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Aurora Empowerment Systems finally liquidated. Directors held accountable for R1,7 billion damage

Aurora Empowerment Systems was finally liquidated on the 4th of October 2011 when the North Gauteng High Court ratified the R9 million liquidation application of Copper Eagle, who acted as contractors for the company.

Meanwhile, the liquidators of the liquidated Pamodzi Gold mines are expected to submit a claim of up to R1,7 billion against Aurora Empowerment Systems' four directors, Khulubuse Zuma (President Jacob Zuma's nephew), Zondwa Mandela (Nelson Mandela's grandson), Michael Hulley (President Zuma's attorney) and Thulani Ngubani (commercial director), for the damage resulting from the looting of the mining assets under their management.

According to trade union Solidarity, the liquidation order in terms of section 424 of the Companies Act paves the way for legal action against the directors of this company for the Aurora disaster.

"Aurora Empowerment Systems is the parent company appointed by the Pamodzi liquidators to manage the Pamodzi mines in Springs and Orkney," explained Gideon du Plessis, Deputy General Secretary of Solidarity. "The liquidation order will hopefully result in the directors of Aurora Empowerment Systems being brought to book for their mismanagement and self-enrichment," he added. One of Aurora Empow-

erment Systems' affiliates, Kaunda Global Mining Resources, trading as Aurora Gold East Rand and Aurora Gold Orkney, was placed under provisional liquidation due to a separate liquidation application of R1,3 million by another creditor, Nelesco. This came after a liquidation application of R3,1 million brought by Solidarity in May this year. The final liquidation of this affiliate, under which the contracts of service of all Aurora employees fell, is expected to be ratified on 1 November.

DiamondCorp mulls R143m Lace mine development

Kroonstad – The board of South African diamond miner DiamondCorp is expected to decide on the planned R143-million underground development of its Lace diamond mine near Kroonstad, in the next four weeks (reported 5th October 2011).

The JSE- and Aim-listed diamond firm was eager to start with development work on this high-value project, as the company announced the results of successful bulk sampling undertaken on the mine's kimberlitic pipe.

The bulk sampling confirmed a better-than-expected grade of 26 carats per hundred tons (cpht) in the mine's pinkish brown volcanoclastic kimberlite (VK) pipe, between levels 25 and 26. The first 1 500 ct run-of-mine recovered from the bulk test was valued in the current market by the SA Diamond Exchange at \$160/ct.

A bonus is expected when the underground development reaches deeper, as the high-grade kimberlite pipe diameter may be 50% larger in size from level 33 downwards.

Urgent action against Delf Sand

AfriForum has called on the Department of Water and Environmental Affairs to take urgent action against Delf Sand, the mining group which supplies silica sand and which has applied illegal mining practices in the Pretoria area for almost ten years (3 October 2011). This comes after a water analysis by the CSIR revealed unusually high levels of aluminium and copper in the Edendale Spruit due to mine water that flows into the marsh.

This water is used by, among others, residents of Mamelodi, a township northeast of Pretoria, said Julius Kleynhans, Head of Environmental Affairs at AfriForum. According to Kleynhans, a high intake of aluminium affects people's memory. Copper intake can cause gastrointestinal problems that may cause long-term liver and kidney damage.

The pollution has a negative impact on the spruit that also runs through Pienaarspoort close to Rayton. The Department of Water Affairs re-

cently issued a directive to Delf Sand, prohibiting the mine from dumping mine water in the Edendale Spruit. The directive also requires compliance with the GN 704 regulations of the National Water Act (Act no. 36 of 1998).

"This directive was ignored by Delf Sand and polluted water is still flowing into the marsh," said Kleynhans.

"Ecosystems in South Africa are being changed and destroyed by water pollution. Our environment is being destroyed due to careless management by companies like Delf Sand. Poor people, in particular, eventually bear the brunt of this destruction."

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