

The NDP Vision 2030 — Does the SAIMM have a role to play?

As you join me for the first cup of coffee in 2017, I would like to welcome you all back from what I trust was a restful and enjoyable festive season. I am optimistic that good times lie ahead of us and that 2017 will be a very productive year.

In previous editions of the *Journal* I have provided some insights into key functions of the SAIMM and our leadership's vision on strategically positioning the Institute as we go into the future. In this edition of the *Journal* I would like to provide a relevant national context and sketch out the role that the SAIMM is playing, and can play, to ensure that it can contribute to securing the country's future. I will do this by referring to the *National Development Plan (NDP): Vision for 2030* which was drafted by the National Planning Commission (NPC) in order to actualize the diverse aspirations of all South Africans, given the country's political history.

After nearly 300 years of colonialism, including over four decades of marginalization of the country's majority through the apartheid system of oppression, South Africa became a democratic state in 1994. This political transition had to confront glaring socio-economic challenges because the new democratic state inherited from the apartheid system the so-called 'evil triplets' of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. The recognition of these challenges required the country to mandate the NPC to draw up the NDP in order to identify ways to confront these challenges. The NDP was published in 2011. To reduce poverty the NDP proposes an increase in the *per capita* income from R50 000 to R120 000 by 2030. The NDP takes the view that the high rate of unemployment, estimated at around 26% in 2016, can be reduced through an increase in the number of employed people from about 13 million in 2010 to over 24 million by 2030. Decent jobs must be created. The NDP envisages that inequality can be reduced through a proxy reduction in the income Gini coefficient from about 0.7 in 2010 to 0.6 by 2030 against a background of South Africa having one of the highest levels of inequality in the world. Education and skills training are important in this regard. Economists predict that if the NDP targets are to be achieved it is critical that the country's gross domestic product (GDP) grows in excess of 5% annually by 2030. Tactically, if this planned socio-economic transformation is to be realized, it is imperative that government attends to several critical success factors, while a common understanding is established on the roles of business, labour, and civil society. So, do we have an understanding of the role that the SAIMM is playing, or can play, to align with the national vision that is crafted in the NDP?

We are making our contribution to socio-economic transformation in a number of ways. Our Scholarship Trust Fund ensures that we continue to assist undergraduate students from poor backgrounds to obtain a university education in mining and metallurgy-related fields, thus contributing towards poverty reduction. By organizing quality technical conferences we are contributing towards the upskilling of minerals industry professionals and hence assisting in reducing inequality gaps and concomitantly attracting foreign delegates that bring foreign currency to the country. This activity resonates with our initiative of strong lobbying to host international mining conferences in South Africa as this adds to economic growth through foreign currency earnings. Looking ahead, our efforts to revive the publication of books will also play a role in reducing foreign currency expenditure and create opportunities to earn foreign income through sales of books across the country's borders. We also need to explore how we can more actively participate in the R&D initiatives arising from the Mining Phakisa process so that we are involved in creating a knowledge economy for the country.

To conclude, I would like to thank the authors of the papers in this volume of the Journal for their efforts in producing such quality contributions. Some of the papers speak to issues that I have highlighted above. For example, one paper argues that mining is but one of the key contributors to socio-economic development and is not a panacea for poverty and unemployment. Another explains how consultative corporate social responsibility (CSR) assists in socio-economic development associated with mining. Another paper addresses how social and labour plans (SLPs) can be designed to reduce the persistence of inequalities in South African societies affected by mining. After you have read all the insightful contributions in this edition you will agree with me that the SAIMM indeed provides a think-tank forum in which socio-economic transformation as espoused in the NDP can move forward in the mining sector.

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