

MEDIA STATEMENT

MINERALS COUNCIL ACKNOWLEDGES PUBLICATION BY MINISTER MANTASHE OF 2018 HEALTH AND SAFETY STATISTICS

Johannesburg, 1 March 2019. The Minerals Council South Africa and a number of other senior industry representatives today attended the event at which Mineral Resources Minister Gwede Mantashe published the comprehensive 2018 health and safety statistics for the industry.

The Minerals Council remains concerned about the industry's safety performance, particularly as reflected in the number of fatalities due to industrial accidents. No loss of life is acceptable and we always remember that the passing of a mineworker has a massive impact on family members and colleagues. It also means that analysing statistics around safety performance is always uncomfortable. However, it is necessary to do so to assess trends in safety performance, and to see how we may learn from these for the future.

To put the situation in context, the industry experienced an 86% decline in the number of fatalities in the 22 years from 1994 to 2016, showing an improving trend. However, 2017 saw a sharp deterioration where the industry experienced 90 fatalities. 2018 began in the same way, with a number of accidents that resulted in multiple fatalities. The Minerals Council notes that the number of fatalities experienced in 2018 declined by 10% to 81 from 90 fatalities experienced in 2017.

The deterioration in performance that started in 2017 prompted the board of the Minerals Council to initiate a number of measures designed to urgently address the deteriorating trend. This was largely by the CEO Zero Harm Forum and included intensified scrutiny on the major causes of accidents, the sharing of good practice as well as additional, fundamental research through the Mine Health and Safety Commission. Part of this initiative was the launch in August 2018 of the National Day of Safety & Health in Mining, where all mines of all Minerals Council members were asked to hold special days at which safety and health would be front and centre of each and every person at each and every mine, across all disciplines and jobs. We cautiously believe that this increasing level of awareness had some impact on raising awareness, and increasing commitment to Zero Harm, and as a consequence we saw a pleasing improvement in performance in the second half of the year.

Speaking on behalf of the Minerals Council, Vice President Andile Sangqu noted that: "This improvement would not have been possible if all tripartite partners, including government and labour had not work together in partnership to address the safety challenges we are faced with as an industry. But, this improvement is no ground for complacency. Efforts to improve further will continue, as they will even when the goal of zero fatalities is reached."



The Minerals Council also reflected on latest data on occupational health, where data for 2017, continues to show improvements. There was a 3% decrease in the total number of occupational diseases reported nationally compared with the previous year.

We are sure that one reason for the improvement is the effectiveness of the Masoyise iTB campaign, where government, organised labour and the industry are working closely to increase screening and testing for tuberculosis and HIV not only among employees but also in the communities where they live. The main goal is to achieve a TB incidence rate in mining that is equal to or better than the country's incidence rate. Significant progress is being made towards meeting that goal.

We are also pleased to acknowledge the historic class action silicosis and TB settlement reached last May between six of our members and attorneys representing former and current gold miners. We note that there are certain legal conditions that need to be fulfilled before the settlement agreement can be implemented.

In conclusion, Mr Sangqu noted that: "The Minerals Council and the industry as a whole remain committed to continuing to work with our social partners on all matters of health and safety towards minimising injury and illness to our employees' work."

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