



DEPARTMENT OF MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY

**REMARKS BY MR DAVID MSIZA, THE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF
MINES,**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2023 NATIONAL DAY OF
HEALTH AND SAFETY**

17 AUGUST 2023

Mr Alan Seccombe, Programme Director

Ms Nolitha Fakude President of the Minerals Council of SA

Mr Japie Fullard, Chairperson of Minerals Council Zero Harm Forum

Mr Mzila Mthenjane, the incoming Minerals Council SA CEO

Commend the role of Mr Roger Baxter, the outgoing CEO

All CEOs and executive of the mining sector

All organized labour leadership: AMCU, NUM, NUMSA, Solidarity, and UASA

Colleagues of DMRE, MHSC and MQA

Media

Ladies and Gentlemen good day

I like to start by sharing the sentiment that we agreed in the sector that we can compete on anything but not on health and safety. We as a Department has been working together with the employers and organized labour to ensure that there is a sustainable improvement in the mining sector. On behalf of the DMRE we commend the Minerals Council of South Africa for arranging this event, especially in the middle of the Women's Month, an important month in the South African calendar when all of us will be celebrating contributions of women in the broader society and in mining. The tripartite stakeholders have, through the Mine Health and Safety Council, ensured that the respective programmes are implemented to enhance the women in mining health, safety and GBV matters in the sector.

We are hopeful that on top of our priorities from today onwards we'll be focusing on the health and safety of the mineworkers and people affected by mining as this continues to be of utmost importance for all of us. The National Day of Health and Safety in mining must continue to provide a platform for learning and allow people to share ideas on improving health and safety in the sector.

The health and safety of mineworkers remain integral to the long-term sustainability of the mining sector and the key area of concern which requires a consistent attention by all stakeholders. Working together with the Mine employers and organized labour the department has over the years made significant strides in improving the health and safety of the mineworkers. This led to the sustainable downward trend in occupational fatalities, injuries and diseases over the years.

It is encouraging that the 2022 safety performance reflect the lowest fatalities ever recorded in the sector of 49 fatalities versus 74 in 2021. With no mine disaster reported since 2018. Also, the sector reported a decrease in the number of injuries and occupational diseases during 2022 when compared to the previous year. Last year we as the sector convened the Mine and Health Summit in October 2022.

The Honourable Minister of Minerals Resources and Energy engaged with the leaders from organized labour and employers on the challenges the mining sector. The general consensus was that we need a step change in

the health and safety performance of the sector. It is also, important for all stakeholders to remain vigilant in the remaining months of 2023 and avoid any issues of complacency. As a department we will continue to engage with all CEOs and union leadership to ensure that more can be done to improve health and safety in our sector.

We commend the Minerals Council as well as the Association of Mine Managers (AMSA) in agreeing to host the Minesafe conference towards the end of this year, where the key areas of concern will be identified and focus on moving forward. All the stakeholders need to commit themselves to working towards the elimination of fatalities, injuries and occupational diseases in the sector in pursuit of zero harm to ensure that each employee returns from work unharmed every day.

The latest statistics in 2023 is not encouraging because there was an increase of 4% from 26 to 27 fatalities, year on year. This was as a result of a single accident that regrettable resulted in four fatalities in one of the gold mines in April 2023. Secondly, the sector had a significant increase in the number of falls of ground accidents from 2 to 8 so far this year. However, it worth noting that since the gazetting of new TMM regulation in December 2022, there has been a significant decrease in the number of transport and mining fatalities from 9 to 3, which corresponds to 67% improvement. The general type of accidents are second biggest contributor to the fatalities in the sector this year.

It is also worth noting that the coal mines did not experience fall of ground fatalities for a year up to date.

Ladies and gentlemen, generally most fall of ground accidents are happening in gold mines. There has also been an increase in the number of seismic related fall of ground accidents. Regrettably there has been no improvement in the general type of accidents.

Lastly, it is also regrettably that in 2023 the sector already reported 3 fatalities which classified under the category miscellaneous. This category of accidents refers to fatalities that may not be readily classified under the available categories on SAMRASS system, which is a system we use to gather and analyze accidents and they cannot be classified pending an investigation on the actual cause of death. I want to implore on the sector to expedite the finalization of investigations involving miscellaneous accidents.

Again, there was a 4% decrease in the number of injuries from 1273 to 1225. The areas of concern in this regard include explosives injuries that increased from 1 to 4; heat exhaustion from 3 to 10 cases and electricity injuries from 8 to 11. Also, it is of great concern that there has been a significant increase of miscellaneous injuries.

In the first quarter of April to June 2023 the mines reported a total of **357** occupational diseases from the Health Incident Reports (HIRs) submitted when compared to **298** reported during the same period in the year 2022. This corresponds to 20% regression year on year. The areas of concern on health are Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) case increased from 66 to 122; Chronic Obstructive Airway Diseases (COAD) case from 17 to 22 and

silicosis case from 37 to 45. Once again, I would like to implore the sector to put more focus on health matters moving forward. Further, the sector is being encouraged to implement effective measures on improving the wellbeing of mineworkers including on mitigating the impact of non-communicable diseases (NCD).

The department welcomes the efforts of all our stakeholders in ensuring that the goal of zero harm is ultimately achieved at all mines. The collaboration and spirit of genuine partnership stands at the very center of change and it will not happen without commitment of all partners. It is also critical to maintain and strengthen relationships at mine level to ensure that the vision of zero harm amongst all stakeholders remain closely aligned.

The health and safety of mine workers is everyone's responsibility. Working together we can attain the goal of zero harm in the sector while also keeping in mind that the long-term sustainability of mining is dependent not only on its growth competitiveness and transformation but also on how well the workforce treated.

In conclusion, I want to strongly recommend that we should ensure that there is a deeper understanding in the causes of the health and safety challenges. This should include how we effectively manage change in the sector, such that effective interventions are implemented to ensure significant and sustainable improvement. Also, it is encouraged for the sector to continue to with the respective health and safety campaigns during the remaining critical period of 2023. We must also achieve a step decrease in the number of occupational diseases, injuries and fatalities.

I would like to once again thank the Minerals Council and all the stakeholders for your attention and also for the invitation to participate in this event.

THANK YOU.