

Media Release

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To: All Media

SKILLS, ACCESS TO MARKETS, AND COLLABORATION KEY TO EMERGING MINERS

Mintek, in collaboration with the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), hosted the Artisanal and Small-Scale/Emerging Miners Symposium on April 11, 2024. The symposium gathered over 200 industry representatives, including influential entities like the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, Industrial Development Corporation, and Wits University, along with DMRE entities to delve into crucial topics surrounding the empowerment of Artisanal Small-Scale Miners and Emerging Miners (ASM/EM) in South Africa.

The symposium was convened under the theme: *the paramount importance of skills development, market access, and collaboration in driving the growth and sustainability of emerging miners*, with expert speakers sharing insights on mineral processing capabilities, funding and training opportunities, health and safety concerns, and innovative funding strategies tailored to support ASM/EM sectors.

Delivering the keynote address, the Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy Dr Nobuhle Nkabane, emphasised the vital role of the artisanal and small-scale mining as well as emerging miners in the economy and outlined the government's support for these sectors. "The launch of the R400 million exploration fund is a significant step towards assisting qualifying enterprises in the mining industry to conduct exploration work, accelerate new mineral discoveries, and promote economic inclusion" she said.

Dr Nkabane further highlighted the government's efforts, including the introduction of the ASM Policy in 2022, aimed at fostering collaboration and empowering ASM/EM through training and development initiatives. "At the core

of this policy is the need for all stakeholders to collaborate and work together on the training and development of artisanal and small-scale miners and empower them to mine the marginal deposits that are considered less valuable by large mining companies," she said.

Furthermore, the Chief Executive Officer of Mintek, Dr Molefi Motuku, reaffirmed Mintek's commitment to advancing the industry through technology transfer, stating that "Mintek remains dedicated to empowering emerging miners through cutting-edge technologies, exemplified by our successful Igoli project with Above Average mine in Barberton, Mpumalanga. Mintek's Igoli technology helps extract gold in a safer, more cost-effective, and environmentally friendly process. Our focus is on equipping ASM/EM with the skills and knowledge necessary for sustainable growth as well as fitting technology".

The symposium served as a catalyst for collaborative efforts among stakeholders, aiming to create an enabling environment for ASM/EM to thrive, thus ensuring a sustainable and transformative mining industry benefiting all stakeholders.

In conclusion, the symposium participants committed to tangible actions that aim to drive progress in mining. These include enhancing skills development, technology, collaborating on funding initiatives and prioritising information sharing for ASM/EM participants. These actions demonstrate a clear dedication to creating a sustainable and inclusive mining ecosystem for the benefit of all and the continuous engagement of black communities, particularly Africans, in the mainstream economy.

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