually be transformed from a male dominated sphere into one more gender inclusive. It is however important that the mining industry recognise the social and economic value of employing women. It would be unfortunate if the industry only employed women to comply with labour legislation.

The **Labour Relations Act** is concerned primarily with the rights and obligations of organised workers. Only 26.3% of economically active women are members of trade unions³². Only 2% of NUM's members are women³³.

I have noted in official documents of government and the unions that there is generally an acknowledgement that the issue of women in mining needs to be addressed. In policy documents there is often one line which notes this, but I have not found much evidence of translating the commitment into practice. This could point to a lack of capacity to implement gender-specific initiatives within the mining industry.

3.3 Industry attitudes towards women on mines

According to Reinoud Boers of the Chamber of Mines, negative attitudes to women in mining are an important constraint to women's effective integration in the industry. Boers says there is a great deal of male scepticism that needs to be tackled. In trying to identify why women have been kept out of mining for so long Boers questions

³⁰ ILO Country Review, 1996

³¹ Wentzel et al, 1999, Women in Mining: increasing access and participation

³² O'Regan and Thompson, 1993 cited in Wentzel et al, MEPC, 1999

³³ NUM Gender Policy Document, 1998

whether paternalism and prejudice could be part of the problem. He cites fears and perceptions that women may distract men if they worked side by side with them. That some men believe women's place is in the home, not in the mine, and that the largely migrant workforce living in single sex accommodation could be a deterrent to women in the mines.

Throughout the literature review and interview process, there was a strong sense of mining being a male domain. There is suspicion about women working in the sector with beliefs that having women underground is unlucky. However once women start working underground, the initial scepticism and resistance of men seems to change into respect, when men realise that the women are able to do the same work, as well as the men. Throughout the research, there was no evidence of gender-based conflict on the mines. Some of those surveyed feared that sexual harassment may result if women worked underground, but companies surveyed who were in fact employing women underground said this was not a problem. This experience bears out a study by the Minerals and Energy Policy Centre, which similarly found that sexual harassment was a fear, but that in practice it was not a major problem in the mine workplace³⁴.

3.4 Accommodating Women

In order for women to work underground, a number of practical changes need to take place. Ablution facilities and changing rooms have needed to be created for women.

This is no different to other institutions which have been male domains. In 1994, when the first democratically elected parliament was elected, there were no toilet facilities for women in parliament³⁵. Very soon toilet facilities and childcare facilities were created in parliament to create a more women-friendly and family friendly institution. A similar process is gradually taking place in the mining industry.

The NUM argues there are specific occupational health and safety requirements to consider when integrating women into the industry.

³⁴ Women in Mining: Increasing Access and Participation, 1999, MEPC, Johannesburg

³⁵ Redefining Politics: South African Women and Democracy, CGE, 1998

- Women differ from men both physically and physiologically, and a workplace or work system, including technology, designed for men in some respects would be unsuitable for women.
- Women's reproductive roles (pregnancy and childcare) and their interaction with work needs to be considered.
- Women have traditionally been banned from working with materials and processes likely to damage the developing foetus e.g. lead³⁶.

There was very little documented information available about the real risks involved in women working underground. There is a clear need for detailed studies to be conducted on the real and potential dangers of employing women underground.

4 LESSONS LEARNT

While the policy and legislative environment in South Africa is conducive to integrating women into mining and must be applauded, there are very little **monitoring and evaluation mechanisms** in place to track progress in terms of advancing gender equality within this sector. A key lesson to be learnt is that when an enabling environment is created, based on political will, there is a need to ensure matching resources to track and monitor progress towards achieving targets. There is also a need for the mining industry to match the government policy commitment to creating a more gender equitable industry. Industry action on this issue has been slow.

5 BEST PRACTICE

Because of the South African government's constitutional commitment to ensuring gender equality, a number of laws have been passed to aid this process. The legislative and policy environment is now an enabling one to ensure that women advance in the mining sector. Also, both the Minister and Deputy Minister of Minerals and Energy are women. Whether this has had an impact on whether gender issues have received more attention than if there had been male ministers is hard to predict. However, the fact that women were appointed into ministerial positions covering traditionally male sectors, also speaks to a commitment to changing the face of the industry.

³⁶ NUM, Occupational Health and Safety Policy, 2000

While there has been fear and superstition surrounding women's employment on the mines, where companies have taken the step to integrate women into the workforce, the experience has been positive, and in the case of the Tau Tona mine, contributed to building team spirit, and a more normalised and equitable mining community.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS/ CONCLUSION

6.1 Targets for Change

There is an urgent need for an industry-wide strategy for the integration of women into the mining sector. Such a strategy should be SADC-wide, building on the enabling environment which exists through the SADC Heads of State's commitment to Gender Equality and via the Beijing Platform of Action. The strategy will include time-frames and targets for the advancement of women in the sector. Progress will be measured via a SADC-wide annual report progress. The strategy will include a package of measures to support the advancement of women in the industry. The strategy should be developed in partnership with SADC, individual governments, the private sector and trade unions.

The strategy will contribute to creating a more healthy and equitable work environment, increase women's employment opportunities, support women's advancement in the sector through skills development, reduce poverty and contribute to sustainable development.

6.2 Speeding up recruitment and increasing the numbers of women in mining

The benefits of integrating women into the mining industry are vast, ranging from creating a more equitable work environment, to contributing to women's empowerment and poverty reduction. The costs of integrating women are low, and the benefits from a sustainable development perspective are high.

The numbers of women engaged in the large-scale mining sector, while gradually increasing, remain minimal. In order to transform the industry into one which reflects the context in which it operates, **more women need to be employed in the industry.**

6.3 Lack of information/ Research Recommendations:

There is very little published research on women in mining in South Africa and the SADC region. In my research I have noted that this does not appear to be unique to

the region as there is little published work globally. This suggests that the area of gender and mining is vastly under-researched.

Recommended research:

- A study of **growth sectors** within the regional mining industry, such as platinum. These industries are growing in the context of a progressive legal environment as regards gender. An opportunity exists for the growth sectors to constitute more gender equitable teams compared to the sunset industries. A research project which tracks and monitors the growth and development of the growth industries from a gender perspective would provide cutting edge information on whether the industry is able to adapt to socially transformed conditions.
- The relationship between **gender and race** within the sector has proven to be one around which there is hesitation to engage. The relationship between race and skilled and unskilled work needs to be further explored from a gender perspective. Are black women able to move up the ranks of the industry? Are black women likely to be employed in professional positions? Are white women likely to be employed underground?
- A SADC-wide study to explore the potential of integrating women's participation in mining to grow the sector, advance women and build the economy. Need to look at policy and practice in all of the SADC countries.
- Health risks of employing women underground. Very little information is available on this issue. There is a need for definitive research on the issue as there seems to be some uncertainty about what kinds of work women can and cannot do.

6.4 Translating Policy Commitment into Practice – Governments and Industry

In official documents of government and the unions there is generally an acknowledgement that the issue of women in mining needs to be addressed. In policy documents there is often one line which notes this, but I have not found significant evidence of translating the commitment into practice. This could point to the existence of political will, but a lack of capacity to implement commitments. Further investigation needs to be done into how paper commitments are being translated into practice and how progress is measured.

6.5 Exploiting the Opportunity of SSM:

SSM is the one mining sector with a great deal of growth potential. Given the chronic unemployment in South Africa and the frequency of mine closures, it is likely that more and more South Africans will move into small scale mining. There is a need for private sector, government and SADC institutions to forge partnerships to create a more enabling environment for SSM – in terms of access to training, skills development, and finance. This could be a window of opportunity for women miners to enter the industry as major players.

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8 APPENDICES

8.1 Contacts

The following is a list of people contacted during the preparation of this report.

Name	Organisation	Title	Tel	E-mail	Type of Contact
Eva Pilane	NUM	Presidency		epilane@num.org.za	Telephone/ E-mail
Tania Manuel	NUM	Gender			Telephone
Naledi Mlambo	NUM	Gender			Telephone
Thembi Ndlovu	NUM	Organising/ Gender		tndlovu@num.org.za	Telephone, Questionnaire
Ms Bopape-Nkosi	DME	Gender	012 317 9000		Telephone
Boni Nkwandla	DME	SAWIMA/ Gender	012 317 9426		Telephone, E-mail
Emile Roux	DME	Statistics	012 3179494		Telephone, E-mail
Kate Philip	MDA	Director	011 403 0277	kphilip@mda.org.za	E-mail
Angeline Kotze	ERPM/ Handre Mining	Administrator responsible for women mine workers	083 7122351		Telephone
Ms Blackburn	AngloGold	PR	637 6379		Telephone
Ian Heyns	AngloGold	HR Manager		iheyns@anglogold.com	E-mail, Questionnaire

Cathy Fazey	AngloGold	HR			E-mail, Questionnaire
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Namakau Kaingu	SADC Women and Mining Trust	Director			E-mail
Daan Adlem	Tau Lekoa Mine	HR Manager	018 4785451		E-mail, Telephone, Questionnaire
Gopolong Modise	Tau Tona Mine	Acting Snr HR Manager	018 700 2344		E-mail, Questionnaire
Steve Kleingeld	Joel Mine	Acting HR Manager	057 733 7060		E-mail, Questionnaire
Peter Lombard	Bambanani Mine	Snr HR Manager	057 904 6140		E-mail, Questionnaire
Stef Zanchi	Anglogold	HR Manager		zanchisl@anglogold.com	E-mail, Questionnaire

8.2 Questionnaire 1

The following questionnaire was used to interview corporates at head office level.

A: Policy Environment

1 Does the organisation have an **employment equity policy**? If so, is the policy explicit on gender targets?

What has been the experience of implementing the policy?

Is the organisation managing to meet its targets, and what are the factors influencing the pace of progress?

2 Is there a specific policy in place to support the **advancement of women** in the organisation?

What has been the experience of implementing this policy?

3 Is there a **training/ skills development policy** and budget in place?

Is there a specific commitment to supporting women's skills development, and is this illustrated in spending?

4 In terms of the companies bursary and scholarships programme, are women in particular encouraged to apply? If so, how do you go about encouraging women to apply?

5 How many **women** and how many **men** are employed in this organisation?

At what levels and in what positions are women and men predominantly employed? (Annual reports and HR stats would be useful).

Do you think there are particular areas of work which are seen to be 'women's work' or 'men's work' in the organisation? Which areas are these? Why?

B: Power, Decision-Making, Access and Control

At what levels of management are women represented in proportion to men? Doing what?

Is there a board of directors, or are there shareholders of this company? How many women, how many men? How were they selected?

C: Work culture

Is this a **women-friendly workplace**? Why? How?

Does the company provide child-care facilities? Do you have a breast-feeding policy?

Are there family policies in place with regards to maternity and paternity leave? Any others? What are they?

D: Women in the Workplace

In order to have women work in the mines, is there anything that needs to be practically changed to accommodate them? (e.g. toilet facilities, accommodation, security check) Please describe what needs to change, and how this was realised.

Were there any unexpected/ unplanned arrangements that needed to be made to accommodate women? Please describe.

Are there any problems with having women on the mine? What are they?

What are the benefits of employing women on the mines?

Do women earn the same as men who do the same jobs? Why?

Are there any women-specific occupational health or safety risks involved in women working on the mines? What are they and how has this been managed?

8.3 Questionnaire 2

The following questionnaire was used at field operation level:

1. How many men and how many women work on this mine?
2. Is there a particular job in which there are many women? Why are there many women in this job?
3. Why have you employed women on the mine?
4. In your experience, what is the value of employing women on the mine?
5. Are there jobs which women are particularly good at? Which jobs? Why?
6. Compared to men, at what levels, and in what positions are women employed?
7. Are there any women in management positions? How many? Doing what?
8. Do you think that the work that women do on the mines challenges ideas of what is women's work, and what is men's work? How? Why?
9. How have men reacted to having women on the mine? Is there a difference between how men originally reacted and how they feel now? Please describe.
10. In order to have women work in the mines, is there anything that needs to be practically changed to accommodate them? (e.g. toilet facilities, accommodation, security check) Please describe what needs to change, and how this was realised.
11. Were there any unexpected/ unplanned arrangements that needed to be made to accommodate women? Please describe.
12. Are there any problems with having women on the mine? What are they?
13. What are the benefits of employing women on the mines?
14. Do women earn the same as men who do the same jobs? Why?
15. Are there any women-specific occupational health or safety risks involved in women working on the mines? What are they and how has this been managed?
16. Bursaries and scholarships – are women in particular encouraged to apply? If so, how do you go about encouraging women to apply?