

Best practice report on mining health and safety

Better safety on South African mines resulted in fewer fatalities, but more must be done to improve livelihoods and boost inclusive growth on the back of mining, said Professor Frederick Cawood, Wits Mining Institute (WMI) director, in the foreword to the [*Best Practice Report on Health and Safety on South African Mines*](#).



Professor Fred Cawood, director of the Wits Mining Institute

At the top of today's mining agenda is intelligent, precise mining causing no harm to mine workers and their communities. "Digital technologies have the potential to take us to the next level when it comes to mine health and safety. Mining has a reputation for being one of the most dangerous occupations, where miners are faced with countless risks every day such as rock falls," he said.

The report was released last week by the Southern African-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It offers information and solutions to support the industry's journey towards zero harm. The involvement of German technology companies in the report stems from their sourcing of raw materials from countries such as South Africa. Germany's government and industry are working to ensure that these inputs are sourced from countries and companies that mine responsibly.

"As part of this commitment, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy embarked on a mine health and safety project for the Southern African region in 2018," said Gerard Mohapi, the chamber's project manager business development – mining and industry. "The first phase of the project is this mine health and safety publication, which will be followed by workshops and seminars in 2019 and 2020."

Unique and massive challenges

In his foreword, Cawood highlighted the "unique and massive challenges" facing the South African mining sector.

"On the one hand is a positive impact on economic well-being, while on the other hand is a legacy of inequity among its workers that has rendered a great many of them vulnerable to poverty and disease. This requires constant innovation to deal with our unique issues to find unique solutions," he said

He noted the vital role of facilities like the Sibanye-Stillwater Digital Mining Laboratory (DigiMine) in finding solutions through doing health and safety research in a controlled environment. The DigiMine is equipped with digital systems to enable research for the mine of the future.

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