



CHAMBER OF MINES
of South Africa

MEDIA STATEMENT

CHAMBER OF MINES NOTES THE RELEASE OF 2016 SAFETY STATISTICS

Welcomes the opportunity to engage with all stakeholders

Johannesburg, 19 January 2017: The Chamber of Mines today welcomed the opportunity to engage with all stakeholders at the release of the annual performance statistics in respect of safety and health.

The industry recorded 73 fatalities in 2016 compared with 77 in 2015. This translates into an improvement of 5% year on year. It is of particularly great concern that during 2016 there was an increase in fall-of-ground related fatalities, an area where the industry has made such great strides in recent years.

The Chamber, on behalf of its council and members, extends its sincere condolences to the colleagues, friends and families of those who lost their lives.

Chamber of Mines President, Mike Teke noted: “While fewer people lost their lives during 2016, we are disappointed that there have been any deaths at all. Our goal must be Zero Harm. I felt exactly the same when I read in the news that over 1,700 people died in road accidents over the festive season alone. We cannot become desensitized and accept that road deaths are acceptable. In the same vein, we cannot and will not accept that deaths in mining are inevitable.”

While the loss of life is always tragic in any circumstance, enormous efforts and successes have been achieved over the past two decades and in 2016. In 2016, overall injury rates continued to fall, showing a consistent and underlying improvement in performance. It is worth noting that recorded serious injuries improved by 13% during 2016. In the past two decades fatal accidents have declined by 88%, while serious injuries have declined by 69%.



The Chamber of Mines congratulates those mining companies that operated without any fatalities in 2016.

Mr Teke noted that, despite the fact that operating conditions in South Africa are often considered to be more challenging than anywhere else in the world, the safety performance of South African mines now compares favourably with other sectors (such as the construction sector) in South Africa, and similar mines in the USA, Australia and Canada. In fact, the South African coal mines continue to be among the safest mines in the world.

Progress has also been made on the occupational health front. Over the past two decades, the incidence of pulmonary tuberculosis, silicosis and noise-induced hearing loss have declined. Work continues to reduce exposure to dust and noise and, over the past decade, the general dust incidence has decreased by more than 50% as a result of the introduction of new or improved technologies. Screening of employees for HIV and TB continued to improve during 2016 and work continues, in association with our government and union partners through the Masoyise iTB campaign, to this end.

Said Mr Teke, “The progress made on the occupational health and safety front is testimony to the various tripartite health and safety initiatives adopted by the mining industry and the efforts of management, employees, government and trade unions.”

The Chamber acknowledges the role of the Mine Health and Safety Inspectorate for its diligence in recording and investigating incidents and accidents. It should be noted, that no other industry in South Africa reports on safety and health in the same degree of detail, accuracy and transparency. This is something the mining industry can and should take great pride in.

In conclusion, Mike Teke said: “It is fitting that all parties attended today – mining companies, unions and government – as it is the strength and determination that comes from this unity that will enable our industry to become a beacon of Zero Harm. Only by working together, especially through entities such as the Mine Health and Safety Council - can we ensure that every single employee returns home, safe and unharmed, at the end of every day.”



For further information please contact:

Charmane Russell

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

Email: charmane@rair.co.za

Web: www.chamberofmines.org.za