



mineral resources & energy

Department:
Mineral Resources and Energy
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEAKING NOTES

Progressive Citizens Forum

Groblersdal, Sekhukhune District Municipality

26 March 2024

Programme Director,

Treasurer General of the governing party, Dr Gwen Ramokgopa

Esteemed Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to start by ***submitting an apology*** on behalf of the Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy, Dr Nobuhle Nkabane, who was scheduled to attend this important meeting, however, due to an ***urgent parliamentary obligation***, she could not join this session today.

We have been asked to speak about the ***opportunities in the South African mining industry***, with a particular focus on Limpopo. Having been actively involved in ***mining for over a century***, our country ***benefitted from the mining of the natural resources*** which our country is blessed with. We have seen this with the developments

historical mining areas such as Johannesburg, Rustenburg, Witbank, and Welkom.

The Council for Geoscience's (CGS) geological mapping programme has identified **Limpopo, Northern Cape and North West Provinces** as the prospective **corridor or new mining belt** for the country. As the DMRE, we have taken it upon ourselves to rigorously **promote investments in the mining and energy sectors in these Province**, hence, we have since convened several **mining and energy investment conferences in these provinces**, bringing together all social partners in the mining industry – government, business, labour, and communities.

Following the inaugural mining and energy investment conference in 2021, where delegates raised concerns regarding support for artisanal and small-scale miners, the DMRE published for implementation the **Policy on Artisanal and Small-Scale in March 2022** to formalise artisanal and small-scale mining and enable economic activity primarily for citizens. Mintek in collaboration with the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA), has since trained over 630 artisanal miners.

In January this year, the DMRE published an invitation for artisanal and small-scale miners to apply for the **funding that is designed to assist artisanal and small-scale miners with Financial Provision for Rehabilitation and Capital Equipment**. In line with available budget for the artisanal and small-scale miners programme, the DMRE intends to offer financial support to at least **13 artisanal and small-scale miners**, with a majority share of the **funding reserved for women small-scale miners**.

Cognisant of the fact that new mines are born out of exploration, the DMRE in partnership with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) has **established a R400 million exploration fund** in February this year. Through this fund, we seek to financially assist qualifying enterprises in the mining industry to **conduct exploration work**, accelerate new mineral discoveries, increase junior miners' access to mine ore bodies, and **promote economic inclusion**.

We are convinced that **Limpopo is rich with mineral resources** that are needed for the just energy transition, hence we need to accelerate exploration in this part of the country. We thus hope to see more **applications** for both the **exploration fund and artisanal and small-scale miners' fund** coming from this province, in particularly the Sekhukhune District.

In conclusion, programme director, the DMRE is aware of a number of **mines that have been put under care and maintenance**, some of which are in this part of the country. We believe such actions not only **contributes to a decline in the mining industry's contribution** to the economy, but also **contributes to the high unemployment** that our nation is battling with.

It is in this context that we are engaging with the mining industry on the **use it or lose it principle** to do away with the deliberate sterilisation of mineral deposits and ensure that these mines are released to **companies that are willing to mine**.

I thank you.