

**"UNITY IS STRENGTH"**

## Botswana Mine Workers Union

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**"MOSEKA PHOFU YA GAABO GA SWE LENTSWE"**

7<sup>th</sup> April 2020

### **Press Release on De Beers Group 20 Million Contribution to Covid-19 Relief Fund**

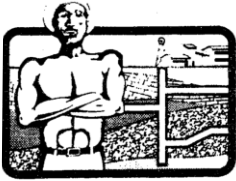
Botswana Mine Workers Union (BMWU) and Botswana Labour Migrants Association (BoLAMA) are elated that De Beers Group has heeded the call made to the mining sector on the 24 March 2020 by BoLAMA and has responded with a sizeable contribution of 20 million towards the fight against Covid-19 pandemic.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, BoLAMA issued a press release calling on the private sector to support the Government of Botswana's (GoB) response efforts to combat Covid-19. The call specifically targeted the mining industry. A subsequent call by GoB to the private sector for donations was made and a fund was established on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020. On the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020, De Beers Group made an announcement on several of its social media platforms, of a \$ 2,500,000 donation made across Botswana and Namibia as relief support towards the public health emergency. The amount directed to Botswana was \$ 1,700,00 million of which BWP 10 million injected into the Covid-19 Relief Fund and another BWP 10 million slated for logistics, supply and community support.

BMWU and BoLAMA consider this gesture to be indicative of Anglo American/De Beers Group commitment to responsible mining in line with its Corona-Virus Response Planning Community Guidance of 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, by putting communities first. This commitment was echoed by the CEO of Anglo American, Mark Cutifani, early this year at the Investing in African Mining Indaba in Cape Town. This is a deviation from supply-side CSR, which is often linked with managing reputation and financial benefits without considering impact of interventions. We believe this is a show of commitment by De Beers, of its preparedness to deal with the social and economic after-effects of the pandemic on its direct employees and contractors during and post the pandemic. We are confident that Anglo American/De Beers possess all the experience and technical know-how in dealing with public health emergencies as evidenced by their intervention in 2014 during the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone.

The Secretary General of BMWU, Mr Tebogo Makhale said *"It is a milestone gesture that sets a benchmark of visionary and compassionate leadership that should be emulated and supported by the entire mining industry. It is a commendable step in the right direction towards an effort to save the entire humanity as well as workers of Botswana"*.

In buttressing these sentiments, BoLAMA Executive Secretary Mr Kitso Phiri stated that *"private-public partnerships are needed for a strategic and coordinated response to covid-19. Mining as the economic bedrock of the country should play an even bigger role in the fight against the pandemic. What De Beers has done is commendable; they heeded not*



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*only the local call from BoLAMA but also the international call by WHO and the ILO to act responsibly amidst the pandemic. We await advise from the sector on what social protection measures they have put in place to mitigate income insecurities and catastrophic household costs of ex-employees and their families. This response is going to require significant financial support from all sectors and we should begin to think around strategies for domestic mobilization of resources to stand a chance of defeating this monster"*

We call on:

- other mining companies and allied industries to follow the example set by De Beers;
- the Botswana Chamber of Mines (BCM) to give an industry position on social protection strategies for employees impacted by covid-19 and how they intend to work with Government in realizing them;
- the private sector to have a vision beyond their short-term financial interests, by realigning and contributing 50% of their unused CSR budget towards the Covid-19 response;
- the government to consider a enacting a law that makes CSR mandatory for all companies

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