



CHAMBER OF MINES  
of South Africa

# MEDIA STATEMENT

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For immediate release

174/2017

## CHAMBER EXPRESSES DISAPPOINTMENT AT INDUSTRY SAFETY PERFORMANCE IN 2017

### *Intensive focus by CEOs on falls of ground*

**Johannesburg, 6 November 2017:** The Chamber of Mines is deeply disturbed and disappointed at the deterioration in safety performance during 2017, and particularly at the number of accidents related to seismic activity and subsequent fall of ground incidents in the past several weeks in each of which up to five employees have died.

Fatal accidents last week raised the number of fatalities in 2017 to 76, above the 73 reported in 2016. This is particularly disappointing given the consistent improvement the industry has seen over the past two decades. Since the dawn of democracy, between 1993 and 2016, the number of fatalities in the industry declined by around 88%. Fatalities as a result of fall of ground incidents declined by 92% over the same period. Fall of ground incidents, particularly at deep level mines, is an area that joint industry efforts have focused on most intensively in the past several years. This is reflected in the more than R150 million that the Mine Health and Safety Council (MHSC) has invested in falls of ground research recognising that South Africa operates the deepest mines in the world. The MHSC is a body representing government, organised labour and business, which celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The collaborative approach amongst stakeholders is globally recognised as a cornerstone of the significant reductions in fatalities.

As Anglo American Platinum CEO Chris Griffith, who is the current chairperson of the Chamber's CEO Zero Harm Forum, says these developments "have strengthened the resolve of the CEOs to work together with our tripartite stakeholders in government and organised labour to accelerate initiatives that could improve this unacceptable performance."



In 2012, the Chamber established the CEO Zero Harm Forum (formerly called the CEO Elimination of Fatalities Team) to visibly lead by example, to drive health and safety initiatives and to share experiences to help address key challenges in a manner that will enable the industry to achieve the 2024 milestones and accelerate the industry's journey to zero harm. Key components of this strategy are the demonstration of industry leadership at CEO level; sharing company experiences and helping each other deal with and solve key challenges; and establishing working protocols with industry stakeholders and communities. Among the priorities have been the development and management of critical controls for fatal risks, with an increasing emphasis on controls that are higher up the hierarchy of controls; and instilling a culture transformation in the industry that will change the behaviour of people at all levels to enhance their compliance and agility for change.

Chris Griffith: "On behalf of Chamber-member CEOs, I want to assure our employees, their families and our communities that, even though progress has been made, we recognise that much remains to be done and that every fatality is one too many".

Mr Griffith has informed the Chief Inspector of Mines of all efforts currently being made to reverse this trend. Among these and noting that fatalities from seismic events (rockbursts) have increased whilst rockfalls have decreased, AngloGold Ashanti South Africa head Chris Sheppard, sponsor of the MOSH fall of ground team, will lead a task team which will develop a summary of rockburst leading practices and propose the best ways to share these efforts with all those who are involved in deep level mining.

"CEOs are doing all in their power to make mining more safe and to work with the other stakeholders in the industry to ensure that mineworkers return home from work unharmed every day," concluded Mr Griffith.

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