

MEDIA STATEMENT

MINERALS COUNCIL SOUTH AFRICA OUTLINES THE SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES OF 2021 AT ITS 132ND AGM AND THOSE FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

Johannesburg, 25 May. The Minerals Council South Africa marked its 132nd Annual General Meeting by noting the intense and focused work to address the key constraints preventing the mining industry from reaching its full potential for the benefit of all stakeholders and broader society.

The critical need for constructive partnerships with the government, its corporate entities, and other stakeholders to unlock the benefits of the industry for inclusive growth, job creation and wealth creation was underscored by the achievements during the past two years in combatting the Covid-19 pandemic, says Minerals Council President Nolitha Fakude, who was elected to serve a second term in the role.

The Minerals Council and its 78 members showed mining is a force for good during 2021, most notably in the Covid-19 vaccination of three quarters of its nearly 460,000 employees, with two thirds receiving the double dose, by working closely with our partners in the Departments of Health, Labour and Mineral Resources and Energy, as well as organised labour and various local governments, she says. This is a leading performance by an economic sector in South Africa and well ahead of the national average.

“I have no doubt that we, as an industry and a nation can work together to build and unleash the potential of the minerals sector for a brighter future for South Africa. It will take hard work, the courage of our convictions, innovation, and leaders who see far beyond just the two-to-three-year cycle,” she says.

“In 2022, ensuring the inclusive growth of the mining sector will require ongoing constructive and honest discussion with government, labour, communities and other key stakeholders around the inhibitors to growth, including challenges around the country’s energy generation capacity and the ailing rail infrastructure.”



The second successive year of regression in mine safety, reflected in the 74 deaths on mines, up from 60 in 2020 and an all-time low of 51 in 2019, was a “devastating downward trend,” says Fakude.

“We remain steadfast in our commitment to zero harm. We know that it is possible. We managed to reach our best safety performance in 2019. We can do it again. We will do it again,” she says.

An external area of focused attention in the Minerals Council are working closely with Transnet to urgently bring its rail and port operations back to targeted levels before considering how to address rail constraints that are holding back expansion plans of bulk mineral companies, says Minerals Council CEO Roger Baxter.

The Minerals Council is working closely with government ministers and officials to expedite the processes to unlock more than 4.2GW of energy projects worth R65 billion by member companies, he says.

Security is a third area the Minerals Council is actively addressing with the government’s security cluster.

“Through ongoing intensive discussions with the national security advisor in the Presidency, and close work with the security cluster we have started seeing action on the mine security front, with several high-profile policing actions to tackle illegal mining. These are a most welcome start to address the high levels of crime experienced by our members,” says Baxter.

“Procurement mafia, self-serving gangs stirring up community unrest, try extorting supply and employment contracts from our members or participation in expansion or renewable energy projects. This has the effect of stifling investment and delaying projects to the detriment of the mines, communities, and national economy. This is an area that we need to see concerted efforts to arrest and convict the perpetrators,” he says.

The Minerals Council will continue its engagements with the DMRE to expedite the processing of thousands of prospecting and mining right applications and to implement a transparent, functional and efficient cadastral system to quickly address the backlog and new applications to revitalise the industry.

The Minerals Council is pleased to note our Office Bearers, Paul Dunne, Themba Mkhwanazi, and Peter Steenkamp, will continue in their roles for another year, providing welcome continuity with their invaluable experience, inputs and wise advice on matters pertaining to the mining industry and the broader economy.

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