



A great start to the year end



Seems like a contradiction, but it's not.

It's been a great start for me as President of the SAIMM, since mid-August 2019. However, the rest of the year has passed at a dizzy-speed to December but I've been able to maintain my 'wits about me'.

Some key insights from these first four months of my Presidency include the financial status of the Institute. It's dire and requires urgent attention, which it is receiving from the Office Bearers in terms of seeking better and additional revenue-generating opportunities. Cost-saving initiatives will never suffice and therefore the efforts from the TPCs, our largest revenue generator, are encouraging.

In addition, the SAIMM has a great network of relationships, both in terms of its membership as well as with local and global associations. However, we have to demonstrate our value-add to both these networks for our continued sustainability. We are evolving to take advantage of opportunities around us of providing a better service to members, as well as to reinvent the organization in terms of its operating model. Today's technologies and innovations, such as webinars and social media, offer numerous advantages that can improve the reach and delivery of services to members. We are exploring, and planning on implementing, these innovations.

The SAIMM remains a crucial institution in the industry as regards technical and academic development of its members. However, we recognize the importance and advantage of partnering and collaborating with 'like-minded' institutions to achieve this objective, in order to share resources and reduce the risks of over-expenditure in implementing membership development initiatives. This development effort remains a core capability of the Institute, and one which I will continue to promote and grow.

The year 2020 is now in sight – the numerical tonation' rolls off the tongue very smoothly, but realistically this year will not be such a smooth ride. Firstly, looking back at 2019, the macro environment has been dominated by the trade-tennis match' between China and the USA, which has wreaked havoc on business sentiment as a result of the uncertainty it has created for business planning and volatility in the equity capital markets. The socio-economic and political context in South Africa, epitomized by the fiscal situation of the country, has been a true test of resolve for our society. In the midst of all this despair, some shoots of hope are emerging, such as the South African Investment Conference, led by our President, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa. An additional R300 billion was raised in this second year, bring the total over the two years to about R600 billion. While this may not be new money, it's playing a role in arresting the growing negative sentiment towards South Africa as an investment destination. More is still required in terms of policy to reach the billion rand target. More can be achieved through, inter alia, mustering the courage to make the difficult decisions to implement the necessary state and policy restructuring, and to invite collaborative relationships between private and public sector to share the resources, risks, and upside of these efforts. The year 2020 should be about realizing the benefits of these efforts and for the South African society to begin growing that sense of hope. There are signals that the resources sector will begin to see reinvestment. Although this is in the equity capital markets, this positive sentiment should filter to the 'real' mining activities of investment in exploration and mine development, which is something for members to look forward to.

So then, until 2020, let take this opportunity to wish you rest and restoration and safe journeys where ever you may be travelling with your families during this festive season. I'm looking forward to an exciting 2020, and hope that you will return rejuvenated to help make the SAIMM and South Africa great again.

Merry Christmas.

M.I. Mthenjane
President, SAIMM