

Historical first as unions join in mine modernisation initiative

Today, in an historical first, the Mandela Mining Precinct - Organised Labour Consultative (OLC) Forum was formally established when five unions - AMCU, NUM, NUMSA, Solidarity and UASA - signed a Terms of Reference agreement with the Mandela Mining Precinct.



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“This is historic in that it is the first time that organised labour, as a critical stakeholder in the modernisation journey, will actively participate in research, development and innovation (RDI) initiatives in SA,” says Sietse van der Woude, senior executive of modernisation and safety at the Minerals Council.

Key stakeholder

Minerals Council president Noliitha Fakude, who attended the signing ceremony says: “Organised labour is the voice for one of the largest stakeholders in mining – its 450,000 employees.”

“It is critical to have unions meaningfully involved in the modernisation journey and it is vital that unions recognise that modernisation of mining is an imperative to extend the lives of mines, save current jobs in mining and create new opportunities in South Africa,” says Fakude

Modernisation of industry

With research, development and innovation evolving rapidly in South Africa, the government, industry and organised labour have agreed to work together to progress modernisation in South African mining.

The forum, which aims to ensure that all stakeholders participate meaningfully in the modernisation of SA's mining industry.

The OCL Forum will engage regularly with Mandela Mining Precinct management on current research, deliverables and future projects.

"The unions inclusion in, and signing of the Terms of Reference, demonstrates their commitment to global competitiveness of mining not only economic metrics, but also on the very important Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) measures through modernisation," adds van der Woude.

The inclusion of organised labour has been long anticipated and was initiated through the South African Mining, Extraction, Research, Development and Innovation (SAMERDI) Successful Applications of Technology Centered Around People (SATCAP) Programme and goes some way towards ensuring meaningful involvement of organised labour in the modernisation agenda.

Largest PPP of its kind

The Mandela Mining Precinct is the largest Public-Private Partnership of its kind.

The founding of the forum is another milestone in the Precinct's history, one that ensures that all industry stakeholders have a say in mine modernisation.

A Public-Private Partnership between the Department of Science and Innovation and the Minerals Council, the Mandela Mining Precinct was launched in 2018 with the aim of revitalising mining research, development, and innovation in South Africa to ensure the sustainability of the industry.

As a model for greater collaboration in an innovation ecosystem, the Precinct has already brought together industry players – from companies to original equipment manufacturers as well as academics and academic institutions to find implementable, game-changing solutions to some of the industry's toughest challenges.

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