

To act or not act (timeously), that is the question for the future



Mining has always been about more than just extracting minerals from the earth. It is about securing the future, balancing economic imperatives with environmental responsibility, technological innovation, and the well-being of those who power this industry. As we move forward, we must ask ourselves: are we truly mining with the future in mind?

The challenge of resource scarcity is real, and it is reshaping how we think about mining. The days of endless reserves are behind us, and the industry must shift from a model of extraction and export to one that embraces beneficiation, circularity, and long-term resource stewardship. The push towards a circular economy is no longer a theoretical discussion, it is a business imperative. If we fail to maximise the value of our minerals beyond extraction, we risk losing economic opportunities that could drive sustainable development across the continent.

Operational excellence remains key. New technologies are transforming mining, allowing us to extract resources with greater efficiency while reducing waste and energy consumption. But efficiency cannot come at the cost of health and safety. The risks of occupational diseases, particularly in underground mining, are well known, yet we often move too slowly in addressing them. Have we learned enough from past health crises, or are we waiting for another preventable tragedy before we take decisive action? Mining cannot afford to be reactive, it must be proactive in protecting its workforce.

The environment is another frontier where mining must do better. The industry is under greater scrutiny than ever, with water use, emissions, and rehabilitation practices facing intense public and regulatory pressure. Companies that do not prioritise sustainability will find themselves struggling to maintain their license to operate. Those that embrace environmental responsibility as a core business principle will be the ones that thrive in the years ahead.

Mining has the potential to be a driver of economic and social progress, but only if we rise to meet the challenges before us. The research in this edition highlights both the risks and the opportunities that lie ahead. It reminds us that the choices we make today will define the legacy of our industry. Will we be remembered as the generation that mined responsibly, using innovation and sustainability to build a lasting future? That is the challenge and the opportunity before us.

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