

SPEAKING NOTES FOR ROGER BAXTER, CEO, AT THE KHUMBUL'EKHAYA LAUNCH ON 1 OCTOBER 2019

Ladies and gentlemen, honoured guests, good morning, and welcome to this National Day of Safety and Health in Mining and the official launch of Khumbul'ekhaya, a CEO-led health and safety strategy that has been eight months in the making.

I would like to particularly recognise Mr David Msiza, who will be addressing us shortly, both in his role as Chief Inspector of the DMRE, as well as the Chair of the Mine Health and Safety Council, and therefore representing all tripartite members. I also recognise the Chairperson of the Minerals Council CEO Zero Harm Forum, Mr Themba Mkhwanazi, the CEOs and senior representatives of mining companies, the senior representatives from organised labour and our senior team from the Minerals Council. Real leadership, real commitment and real progress.

An initiative such as this is not something that we, as the industry, have developed on our own, although our CEOs have certainly taken a lead. Just some weeks back, when we were sharing some of our vision with our partners in labour and government, we were reminded of the continuing value of collaboration.



This is a truly meaningful day for the Minerals Council, and in particular for the CEO Zero Harm Forum that was established seven years ago. And it is one that, when we look back in years to come, will mark yet another significant turning point in our journey to Zero Harm.

As I outline the journey we have taken so far, and in bringing us to this point, 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, and of course employees themselves.

For the industry itself, we need to recognise the health and safety legacy, and the thousands of employees who have lost their lives in the service of the industry over the past 150 years.

At this juncture, may I ask everyone in the room to stand, and to join me in honouring their memory, and the memory of the 35 mineworkers who have died at work this year. Their names appear on the screen behind us.

[Minute's silence]

Thank you.

Significant efforts have been made to address this legacy, particularly over the last two-and-a-half decades.

Those who came before us, and particularly those who led this industry into South Africa's democratic era, came to see that the industry's health and safety challenges needed to be met and undergo qualitative change.

The trends over these past 25 years show how a succession of initiatives succeeded in reducing the number of deaths in accidents at work on an almost continuous basis. Often, we saw fatality rates plateauing for brief periods, which made the executives and managers and union leaders and government officials of those years understand that yet more needed to change to give further impetus the safety drive.

Similarly, in the occupational health sphere, we saw material changes. New forms of underground dust management, increasingly effective silencing of equipment to address noise-induced hearing loss. And we are particularly proud that, while not an occupational disease, our industry led the way in South Africa in the treatment of HIV/AIDS.

As mentioned earlier, though, there were also outside initiatives that pushed the improving trends:

Judge Ramon Leon's mining health and safety inquiry was critical. It led to the development and promulgation of the Mine Health & Safety Act and the establishment of the tripartite Mine Health and Safety Council. These forever changed the way we would view and manage safety and health, ensuring that these were a collective endeavour between companies, labour and government – like a three-legged stool, that is only useful if all three legs play a role.

In June 2008, the Minerals Council and its social partners established Mining Industry Occupational Safety and Health (or MOSH) unit to focus on the identification and adoption of relevant leading practices.

Together, under the MHSC, the tri-partite stakeholders committed to the MHSC milestones. Good progress has been made with the implementation of the Summit Action Plan at the MHSC. The Minerals Council is very encouraged by the commitment displayed by tripartite stakeholders at the 2018 Mine Health and Safety Summit to the achievement of milestones through implementation of concrete actions that stakeholders committed to achieve by working together.

We are encouraged that the MHSC's Centre of Excellence is now fully operational and that the outcomes of the Centre's quick-win research projects including the development of collision avoidance systems to prevent transport related accidents and rock-mass assessment tool to prevent falls of ground accidents, will be beneficial to the industry's quest for Zero Harm. Collectively, as tripartite stakeholders, we need to embrace a just transition and people-centric adoption of Industry 4.0 as one of the vehicles of attaining the Zero Harm goal.

The CEO Zero Harm Forum (which was formerly the CEO Elimination of Fatalities Team), came into being in 2012. The focus was on CEO leadership to further drive the changes towards improving safety and health in the sector.

And these collective efforts have seen significant success, by any account.

There has been an 87% fall in the number of fatalities since 1993, from 615 fatalities in 1993 to 81 in 2018. Now you might say that this decrease is because of the reduction in the number of employees, and you would be partially right. But if you take a look at performance rates over the same period. In 1993, the fatal injury frequency rate was 0.5 per million hours worked; in 2019, it was 0.08 – that is an 84% improvement.

We had (and still have) substantially narrowed the gap between our safety performance and those of the leading mining jurisdictions, the likes of Canada, Australia and the US.

Though an impressive achievement, particularly given the far deeper nature of our two most labour-intensive and deep-level mining sectors – gold and platinum – we know that this isn't good enough.

And so, while we celebrate these improvements, we continue to mourn our loss. No single fatality is acceptable.

We were particularly dismayed at the setbacks of 2017 and the first half of 2018 when the numbers of fatal accidents began to rise.

That led to some very profound introspection by the industry and, in particular, by our CEOs.

Just 14 months ago we launched a mine health and safety day campaign that was taken up by 92 mines run by our members. The consequences of a massive collective and broad effort across the industry were positive, as the numbers of fatalities fell, a trend that has continued this

year. As 23 September this year, there have been 35 fatalities, compared with 63 at the same date last year (44% improvement).

But we still don't think this is good enough.

I will now hand over to Matthew Grant of AMCU who is speaking on behalf of organised labour.

Thank you.

