

MEDIA STATEMENT

MINERALS COUNCIL LAUNCHES CEO-LED STRATEGY ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

Khumbul'ekhaya – Remember Home

Johannesburg, 1 October 2019: The Minerals Council South Africa today formally launched the Khumbul'ekhaya initiative, a CEO-led strategy on health and safety, developed and led by the Minerals Council CEO Zero Harm Forum. The aim of the initiative is to drive and sustain the mining industry's pursuit of Zero Harm, with a particular emphasis on eliminating fatalities.

Significant strides in improving industry safety and health performance in recent years have been possible through the collaborative efforts of employees and unions, the support of the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), and mining companies.

Collaborative initiatives – such as the Mine Health and Safety Council (MHSC) 2014 Occupational Health and Safety Summit Milestones and the Centre of Excellence, the establishment of the MOSH Learning Hub, the work being undertaken by the Mandela Mining Precinct, and the CEO Zero Harm Forum – have made important contributions. All these efforts have helped to contribute to an 88% decrease in the number of fatalities since 1993 as well as reductions in occupational health-related deaths. However, the industry takes the view that no fatality is acceptable, and their incidence needs to be eliminated.

The increase in fatalities in 2017 – the first regression in a decade – resulted in deep introspection among CEOs. It prompted the Minerals Council Board to urgently initiate several measures to address this trend, including intense scrutiny of the major causes of accidents, research conducted through the MHSC and the launch of the National Day of Safety and Health in Mining 2018. A massive combined effort by companies, unions and the DMRE in mid- to late-2018 saw a gratifying improvement. In addition, a facilitated workshop involving 34 industry CEOs in January this year, provided the impetus for a revitalised strategy – Khumbul'ekhaya.



Khumbul'ekhaya is a Nguni word for “remember home”, and recognises the devastating impact that work-related deaths have on families. It intends to drive home an enhanced safety and health message.

Khumbul'ekhaya, which is complementary to and supportive of existing initiatives, has four critical drivers:

- The industry’s continued commitment to Zero Harm
- A two-year focus on the elimination of fatalities as a result of both *safety and health* incidents
- Adopting a holistic approach, recognising that fatalities are usually the result of a complex set of circumstances
- Learning from incidents, from each other and from other industries

Speaking at the launch in Johannesburg today, Themba Mkhwanazi, Chair of the CEO Zero Harm Forum, said: “At the centre of it all is the recognition that the quality of safety and health in the industry starts with us and depends on us, the industry’s leadership.”

Minerals Council CEO Roger Baxter noted: “I want to give full recognition to our social partners and the positive contributions they have made. The regulator, in particular the Chief Inspector of Mines, and the unions.”

Matthew Grant, from AMCU, speaking on behalf of the unions: “We welcome the Khumbul'ekhaya initiative, especially the strides made by CEO Zero Harm Forum over the years. But, while we are doing well, we are not doing well enough, particularly in respect of falls of ground as a priority. Profitability *can* be achieved through the imperative of health and safety. We know our role as organised labour, and we will play that role.”

David Msiza, Chief Inspector of Mines and the Chair of the MHSC, commented that, “We shouldn’t lose sight of where we have come from. Decades ago, no one believed that Zero Harm was possible. If we maintain the reduction we have had, this will be the safest year ever.”

He noted the significant challenge of safety issues related to women in mining and at home, and indicated that the MHSC would be focusing on this.

In the coming months, Minerals Council member companies will be hosting their own Khumbul'ekhaya launches as they hold their own health and safety days, with CEOs intent on leading these programmes.

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