



Shaping the mining sector through inclusive leadership



Two weeks ago while having my morning cup of tea, I contemplated, reflected, and marveled at the changes that have occurred in the country and the mining sector in the first six months of my term as the President of the SAIMM. I did not realize then that there was one big change around the corner. They say that a week is a long time in politics, and we have seen how true this statement can be with the recent significant changes that have transpired in Southern Africa; in our beloved neighbor country Zimbabwe as well as our home country South Africa. The mining sector has played, and continues to play, a significant role in the history and development of these two countries. At the same time, leadership and governance play a major part in paving the path for the mining sector.

According to a recently released Chamber of Mines survey, the creation of attractive policies, a regulatory and governance environment through ethical leadership, good governance, and the adoption of stable and predictable policies can result in significant investment in the mining sector. Clearly, leadership is a crucial element in the development of the mining sector. Leadership is instrumental in achieving social change, and is imperative in unlocking growth and transformation in any industry. Good and visionary leadership can shift a country from obscurity into the spotlight. A good and visionary leader can shift a company from a loss-making entity to a profit-making organization that can make a significant and meaningful contribution to national revenue or gross domestic product. There are a few examples in the history of the mining sector that attest to this. Similarly, a good community leader can drive and achieve significant social change leading to community upliftment. Imagine, therefore, what a country stands to gain when leaders from all sectors work together. Imagine if the leadership of the mining stakeholders such as the government, labour, business, and the community played an equal and a more prominently positive role in policy development. The potential for the development of attractive policies that can boost private sector investment, stimulate growth, and improve employment, with benefits that cascade down to and transform local communities, is extremely high.

Recently, the Presidency announced its commitment to resolving the impasse on the Mining Charter and facilitating a process of developing a Charter inclusive of all stakeholders, and in the interests of the industry and the country as a whole. In the words of the new South African President, 'by working together in a genuine partnership underscored by trust and shared vision, I am certain we will be able to resolve the current impasse and agree on a Charter that both accelerates transformation and grows the vital sector of our economy.' Clearly, success in industry, not only in mining but also in other supporting industries such as manufacturing, banking, education, and services, depends on leadership, trust, shared vision, and working together. In order to lay the foundation of true success, we need leaders who are visionary, see potential, remove obstacles, and build confidence. Such leaders can energize and encourage people to do more for personal and organizational growth. We need stakeholders who are not only committed to the vision of the future, but who also work together to establish a stronger, more competitive, more resilient, and prosperous mining industry. It is only through such an approach that we can ensure that our industry is forever a sunrise industry that extends opportunities to as many people as possible. And it is only through such an approach that we can truly say that our country is richly endowed.

S. Ndlovu
President, SAIMM