

NATIONAL DAY OF HEALTH AND SAFETY IN MINING 2023

WELCOME ADDRESS BY MINERALS COUNCIL PRESIDENT, NOLITHA FAKUDE

17 AUGUST 2023

Chief Inspector of Mines, Mr David Msiza, and other senior government officials, leaders from organised labour, fellow CEOs and company representatives, members of the media, Minerals Council colleagues and all other guests.

Thank you for joining us today for the sixth annual National Day of Health and Safety in Mining.

Our theme this year is: “Always: Vigilance, Learning and Improving”. This theme tells us to always remain vigilant to protecting the lives and well-being of every one of us at work in our industry. It also reminds us that we can only succeed in this mission to eliminate fatalities by continuously learning through research and development as well as from each other to ensure implementation of best practices.

That is why we launched the Khumbul’ekhaya campaign in 2019. Khumbul’ekhaya means “remember home” in Zulu. It urges us to think of the human impact of every health and safety decision we make. It challenges us to prevent fatalities and injuries by integrating health and safety into every aspect of our work. And it inspires us to keep improving our performance and standards.

We will continue to pursue our Khumbul’ekhaya campaign. It requires us to focus on:

- The prevention of fatalities
- The integration of health and safety

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- And the need for intensified vigilance and effort.

We are beginning to see the results of this campaign. For the first time in history, we recorded fewer than 50 fatalities in a calendar year. Nonetheless, the Minerals Council mourns the tragic loss of 49 employees who perished in mine accidents in 2022. We express our deepest sympathy and solidarity to their loved ones and co-workers, and recommit ourselves to making further progress. We know that every life lost or harmed is one too many. We know that we still face many safety challenges. And we know that we have a responsibility to our workers, their families, and our society to ensure that mining is not only profitable, but also safe and sustainable.

The safety performance of January 2023 gave us hope because, for the first time ever, we had a fatality-free month. These milestones are a confirmation that our aspiration to zero fatalities is realistic and achievable. We will be disappointed if 2023 does not see a further reduction in fatalities.

Indications in the first seven months of 2023 suggest that we need to continue to tirelessly implement effective strategies to improve health and safety performance and achieve zero harm. Again, there is a need for tripartite stakeholders to continue to collaboratively work together towards the common objective of zero harm. A growing concern is the increase in fatalities arising from 'general' types of incidents as well as the regression in Fall Of Ground safety performance, and that is something we are addressing.

In the occupational health sphere, we are pleased to see continuing reductions over the years, in the incidence of most occupational diseases. We however did note the increase in reported occupational diseases from 2022. During COVID there was a significant decline in reporting from companies and in this post-COVID era we are not surprised by the increase in diseases reported as there is a return to normal reporting and even higher levels of screening and monitoring.

Our biggest achievement continues to be the reduction of TB in our sector. The industry met the TB milestone of having a TB incidence below the South African one in 2017. In 2022 our TB incidence was 241/100 000, far below the national incidence which is around 500/100 000. We are however fully aware that TB in our gold sector is still high, at around the national



incidence. This has prompted our Health Policy Committee to establish a Gold TB Working Group that will focus on all interventions possible to reduce TB in the gold sector.

Noise induced hearing loss and more importantly, exposures to high levels on noise continue to be the bane of the industry. An unacceptable number of our employees are still exposed to noise beyond 85 decibels and cases of noise induced hearing loss are not decreasing. Through our MOSH programme, we are making bolder moves to ensure that we reduce these exposures and to especially promote the industry buy and maintain quiet initiative which eliminates noise at source.

We would like to congratulate the DMRE for making progress on the reporting of occupational diseases. Five years ago, we were not able to track occupational diseases except on an annual basis and even then, the reports were released almost a year later. With the promulgation of monthly incidence reports, it is now possible for us to receive statistics on occupational diseases in the previous quarter. This is a major development, and we hope to see it extended to occupational exposures as they are the leading indicator for diseases. Reduction of exposures should be our primary focus.

The Minerals Council's CEO Zero Harm Forum, under the leadership of Japie Fullard, has focused on a number of areas aimed at reversing any negative trends. Japie will shortly be outlining the detail of the work being done by the Forum.

Our health and safety work is not limited to the occupational hazards we have been speaking about for so many decades. We are also working tirelessly to eliminate gender discrimination in mining as we continue to seek to increase the presence of women in mining occupations. A critical part of that work is the need to invest significant time and energy in addressing the issue of gender-based violence.

We do that through the Minerals Council's women in mining programme. And through the Mine Health and Safety Council's Women in Mining Advisory Committee.



There is still much to be done across the industry to make mining a fully safe and supportive industry, where women can not only work but also fully develop and progress in their careers. There must be continued focus on the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) designed for women, and ensuring that the physical environment in which women employees work is one that takes their health and safety needs fully into account.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our regulators and our trade union colleagues for their concerted work with us in assisting to reverse the regressions we have seen in recent years. Without the wholehearted co-operation between the social partners, this would simply not have been possible. As we have observed before, though we sometimes find ourselves in conflict, when it comes to safety and health we work co-operatively because we are all committed to a common goal.

Thank you.



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CLOSING REMARKS BY MINERALS COUNCIL PRESIDENT, NOLITHA FAKUDE

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We are at the end of yet another fruitful National Day of Health and Safety. To our social partners and to industry leaders and health and safety specialists, I'd like to thank you all for your heartfelt and constructive contributions, and the recommitment you've shown to do all you can to ensure further progress towards our common health and safety goals.

Let us repeat the Khumbul'ekhaya campaign goals and expand them to:

- Firstly, and most importantly, prevent fatalities and eliminate occupational exposures and diseases.
- Secondly, integrate health and safety into every aspect of our work.
- And thirdly, to intensify vigilance and effort on both fronts. I emphasise here –the right of all employees to say no to unsafe work.

Let us all ensure that when we meet again a year from now, we will be able to point to that further progress.

Thank you.