

Mining Expo 2026

Health and Safety Conference Day



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An old law governs mine safety in Namibia

Namibia's mining industry continues to operate under health and safety regulations established by the Mines, Works and Minerals Ordinance, 1968 (Ordinance No. 20 of 1968), with a modern replacement unable to take effect until Parliament passes the long-awaited Minerals Bill.

The revelation emerged at the inaugural Chamber of Mines Safety Conference on Tuesday, held as part of the 2026 Namibia Mining Expo and Conference at the Windhoek Showgrounds.

Introduced under the theme "Safety for a Resilient Tomorrow", the conference brought together mining executives, regulators,

legal experts, health and safety practitioners and government officials to examine leadership accountability, legal compliance, contractor management, road safety, mental health and the development of a stronger safety culture across Namibia's mining industry.

The three-day Namibia Mining Expo and

Conference, running from 4 to 6 August, has attracted a record 222 exhibitors occupying 397 exhibition spaces, making it the largest event in the Expo's history.

Addressing delegates, Chamber of Mines president George Botshiwe said the industry's current mine health and safety regulations still derive from the Mines, Works and Minerals Ordinance, 1968, despite dramatic changes in mining technology, operational practices and international safety standards over nearly six decades.

"As our industry continues to grow, to

innovate and to embrace new technologies, it is essential that our legislative framework evolves in tandem, supporting a health and safety regime that reflects the realities, risks and opportunities in modern industries," he said.

Botshiwe said the Chamber's Health and Safety Committee and the Office of the Chief Inspector of Mines have spent several years drafting a new set of mine health and safety regulations designed to replace the existing framework.

According to Botshiwe, the proposed regulations have been drafted

to align with current international standards and industry best practice.

They are intended to replace what he described as "the very outdated mining health and safety regulations" developed under the Mines, Works and Minerals Ordinance, 1968.

However, he said the new regulations cannot be implemented until the Minerals Bill has been enacted.

"These regulations can only be brought into force once the Minerals Bill has been legislated, which will empower the honourable minister to gazette and implement

these regulations," Botshiwe told delegates.

Significant improvements

Despite operating under legislation dating back nearly six decades, Chamber of Mines member companies have recorded significant improvements in workplace safety over the past decade.

Chairperson of the Chamber's Health and Safety Committee, Barcelona Tsauses, said the all-injury frequency rate declined from 21.9 in 2014 to 9.72 in 2025, representing a

57% improvement, while both the disabling injury frequency rate and the lost-day injury frequency rate were reduced by 50% over the same period.

She attributed the improvements to sustained investment in leadership, robust safety management systems, peer reviews and the sharing of best practice across member operations.

Tsauses also revealed that Namibia's mining industry recorded five fatalities between 2020 and 2026 across both

Chamber and non-Chamber operations.

However, four of those five fatalities occurred at non-Chamber mines, prompting the Chamber to work with the Office of the Chief Inspector of Mines to extend its expertise beyond its membership.

She said the Chamber's Health and Safety Committee has been visiting non-member operations to assess their safety management systems, evaluate workplace practices and share best practice aimed at reducing

fatalities across the wider mining industry.

Acting Deputy Director: Mine Safety and Operations Division Mines Presley Kamuvi said regulators had already concluded that the existing health and safety regulations are outdated and that the drafting process deliberately incorporated international best practice to bring Namibia's mining sector in line with modern standards.

He noted that regulations can be amended more readily than Acts of Parliament,

making it easier to keep pace with technological and operational changes once the new legal framework is in place.

Kamuvi explained that the Mines, Works and Minerals Ordinance, 1968 (Ordinance No. 20 of 1968) still provides the legal basis for protecting the health and safety of employees and other persons at mines, while setting out enforcement powers, inspection systems and the duties of employers and employees.

Legal practitioner Zeka Alberto, who

also addressed the conference, said Namibia's mining industry currently operates under several overlapping legal instruments, including the Constitution, the Labour Act and regulations issued under the Mines, Works and Minerals Ordinance, 1968.

In the Chamber of Mines' 2025 Annual Review, Botshiwe also warned that unresolved policy and legislative matters, including the Minerals Bill, continue to create regulatory uncertainty that could discourage investment.

Mining industry broadens safety culture beyond hard hats and hazards

Namibia's mining industry is redefining workplace safety by placing greater emphasis on leadership, employee wellbeing, and workplace culture, with industry leaders arguing that achieving zero harm depends as much on how people think and behave as on complying with safety procedures.

The shift emerged during the inaugural Chamber of Mines Health and Safety Conference, introduced this year as a dedicated component of the Mining Expo and Conference under the theme "Safety for a Resilient Tomorrow."

The conference forms part of the Chamber's effort to strengthen collaboration between mining companies, regulators and safety professionals while promoting leadership accountability, legal



compliance, safety culture, contractor management, road safety and employee wellbeing across the industry.

The renewed focus also comes as the

Chamber seeks to build on improvements in mine safety achieved over the past two decades.

Chamber of Mines president George Botshiwe said member

companies have recorded a number of fatality-free years since 2004, driven by stronger leadership, improved operational practices, and an entrenched safety culture.

However, he acknowledged that recent fatalities at non-member mining operations demonstrate that significant work remains to improve safety performance across the industry.

Leading the discussion on safety culture, Barcelona Tsauses, chairperson of the Chamber's Health and Safety Committee, said mining companies must move beyond treating safety as compliance with rules and procedures and instead build organisations where safety becomes part of everyday behaviour.

"Safety is not just about rules and procedures. It

is really about creating a high-performance culture where good production and safety can coexist to yield operational excellence. It is about creating an environment where people are empowered to stop unsafe work, implement corrective measures where required, ask questions whenever they are unsure and understand that safety leadership begins in the boardroom and extends all the way to the rock face."

She said the ultimate objective is for safety to become part of employees' daily lives rather than something practised only at work.

"You cannot just wear safety at the gate when you come to work. Safety needs to be part of your DNA. It needs to go home with you, influence your family, your children and your community

because that is how we build a genuine culture of safety."

Responding to delegates during the discussion, Tsauses said the industry's safety record demonstrates both the progress made and the work that remains. She noted that five mining fatalities have been recorded since 2020, including this year, four of which occurred at non-Chamber mining operations, adding that the Chamber's Health and Safety Committee has strengthened collaboration with the Office of the Chief Inspector of Mines, conducted peer reviews and shared best practices to improve safety performance across the sector.

The broader approach to workplace wellbeing was introduced earlier by George Botshiwe, who said the industry

must now recognise that protecting employees extends beyond preventing physical injuries.

"We must also, as an industry, recognise the growing impact of mental health, fatigue, stress and other social challenges on workplace wellbeing. Building resilient organisations requires us to care for the whole person, ensuring that both physical and psychological wellbeing remain essential to our approach to health and safety."

Botshiwe said the Chamber deliberately designed the conference programme to examine leadership accountability, legal compliance, safety culture, contractor management, road safety, mental health, fatigue and workplace

stress because safety has become "an absolutely non-negotiable and critical strategic and business imperative" for the mining industry.

Providing a legal perspective, Zeka Alberto, legal counsel for the Rössing Uranium Life of Mine Extension Project, said companies must move beyond simply obtaining licences and permits and instead create organisations in which safety is part of their culture and social responsibility.

"We are past ticking the box and saying we have the licence, we have the permits, let's start operating. We have crossed that bridge where we now say we need to establish our social licence to operate, and that social licence to operate is to comply

with each and every aspect to ensure that all our employees go home safely."

Alberto said lasting improvements in mine safety will depend on leadership creating workplaces where safe behaviour becomes part of organisational culture rather than simply a legal requirement.

The conference reinforced a common message from all three speakers that the future of mine safety will be determined not only by engineering controls and regulatory compliance, but also by leadership, workplace culture and the willingness of every employee to take personal responsibility for ensuring that everyone returns home safely at the end of each working day.



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Programme

Public Invitation: CIF s-TIP Validation Workshop & Launch of Public Consultation



Venue Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy Auditorium

Date 3rd of August 2026, 2pm CAT

Scan the QR Code
to join us online

The Namibia Green Hydrogen Programme (NGH2P), on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) and in partnership with the Environmental Investment Fund (EIF), hereby invites all interested stakeholders to participate in the Sectoral Transformation Investment Plan (s-TIP) Validation Workshop, which will formally launch the national public consultation process.

The s-TIP forms the backbone of Namibia's proposal under the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) Industry Decarbonisation Programme, a global initiative designed to help countries shape the emissions profile of new industrial investments before carbon-intensive pathways become locked in.

For Namibia, the s-TIP showcases a practical, financeable roadmap to unlock concessional capital—potentially up to USD 250 million in CIF resources and over USD 1 billion in blended MDB finance—to accelerate green industrialisation, shared infrastructure development, MSME growth, and inclusive community benefits. It reflects the outcomes of the June 2026 Joint Mission, where government, SOEs, MDBs, private developers, financiers, academia, and civil society refined the plan into a coherent system-level intervention which took into account findings from stakeholder consultations held in April and May in the Erongo and //Karas Regions as well as the illustrative pipeline's bankability needs.

Public Consultation Period

Following the Validation Workshop, the draft Investment Plan (s-TIP) will be made publicly available on the Namibia Green Hydrogen Programme website (www.gh2namibia.com) for public review and comments.

The consultation will remain open for two weeks from the 03rd August 2026, during which stakeholders are invited to submit written feedback and recommendations on the almost-final s-TIP focused on the country's Industrial Decarbonisation Programme.

Who May Participate

The consultation is open to:

- Government representatives
- Private sector representatives
- Civil society organisations
- Academia and research institutions
- Community groups and traditional authorities
- Development partners
- State-Owned Enterprises
- The general public

Purpose of the Validation Workshop

The workshop will:

- Present the almost-final s-TIP for public review
- Summarise the key takeaways from the CIF Joint Mission
- Provide an overview of Namibia's proposed decarbonisation and industrialisation pathways
- Invite stakeholder perspectives before finalisation of the CIF Investment Plan
- Launch the formal two-week public consultation window

Submission of Comments

Stakeholders will be invited to submit written feedback, recommendations and comments through the Namibia Green Hydrogen Programme to a link that will be shared immediately after this launch.

For more information:

Namibia Green Hydrogen Programme

Email: CIFGRN@gh2.org.na

Tel: +264 81 143 1559

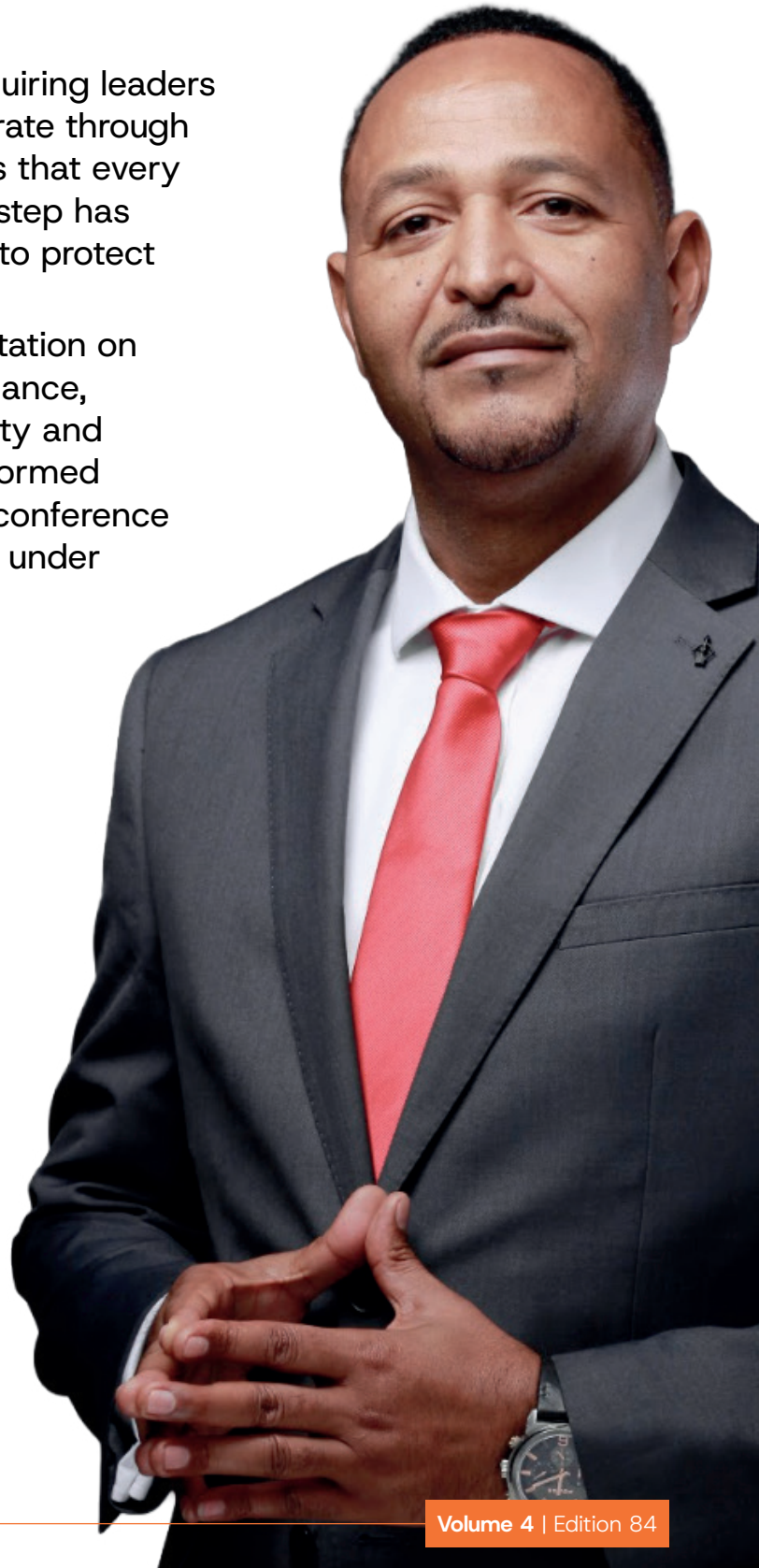
Mine CEOs remain criminally liable despite delegating safety duties

Chief executive officers and managing directors of mining companies cannot escape criminal liability for workplace safety failures simply by delegating health and safety responsibilities to subordinates, with legal expert Zeka Alberto warning that while operational duties may be assigned, accountability under the law remains with an organisation's leadership.

Addressing delegates at the inaugural Chamber of Mines Health and Safety Conference, Alberto, legal counsel for the Rössing Uranium Life of Mine Extension Project, said legal compliance in the mining industry extends far beyond obtaining licences and

permits, requiring leaders to demonstrate through their actions that every reasonable step has been taken to protect employees.

His presentation on legal compliance, accountability and leadership formed part of the conference programme under the theme "Safety for a Resilient Tomorrow," where delegates examined the legal obligations placed on mine operators, and the role



leadership plays in preventing workplace incidents.

Alberto said mining companies operate within a comprehensive legal framework that includes the Constitution, the Labour Act, the Minerals (Prospecting and Mining) Act, common law,

environmental legislation and mine health and safety regulations. He stressed that many people mistakenly view company safety rules as internal policies when, in reality, they are legal requirements that carry significant consequences if breached.

He said the mining industry has also moved beyond simply obtaining operating licences.

"We are past ticking the box and saying we have the licence, we have the permits, let's start operating. We have crossed that bridge where we now say we need to establish our social licence to operate. And that social licence to operate is to comply to each and every aspect to ensure that all our

employees go home safely."

Alberto warned that a single workplace incident can expose both companies and individuals to multiple forms of legal action.

He explained that a single incident may trigger criminal prosecution, civil claims, labour disputes, environmental liability, regulatory action, and professional disciplinary proceedings simultaneously, making health and safety one of the most significant legal responsibilities facing mine leadership.

However, he said one of the biggest misconceptions among company leaders is that assigning health and safety responsibilities to

managers, supervisors or safety officers transfers legal accountability.

"The Labour Act places also some sort of strict liability on certain actions. The managers of a mine, the managers of any operations, the mere fact that you have assigned someone and delegated your functions does not relieve you of the legal liability. It does not. So we have to go beyond delegation of rights, delegation of authority. We have to see how do we pre-empt this and mitigate by taking positive action to eliminate any potential

harm and to ensure that all the people that you appoint are fully trained and that they can ensure the safety of others."

Alberto said the Labour Act allows operational duties to be delegated, but not legal liability.

"Within the corporate structure, who is at risk of criminal liability? It's the leadership team. Now, just to look at the Labour Act which applies across all sectors, for example, it places the CEO or the MD as the person that's answerable in case of a criminal offence. Irrespective of whether you delegate under

Regulation Number Five, the CEO can delegate his duties to other people. But he will still remain answerable. The liability part he cannot delegate."

He devoted considerable attention to Section 132 of the Labour Act, explaining that employers seeking to rely on the section as a defence must do far more than issue written instructions or appoint competent employees.

Alberto said employers must be able to demonstrate that they identified workplace hazards, implemented preventative measures,

ensured employees received appropriate training and maintained records proving those actions were taken. He said inspectors and investigators will expect employers to produce evidence showing that employees were properly trained, instructed and supervised, rather than merely relying on company policies or verbal instructions.

"The employer must go beyond that in order to demonstrate and rely on Section 132 as a defence and to assure that you don't attract liability."

He said documentation

therefore becomes a critical part of legal compliance because employers may later be required to prove that they fulfilled their statutory obligations and actively managed workplace safety.

Alberto also warned that legal consequences are not confined to companies alone. Depending on the circumstances, engineers, lawyers and other registered professionals involved in mining operations may also face disciplinary proceedings before their professional bodies where negligence

contributes to workplace incidents.

Concluding his presentation, Alberto said legal compliance ultimately depends on leadership creating organisations where safety is embedded as a value rather than treated as a regulatory obligation.

"Culture is adopting. This is what we have adopted in the mining industry, not only as a culture, but safety as a value system. Behind every culture, you need leaders that have to demonstrate those leadership qualities."

Mining expansion drives industry-wide C28 road safety campaign

The Roads Authority and Namibia's mining industry have signed a C28 Road Safety Charter, committing themselves to work together to improve safety along one of the country's fastest-growing mining corridors as expanding uranium and other mining projects are expected to place thousands of additional mining-related vehicle movements on the route each day.

The charter was signed during the inaugural Chamber of Mines Health and Safety Conference after mining companies collectively projected a substantial increase in daily traffic along the C28

between Windhoek and Swakopmund, prompting industry leaders to warn that road safety has become one of the sector's most significant operational risks.

Launching the initiative, Zebra Kasete, managing director of Deep Yellow Namibia, said the



C28 has evolved from a scenic tourist route into one of Namibia's most strategically important mining corridors, serving existing mines while supporting several projects that are expanding or moving towards production.

"Interestingly, it is also becoming one of Namibia's most important mining corridors, where several mining projects are either operating, expanding or advancing towards production. We know that traffic volume on C28 will increase considerably over the coming years," Kasete said.

To quantify the challenge, participating mining companies were asked to estimate how many vehicles their operations would place on the road each day. The

projections indicate daily mining-related traffic could include 2,033 quantum buses, 37 large buses, 124 light-duty vehicles and 114 heavy-duty trucks, with the same vehicles making return journeys along the corridor every day.

"Collectively, we have asked all the mines who are using that road how many vehicles are going to be travelling on that road. If you listen to this number, it is scary. Two thousand and thirty-three quantum buses, 37 large buses, 124 light-duty vehicles and 114 heavy-duty trucks along this road. This is one way going. All those vehicles must go back on a single day," Kasete said.

Kasete said the projected traffic volumes have elevated the C28 into one of the mining industry's highest strategic risks.

"For all mining companies, I would agree with you that this is one of the highest risks that boards are worried about — how are we going to manage that road?"

He said the corridor

presents additional hazards because of its mountainous terrain, gravel sections, strong south-easterly winds, coastal fog and the mix of mining vehicles, tourists and international visitors unfamiliar with Namibian driving conditions.

"It is a very, very dangerous road. If you can imagine, we talk about tourists, people who drive on the different side of the road. Even the trucks going there and collecting material will include people who are foreign to Namibia. Add the strong south-east winds, the morning mist and reduced visibility, and it's really a death trap, if you can put it that way," Kasete said.

He said the campaign was launched to ensure that increased mining activity does not result in more road crashes and fatalities.

According to Motor Vehicle Accident Fund statistics presented during the launch, Namibia recorded 1,637 road crashes, 2,807 injuries and 229 fatalities

between 1 January and 26 July 2026.

"These are not just statistics. Behind every number is a family. These figures remind us that road safety is not simply the responsibility of government or law enforcement. As an industry that depends on the national road network every single day, we have a duty to be part of the solution," Kasete said.

Roads Authority chief executive Mbahupu (Hippy) Tjivikua, who signed the C28 Road Safety Charter on behalf of the authority, said traffic volumes along the corridor will continue to increase as mining activity expands, making proactive planning and road safety interventions essential.

"That number is not going down any time

soon. It is increasing and it is incumbent upon us to ensure that we plan appropriately for that road infrastructure and to have better interventions in terms of safety," Tjivikua said.

Tjivikua said the Roads Authority's board had instructed management to engage with the mining industry regarding the growing demands placed on the road network. While discussions initially centred on infrastructure requirements, he said both parties agreed that improving road safety was the immediate priority.

He said improvements to the C28, including the possibility of a dual carriageway, form part of the Roads Authority's medium- to long-term planning, subject to

funding, but stressed that engineering solutions alone would not eliminate road crashes without safer road-user behaviour.

Kasete said the charter represents a commitment by both the mining industry and the Roads Authority to ensure the C28 becomes a model for collaboration and one of Namibia's safest mining corridors.

"Let's work towards the future where C28 is recognised not only as a corridor supporting a growing mining industry, but as a model for collaboration and one of the safest roads in the country. Because at the end of every shift, every holiday, every business trip and every journey, the destination that matters most is to go home safely," Kasete said.



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~600

Jobs to be created
in the region

~4000

Jobs to be created in related
industries

~20 000

Namibians expected to benefit
from the project

\$500 mln

Planned investment
in the project

\$3,5 bln

Estimated tax revenue during
development

3000 tons

Expected annual uranium output
over a 25-year mine life



Decent working
conditions
and remuneration



Development
of infrastructure,
health care and education



Highest safety
and environmental
standards



Advanced digital technologies
and innovative scientific
developments



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and contribution
to the energy security
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More than 70 years
of experience
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responsibility
from the earliest
stages of the project



Full transparency
with stakeholders



Chamber opens mine safety programme to emerging and artisanal miners

The Chamber of Mines wants its newly established Health and Safety Conference to become a platform that extends beyond its membership to include non-member mines, emerging miners, and artisanal miners, as part of a broader effort to improve health and safety standards across Namibia's mining industry.

The proposal follows concerns that while Chamber member companies have made significant progress in improving safety performance, fatal incidents outside the organisation continue to highlight the need to share knowledge



and strengthen safety practices across the wider mining sector.

Introduced this year under the theme "Safety for a Resilient Tomorrow," the inaugural Health and Safety Conference is part of the annual Mining Expo and Conference and is intended to become a permanent platform for collaboration



among mining companies, regulators, technical experts, and safety professionals.

The initiative could have far-reaching implications beyond the Chamber's membership.

According to the Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy, Namibia has about 1,078 registered mining

claims, while the ministry estimates that between 5,000 and 8,000 people are engaged in small-scale mining, many working in groups on individual claims.

Through its Small Scale Mining Division, the ministry provides technical assistance, training, laboratory services, mineral rights administration and support for cooperatives as part of efforts to formalise and strengthen the sector.

Against that backdrop, the Chamber's proposal would enable non-member operations, emerging miners and artisanal miners to benefit from the safety knowledge, peer learning

and best practices developed within Namibia's established mining industry.

Responding to delegates during the conference, Barcelona Tsauses, chairperson of the Chamber's Health and Safety Committee and executive vice president of Sinomine Tsumeb Smelter, said the Chamber has already begun to extend its expertise beyond its member companies.

She said mining statistics since 2020, including the current year, show that the industry has recorded five fatalities, with four of those fatalities occurring at non-Chamber mining operations.

"What we have done over the past few years is that we've worked with the Chief Inspector of Mines and we've actually offered our services as a Health and Safety Committee, where we've gone to non-Chamber sites as a committee to go and evaluate their safety management systems, their safety management practices, and to offer advice to them as well.

The same peer review type of cross-pollination we have offered to that sector as well," Tsauses said.

She said the Chamber now wants to expand those efforts through the annual conference.

"I think what we would

love to see is that more and more of those sessions can continue to happen for us to curb the fatalities. So that's what we definitely are doing in that space. And also these platforms that we currently have today, this platform of the Safety Conference, it's not just for Chamber sites. We hope to see even the non-Chamber sites, the emerging miners, the artisanal miners, to come and listen and to learn with us as we go throughout this day."

The issue was raised during the discussion session by Precious Gowases, Health and Safety Superintendent

at Navachab Gold Mine, who asked whether Chamber member companies could do more to influence safety performance across the wider mining industry rather than focusing only on their own operations.

Earlier, Chamber of Mines president George Botshiwe said that improving mine safety is a responsibility shared by the entire industry, regardless of membership in the Chamber.

Botshiwe said Chamber member companies have recorded a number of fatality-free years since 2004 through strong

leadership, disciplined operational practices and deeply embedded safety cultures. However, he cautioned that fatal incidents at non-Chamber operations during 2025 and 2026 demonstrate that significant work remains to strengthen health and safety performance across the wider mining industry.

"Although these incidents did not occur at Chamber member operations, every loss of life resonates throughout the mining sector.

"They serve as a sobering reminder that safety extends

beyond organisational boundaries and that the consequences of workplace incidents affect the entire industry, its employees, their families, and the communities we serve."

Botshiwe said the Chamber's Health and Safety Committee, working closely with the Office of the Chief Inspector of Mines, reviews serious incidents, including those at non-Chamber operations, to identify lessons that can be shared across the industry.

"For this reason, the Chamber's Health and Safety Committee, in

close cooperation with the Office of the Chief Inspector, actually reviews serious incidents, even at non-Chamber member operations, to identify lessons learned and share these across the industry.

"By fostering this culture of learning and continuous improvement, the committee helps strengthen safety systems and reinforces the principle that safeguarding lives is a responsibility shared by the entire mining community."

Botshiwe said the Chamber intends the Health and Safety

Conference to become a permanent annual platform where industry leaders, regulators, technical experts and safety professionals can exchange knowledge and strengthen their collective commitment to achieving zero harm.

Building on that vision, Tsauses encouraged non-Chamber operations, emerging miners and artisanal miners to participate in the conference, learn from the industry's experience and contribute to improving safety standards across Namibia's mining sector.

431 road deaths force mining industry into road safety campaign

Namibia's mining industry has launched a renewed road safety campaign after the country recorded 431 road fatalities in 2025, with the Chamber of Mines warning that road crashes have become one of the greatest safety risks facing a sector whose employees and contractors travel thousands of kilometres across the country every day.

The initiative was launched on Tuesday during the inaugural Chamber of Mines Health and Safety Conference, a new addition to the 2026 Mining Expo and Conference held under the theme "Safety for a Resilient Tomorrow." Introduced for the first time this year, the conference reflects the Chamber's decision to make health and safety a dedicated pillar of Namibia's

premier mining event.

Opening the conference, Chamber of Mines president George Botshiwe said safety has become "an absolutely non-negotiable and critical strategic and business imperative" for the mining industry, with the protection of employees remaining the sector's highest responsibility.

Botshiwe said road safety extends well beyond mine sites and has become a growing concern for the industry due to the

large number of mine employees and contractors who use Namibia's roads every day.

"In 2025 alone, Namibia recorded 431 road fatalities,



continuing an alarming trend over recent years and underscoring the urgent need for collective action to improve road safety across our country," Botshiwe said.

"Given the thousands of mining employees and contractors who travel Namibia's roads every single day, this is not simply a national concern, but it is also a huge concern for the mining industry."

He said the Chamber's Health and Safety Committee is working with relevant authorities to strengthen collaborative road safety initiatives, while member companies continue investing in road safety awareness campaigns and infrastructure improvements in communities surrounding mining operations. He added that the industry's responsibility to protect employees does not end when they leave the workplace, but extends to every journey they undertake and the communities in which they live and work.

The conference also marked the official launch of the Erongo C28 Road

Safety Campaign, which Botshiwe described as an example of what can be achieved when industry, government and other stakeholders work together to improve road user behaviour, reduce accidents and ultimately save lives along one of Namibia's busiest mining corridors.

Botshiwe said the introduction of the Health and Safety Conference recognises that mining is fundamentally an industry built on people.

"Every tonne of ore we mine, every exploration programme we undertake and every new project we develop depends on the dedication, professionalism and commitment of thousands of women and men who work in our operations every single day," he said.

"For that reason, there is no responsibility greater than ensuring that every one of these employees returns home safely, free from injury and occupational disease, to their families at the end of each shift."

He said Chamber member companies have

recorded a number of fatality-free years since 2004, reflecting more than two decades of sustained commitment to improving workplace safety through stronger leadership, disciplined operational practices and a deeply embedded safety culture.

At the same time, he cautioned that fatal incidents at non-member mining operations during 2025 and 2026 demonstrate that significant work remains to improve health and safety performance across the wider mining industry.

Botshiwe said the Chamber intends making the Health and Safety Conference a permanent feature of the annual Mining Expo and Conference, providing a platform for mining companies, regulators, technical experts and safety professionals to exchange lessons, strengthen collaboration and reinforce the industry's commitment to achieving zero harm.

"No achievement is greater than protecting human life," he said.

Debmarine says regulatory compliance no longer enough to prevent fatalities

Debmarine Namibia says compliance with mining and maritime regulations is no longer sufficient to protect employees from fatal and life-altering incidents.

Chief operating officer Charlotte Maenge Shipiki-Kali said the marine diamond miner remains subject to an extensive regulatory regime covering Namibian labour, mining and shipping laws, as well as International Maritime Organisation requirements, but had concluded that compliance represented only the starting point of effective safety management.

"We are a compliant culture in terms of regulations. We comply with the Namibian regulations. We also comply with the International Maritime Organisation. In terms of safety of lives at sea,

maritime labour, we are highly regulated. So we are compliant. But compliant is not sufficient for us. We need to be more than just compliant. So compliant is basic," Shipiki-Kali said.

Shipiki-Kali said Debmarine's operations face risks that differ substantially from those of land-based mines because employees work on vessels operating about 30

kilometres offshore, where they must contend with deep water, changing weather



conditions and the hazards associated with marine mining equipment.

She said the company's safety journey began taking clearer shape in 2010 through its "road to zero harm", initially focusing on safety, health, environment and security observations and later on fatal-risk controls intended to identify the events capable of killing employees.

However, the company's approach was also shaped by a fatality recorded in 2008, when a worker named Nicolas Clute died aboard a vessel Shipiki-Kali was managing.

"That death would stay with me. The guy was from Port Nolloth, was working on a tug. Nicolas Clute. I had to drive to Port Nolloth for his funeral. I had to meet his twin brother, his mother and his family. That would stay with me. It has informed how I feel about safety. It is personal. You have

got skin in the game," she said.

By 2017, Debmarine's leadership had become concerned that its focus on lost-time injuries and compliance was not adequately addressing the events capable of causing fatalities.

Shipiki-Kali said the company subsequently partnered with the Institute for Training and Development to assess its safety culture and psychological safety, with about 800 employees interviewed as part of the process.

The findings challenged management's view of its own safety performance.

"What we found is that we were mostly compliant, also reactive, a little bit proactive. In our minds, we thought that we were better than that, to be honest. We were shocked to see that the feedback that we got from the workforce was telling us that you are not as good as you think that you are," Shipiki-Kali said.

She said the company introduced structured discussions in which senior managers, operators, plant hands

and deck hands participate as equals and can challenge management where they believe an unsafe act is taking place.

"Around that table everybody is equal. There is no CEO. The plant hand is equal to our CEO around that table. The plant hand or the operator or the deck hand can give their opinion where they disagree and where they think management is also exhibiting some unsafe act," she said.

Shipiki-Kali said this was particularly important in a marine environment where employees must ordinarily follow the captain's commands, but still need the confidence to raise concerns and halt work when safety is at risk.

Debmarine also changed the risks it focused on, moving away from devoting most of its attention to minor observations and towards what it calls priority unwanted events, including hazardous materials, fire, launch and recovery operations, structural failures, loss of power, and helicopter

operations.

"It could not be that safety and we are separate. They had to be part of this process," Shipiki-Kali said.

Once critical controls had been identified, Debmarine introduced systems to alert the responsible manager or risk owner whenever a control was not checked or had failed.

"When you go and do a job, you have a paper that tells you, here are your critical controls. If this is not in place, it is a no-go. And if it is a no-go, that is your stop-work authority," Shipiki-Kali said.

She said Debmarine also identified behaviours that would attract disciplinary action, including deliberately disregarding controls related to high-risk activities such as safeguarding, confined

spaces, hot work, and lifting.

"Compliance is unacceptable for us. It is something that we do not accept," she said, adding that Debmarine's definition of zero harm now concentrates primarily on preventing fatalities and life-altering injuries.

The company subsequently trained employees across its vessels to actively search for high-impact risks through a programme involving what it calls safety sentries, while technical personnel and managers conduct further pressure-testing of critical controls through teams known as delta commanders.

"If something happens, whose fault is that then? It is not on the person who is doing the work. It is on me, it is on us. So we try and take care of that through design," she

said.

Debmarine no longer describes the programme simply as a safety maturity journey, but as a journey to resilience that covers safety, risk, work systems, leadership, and employees' ability to respond to changing conditions.

"We actually say journey to resilience, meaning it encompasses everything. It is not just safety, it is risk, it is work, it is everything. It is in all spheres. So the key thing for us is the fact that everyone is a safety leader.

"The human being is the strongest link because we are too far to manage the team. The systems must be agile and everybody must be ready to respond. Psychological safety is a requirement, and there is no end to the journey," she said.

Namibia: Where Responsible Mining Aligns with World-Class Conservation

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Namibia



WHO WE ARE

RIB Industries is a proudly Namibian printing and branding company specialising in commercial printing, corporate branding, promotional products and corporate wear. We partner with businesses, government institutions and organizations to deliver high-quality solutions that strengthen brand visibility and create a lasting impression.

Our services include corporate publications, annual reports, large-format printing, signage, vehicle branding, promotional merchandise and custom branded apparel. From concept to production, we provide tailored, end-to-end solutions designed to meet the unique requirements of every client.

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