

**SPEAKING POINTS**  
**MINERALS COUNCIL CEO ROGER BAXTER**  
**NATIONAL DAY OF HEALTH AND SAFETY IN MINING**  
**3 AUGUST 2022**

- Chief Inspector of Mines, Mr David Msiza and other senior government officials, leaders from organised labour, Minerals Council office bearers, board members and CEOs, representatives, members of the media, Minerals Council colleagues and other guests
- I welcome you today to this fifth annual National Health and Safety Day in Mining.
- This annual day of recommitment reinforces our Khumbul'ekhaya health and safety strategy, which we initiated in 2019.
- The purpose of this national commemorative event is to remind us all, including the leadership of our industry, that the safety and health of our industry's workers has to be our primary concern. Khumbul'ekhaya tells us that our focus must be on ensuring that every worker returns home as healthily and safely as they left home to head for their workplace. And it reminds when we have failed, and mourn those who were lost.
  
- As an industry, when stakeholders assess our performance, we must understand and accept that the extent to which we meet that goal is and should be the first measure of our performance.
- Until 2019, while we were still a long way from our goal of zero accident fatalities, we had seen almost consistent improvements in moving towards that goal. We then experienced two years of regression.
- So far in 2022 we are seeing improvements again in the safety sphere. And most of our occupational health measures continue to improve.
- We will not be complacent though - certainly not until we have met and sustained for a reasonable period our goal of zero fatalities.
  
- Before continuing, I would like to ask that we all observe a minute's silence for those who have passed away. In particular, let us remember the 159 colleagues who have succumbed to injuries sustained in mine accidents since the beginning of 2020. And we also remember the 750 people within the industry who have become victims of COVID-19 since the pandemic began in South Africa almost 2 ½ years ago.

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- I would like to dwell for a few minutes on COVID-19, which has been a devastating episode for our industry, our country and the world. And though many have returned to their pre-COVID lives, we do need to be smart enough to realise that it hasn't gone away. We cannot know how severe future variants will be. And even now, many people are suffering the long term effects of contracting COVID-19.
- The smarter among us will continue to wear masks in crowded places and sanitise. And, most importantly, we should continue to vaccinate.
- The mining industry, the Department of Health, our regulator and our unions can be proud that we have so far managed to vaccinate some 77% of the people working at our operations. We need to maintain the intensity, improve that percentage, and ensure that all vaccinated employees receive their booster shots in good time.
- When we considered the theme for this year's commemoration, we recognised that – notwithstanding the fact that the industry had risen to the challenge of COVID-19, lives were still lost. And, while we have seen many steady and significant improvements in both health and safety in mining, we realised that we still had further challenges to step up to.
- In identifying *Stepping up to the Challenge* as this year's theme, we recognise the progress made on many fronts in respect of health and safety, both nationally and at an operational level. There are many examples of excellence in our industry and a demonstration of Stepping up the Challenge. During the course of this event, we will showcase just three instances:
  1. Vaccine hesitancy was and remains a national and global challenge. The Minerals Council played a significant role in understanding the science and developing a toolbox to overcome hesitance. At Kumba Iron Ore, part of the Anglo American Group, this effort was tackled on the ground by peer educators, who helped convince and support their colleagues in adopting vaccination. We will hear about this in our first video.
  - In our second video, we will hear about the industry's approach to noise management, and how we have made excellent progress in stepping up the challenge of tackling this insidious and devastating affliction.
  - In our third video, we show just one example of how our colleagues at Northam's Eland Mine have been addressing the issue of fall of ground through improved

underground lighting. Themba will speak more about the progress we have made in fall of ground management.

- Before we commence our programme, I would like to thank all our stakeholders and partners in being here today: we have always said that in respect of health and safety we have a common goal, and there is no competition between companies, and between social partners. Today is an excellent example of this.
- I would like now to invite the Chief Inspector of Mines, David Msiza, to address us.