



mineral resources

Department:
Mineral Resources
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF MINERAL RESOURCES, HONOURABLE MR MOSEBENZI J. ZWANE (MP), ON THE 2015 HEALTH AND SAFETY STATISTICS

Valued Mining Industry Stakeholders

Members of the Media

It is fitting that we begin today's briefing by observing a moment of silence for the four employees who lost their lives at Impala Platinum this past weekend as well as those who lost their lives in the mining industry during the past year.

(Moment of silence)

I further acknowledge the critical role that our stakeholders, including the labour unions, employers and the media have played in raising awareness on health and safety issues in the mining industry.

The Mine Health and Safety Act and related regulations as administered by the Department of Mineral Resources, is designed to protect the health and safety of our mineworkers, and to deliver on a dignified work environment such that the right to sanctity of life is guaranteed at all times.

We therefore continue to place great importance on the collaboration with all our stakeholders, as it is only through working together that we can attain the ultimate goal of zero harm.

Statistics shows that before 1994, the mining industry reported high fatalities, injuries and occupational diseases. The figures reported by the industry were on average 800 fatalities and 12 000 injuries per annum over the two decades before 1994. However since the dawn of democracy, as the State developed and implemented the appropriate policies, there has been a downward trend in the annual figures. Despite this, we believe there is room to do even better.

Reduction of fatalities in the mining sector

It is noteworthy that 2015 saw the lowest ever fatalities recorded in the mining sector. This is encouraging, and an indication that our combined efforts as stakeholders are bearing fruit. A total of 77 fatalities were reported in 2015, compared to 84 reported for 2014. This translates to an improvement of 8% year on year.

The breakdown of the fatalities per commodity year on year is as follows:

- Gold mines reported 33 fatalities in 2015 versus a total 44 fatalities in 2014, an improvement of 25%.
- Platinum mines reported 22 fatalities in 2015 versus a total of 16 fatalities in 2014, a regression of 38%.
- Coal mines reported 5 fatalities in 2015 versus a total of 9 fatalities in 2014, a significant improvement of 44%.

- Other mines reported 17 fatalities in 2015 versus a total of 15 fatalities in 2014, a regression of 13%. This category of mines includes diamonds, chrome, copper, iron ore, and all other mines not specified above.

Furthermore, the South African mining sector is now comparing favourably, in terms of the fatality rates, when compared with other countries such as the United States and Canada.

More Mining Companies going for more than 12 months, fatality-free

There are now more mining companies going for more than 12 months without fatalities. These include, De Beers, Exxaro, Sasol, Northam Platinum, Pilanesberg Platinum, South 32, Aquarius Platinum South Africa, Total Coal South Africa, Kuyasa Mining, Coal of Africa, Eskom Ingula Pumped Storage, Foskor, Lafarge, AfriSam, Petra Diamonds and Trans Hex Mining.

We would like to congratulate these companies and their mineworkers. We hope that their achievements will serve as an encouragement to the sector, as we do believe that it is possible for other companies to reach such milestones.

The reduction in General, Fall of ground and Explosives related fatal accidents

General and fall of ground accidents have in the past been major contributors of fatalities in the sector. However, there has been a reduction of 31% in the number of fatalities classified under General, from 29

fatalities in 2014 to 20 fatalities in 2015. Fall of ground fatalities reduced by 12% from 25 in 2014 to 22 fatalities in 2015. In the case of explosives-related fatalities there was also a decrease of 33%.

Injuries reported by the mining sector

- A total of three thousand one hundred and sixteen (3 116) injuries were reported in 2015 compared two thousand seven hundred (2700) in 2014. This translates to a regression of 15% year on year. The regression is largely as a result of the comparison period which also includes the platinum wage negotiation period in 2014.

The breakdown of the injuries per commodity year on year is as follows:

- Gold mines reported one thousand two hundred and twenty eight (1228) injuries in 2015 versus a total one thousand two hundred and forty three (1243) injuries in 2014, an improvement of 1%.
- Platinum mines reported one thousand three hundred and thirty one (1331) injuries in 2015 versus a total of seven hundred and ninety six (796) injuries in 2014, a regression of 67%.
- Coal mines reported two hundred and seven (207) injuries in 2015 versus a total of two hundred and sixty seven (267) injuries in 2014, an improvement of 22%.
- Other mines reported three hundred and fifty (350) injuries in 2015 versus a total of three hundred and ninety four (394) injuries in 2014, an improvement of 11%.

Improved statutory reporting on Occupational Health matters

Compliance with statutory reporting has improved, with mines timeously submitting their occupational hygiene statutory returns and Annual Medical Reports (AMRs).

The overall number of occupational hygiene reports submitted for the reporting period 2014/15 increased as follows: airborne pollutants by 17%, noise by 15% and thermal stress by 26%.

The number of Annual Medical Reports submitted also increased by 10%. Furthermore, the statutory reporting on HIV and TB increased significantly by 49% between 2013/14 and 2014/15 reporting periods.

Overall reduction of occupational diseases

Occupational diseases are reported in line with the Act on annual basis, and the figures for 2014 were confirmed in early 2015. There was an improvement of 3% on the number of occupational diseases reported, from six thousand eight hundred and ten (6810) in 2013 to six thousand five hundred and seventy seven (6577) in 2014.

Nationally, the rate of silicosis cases decreased by 24%, pulmonary tuberculosis cases increased by 9%, silico-tuberculosis cases decreased by 27%, Noise Induced Hearing Loss increased by 5%, Coal Workers

Pneumoconiosis cases decreased by 23%, Asbestosis increased by 50% whilst other diseases decreased by 6% bearing in mind the latency period. Other diseases include HIV/AIDS-related diseases, psychiatric conditions, cardiovascular diseases and orthopedic problems.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENT MEASURES

A number of initiatives have been embarked upon to further enhance health and safety in the mining industry. These include:

- Stakeholder Collaboration;
- Implementation of the 2014 Mine Health and Safety Tripartite Summit Commitments;
- Prioritization of Health and Safety for Women in Mining;
- Monitoring compliance and enforcing legal provisions;
- Enhancing Skills Development; and
- Enhancing Capacity to Monitor Compliance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we welcome the overall improvements in matters of health and safety, and pledge to continue working with all our stakeholders in ensuring that this matter remains a top priority for all of us. It is after all in the long-term interests of us as stakeholders, and for the sustainability of the mining industry, that every worker should return home unharmed, every day.