

MEDIA STATEMENT

Minerals Council South Africa reaffirms plans to eliminate falls-of-ground incidents

Johannesburg, 27 March 2026. After two years of regressions in fatalities related to falls-of-ground incidents, the South African mining sector has started 2026 with no deaths from this cause, says Japie Fullard, Chair of the Minerals Council South Africa's CEO Zero Harm Forum.

Speaking at the fifth Elimination of Falls of Ground Action Plan (FOGAP) Day of Learning on Friday, Mr Fullard noted that since the record low of 6 fatalities resulting from falls of ground in 2022, the mining sector had regressed to 15 in 2025.

"These numbers are not just statistics. They present people, families and their futures, which have been forever changed. They remind us why this work of fall of ground demands our unwavering commitment. Despite these setbacks, the industry has not retreated. Instead, we continue to push forward with the determination through the implementation of FOGAP," Mr Fullard says.

"We are investing heavily, we are learning continuously, and yet the full impact of our efforts is not immediately visible. This does not mean the strategy is failing. It means we are in the steepest part of achieving Zero Harm, a place where progress requires resilience, discipline and collective resolution," he says.

The South African mining sector's safety interventions and collaboration with its key stakeholders, the regulator and organised labour, have delivered two successive years of record safety performances in 2025 and 2024. The mining sector has reduced fatalities in three decades by 91% to 41 in 2025 from 484 in 1994. Serious injuries have fallen by 80% to 1,693 from 8,347 in that period, with specific sector focus on the leading causes of fatalities.

The mining sector is continuing extensive work to eliminate the falls of ground risks for employees when there are underground seismic events, including predictive technologies, advanced rock engineering, and through the use of bolting and permanent netting on the roofs and sides of tunnels and working areas to prevent falling rocks harming people.

Improved underground lighting also assists employees to scrutinise their working areas for loose rocks and to safely prise them off. The Minerals Council is leading work to trial exoskeleton devices to reduce employee fatigue during this work which entails using a long steel bar.

"FOGAP is one of the most complex and far-reaching safety strategies in our sector that have ever been undertaken. Eliminating fatalities from falls of ground is not a quick fix. It is not a



matter of plug-and-play technology. What one company does, you can't just take it like that and just introduce it at another company. That's impossible," says Mr Fullard.

The Minerals Council, whose members represent 90% of Africa's annual mineral production by value, is heading work to identify leading practices and the adoption of these interventions in the mining sector.

In 2021, the Minerals Council's CEO Zero Harm Forum mandated the Rock Engineering Technical Committee (RETC) of the Minerals Council, with the support of the South African National Institute of Rock Engineering (SANIRE), to develop the Action Plan to eliminate FOG fatalities.

The Minerals Council is implementing the FOG Action Plan project in partnership with mining professional associations including Association of Mine Managers of South Africa (AMMSA), South African Collieries Managers (SACMA), SANIRE, organised labour, the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources, suppliers, research institutions and universities.

FOGAP consists of the following six pillars: Adoption of leading practices, research and development, skills development, policy issues, achieving Zero Harm production, and the implementation and monitoring of leading practices.

"FOGAP represents a fundamental shift in how we think, how we plan, and how we work underground.," says Mr Fullard.

Mr Fullard hands over the role of sponsor of the fall-of-ground workstream in the Minerals Council to Benford Mokoatle, Executive Vice President South Africa, Gold Fields.

The Day of Learning is hosted by the Minerals Council in association with AMMSA, SACMA and SANIRE.

The event brings together industry leaders, practitioners, OEMs, researchers, and stakeholders committed to improving mine safety. The day focuses on sharing progress, practical insights and innovation across the FOGAP pillars, reinforcing collective accountability in eliminating fall of ground incidents.

Please [click here](#) for the FOGAP website

Please [click here](#) to access the FOGAP Roadmap video

To watch the exoskeleton video, please [click here](#)

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