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**Mzila Mthenjane**  
CEO

## **Young Professionals Programme**

### **Opening comments**

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**“Cry NOT, my beloved Africa.”**

These words rise from our history like a quiet rebellion; a reminder that even when storms gather, this continent has never surrendered its promise. And today, as I look at this room filled with young professionals, I know: Africa has no reason to weep, because her future has walked into the room.

We meet at a time when the global economy feels unsteady, when political landscapes seem unpredictable, and when young people often inherit the weight of instability they did not create. Yet here you are choosing to show up, choosing to lead, choosing to imagine a different Africa.

And for that, I say: **“Cry NOT, my beloved Africa, for your youth have arrived.”**

### **Debunking the Myths and attempt to see Mining Through the Eyes of Youth**

#### ➤ **Myth 1: “The youth are not interested in a career in mining”**

We often borrow perceptions from global polls from 2021–2023 in Canada, the UK, and Australia which show mining ranked low as a career choice. But African data tells a different story.

**Fact:** Surveys by mining youth associations and university programmes show high interest, but limited visibility of pathways, bursaries, internships, and graduate placements. The issue is not interest, it is **access**.

#### ➤ **Myth 2: “The youth are unprepared, and leadership does not trust them.”**

**Fact:** Nothing could be further from truth. Industry leaders recognise your value. We see your innovation, your audacity, and your impatience with the status quo. The industry’s future is digital, automated, and decarbonised, that is the DNA of young African’s because you are fluent in the technologies reshaping mining, from data analytics, renewable power systems and numerous other emerging innovations. **We do not fear the rise of youth; we welcome it.**

➤ **Myth 3: “Mining Is Not Safe.”**

**Fact:** Our industry has made profound strides transforming operations through adoption of modern technology and shifting cultures. From zero-harm campaigns to bring awareness to safe mine practices to mechanisation and remote operations to limit exposure to potentially hazardous conditions, we are proving that mining is safe, humane, and inclusive. We are building an industry where young people, especially women, do not inherit danger, but **inherit possibility.**

➤ **Myth 4: “There is no future role for young people in Africa’s Mining industry”**

**Fact:** Africa holds more than 30% of the world’s critical mineral resources. So, think critical minerals and beneficiation, and see economic development and social progress and prosperity. The global energy transition cannot happen without Africa, and therefore, without you. Young people will explore for new commodities using AI innovation, design modern mines with key consideration for post-mine successor economies and the supply chains to support these operations, build the renewable systems to power our economy, and shape the policies that define this new frontier.

**You are not bystanders to the critical mineral revolution, you are its authors.**

➤ **Myth 5: “Investment appetite for African mining is dying.”**

**Fact:** Investment follows conviction and conviction leads to development. Where there is geological richness, youthful talent, and technological renewal, investment does not disappear; it shifts, it evolves, it grows.

Africa, and by association, mining and minerals, are not a sunset story. **Africa is the sunrise of the global energy future.**

To the young people in this room: you are seen, you are valued, and you are needed. Not in the distant future but now! So, hear me clearly:

**“Cry NOT, my beloved Africa, for her youth are not waiting for hope.**

**They are creating it.”**

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