

**27 May 2026**

**Minerals Council South Africa - 136th Annual General Meeting**

**Paul Dunne**

**President**

Thank you, Mzila.

Good morning, everyone, I join Mzila in extending a warm welcome and thank you to our Board members, fellow CEOs, and the media for joining this, our 136th Annual General Meeting.

We come together during one of the most important moments in recent years for the South African mining sector.

There is a fundamental sea change underway as the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources (DMPR) is further revising the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (the Act), which was gazetted 22 years ago in April 2004.

We have a long history of robust engagements in policy developments with the Department. We have had moments when there were positive outcomes, but there were others where we disagreed and had to resort to the courts to resolve those impasses. These were unnecessary developments that damaged sentiment and perceptions of South Africa as a mining investment destination, and which, we trust, will never be repeated.

Since 2004, our sector has operated under the Mining Charter, which has positioned the mining sector as one of the most transformed economic clusters in South Africa, a fact that Mineral and Petroleum Resources Minister Gwede Mantashe has often acknowledged.

The Act marked a profound change in the way our sector operated. It vested all unmined minerals in the custodianship of the State, ending private mineral ownership. It ensured the participation of all South Africans who were previously excluded from full participation in one of the country's most important industrial clusters.

The Act ensured that companies looked beyond their mine gates to uplift communities through investments and partnerships, and to create fairer, more equitable and inclusive workplaces. Around the time the Act was gazetted, women representation in mining was about 3%. It is now estimated to be about 21% at Minerals Council members and rising. Minerals Council member companies have met or exceeded BEE ownership targets.

It is unfortunate, however, that while the Act has delivered profound social change and transformation in the mining sector, it has fallen short of its aspiration to “create an internationally competitive and efficient administrative and regulatory regime.”

Mining's contribution to GDP in 2025 was 6.2%, virtually flat compared to 6.3% when the Act was gazetted in 2004. Simply put, South African mining is not – and has not been -- growing in any meaningful way for a multitude of reasons, including electricity shortages, above-inflation energy tariffs, logistics bottlenecks, regulatory uncertainty and poor administration of the law among others.

The past 22 years have been marred by disputes between the regulator, and the Minerals Council and its members, which were often resolved in court. The Minerals Council's purpose is to serve and promote our members' interests, a role it takes seriously.

In 2013, a Bill to amend the Act spent more than 2,000 days in various proceedings before Minister Mantashe scrapped it when he took office in 2018. There was profound unhappiness within the sector about the proposed amendments. The negative impact of the prolonged regulatory uncertainty that those proposed amendments caused for the mining sector must not be understated.

A repetition of drawn-out wrangling, because of an ill-considered Amendment Bill, which does not reflect our engagements with the DMPR, must be avoided at all costs.

Coupled with the uncertainty caused by the previous Bill, there have been the four versions of the Mining Charter -- including the disastrous, short-lived 2017 version that Minister Mantashe replaced in 2018. Each version of the Mining Charter set revised targets or developed new ones, never providing our sector with the long-term certainty necessary to make large investments with any degree of confidence.

As a result of these and related issues, the mining sector has not delivered to its full potential in the past 22 years.

The sector needs an Act that will encourage and sustain long-term investment and growth in exploration, new mine developments -- with new entrants coming into the sector -- and to extend the lives of existing operations. The mining sector needs a stable regulatory environment that is well administered by professionals.

We are encouraged by the nature of the engagements we have had with the DMPR since the draft Mineral Resources Development (MRD) Bill was gazetted a year ago. However, we do not want to be surprised by a revised version of the MRD Bill that does not reflect the engagements we have held.

The Minerals Council has held extensive talks in good faith with officials in the DMPR to develop laws that will make South Africa a globally attractive exploration and mining destination. Both sides agree on the need to revitalise our nationally important sector.

I would like to thank the DMPR team for the nature of the discussions we have had so far on the Amendment Bill. The talks have been robust but encouraging, but we have a long and challenging road ahead of us before we have the final Act, so to speak.

We must seize this opportunity to unlock the potential inherent in South Africa's unique mineral endowment to catalyse economic and industrial investment, growth, and, of vital importance, to create jobs to lift South Africans out of poverty.

The mining sector is the backbone of our economy. It contributed R477 billion or 6.2% to gross domestic product, it exported R816 billion worth of minerals, and generated a total of R124 billion in taxes for the fiscus in 2025.

Mining employed 470,457 people – about 5% of formal employment. Each job in the mining sector supports 10 more jobs in the mineral value chain and ancillary industries, meaning more than 4.7 million people’s livelihoods depend on mining.

As we have said many times, mining is a powerful multiplier, and we must unlock its potential through pragmatic policies and an enabling environment.

I must stress: A thriving mining industry, with a rich pipeline of exploration projects and new mines, is essential for South Africa and the future of its citizens.

Legislation alone will not achieve that ambition. The laws and regulations must be administered efficiently, honestly and transparently. Fundamental to globally competitive mineral rights management is a modern, world-class mining cadastre that removes human interference, streamlines applications, makes geological information easily accessible from anywhere in the world, and delivers the utmost transparency.

There is an urgent need for a one-stop shop for mineral right applications to coordinate and align all relevant regulations from other departments, to streamline and expedite approval processes. The prevailing fragmented system results in delays and lost opportunities. A shared vision in the government of the importance of mining and the role it plays in our economy and society is essential.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Themba Mkhwanazi who served as a Vice President of the Minerals Council with distinction before he stepped down during 2025. His support and strategic thinking were important for the organisation.

We welcomed Moses Madondo as a Vice President during 2025 to join Richard Stewart and Mpumi Zikalala, who have provided us with guidance and a strong oversight of the work of the Minerals Council. We retain a strong team, with decades of experience in our sector. Their wisdom and insights are invaluable.

Mzila Mthenjane has served three full years at the helm of the Minerals Council as CEO, and he continues to lead us through complex industry matters along with his highly experienced and hardworking colleagues. They serve with distinction and dedication to the mining sector.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the unwavering commitment of our mining companies, their CEOs, industry leaders and employees to making our sector a safer, healthier environment and who make this important sector what it is.

Allow me to join Mzila in thanking Japie Fullard for his contribution to making our sector healthier and safer. He chaired the CEO Zero Harm Forum with distinction and refreshing candour, providing true leadership in our quest for Zero Harm. I have no doubt Moses Madondo will similarly excel in leading this important Forum and he has the support of all CEOs.

Without their commitment, skill and resilience, mining would not matter as much as it does to South Africa's economic and social landscape. For South Africa to succeed, mining must succeed. That's why Mining Matters.

Thank you.