

DMRE to prioritise mining's socioeconomic components

It is only in the context of harmonious co-existence between the communities, workers, and mining companies that mineral resources can be optimally and orderly exploited.



Mineral resources and energy minister, Gwede Mantashe

“Together with other social justice-orientated policies that are embedded in the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA), like the social and labour plans (SLPs), communities are poised to meaningfully benefit from the exploitation of natural resources, which are the national patrimony and heritage of all South Africans,” minister of mineral resources and energy, Gwede Mantashe, said at the Marikana Memorial hosted by Sibanye-Stillwater.

“This is the social capital in which all the relevant stakeholders must invest. Thus, it is for this reason that the department will henceforth rigorously monitor the implementation of these policies,” he said.

New approach to SLPs

He said the Mining Charter requires right holders to contribute meaningfully towards mine community development.

“Mining right holders thus, must in consultation with relevant municipalities, mine communities, traditional authorities, affected stakeholders identify developmental priorities of mine communities. These projects must therefore be aligned to the integrated development plans (IDPs) and be identified in the social and labour plan.

“We need to have a new approach to SLPs. The charter makes provision for collaboration of mining right holders operating in the same area to identify projects and maximise socio-economic developmental impact in line with approved social and labour plans,” he said.

Mantashe said the charter further requires a 100% implementation of the social and labour plan projects within any given financial year.

“This will result in impactful projects that will make a difference in communities. However, these SLPs should not replace the municipal IDP but must compliment them.

“Furthermore, the introduction of the District Development Model (DDM) will enhance collaboration amongst the stakeholders and across sectors to effectively address the socioeconomic challenges faced by communities. Mining communities like Marikana can best benefit from that approach,” the minister said.

Socioeconomic objectives

The department has, from time to time, entered into various contractual agreements with mining companies.

These agreements are meant to give practical effect to socioeconomic objectives of the MPRDA.

“As a result, we have seen the building and refurbishment of, among others, community healthcare centres, schools and roads. We have recently visited the Mpumalanga Province to officially open two state-of-the-art healthcare facilities in Middelburg and Cathysville, which were built by mines and handed over to the communities.

“We expect all mining companies including Sibanye Stillwater to follow suit. In this regard, we are in the process of fast tracking the assessment and approval of SLPs requested for Western Limp Platinum (WLP) and the Eastern Limp Platinum (ELP) belts,” Mantashe said.

The government will continue to improve the regulatory environment of the mining and energy sectors to enable more vibrant and cost-effective factors to doing business and attract investments.

“Amongst these has been the recent promulgation as law of the provision for embedded electricity generation from 1MW to 100MW,” he said.

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