

African mining needs an industrial revolution

The African mining industry needs to explore innovative ways to improve productivity, competitiveness, and profitability to propel the continent into industrialisation.

Dr Markus Thill, president of Bosch's Africa region, believes that by making the mining industry more profitable, economic growth can be furthered. Eventually, this would have positive effects also on education and skills development.



Change brings opportunities

"History has shown that the introduction of new, modern technologies creates opportunities for high-paying jobs as demand for skilled workers increases substantially. The depletion of coal resources in Europe led to the First Industrial Revolution and the use of steam power was to mechanise production. Such profound changes usually create concerns among people.

"However, as the example of the First Industrial Revolution shows, transformation processes very often bear opportunities. Here, productivity increased which led to the creation of high-paying jobs and the generation of new industrial wealth," he says.

The introduction of modern mining techniques and technologies in many instances, retrofitting old mines with new technologies boosts productivity, reduces costs, and leads to improvements in safety when mining for resources.

Power supply

While Africa has improved electricity supplies, cost-effective and reliable energy remains a key challenge for mining and industrial companies.

"Harnessing that power will require investment in transmission and distribution infrastructure to ensure that electricity gets to as many customers, in particular industrial and commercial end-users, as possible," explains Dr Thill.

Safety

The mining industry has also made significant strides in reducing mining-related accidents and fatalities, thanks to regulators and industry stakeholders that have stepped in to address the challenge.

While industry stakeholders and experts commend the implementation of regulatory measures to tackle the challenge, there is also apprehension about overregulation, which increases the cost of mining in Africa.

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