

## PRESS RELEASE

### **SAUMA raises concerns about in situ uranium mining in the Stampriet Artesian Basin at a meeting with Parliamentary Standing Committee**

Since June this year, the Stampriet Aquifer Uranium Mining Association (SAUMA) repeatedly requested an audience with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Natural Resources on the risks associated with in situ leach mining of uranium, without success.

SAUMA then by chance got wind of a meeting on this issue scheduled between the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Natural Resources as well as the Standing Committee on Economics and Public Administration with the community of Leonardville on October 11. During this meeting SAUMA publicly requested to be granted an audience with both Committees, which the chair of the Natural Resources Committee acknowledged. Another meeting was then proposed by the Chair, Honourable Tjekero Tweya, to be held in Leonardville again, on Friday, November 17, 2023.

Only two members of the Committee on Natural Resources attended this event, but no representative of the Standing Committee on Public Administration was present. Various regional leaders (Governors, Councillors, etc.) and community representatives – all of whom solely rely on the underground aquifers in the basin for their drinking water - attended the gathering. The purpose of this meeting was to provide both committees with technical information and raise awareness regarding the risks associated with in situ leach mining of uranium within the Stampriet Artesian Basin (SAB).

During the event, SAUMA delivered a powerful and fact-based presentation on the process of in situ leach mining, emphasizing the potential risks and outlining its adverse effects. The presentation covered key aspects such as the definition and procedure of in situ leach mining, the critical dependence of everyone living and farming in this region on the water in the underground aquifers, water usage and consumption patterns within the basin and the problems inherent to in situ leach mining.

SAUMA also elaborated on the challenges of restoring the mining areas, the features that will result in leakage of the uranium-rich mine solution from the mined aquifer to other aquifer layers, the presence of radioactivity, the build-up of heavy metal toxicity and the spread of both from the mine area far into the rest of the aquifer. SAUMA provided examples where similar in situ mine operations elsewhere in the world had resulted in massive contamination of underground aquifers. The presentation was conducted in English, Otjiherero, Nama-Damara and Afrikaans with

translators assigned to ensure effective communication and understanding among all participants.

It is important to note that SAUMA does not oppose mining in general but strongly objects to mining activities within the Stampriet Artesian Basin, Namibia's primary and largest artesian water resource. While acknowledging the potential for job opportunities that in situ leach uranium mining may hold for Namibians, the committee firmly believes that the environmental contamination of our most valuable water resource far outweighs any short-term benefits. The long-term consequences and damage are simply too significant to ignore.

SAUMA earnestly appealed to the Standing Committee to consider the future implications and the irrevocable effects of the decisions made today. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, SAUMA requested the involvement of independent specialists, including hydrologists and geologists, to conduct a thorough scientific investigation into the hazards associated with in situ uranium leach mining within a critical and absolutely unique drinking-water aquifer.

SAUMA extends its sincere gratitude to the members of the Standing Committee for their attentiveness, receptiveness, and participation in the meeting. The association remains committed to fostering dialogue and collaboration to safeguard Namibia's water resources and secure a sustainable future for generations to come and welcomes close involvement with ALL impacted Committee members.

#### **TEAM SAUMA**

22 November 2023

#### **About SAUMA:**

Stampriet Aquifer Uranium Mining Association (SAUMA) is a non-profit association dedicated to promoting sustainable and responsible practices within a protected water area. SAUMA works closely with stakeholders, governmental bodies, and local communities to ensure that possible mining activities are conducted in a sustainable and environmentally responsible manner for the benefit of our Namibian nation, now and into the future.