

MEDIA STATEMENT

MINERALS COUNCIL CONFIRMS SUPPORT FOR 21-DAY LOCK-DOWN

Measures to prevent infection and to minimise economic impact on mining to be implemented

Johannesburg, 25 March 2020: The Minerals Council South Africa, on behalf of its members, has reaffirmed its support for the 21-day lock-down to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and the efforts by government to manage this unprecedented crisis.

The Minerals Council has carried out constructive discussions with Mineral Resources and Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe on the implementation of the lock-down in mining that envisages significant scaling down of mining activities. Companies may apply to the Minister on a case-by-case base for limited operations.

The Minister has indicated that operations supplying Eskom will continue to be mined to optimise energy security, though at a reduced level. Coal supplied to enable the manufacture of liquid fuels is also considered an essential service.

Minister Mantashe acknowledged the importance of maintaining value-adding mining infrastructure, especially refineries and smelters, which cannot easily be switched on and off. These operations will continue to operate at reduced levels, using stockpiled ores or lower levels of mining production, while ensuring that due care is taken with preventative and monitoring measures to protect those staff.

It has been agreed that activities involved in internal essential services, including security, ventilation, cooling and pumping, refrigeration, tailings facilities and specialised maintenance may continue. Further, the provision of water and other supplies to communities, as well as services to staff residences where required, will also continue.

Minerals Council CEO, Roger Baxter also said: “We, as an industry, reiterate our support for the fight against this pandemic by making available facilities for quarantine and treatment of COVID-19 patients, in partnership with government.



“The industry is fully committed to working with government to reach our common goal of preventing infection by COVID-19, and to minimise its spread. At the same time, we will seek to ensure that mining operations can start up in reasonable shape once the lock-down is over.”

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