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Implats wage settlement

Impala Platinum Holdings Limited (Implats) and its operating subsidiaries Impala Platinum Limited (Impala) and Marula Platinum (Marula) are pleased to announce that they have reached a two-year settlement on wages with the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

The agreement followed the NUM declaring a dispute with the world's second-largest platinum miner in July.

The offer provides for:

- Increases on basic pay of 10% to A and B-level and 8.5% to C level employees along with various amendments to other benefits in the first year.
- Increases on basic pay of 10%, 9% and 8% to A, B and C-level employees respectively in the second year.

This wage agreement secures a desirable two year settlement period in which to further cement business performance and strengthen employee relations.

The union demanded a 14% salary hike in a one-year deal, while Implats initially offered 6.5% for the lowest-earning workers on a three-year agreement.

The wage agreement is in line with the deal reached between the NUM and Anglo American Platinum (Amplats). Amplats agreed to a 10% wage increase for lower paid workers and 8.5% for higher paid workers in the first year, and 9% and 8%, respectively in the second year.



R33.5-million Diamond Project in NW

TSX- and JSE-listed Rockwell Diamonds has completed the R33.5-million acquisition of the Tirisano mine, which would contribute to ramping up the miner's production profile, CEO James Campbell said on Tuesday (Oct 11).

The 90 000-m3 a month North West province operation, which has been on care and maintenance for two years, was of strategic importance to Rockwell's long-term growth objectives, he said, adding that it would enhance the company's cash flows in the long term.

"The quality and price per carat of the stones recovered at Tirisano during the commissioning and recovery testing phase are encouraging as these exceeded what was achieved by the mine's previous operators," Campbell explained.

During the next six months, the focus at Tirisano is optimising the mining and plant efficiencies, including the development of long-term solutions for the front end. Work would also continue on the concept designs to increase the plant's capacity.

Rockwell has established a mining fleet, processing plant and final recovery capacity on site over the past 18 months to progress to commercial production. Plant modifications were completed in-house, using unused existing plant and machinery, which was redeployed from Rockwell's Wouterspan and other Northern Cape mines.

Furthermore, official ownership brings with it the assurance that Rockwell would bring Tirisano's first



CEO James Campbell (Picture by: Duane Daws)

two production lines into commercial production by the end of the third quarter, which has the potential to create 200-plus jobs in the Ventersdorp region, where the local Mogopa community is the company's broad-based black economic-empowerment partner.

Final acceptance and release documents were signed on October 7, the company said, with all conditions being met including the mineral property transfer approval and the Industrial Development Corporation's commitment to consolidate the company's debt finance with deferred payment terms.

SRK Consulting Africa is working on developing the geotechnical parameters that are being used by openpit mining consultancy, Tacmin Madini, to finalise the optimised mine design and extraction plan.



Diamonds

15 000 govt jobs available

Government is close to filling vacant positions with only about 15 000 posts still open at national and provincial level, Minister in the Presidency Collins Chabane revealed.

At the end of March, there were 8 600 unfilled posts at national level out of a total of 300 182 that had been budgeted for.

The figures at provincial level were 7 000 unfilled posts out of a total of 862 750 funded posts.

"There are some remaining vacancies in some departments, particularly for highly skilled positions such as engineers, where it has been found to be difficult to find candidates," Chabane noted after a meeting of the President's Co-ordinating Council in Pretoria. "The concerned departments are currently engaged in recruitment processes to fill these positions." Figures for local government were not provided, but Chabane said, "Local government has filled most of their funded vacant posts over the past year."



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