

MEDIA STATEMENT

MINING STAKEHOLDERS RECOMMIT TO HEALTH AND SAFETY INTERVENTIONS AND PRACTICES TO ACHIEVE ZERO HARM

Johannesburg, 17 August. At the sixth National Day of Health and Safety in Mining, stakeholders agreed to work together as they recommitted to the interventions and initiatives to achieve the universal goal of Zero Harm so that every employee returns home safely and in good health.

The Minerals Council South Africa hosted Thursday's event as part of its unrelenting focus to ensure safe and health working environments for more than 470,000 mineworkers through inclusive and collaborative engagements with Department of Mineral Resources and Energy's Mine Health and Safety Inspectorate and organised labour.

The event was addressed by David Msiza, Chief Inspector of Mines, as well as Gabriel Nkosi from the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU), Duncan Luvuno from National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), Hanlie van Vuuren from Solidarity and Chris Smith from United Association of South Africa (UASA).

This year's theme is: ***"Always: Vigilance, Learning and Improving"***.

"This theme reminds us to always remain vigilant in 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 commitment to eliminate fatalities by continuously learning through research and development as well as from each other to ensure implementation of best practices," says Nolitha Fakude, President of the Minerals Council.

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



In the occupational health sphere, there are continuing reductions in the incidences of most occupational diseases, but there are still areas that need more focus to ensure a downward trajectory.

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, mining companies focused on screening and treatment of that illness, with reduced screening and monitoring of occupational diseases. Since 2022, as the work environment normalised and health interventions of mines returned to pre-COVID levels, there has been a renewed focus on higher levels of screening and monitoring, which will result in an apparent increase in incidences compared to the COVID period.

The incidence of noise-induced hearing loss is rising, requiring special attention from mining companies. In 2022, there were 776 cases compared to 738 the year before.

The mining industry's tuberculosis incidence continues to trend lower and remains well below the national rate of infection, a target the industry set for itself and has achieved since 2017. In 2022, there were 278 cases per 100,000 employees compared to 537 per 100,000 in the general population. In 2020 and 2021, when there was reduced screening, there were 220 and 224 incidents per 100,000 in the mining industry.

The Minerals Council launched its Khumbul'ekhaya campaign in 2019, drawing on the Zulu expression that means "remember home."

"We wanted everyone 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," says Ms Fakude.

The campaign as well as focused interventions and initiatives by the Minerals Council and its more than 70 member companies and organisations have resulted in significant step changes in health and safety as the industry strives to achieve Zero Harm.

In 2022, the industry reported its lowest number of fatalities, with 49 people losing their lives compared to 74 fatalities the year before. The mining industry mourns the tragic loss of 49 lives and expresses its heartfelt condolences to their families, friends and colleagues.

By 17 August, 27 mineworkers have lost their lives compared to 26 in the same period a year ago, and 1,225 employees were injured compared to 1,273 a year ago, a four percent decline.

In the year to date, 2 women have succumbed to their injuries and 133 have been injured. This compares to 3 fatalities and 217 injuries for the full year of 2022. The previous year, 2021, one woman died and 166 were injured at work.

The mining industry has embarked on a modernisation process to make mining safer, more productive and accessible to everyone wishing to make a career in the sector.

“By being vigilant and keeping an unrelenting focus on safety, we can make a difference. But it’s through learning from each other, from our peers overseas, and by continually improving on safety interventions and initiatives, we will achieve our goal of Zero Harm in a sustainable way,” says Japie Fullard, Chair of the Minerals Council’s CEO Zero Harm Forum.

Please click on <https://www.mineralscouncil.org.za/special-features/1364-national-day-of-health-and-safety-in-mining-2023> to access the full suite of materials.

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