

## **MINERALS COUNCIL WOMEN IN MINING LEADERSHIP FORUM WOMEN IN MINING SUSTAINABILITY HEROES 2024**

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**06 MARCH 2025**

Thank you for the introduction and good morning colleagues.

Close to 30 years ago I was a young starry eyed activist when I joined the Commission on Gender Equality. At the time, we were optimistic about creating a South Africa where gender equality would be achieved in our lifetime. 24 years ago, I stepped in to the mining industry and industry we believed would be the hardest to crack because we didn't see the will and the practicality of that transformation.

Today 6 March 2025, the story is totally different. It is a privilege for me to be in a room full of women and are celebrating the Women in Mining Sustainability heroes. That means we are as a collectively succeeded in inclusion and carving niche for women in this industry.

This is not an easy time to be advocating for sustainability, with very powerful forces around the world seeming to be doing their utmost to dismantle many hard-fought initiatives to combat climate change and drive diversity, equity and inclusion.

But, as President Cyril Ramaphosa said recently, "we won't be bullied" and in the words of my own CEO : stay true to your north – At Sibanye Sustainability is our true North as I believe it is for many of you sitting here today.

The Sustainability Heroes we are celebrating today embody the industry's commitment to going beyond the call of duty to ensure we continue to make the world a better place. Our view is simple, sustainability is doing business in such a way that the outcomes are good for people and the planet.

I do not think anyone in this room doubts the transformative power of mining. We all know the crucial role the industry plays in economic development, often in remote, rural areas where there are limited other opportunities. We bring well-paid jobs, training and skills development, supplier and small business development opportunities, infrastructure investment, and community investments on a scale that very few, if any, other industries can replicate.

In South Africa alone, the industry directly employed over 470,000 people, contributed R433 billion to GDP and nearly R44 billion in taxes last year. In short, what we do matters immensely, to the well-being of our employees, suppliers, communities, and the country at large.

Even more importantly, without our metals and minerals, modern life simply would not be possible. Without mining, there are no cars, houses, cell phones, cancer treatments, or commercial food production. And, if we want to combat climate change – which is posing an existential threat to humankind, no matter what which billionaire is saying – we will need to mine even more of the metals that are critical to the energy transition.

As an industry, we have immense power to make a real, positive and meaningful impact in the world. But with great power comes great responsibility.

The challenge is: HOW do we mine the finite resource endowments that we have been entrusted with in a manner that limits our environmental impact, and brings the greatest benefit to society?

Now this is the part that really gets all of us at Sibanye-Stillwater excited.

If I reflect on the progress we've made over the last three decades to address our very painful legacy issues, I am encouraged by the huge opportunities ahead for us to help change the world for the better.

As an industry, we have also made huge strides when it comes to workplace health and safety. In 2003, we lost 270 colleagues to workplace accidents. That number has declined to 42 last year, the lowest on record. Let me be clear – our work is not done until every colleague goes home unharmed, every day. But the safety improvements we see every year show us that zero harm is possible.

The industry has also long been leading the charge on public health challenges, from HIV and TB to Covid. Our support extends to investments in clinics and hospitals, partnering with government to bring much-needed services to communities around the country.

As we are celebrating International Women's Day on Saturday, I'd like to also reflect on inclusion and diversity. As you know, as recently as 1996, women were not allowed to work underground in South Africa. Today, women represent about 19% of the workforce – nearly 90,000 women. Yes, I would like that number to be much higher, and I would like to see more women in our boardrooms – but let's also celebrate the progress we've made. That is 90,000 women who can advocate for one another, who can encourage and support and open doors for one another. Let us use the opportunity to be each other's biggest cheerleaders, and to inspire and support girls and other women to choose mining as a career.

Unfortunately, we have a long way to go to eliminate bullying, harassment, racism, and gender-based violence from our workplaces and communities. But I am encouraged by leaders standing up and acting against perpetrators. At Sibanye-Stillwater, we recognise the role

women play in sustainability and our programmes are geared at creating an inclusive environment within and outside our operations.

We have invested in GBVF programme including centres within and outside our operations. We support Thuthuzela Care Centres nationwide, helping survivors obtain protection orders, relocating families and providing ongoing psychosocial support. Let us keep speaking up and taking action until every person is safe, both at home and in the workplace. GBVF removes the barrier but gender mainstreaming across the spectrum is critical as we recognise the skewed impacts of the many issues on women that we talk about within the sustainable agenda. As we talk about the transition, how are women represented in JET agenda.

Miners are nothing if not problem solvers, and so we continue to innovate and improve our processes and technologies to not only make our workplaces safer and more inclusive, but also to reduce our environmental impacts.

Tailings reclamation and urban mining through recycling are becoming increasingly important tools to reduce emissions, waste and water usage, and we have also seen significant investments in renewable energy by the industry in South Africa. In addition to the positive impact on emissions, these investments also help reduce the pressure on Eskom, improving energy security for the country.

As an industry, we have also made significant progress in reducing our freshwater usage and partnering with the government and other stakeholders to build much-needed water infrastructure in underserved parts of the country where it transforms people's lives

The toughest challenge, in my opinion, is how to increase our social contribution and leave a lasting positive economic legacy, particularly in a country with very high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality. Our social and labour plans are designed to create sustainable economic impacts, but our industry contributions extend beyond SLPs: from supplier and small business development to land rehabilitation and agricultural investments, all designed to support sustainable livelihoods.

If there is one thing we know for sure, it's that none of this is possible without partnership and collaboration. To secure the sustainability of our industry, we need to be a neighbour and partner of choice. The only way we can achieve that is to be a force for good, running a business where all stakeholders share in the value of the limited, precious resources we are entrusted to mine on behalf of the people of this country. We cannot do this alone. Working with industry colleagues, suppliers, government, communities, NGOs and other stakeholders, we can multiply our impact and make mining better every day.

To achieve this, we need to have more women in the room when decisions are made, and more women working in every hook and cranny of our industry. I am surrounded by passionate and forceful woman like Thabisile and Nishi and the teams they lead that drive our purpose everyday with every action and decision that they make. These woman are our champions, they are our superpowers as you Heros are to your businesses and communities and as each of you are sitting in this room today. We can change our legacy that we leave as individuals, as companies and as the mining sector.

I want to close with a quote from Noliitha Fakude, president of the Minerals Council, as a call to action for every one of you in the room today: Let us commit to work relentlessly and determinedly to ensure that the South African mining industry transforms to become a place where women lead and thrive.

Congratulations again to our Heroes, and thank you.