

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

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### **THE MINERALS COUNCIL SOUTH AFRICA CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

**Johannesburg, 8 March 2022.** The Minerals Council South Africa joined celebrations around International Women's Day 2022, raising awareness of gender bias and the mining industry's actions to address inequality.

Since 1996 when women were first legally allowed to work underground in mining operations, the industry now employs 64,500 women out of a total workforce of 455,200. The Minerals Council and its members have set stretch targets to at least double the percentage of women in mining by 2025 and ultimately work towards 30% to 40% women representation across the industry and 50% in management over the next decade.

This year's International Women's Day theme is #breakthebias.

"At the Minerals Council, one of the seven Foundational Principles of creating a thriving women in mining culture is to increase training on unconscious bias. We are monitoring and urging our member organisations to run these programmes within their workplaces as well as beyond the mine gates," says Nolitha Fakude, the first woman president of the Minerals Council in its 132-year history.

"Company leadership is critical to change corporate culture to address and breaking the bias and stereotypes by creating a psychologically safe space for diversity to flourish," she says.

To mark International Women's Day 2022, the Minerals Council, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, organised labour, the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy and the Mining Education Trust Fund celebrated ten Women In Mining Modernisation Heroes who were selected out of more than 180 women nominated by the Minerals Council's 79 member companies and associations.



Modernisation of mining is a critical factor in making this a physically safe, attractive career for women, driving transformation, growth and sustainability of the sector.

As the industry and the country seeks to build back better following the disruptions created by the global Covid-19 pandemic, the Minerals Council Women in Mining Leadership Forum sought to acknowledge the crucial role modernisation plays in making mining attractive to women, while accelerating transformation and growth within the industry.

The work of women in mining and their role in the adoption and implementation of modernised approaches, research and systems implementation is often unrecognised. Therefore, the objective of the Women In Mining Modernisation Heroes campaign is to honour and celebrate these unsung heroes in the industry who work tirelessly to create an environment in which more women can participate and realise their full potential.

“As we seek to break the bias for everyone, regardless of gender stereotypes, these women truly are heroes, making a marked contribution to their company’s modernisation strategies and rollout. They give us all something to aspire to and to make a difference in our own ways,” says Fakude.

There remain underlying issues in the mining industry of gender-based violence and femicide, sexism, racism, bullying and victimisation as the recent Rio Tinto report highlighted after an independent study into its global operations.

“Besides being a sobering read, it also brought to the fore the urgent need for industry leaders to demonstrate decisiveness when dealing with the issues of culture and specifically creating a workplace that will be safe physically and psychologically for all employees, especially women,” says Fakude.

Please follow this link <https://www.mineralscouncil.org.za/> to access the presentations, video interviews of the ten Modernisations Heroes and speeches delivered at the event co-hosted by the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, and the Minerals Council South Africa.

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