

## **Response To Statement from Justice Foundation for Porgera Limited**

**PORT MORESBY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA – MONDAY 17 AUGUST, 2020:** *Barrick Niugini Limited, the majority owner and operator of the Porgera Gold Mine in Enga, Papua New Guinea, provides the following response to a recent statement issued by the Justice Foundation for Porgera Limited.*

Barrick Niugini Limited categorically rejects the many false and/or defamatory assertions contained in the Justice Foundation media statement of August 12 2020.

In regards to claims of environmental damage, BNL notes that the Porgera Mine, like all other mines in the country, operates under strict environmental conditions pursuant to PNG law.

As with any mine, there are impacts on the environment that necessarily arise as a consequence of mining activities at Porgera, however these impacts are regulated by the stringent conditions of mining and environment permits issued by the Government of Papua New Guinea, and are managed under an ISO14001 certified Environmental Management System (EMS).

The mine operates an extensive environmental monitoring program which has consistently shown that mining operations have been undertaken in compliance with the environmental permits issued by the PNG Government and that overall, the condition of the environment is consistent with predictions made prior to operations commencing in 1990.

Further, the company notes that environmental management practices at the mine were studied and approved by the Government prior to the grant of the Special Mining Lease.

Contrary to the claims made by the Justice Foundation, the PNG Government, through the Conservation and Environmental Protection Authority (CEPA) has also carried out regular audits of the environmental performance of the mine, and has always found it to be in compliance with its permits.

BNL notes that the Porgera Mine pays significant statutory land use compensation to traditional landowners of the land on which the mine is situated. The company notes that this compensation is determined by Government regulation, and that contrary to the Justice Foundation claims, the mine has always complied with its compensation payment obligations, and has made land and environment compensation payments of more than K279million since mining at Porgera first began.

The company further notes that despite the unfounded claims of the Justice Foundation, it has complied with its relocation obligations by relocating 1,395 families out of operational areas since mine construction commenced in the Porgera Valley.

In respect to the various allegations of the Justice Foundation that the company or its employees have been involved in human rights abuses or criminal conduct, the company policy on these matters is entirely clear – it does not, and will not, tolerate any unlawful behavior on the part of its employees or contractors, and it has always, and will always, cooperate entirely with any formal investigation by relevant Government authorities into allegations of this nature.

In accordance with its corporate Human Rights Policy, on every occasion where such a claim has been made in the past, the company has encouraged those making the claim to both report the matter to appropriate authorities (particularly the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary, in cases where the allegations involve criminal conduct), and to provide any evidence or information regarding the claim so that it may be properly investigated.

It is important to note that formal statutory and regulatory mechanisms (including police and courts) exist to receive, investigate and rule upon the types of claims that have arisen from time to time, and it is the responsibility of those making such claims to bring their allegations to the appropriate authorities so that they may be acted upon in accordance with the law.

As the Justice Foundation Chairman, Jonathan Paraia – previously a mine employee and member of the Porgera Joint Venture Management Committee - would know, the Porgera Gold Mine has seen over thirty years of responsible and efficient mining operations, during which the mine has made an enormous contribution to the economic development of Porgera, Enga Province and Papua New Guinea, paying more than K4 billion to the National Government in the form of taxes and duties, and making royalty payments of over K650 million, shared between Porgera landowners and the Enga Provincial Government.

Since it was first constructed, the Porgera Mine has also spent more than K539 million kina to improve schools, build health facilities, provide water and free power to local communities, and to build better bridges and new and wider roads in Porgera and Enga Province more widely.

The mine has spent over K5 billion on contracts with Papua New Guinean companies since mining began, including more than K1.3 billion with Porgeran contractors and suppliers, and until the recent Government decision forcing the cessation of mining operations, employed more than 3,300 Papua New Guineans.

In light of these facts, the allegations made by the Justice Foundation are simply misleading at best, and do not represent the views of the vast majority of Porgera Landowners, who support the re-opening of the Porgera Mine under the management of Barrick Niugini Limited.

**>ENDS<**

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The Porgera Mine is a joint venture between Barrick and the Zijin Mining Group, which each owns 47.5%, with the remaining 5% interest held by Mineral Resources Enga (owned equally by Porgera Special Mining Lease landowners and the Enga Provincial Government). The Mine is operated by Barrick (Niugini) Limited (“BNL”).

*Porgera Gold Mine – Part of the Community*

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