

Press Release

For immediate release

25 September 2018



South African Institute of Race Relations
The power of ideas

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South Africa's geology is the bedrock of enormous potential

The latest report from the Institute of Race Relations (IRR), 'What opportunities does South Africa's geological endowment offer for the country's future?', examines the scope for making the most of the country's underlying geology, the foundation of a wide range of vital economic sectors from mining and industry to tourism.

The specialist authors of the report, Banzi Geotechnics, argue that '(t)here is much that can be done to encourage and empower the population of South Africa to fully and enthusiastically engage with its extraordinary geological heritage'.

They write: 'This must be done in ways that optimise the resources and opportunities in a sustainable manner to the benefit of the largest number of people and the environment as a whole.'

'How this can be achieved is the subject of much research and debate, but success will depend on political will and adequate financial and technical support underpinned by comprehensive enabling legislation and regulation.'

The report offers 'a broad sweep' of South Africa's 'geological heritage', showing 'the dependence of the environment on the geological architecture'.

It notes that the challenge facing the country is: 'How does one unlock this to the benefit of the largest number of the population in a sustainable manner, without causing grief and harm?'

The report highlights opportunities for exploiting the country's geological endowment by, among other things:

- Developing geologically based tourism and recreation in all forms and kinds, as the easiest way to boost economic growth;
- Promoting water beneficiation from mines, polluted river systems and dams to spawn technological innovation, fixed capital investment and 'downstream' research and technologies;
- Boosting development and international marketing of South African metals and minerals which are strategic to emerging technologies in the Green Revolution and Industry 4.0;
- Creating enabling and managed environments for micro-scale (one person) mining and beneficiation projects;
- Regulating artisanal mining, which occurs in all 9 provinces, and placing it under a specific department of government and in the provinces; and
- Boosting beneficiation of mine wastes, 'possibly one of the most pressing and important mine-related activities'.

The report argues that these and other 'actions and areas of focus ... could provide a solution, predicated on enabling legislation, positive leadership, security of tenure, trust in the law and, above all, an informed and stable society'.

Read the full report [here](#).

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