

MEDIA STATEMENT

MINERALS COUNCIL POSITION ON THE RESUMPTION OF MINING OPERATIONS

Johannesburg, 9 April 2020: The Minerals Council South Africa notes articles in the media regarding the resumption of mining operations after 16 April. The Minerals Council notes the following:

The Minerals Council and its members have been fully supportive of the current lock-down, with the bulk of industry operations having been shut down. Any exemptions have been granted on the basis of directives to continue operations (for example, coal operations supplying Eskom and the synfuel industry), certain strategic exports, smelters and refineries and limited surface operations, and care-and-maintenance activities. All exemptions have been sanctioned by the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) under operating principles that are focussed on employee health as the priority.

The Minerals Council has been engaging with the DMRE and unions in recent days to establish a way forward on how to work safely under the constraints of COVID-19. The disease is likely to be with us for some months yet, with some experts indicating a likely peak in June this year.

It is certainly the industry's hope that the lock-down, which has come at great expense and sacrifice to so many South Africans, has indeed had the effect of flattening the curve. Certainly, initial indications are that it has done so, and at the very least it will give the country and companies time to put in place improved measures to proceed under our new reality.

When we do resume operations as an industry, it will not be business as usual.

But it is premature to comment on when such a resumption may be. This will depend on decisions that government as a whole will take on the approach following the end of the current lockdown period, and it will be within a holistic view of the entire economy. The mining sector will continue to abide by and support the positions taken by government in this regard.



When operations do resume, the industry will be well-placed to enter into this new phase of operating in a COVID-19 constrained environment.

Our approach to dealing with COVID-19 before the lock-down was risk-based, and it would continue to be so.

Employee health will be assessed at the resumption of operations in line with World Health Organization (WHO) protocols, including assessment of possible symptoms, travel history and recent contacts. Proper social distancing and face covers in some circumstances would be adhered to during this time.

Similarly, mining operations would scale up appropriately depending on the nature of the operation (surface or underground), the availability of employees (depending on travel restrictions being lifted from neighbouring countries), appropriate restart procedures (similar to those that would have been undertaken after any extended shut-down) and the nature of the spread of the epidemic in South Africa. The priority for all operations will be to:

- equip employees with the knowledge and means to be able to protect themselves and their families;
- to put in place the systems and standard operating procedures that apply best practice knowledge on hygiene and social distancing;
- to screen and detect employees who are ill, and provide for quarantine facilities where this is necessary;
- to provide medical care for employees, and where possible, for families and communities as well.

The Minerals Council has developed standard operating procedures for the return to work and for measures at work. These are aligned with the guidance and stipulations of WHO, the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD), the Department of Health and the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy.

In conclusion, the industry's approach remains an integrated holistic approach that recognises that fighting this disease is a national and industry imperative. We recognise and take pride in the industry's role as a significant contributor to the economy, and we will seek to make our contribution as best we can in the new reality that we face.

For further information, please contact:

Charmane Russell

Tel: +27 (0)11 880 3924 or Mobile: +27 (0)82 372 5816

Email: charmane@rasc.co.za or crussell@mineralscouncil.org.za

Alan Fine

Tel: +27 (0)11 880 3924 or Mobile: +27 (0)83 250 0757

Email: alan@rasc.co.za

Web: www.mineralscouncil.org.za