

MARK MUNROE

Minerals Council International Women's Day conference

- Ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to stand before you today as we gather to celebrate International Women's Day and discuss the critical topic of Women's Economic Empowerment in the mining industry.
- This is a subject that I am deeply passionate about this subject and committed to driving positive change within our industry, and our country.
- Let us begin by defining what Women's Economic Empowerment truly means. It encompasses the creation of an environment where women have the opportunity to actively participate in and benefit from economic activities on an equal basis with men. It involves providing women with the tools, resources, and opportunities they need to realise their full potential, both personally and professionally.
- However, when we look at the current state of affairs in the mining industry and in South Africa, it is evident that there is much work to be done. According to a 2020 report by McKinsey and Co, the mining industry has been slow to address gender diversity, with women occupying only a fraction of executive ranks, board positions, and C-suite roles. While these statistics are concerning, they also serve as a catalyst for change.
- I am proud to say that the industry has now started making strides in the right direction. Technological advancements are breaking down barriers and creating opportunities for women in roles that were previously dominated by men. Take, for example, Siphwe Plaatjie at Impala Rustenburg, who made history as Impala's first female RDO facilitated by hydropower equipment. Additionally, Nonku Mabusa recently became the first female General Manager at Impala Rustenburg, paving the way for future generations of women in leadership positions.
- At Implats, we are committed to championing gender diversity and empowering women both within our organisation and in the communities we serve. Through various initiatives such as community programmes, bursaries, internships, and youth development initiatives, we strive to give women a platform for their voices to be heard and their talents to be nurtured.
- Internally, we have implemented a comprehensive diversity and inclusion strategy aimed at fostering a culture of care and growth leadership. This includes promoting mentoring and retention programmes, as well as establishing forums to break barriers and lead positive change.

- Externally, we place great emphasis on ensuring gender-diverse representation among the beneficiaries of our procurement opportunities and enterprise development programs. Promoting diversity and inclusion among suppliers and contractors is a powerful way to drive positive change. By actively seeking out and partnering with diverse suppliers, we not only enhance the vibrancy of our supply chain but also contribute to economic growth and development in the local communities where we operate.
- But beyond our own initiatives, it is essential for companies in the mining industry to actively strive for women's economic empowerment. So let's dig deeper into what this means practically for all organisations and with suppliers.
- Firstly, it's imperative for mining companies to adopt and implement **diversity and inclusion policies** that specifically address gender equality. These policies should not only advocate for equal pay opportunities but also support initiatives that foster a more inclusive workplace culture, where women feel valued and can thrive. Investing in education and training programmes tailored to women interested in pursuing careers in mining is essential. This includes scholarships, internships, and mentorship programs aimed at equipping women with the necessary skills and confidence to succeed in the industry.
- On top of this, advocating for the **inclusion of women in leadership roles** within mining companies is crucial. By promoting the appointment of women to executive positions and boards, we showcase their capability and contribute to diverse decision-making processes.
- Ensuring **workplace health and safety measures** are inclusive and considerate of the specific needs and concerns of women is paramount. This involves providing proper facilities, safety equipment, and policies that prioritise the well-being of all employees.
- **Community engagement initiatives** that involve women in development projects related to mining activities can empower women in local communities and create a more positive perception of the industry.
- Investing in **technology** that makes mining operations more inclusive and accessible to a diverse workforce, including women, is also vital. Allocating funds for research and development in this area can drive innovation and efficiency within the industry.
- Transparency in **data collection and reporting** on gender diversity within the workforce is essential for identifying areas for improvement and holding companies accountable for progress.
- **Fostering collaboration** between mining companies, government bodies, non-profit organisations, and educational institutions is key to creating a collective effort in advancing gender equality in the mining sector.

- Furthermore, promoting **procurement practices** that support and promote women-owned businesses in the supply chain of the mining industry can drive economic empowerment and foster diversity within the industry. Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) led by women should be specifically supported and encouraged.
- In conclusion, achieving women's economic empowerment in the mining industry requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders. It is not just a matter of diversity and inclusion; it is about creating a more equitable and prosperous future for all.
- By addressing these aspects, investors can contribute to creating a more equitable and progressive mining industry that harnesses the diverse talents and perspectives of both men and women.
- Together, let us continue to work towards a world where women have equal opportunities to thrive and succeed in the mining industry and beyond.
- Thank you.