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Foreword

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We need to appreciate the significance of the changes that will be brought about by the 4th industrial revolution – some changes will be predictable, but most will not. What I like to refer to as the ingenuity of mankind will be tested to its limits and therein lies the opportunity for our industry.

Celebrating our centenary in 1994 was something special, coinciding with the first democratic elections of the Republic of South Africa. That year marked the beginning of the path to irreversible change in South Africa. This year, 2019 and 25 years later, marks the 125th Anniversary of the existence of the SAIMM and a continuation of the journey of change in the country for everyone living in it.

I have based this foreword on reading 19 personal recollections and memoirs by Past Presidents from 1994 onward as well as from recipients of the Brigadier Stokes Memorial Awards – actually, 19 plus one, the 20th being my own account of a mining career commencing in 1993. It was a wonderful read of really deep, personal and fond memories of mining and SAIMM experiences during the past 25 years; it was also evident that we all love the industry and our country, with all the accompanying joys and hardships and rewards. There's just something special about the mining industry and after 125 years, and the recent 25 years, there will be much to reminisce about. So, I'll focus on a few common issues that stood out for me.

Firstly, while other industries may claim the same, the mining industry in South Africa has had brave men in the past who established the global status of our industry. Several of the memoirs highlighted some of my favourite characteristics of leadership which are so urgently required today in our industry and country: *vision, boldness, and selflessness* and epitomized in the outlook of these individuals for the mineral potential and possibilities of specific developments for the benefit of the industry. I'm referring here, amongst others, to the technical input provided by individuals such as Roger Dixon, Dr Danie Krige, and Dr Ferdi Camisani in developing SAMREC.

This remains a fundamental achievement for the development of the country's diverse resource base and ability to attract investment, both from local and foreign investors. Accompanying this effort was the need for continuous research and development, which has been

provided by various educational and research institutions such as the University of the Witwatersrand and Mintek. The improved understanding through, and symbiotic relationship between, mineral resource management and processing technology grew the industry beyond the foundation established by the gold mining industry into the diversified mining and mineral commodity industry we see today.

Secondly, the enabling policy role of government in developing a successful mining and metals industry was a common feature in almost all the memories. Today, this has not changed. The year 1994 brought with it a monumental (and necessary) change to policy in South Africa. As mentioned before, it was the beginning of irreversible change.

Given the discriminatory history of the country over more than 300 years and the specific role of the mining industry in this regard, change was inevitable.

Transformation was (and continues to be) a primary and focused drive of the new ANC-led government. Both potential losses and gains drove anxiety – the only unknown was how much and possibly for how long. The BEE-Commission, led then by Cyril Ramaphosa, was instrumental in establishing the foundations of what we now refer to as the Codes of Good Practice and derivatives thereof in terms of various industry charters. The transformation imperative, as espoused by the Codes of Good Practice and industry charters, was a catalyst and transitional solution to the much-desired GDP growth when it allowed entry of the previously excluded and majority population into the economy.

We witnessed growth of close to 5% for a short period in the early part of the years under review. However, it was the lack of forward planning and investment in other sectors of the economy and society that made this achievement so short lived. To name a few: prevailing policy uncertainty and lack of coordination, limited investment in infrastructure to facilitate mine development and growth and possible industrialization benefits; poor education policy and investment to enable

human capital development; poor service delivery which has continued to impose a heavy burden on the standard of living of South Africans, and in particular, the black population; a mining policy environment that largely kept investors on the sidelines resulting in South Africa missing out on the profit, tax and employment benefits of the biggest and longest modern day commodity boom in the late 1990s to the early 2000s. During the past ten years we witnessed and were victims of unprecedented levels of corruption and poor governance which has near-crippled the ability of government to function. We are hopeful that we will now emerge from this disappointment thanks to an independent judiciary, and robust contributions from civil society, and the independent media and business.

Lastly, the decline of the South African mining industry, as measured, amongst others, by contribution to GDP, employment, and total mineral production, has been long in the making, even before 1994. There have been a few positive indicators, but the trend has been in a downward direction unlikely to result in the significant socio-economic improvement that is hoped for and could be delivered by this industry.

So, could the mining and metals sector be a sunrise industry? According to the Minerals Council South Africa's September 2018 Facts and Figures report on the South African mining industry, 'it remains the flywheel of the South African economy'; what will it require to remain such and improve? Considerable effort, focus and discipline amongst the key players in the industry in terms of policy, investment and people development; continued change and adaptation to an evolving global context where technology and innovation are the primary drivers of productivity, profit and progress; delivery on the transformation agenda – as a primary industry, the leverage on growth and development through both mining and processing as well as downstream activities is second to none; and then combined with the necessary and difficult, but broad and coordinated policy changes that can arrest this downward trend of the industry and stimulate the rest of the economy. In addition to all these challenges, we also need to embrace the increasing momentum of technological change brought about by the 4th Industrial Revolution, as discussed at the 2015 World Economic Forum.

We need to appreciate the significance of the changes that will be brought about by this revolution – some changes will be predictable, but most will not. What I like to refer to as the ingenuity of mankind will be tested to its limits, and therein lies the opportunity for our industry.

During my tenure as a young(er) mining engineer, my supervisors always used to say to me that 'mining is a people business'. This remains true today, irrespective of the prevailing technologies. Mining is certainly all about people, both within and outside the mining companies where we work. This fact also speaks to the bigger purpose of mining (and broader business sector) in society, which is about providing (appropriately incentivized) solutions to the challenges of society, and today, to do this in a manner that balances profit and environmental stewardship for the sustainability of society. How can we achieve this? Allow me to share some of my thoughts.

Firstly, we should not seek, nor accept credit for, doing

the right thing. The mining industry has always been characterized by visionary and brave men (and recently, women). We need to acknowledge and recognize that our leadership roles extend beyond the company to the greater society and that our decisions are relevant for a greater stakeholder base. Today in South Africa, which is faced with the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality, being a leader means being selfless in one's actions and acting for the benefit of the local and a wider community. The current system of conferring credits on mining companies for doing good is inappropriate and encourages only short-term and selfish thinking. An emerging approach to contributing to society is collective impact through the cooperation of not only neighbouring mining companies, but diverse and strategically aligned entities that together can make the relevant and appropriate contributions to addressing a social challenge for regional development.

Secondly, a true collaboration between business and government is required. South Africa remains an outstanding country in sub-Saharan Africa because of the nature of the relationship that existed between government and business prior to 1994 and the development of the infrastructure that we continue to enjoy today. However, this relationship formerly served only an exclusive community; we therefore need a common agenda between business and government – contrary to popular belief, one cannot do without the other. The common agenda today is not only continued pursuit of transformation as legislated by our BEE legislation, but development and progress for the whole nation, as reflected in our constitution. Let's take what is suitable from the past and build on it for the future. A delayed response to the imperative for collaboration will only result in additional and more severe challenges in a constantly evolving world.

Lastly, the SAIMM continues to be a provider of essential technical knowledge and expertise for the mining and metals industry. The focus on membership and industry relationships with similar bodies locally and globally is a key strength. However, it was notable in the memoirs that the SAIMM has remained a behind-the-scenes entity in an evolving environment. There is a broader stakeholder group that must be acknowledged and engaged for the Institute to continue to thrive and contribute to the development and growth of the industry, both in South Africa and regionally within the African continent.

Recent changes such as the adoption of digitalization and strengthening relationships with the Minerals Council South Africa and ECSA, must continue as a foundation for the transformation of the Institute. In addition to knowledge sharing and technical development, the SAIMM should position itself as a platform for industry-wide stakeholder engagement in order to maintain its relevance and keep abreast of developments in both technical and socio-economic issues, which need to drive both the sector and the country forward.

Thank you to those who took the time to share with us their memories of the past 25 years and contribute to this 125th Anniversary publication. It was a privilege and learning experience for me to research and provide this foreword. Wishing you and the SAIMM a great year ahead to begin the adventure of the next 125 years. ✨