

Chamber: Misgivings on proposed Mining Charter

The revised Mining Charter could be gazetted this week, but the South African Chamber of Mines is worried that it may differ from the document that was originally proposed.



Roger Baxter, CEO, Chamber of Mines of South Africa. Photo: [Access Africa](#)

“Stakeholder buy-in is necessary if we are to overcome the issues in the industry, but unlike previous charter negotiation processes, there has been no engaging spirit,” Roger Baxter, CEO of the chamber told delegates at the recent Junior Mining Indaba in Johannesburg.

Mineral resources minister Mosebenzi Zwane announced that the charter would be gazetted this week at the reopening of the Highveld structural mill in Emalahleni on 7 June. “It is a very straight-forward charter. People must work together. We must transform our country,”

Zwane has been promising the charter since the African Mining Indaba in February, where he said his intentions were to have the process finalised in March. The review of the Mining Charter was gazetted in April for public comment and has yet to be finalised.

The days of the Randlords have gone

But despite the chamber’s misgivings, the industry remains committed to transformation, Baxter says. “It’s a journey, and we have achieved more than has been acknowledged, such as BEE and management team profiles, and we will continue to achieve more. Critical mass is perpetuating itself in the rest of the industry. There are examples of real change taking place – the days of the old Randlords has certainly gone.”

He acknowledges that while mining is an important sector for the country and the continent, it has undergone many changes over the past decade. “The chamber understands this and two years ago we embarked on a process to reform the organisation and adopt a transformative and progressive agenda.”

It underwent a brand process to see how it could deal more effectively with legacy issues and to reposition itself, while engaging the public and other stakeholders, to be more active in dealing with issues in the industry.

Representing all players

It also wanted to be more representative of the entire sector. Traditionally the chamber has represented the big guns in the gold, coal and diamond sectors. “We wanted to bring in junior miners, and we have been successful in bringing in smaller sectors.”

To date, the chamber represents 75 organisations including smaller mining associations as well as 30 miners, who are classified as emerging miners. He adds that the coal sector has been particularly successful in this industry segment, and there are interesting signs in the diamonds and industrial minerals sectors.

The chamber has also set up an emerging miners desk. “It serves not only to recruit new entrants into the industry, but also assists them with advice from ex- and retired mining executives. For a low fee, they have access to all the chamber resources,” he explains.

This includes workshops on topics requested by the emerging miners themselves. Topics include the convoluted subject of water licences and legislation, and the Mining Charter.

In addition, the chamber has been working with government to get exemption for junior miners on certain regulatory requirements. “The change in the regulatory environment is one that many junior miners do not have the capacity to deal with,” he says.

“As the chamber, we will continue to drive a progressive agenda for a stable regulatory environment to enable miners to make decisions to make this country great again.”

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