



**SPEECH BY MR ANDILE SANGQU, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF MINES
WORLD AIDS DAY CELEBRATION, MTHATHA, EASTERN CAPE
1 DECEMBER 2017**

The Programme Director

His Excellency, the Deputy President of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa

Honourable Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

It is an honour for the private sector and the Chamber of Mines, in particular, to be participating in this World AIDS day celebration. The celebration is even more poignant as it is held in the OR Tambo district, during this auspicious year marking 100 years since the birth of a great son of this soil, Oliver Reginald Tambo.

The theme for this year's commemoration: "It is my right to know my status. Prevention is my Responsibility" resonates with the work done by the private sector on safeguarding and preserving the health of employees. The health and wellbeing of our employees is both a strategic imperative for the industry, as well as a national imperative. We go as far as to say, "We will not mine, unless the health and safety of our employees is assured."

Our employees come from all walks of life in South Africa and the SADC region. A very significant number come from this very province and district. The Eastern Cape has historically been a major labour sending area to the mining industry. From the time of the famine and decimation of our people in Nongqawuse's time, and the Hut Tax imposed by the colonialists, our people have had to work in lands far from home.

This trend continues till today. We recognise the poor socio-economic conditions prevailing in the province and this district, which force people to migrate in search of economic opportunities. The Chamber is also cognisant of the challenges ex-mineworkers are facing in accessing unclaimed benefits due to them.

It would therefore be remiss of me if I was not to mention, however briefly, what the Chamber is doing to address some of the challenges faced by mineworkers, regarding TB and HIV/AIDS and unclaimed pension and compensation benefits.

TB and HIV/AIDS continue to exact a heavy toll on our country. The Chamber of Mines has, individually and as part of business, over the past years intensified its response to TB and HIV/AIDS and we are proud of the partnerships we have made in the process. Masoyise iTB is one such partnership, and it has its origins in a challenge made by the Deputy President, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa during World TB Day in March 2015. The challenge was that South Africa should increase screening for TB and HIV, particularly in key populations, which includes mine workers.

The mining industry responded to the challenge by initiating Masoyise iTB which is now a strong partnership that includes the Departments of Health and Mineral Resources, all four labour unions, the UN agencies, SABCOHA, the Chamber of Mines and several other stakeholders.

The aim of Masoyise is to have a meaningful impact on the TB challenge in the country and the industry. It is in line with our industry milestone for TB which is to have a TB incidence rate that is at or below the South African rate. Through Masoyise, we have set ourselves the target of screening all employees, from the CEO down, every year, for TB and HIV. Companies have embraced the initiative and gains have been made on TB contact tracing, support to small mines, and improving access to TB and HIV diagnostics.

This progress would not have been possible without the cooperation of a range of committed stakeholders who were part of co-creating Masoyise iTB. We owe our success to the support given by the National Health Department, the provincial departments of health in Gauteng and North West, as well as the labour unions in the industry.

We are heartened by results thus far which show that, in 2016, 73% of employees were screened for HIV, while 84% were screened for TB. With this performance, we believe that we will achieve our target of screening all mineworkers every year for TB and HIV.

If I may turn my attention to unclaimed pension and compensation fund benefits. In 2016, the Financial Services Board indicated that R41.6 billion in unclaimed benefits was due to 4 million beneficiaries from South African pension and other benefit funds. Of the R41.6 billion, 10% or R4 billion, was due to people that had worked in the mining sector. This, ladies and

gentlemen, is a large amount, particularly for beneficiaries who are currently deprived of any source of income.

There are many barriers to people accessing these funds, ranging from lack of bank accounts, lack of correct identification documents, or information on how to claim from the relevant funds. Our people were pushed from pillar to post between a myriad of funds. I am pleased to say that, much progress has been made to assist claimants over the past year. Through collaboration between the Departments of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation, Health, Labour and Mineral Resources, the FSB, various pension funds and the Chamber, regular strategic meetings have been held with excellent results. Information on claimants and on outreaches is shared, a database of claimants has been established by the FSB and the Compensation Commissioner at the Department of Health. The Chamber has secured the services of a dedicated Pensions Officer who assists mineworkers with their claims. Assistance can be provided telephonically, by email or through physical contact.

All these efforts have resulted in more claimants receiving their benefits, and we look forward to an increase in payouts. No one, especially the most vulnerable, should be deprived of the sweat of their brows and we are part of ensuring that this does not happen.

Once again, success is being achieved through collaboration and cooperation. I would like to particularly recognise and appreciate the leadership of the Department of Health under the Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, and the unflinching commitment from Dr Barry Kistnasamy, the Compensation Commissioner for ODMWA. For both TB and HIV/AIDS, and improving access to unclaimed benefits, their support has been unstinting.

Programme director, ladies and gentlemen. I have highlighted the health and socio-economic challenges that still exist in this province, all of which have their origins in poverty. It is with these challenges and realities in mind that the Chamber and EOH, Africa's largest technology service provider, in partnership with the South African Business Coalition on Health and AIDS (SABCOHA), are pledging to support comprehensive health screening in the OR Tambo district to the value of R1.8 million. The health screening will include:

- HIV counselling and testing
- TB screening
- Glucose (sugar) measurement
- Blood Pressure measurement
- Height and weight measurement

The Chamber further commits to support the province and the district in particular with R500,000 to be utilised for tracking and tracing ex-mineworkers with unclaimed pension/provident and compensation benefits. These funds will bolster existing initiatives.

With this modest contribution, we hope to attract further funding from other partners. From this initial stream, let others join until we have a strong, fast-flowing river. As the Chamber of Mines we are determined and committed to enhancing the meaningful existence of our employees through the eradication of TB.

Programme director, ladies and gentlemen, the health of our nation is of paramount importance and we will do whatever it takes to ensure that we contribute to good health, great wellbeing and a productive nation.

Once again, it has been a great privilege to be part of these proceedings and we look forward to further collaboration on stopping TB and HIV in their tracks.

I thank you.