



## A new dawn for the mining industry?



As I sit here writing this President's Corner, today's dawn has brought with it the first real rains of the summer. I am reminded that the rain represents a blessing showered down upon us, and our country. Is this a blessing for our industry?

Much has changed for the mining industry over the last few months, or has it?

First, after the inauguration of the new President of South Africa, the promise of a 'new dawn' for South Africa and its peoples created a sense of euphoria, popularly described as 'Ramaphoria'. Exactly what the new dawn will bring for us is not altogether clear, however. Sello Lediga, writing in the Daily Maverick on 7 May 2018, points to the following as four pillars that could assist the President in clarifying the concept, these being:

- Establishing clean governance and an intensified anti-corruption drive. Given the events and announcements of the last month and the revelations from the State Capture inquiry, this resonates even louder.
- Rebuilding a broken economy. Many sectors of the economy are broken, but is mining broken beyond repair, or just damaged, and in need of some care and attention?
- Rebuilding our education and training systems.
- *Thuma Mina*, which is a spirit epitomized in the music of Hugh Masekela, who wrote: 'I wanna be there when the people start to turn it around/When they triumph over poverty/I wanna be there when the people win the battle against AIDS/I wanna lend a hand/ I wanna be there for the alcoholic/ I wanna be there for the drug addict/ I wanna be there for the victims of violence and abuse/ I wanna lend a hand/Send me.'

These pillars reflect the objectives of the National Development Plan, as described in my Presidential Address.

Turning more specifically to the mining industry, we have seen the replacement of the previous Minister of Mineral Resources with Minister Mantashe, and this has been widely supported as heralding the dawn of a new era within the Department of Mineral Resources, headed up by a man who knows the industry well. This creates the opportunity for open and transparent dialogue; but, of course, the engagements will be robust. This was clearly illustrated at the Joburg Indaba and the launch of the Mandela Mining Precinct, where the Honourable Minister emphasised the need for all parties to work together for the future of the industry.

First and foremost on the agenda for the new Minister has been the resolution of outstanding issues in the Mining Charter, so as to create, through engagement, a version of the Charter that has broad support. Notwithstanding this broad support, there are still issues to be resolved, and definitions and intent to be more clearly defined. However, at least certainty has been established on a number of issues, some of which are of importance to the SAIMM. In particular, the need for increased research and development capability and capacity, and the focus on increased localization of the supply chain to the mining industry present opportunities for job creation and skills development.

The recent gazetting of the Department of Science and Technology White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation established a vision of 'Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) enabling sustainable and inclusive South African development in a changing world', which has the following objectives:

- Improved National System of Innovation (NSI) partnerships, coherence, and coordination
- Strengthened and transformed NSI institutions;
- Increased human capabilities
- Expanded research enterprise
- Enhanced enabling environment for innovation
- Improved financing for the NSI funding regime.

The White Paper stresses the need for R&D to be inclusive and interdepartmental at government level, and to be pan-African, with a strong emphasis on skills development and the embracing of Industrial Revolution 4.0 in South African growth and competitiveness. This approach also provides opportunity for the SAIMM to support and develop the R&D initiatives for the mining industry through dissemination of information and knowledge, and to allow for dialogue and engagement between interested stakeholders, beyond the traditional or historical norm.

Not only the Charter, but also the White Paper emphasises the need for the development of circular and lateral economies around mining areas, involving the development of local industrialization, agri-businesses, and alternative energy sources, so as to ensure the sustainability of mining communities after the mining has ceased.

Of course, if there is a new dawn for mining, there must be mineral resources within the country that can continue to be exploited. This requires a new approach to exploration, a topic that is partially addressed by the Charter, but which requires further debate to encourage investment in this vital activity.

All of these announcements, initiatives, and activities create a context for the SAIMM, in terms of its forward-looking strategy.

The Council of the SAIMM, through Office Bearers, has used this context to develop a new strategic plan for the Institute. Previous strategic plans have tended to be more operational than strategic, so a longer term vision and context was used to develop this plan, which takes at least a five-year view of the future.

## A new dawn for the mining industry? (continued)

The plan has established a new vision for the Institute, which is 'To be an independent and globally recognized platform for the development of the African minerals industry of the future.'

This vision articulates that the Institute, in order to remain current and valuable to its members, needs to explore new means of establishing dialogues between multiple stakeholders, while preserving its professional, independent, and apolitical status.

The strategic plan contains six focus areas, which are as follows.

- Redefining who we are. This involves issues such as:
  - How to better engage with our members using modern technology
  - How to better market our products and services in a modern way
  - How to embrace state-of-the-art digital technology
  - How to send out a modern message to members and prospective members
  - How to further engage and collaborate with our key partners.
- Modernizing and extending our reach. This covers:
  - Reassessing and modernizing current offerings and services in line with individual and company needs, *i.e.* a review of what 'the industry' needs and expects
  - Aggressive marketing of the Institute
  - Initiating stakeholder mapping and nurturing current and new relationships
  - Adapting to an Industrial Revolution 4.0 world, where there may be new partners
  - Holding general meetings (local and regional) to eke out what members want from the SAIMM
  - Developing a strategy to engage new professions for modern mining
  - Engaging with emerging/junior miners to develop a strategy with them (value proposition) and others in this space
  - Supporting localization and local supply chain development
  - Extending into 'green mining' for sustainable communities.
- Keeping in touch.  
This involves using Council meetings to inform members of developing issues, and the landscape as it changes. This means adopting a more dynamic and open approach, and using these discussions to form TPC initiatives for 'platform' issues.
- Strengthening and extending our geographic reach.
  - Instituting a project for improving geographic reach (linked to the digitalization strategy via a focused approach). This involves being able to share meetings, presentations *etc.* remotely on a live basis
  - Creating mechanisms to link old/new ideas
  - Developing an SAIMM app for members to interact with the Institute
  - Increasing our geographical reach through engagement with MIASA (Mining Industry Associations of Southern Africa)
  - Strengthening existing branches and links.
- Creating platforms.
  - Harnessing a portal for 'independent platform' issues and strategy
  - Being the conduit for digitalization, new technology, and the Mine of the Future
  - Making the TPC Digitalization in Mining strategy work for all
  - Creating a regularized calendar of breakfast events
  - Identifying burning platform issues where we can add value through facilitation and dialogue
  - Supporting, collaborating in, and creating the Mine of the Future
  - Green mining (work with Minerals to Metals and MineCare)
  - Establishing a knowledge hub
  - Establishing an emerging miners hub, working with financiers, MCSA, WIM *etc.*
  - Supply chain development and localization
  - Creating an industry-wide independent 'hackathon'-type annual platform
  - Establishing a serious role for the YPC.
- Strengthening our professionalism.
  - Setting out SAIMM conditions of professionalism (ethics/code of conduct)
  - Reaffirming our ethics to our members
  - Constantly re-emphasising the importance of membership to the industry
  - Engagement with MCSA and other organizations
  - Strengthening our ties with ECSA, SACNASP, and other statutory organizations
  - Continuing to punch above our weight on SAMREC, SAMVAL, and IMVAL
  - Continuing and strengthening our position in the Global Mining Guidelines Group
  - Engaging actively in Global Mining Professional Associations, activities by representing Africa.

All of these strategic issues are now being turned into action plans, and members will be regularly updated on progress and alignment of the Institute to its vision, the African Mining Vision, and the National Development Plan.

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