

MEDIA RELEASE



Media Release – issued on behalf of the Department of Health – CCOD, MBOD; the Minerals Council South Africa and the Occupational Lung Disease Working Group

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World Bank President Dr Jim Yong Kim visits occupational lung disease outreach

Johannesburg, 4 December 2018. World Bank president Dr Jim Yong Kim, currently on an official visit to South Africa, was hosted yesterday afternoon by the Minister of Health Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, Compensation Commissioner Dr Barry Kistnasamy, the Minerals Council South Africa, and the Occupational Lung Disease (OLD) Working Group and its six member mining companies: African Rainbow Minerals; AngloGold Ashanti; Anglo American SA; Gold Fields; Harmony and Sibanye-Stillwater.

The purpose of the event was to demonstrate to Dr Kim the outreach work being carried out collaboratively by these organisations in mining regions and labour-sending areas around the southern African sub-continent. The World Bank was instrumental in providing initial investments and analytical work which assisted in towards a more comprehensive and fully integrated occupational health services for ex-mineworkers in southern Africa. The purpose of the work is to track and trace former mineworkers, test them for any occupational lung diseases they may be carrying, and assist them to apply for compensation to which they may be entitled. Their applications are then tracked to ensure they are efficiently processed and compensation paid timeously.

In addition to these services, miners without banking accounts into which the compensation is paid are assisted to open such accounts. Miners are also assisted to establish whether they have any retirement fund assets due to them. The work is making significant progress in reducing the numbers of former miners who did not receive their retirement fund entitlements upon leaving service.

In addition to the host organisations, participating groups include:

- Riskscape, whose technologies are used in the work;
- TFS, which assists with historical claims files;
- IP Capital, which manages the MBOD database, among other things;

- TEBA, which assists with ex-miners' historical records;
- Aurum Health, which operates mobile health vehicles where medical examinations are carried out;
- The Mineworkers' Provident Fund, to which many ex-miners belonged; and
- ABSA, which is assisting the opening of banking accounts.

Dr Kim has a particular interest in this work due to his previous medical work in the fields of tuberculosis and HIV/Aids, both in the World Health Organisation and Harvard University.

In welcoming Dr Kim, Minister Motsoaledi recognised the World Bank's contributions to the funding of work on tuberculosis and other occupational lung diseases. He also acknowledged the assistance provided to the Compensation Commissioner and the Medical Bureau for Occupational Diseases (MBOD) by South African stakeholders to repair the "significant governance and service delivery issues" Dr Kistnasamy had been brought in to fix. He cited particularly the assistance of the Minerals Council, OLD Working Group, the mining industry unions, the UK's Department for International Development, various non-governmental organisations and the governments of neighbouring countries.

This, he said, has resulted in the payment of R600m to 20 000 claimants in the past three years - a five-fold increase in payment rates.

Dr Kim responded that he was amazed at the quality of the technology he had seen demonstrated for him yesterday. "I am here to celebrate this project. I see tremendous ambition."

He said that SA was at a crossroads where its future development path depended on investment in health and education to remedy its human capital crisis.

In thanking Dr Kim, Minerals Council vice president Andile Sangqu announced that the Minerals Council board had approved the allocation of R120m over next three years to revitalise and strengthen the MBOD.

He noted that the incidence of silicosis cases had fallen by 60% between 2007 and 2016. He expressed determination that the halving of dust incidence targets in the 2014 Mine Health and Safety Council milestones would lead to the complete elimination of silicosis, with similar outcomes in coalmining lung diseases. He said the Minerals Council's Mining Industry Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH) structure was intensely focused on improved dust management technologies.

For further information please contact:

Dr Barry Kistnasamy

Compensation Commissioner

kistnb@health.gov.za

Mobile: +27 72 220 0247

Alan Fine

Tel: +27 (0)11 880 3924 or Mobile: +27 (0)83 250 0757

Email: alan@rasc.co.za

Web: www.mineralscouncil.org.za

Charmane Russell

Tel: +27 (0)11 880 3924 or Mobile: +27 (0)82 372 5816

Email: charmane@rasc.co.za

Web: www.mineralscouncil.org.za

Memory Johnstone

Tel: +27 (0)11 880 3924 or Mobile: +27 (0)82 719 3081

Email: memory@rasc.co.za

Web: www.mineralscouncil.org.za

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Photo captions

Photo 1

Compensation Commissioner Dr Barry Kistnasamy

World Bank President Dr Jim Yong Kim

Minister of Health Dr Aaron Motsoaledi

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Photo 2

World Bank President Dr Jim Yong Kim

Minerals Council vice president Andile Sangqu

Photo 3

Chairperson of the MBOD Certification Panel Dr Mpho Rabada

World Bank President Dr Jim Yong Kim

Minister of Health Dr Aaron Motsoaledi

Photo 4

World Bank President Dr Jim Yong Kim

Photo 5

World Bank President Dr Jim Yong Kim