

SACBC STATEMENT

ON MINERS' DEMANDS (20/8/85)

The Southern African catholic Bishops' Conference called on the Chamber of Mines to accept the legitimate demands of thousands of mineworkers and avert a potentially violent strike.

Archbishop Denis Hurley, president of the Bishops' Conference said, after a meeting of bishops and mine chaplains in Johannesburg to discuss the pending National Union of Mineworkers' strike which could affect about 400 000 mineworkers, that:

“Confrontation looms on South Africa's mines with the possibility of a mass strike. A large proportion of mineworkers earn below subsistence wages, even after increases implemented by the Chamber of Mines.”

“Now that workers are unionised they demand a living wage, that is, a wage that enables them to provide decent support for themselves and their families.

“It is essential that all employers in South Africa come to terms with such legitimate demands of workers and we express the hope that the Chamber of Mines will see differences with the mine workers in this light and so contribute to a satisfactory resolution of that difference.

“This is all the more necessary because if a strike occurs it could lead to widespread violence and immense suffering.”