

MEDIA STATEMENT

MINERALS COUNCIL PROVIDES UPDATED TB DATA

Johannesburg, 29 October 2020. The Minerals Council South Africa notes the article titled ***Africa's miners face new TB threat as pandemic disrupts treatment*** published by the Thomson Reuters Foundation on 26 October 2020.

The article highlights the need to focus on tuberculosis (TB) as a threat to the health of mineworkers, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a concern shared by the Minerals Council and on 15 October, the Masoyise Health Programme – a multi-stakeholder initiative led by the Minerals Council to reduce the impact of occupational and other health threats, including TB, HIV and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – hosted a virtual seminar aimed at ***Fighting the unrecognised pandemic: Re-prioritising TB, HIV and NCDs in the era of COVID-19***. The seminar was open to all who wished to attend at no cost and around 600 people attended.

However, the Minerals Council wishes to provide updated data, in response to outdated data published in the article:

“There are 2,500-3,000 TB cases reported per 100,000 mineworkers in Southern Africa, according to the World Bank, a rate 10 times higher than what the World Health Organization (WHO) classifies as an epidemic emergency. Miners have a three-times higher chance of getting TB than the average person.”

The data attributed to the World Bank in the article is outdated by a decade.

The Minerals Council prides itself in the work done over the past decade, and in particular since 2016 when the mining industry, labour, the Mine Health and Safety Council (MHSC) and other government health institutions first launched the Masoyise iTB programme to address HIV and TB in the mining industry. Its work has expanded to deal also with other NCDs prevalent in the industry and in 2019 Masoyise iTB became the Masoyise Health Programme.

A key aspect of the Masoyise intervention relates to the collation and reporting of accurate and credible data, which is strengthened by the regulations outlined by the Department of Mineral



Resources and Energy (DMRE) which, since 2014, requires all mining companies to report TB and HIV statistics. Therefore, the industry possesses robust data on the incidence of TB.

According to the latest figures published by DMRE in its annual report for the 2018/2019 financial year – which covers the entire South African mining industry including mining companies not members of the Minerals Council and which may be accessed on the department's website – in 2018 474,429 employees out of a total of 493,054 employees were screened for TB and 2,066 cases were diagnosed. This translates into a case finding rate of 0.4% or 400 cases per 100,000 population.

These findings are aligned to the Minerals Council's own reporting system for members where, since 2016, TB incidence rates have been in decline as follows:

- 750 cases/100 000 in 2016
- 548 cases/100 000 in 2017
- 415 cases/100 000 in 2018
- 301 cases/100 000 in 2019

This demonstrates a significant and consistent improvement over the past 10 years. In fact, the TB incidence rate in the mining industry is now lower than the national average.

The Minerals Council has made several presentations to the World Bank on the latest statistics and these statistics were provided to the Thomson Reuters Foundation by the Minerals Council in response to a media query.

It is regrettable that the outdated data reported on was not shared with the Minerals Council before publication.

That said, while the mining industry is heartened by the significant improvements made over the past decade, it remains committed to continuing to work with its social partners on all matters of health and safety and in its determination to work collaboratively to achieve the goal of Zero Harm.

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