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Human behaviour remains mining's weakest safety system

Mining companies have invested heavily in engineering controls, sophisticated safety management systems and regulatory compliance, yet fatal accidents continue to occur because the greatest variable in any operation remains human behaviour, leadership development specialist Rudzani Petrus Mulaudzi told delegates at the Chamber of Mines of Namibia Health and Safety Conference.

Presenting on Leadership Development for Health and Safety, Mulaudzi challenged the industry's long-held belief that stronger procedures alone produce safer mines. While acknowledging that engineering controls, legislation and management systems are essential, he argued that they only provide the framework for safe work. Whether those systems succeed ultimately depends on the people expected to use them.

"The essence of this discussion is how we make safety work where work really happens," he said, explaining that the true test of any safety system is not in boardrooms or policy manuals. Still, in the decisions workers make when conditions change, supervisors are absent, and production pressures increase.

Mulaudzi said every organisation operates through two interconnected systems. The first is the technical operating

system, comprising engineering controls, technology, procedures, legislation and management processes designed to control risk. The second is the human operating system, which includes the beliefs, judgement, communication, relationships, assumptions and behaviours that determine how people respond to those systems in practice.

Mining companies, he said, have become highly skilled at developing the technical system, but have paid far less attention to strengthening the human system that ultimately determines whether those technical controls work under real operating conditions.

"We need the technical systems," he said. "But they don't make themselves work. People do that."

He described what he called the safety performance gap – the difference between how work is designed to be carried out and what actually happens once people encounter changing conditions, production demands, fatigue, assumptions and uncertainty.

That gap, he argued, cannot be closed simply by writing more procedures because people rarely respond to identical situations in identical ways.

To demonstrate the point, Mulaudzi asked volunteers to participate in a paper-folding exercise.



Each participant received the same sheet of paper and the same verbal instructions. Yet when the exercise ended, no two papers looked alike.

The demonstration, he said, exposed one of the most misunderstood assumptions in leadership.

"People never execute your instruction. They execute what they understand to be the meaning of your instruction."

Leaders, therefore, make a fundamental mistake when they assume that issuing instructions automatically creates understanding.

"The meaning is not your choice," he said. "It is the choice they make."

Mulaudzi explained that none of the volunteers had performed the exercise incorrectly.

Instead, each interpreted the instructions according to personal experience because nobody stopped to ask what he

meant by "top right corner".

He said the exercise revealed another hidden weakness in organisational culture.

By describing the task as "simple", he had unintentionally discouraged participants from asking questions because they feared appearing incapable in front of colleagues.

The same behaviour, he warned, occurs every day in workplaces.

Employees often remain silent not because they are careless or indifferent, but because organisational cultures make them reluctant to question instructions, admit uncertainty or challenge decisions made by authority figures.

To illustrate the consequences of such silence, Mulaudzi referred to the 2019 Brumadinho tailings dam disaster in Brazil, where the collapse of a Vale-operated dam claimed 270 lives.

He said major industrial disasters rarely occur because organisations lack procedures or engineering expertise.

Instead, warning signs often exist long before catastrophe strikes.

"Somebody knew," he said.

"Somebody knew that something had changed sufficiently."

The tragedy, he argued, demonstrated the consequences of a failed human operating system in which people either did not speak, were not heard or felt unable to raise concerns before disaster occurred.

According to Mulaudzi, resilient organisations deliberately

cultivate five human behaviours that strengthen safety performance before incidents occur.

These include the ability to notice changing conditions, maintain curiosity, respect others' perspectives, demonstrate the courage to intervene when work becomes unsafe, and continuously learn from experience.

Those qualities, he said, cannot simply be written into procedures or downloaded through compliance training.

Instead, leaders must deliberately create environments that encourage those behaviours to develop naturally.

He said leadership therefore extends beyond enforcing rules.

Its primary responsibility is to create ownership.

That requires leaders to establish psychological safety so employees feel comfortable asking questions, reporting hazards, admitting mistakes and stopping work without fear of embarrassment or retaliation.

Rather than relying solely on instructions, leaders should create purposeful conversations that encourage participation, feedback and shared understanding.

"A conversation is not an instruction," he said, arguing that genuine dialogue allows organisations to test assumptions and improve collective decision-making.

Mulaudzi also reminded delegates that leadership is demonstrated through behaviour rather than words.

Using a second audience

exercise, he showed how people instinctively copied his actions even when he gave no instruction to do so, illustrating that employees observe what leaders do far more closely than what they say.

For that reason, he argued, leaders who expect workers to value safety must first model the behaviours they expect from others.

He said building resilient organisations does not necessarily require more administration, additional procedures or new qualifications.

Most mining companies already possess comprehensive legal frameworks and technical safety systems.

The missing investment, he argued, is in developing people who understand risk, communicate openly, coordinate effectively and hold one another constructively accountable.

Only then can organisations move beyond simple compliance and create genuine safety ownership.

For Namibia's rapidly expanding mining sector, where several large projects are entering construction and production simultaneously, Mulaudzi said the future of mine safety will depend not only on engineering excellence but on strengthening the human operating systems that influence every decision made on a mine site.

"Every safety system," he concluded, "ultimately succeeds or fails through the decisions made by the people operating it."

Rössing says contractor safety begins long before work starts

As Namibia's mining industry enters a new phase of expansion, safety failures involving contractors are more likely to originate in leadership decisions, procurement processes and planning than at the workplace itself, Rössing Uranium's Manager for Health, Safety, Environment and Protection Services, Jacqueline Mwenze, has warned.

Addressing delegates at the Chamber of Mines of Namibia Health and Safety Conference on Wednesday, said contractor safety should not be viewed as a procurement or compliance function but as a leadership responsibility that begins long before the first machine arrives on site. Her presentation, Contractor Leadership at the Interface of Change Management, focused on how mining companies can maintain consistent safety standards as they increasingly rely on contractors to execute major projects.

She challenged the industry's tendency to distance itself from incidents by saying "the contractor had the incident", arguing that such language shifts attention away from the

people affected and the leaders responsible for creating safe working environments.

"I've never made a piece of equipment. I've never made a contractor," she told delegates. "It's people that get injured."

For Mwenze, the question after an incident should never be which company employed the injured person, but whether leadership fulfilled its responsibility to ensure that person returned home safely.

She said the issue has become increasingly relevant at Rössing Uranium as the mine undergoes one of the biggest operational changes in its five-decade history. The company is developing a new open pit and implementing the Phase 4 pushback, introducing contractors into mining activities that Rössing employees historically performed.

Those changes, she said, have significantly increased the number of operational interfaces that must be managed safely.

Despite navigating ownership changes, the COVID-19 pandemic and uncertainty surrounding the extension of the mine's life, Wednesday said Rössing continued to record strong safety performance,



earning three Chamber of Mines safety awards during that period. She attributed those achievements not to favourable circumstances but to deliberate leadership and disciplined safety management during periods of significant organisational change.

Mwenze said contractors have become indispensable to modern mining because they provide specialised expertise, operational flexibility and additional capacity that owner-operated mines cannot always sustain internally. However, she cautioned that every contractor introduced into an operation creates a new interface between organisations, systems and people.

Those interfaces, she said, are where many failures begin.

"As soon as you introduce another organisation into your operation, you introduce another interface," she said, explaining that unclear responsibilities, inconsistent supervision and poor communication can create gaps that increase operational risk.

She stressed that hazards do not distinguish between permanent employees and contractors.

"There is no contractor standard and employee standard," she said, arguing that gravity, electricity, heavy equipment and explosives respond only to exposure, not to the company logo on a worker's overalls.

For that reason, she said every individual working in a mine should be held to the same safety standards and leadership expectations, regardless of who signs their salary cheque.

Wednesday also rejected the long-standing perception that safety competes with production.

"I always tell my team that safety and productivity are married," she said, arguing

that production can only be sustained when people work safely. Organisations that sacrifice safety to increase output ultimately undermine both objectives, she said.

Rather than blaming contractors when incidents occur, Mwenze urged mining companies to examine their own contractor governance systems.

She said poor outcomes often stem from unclear scopes of work, weak supervision, poorly defined responsibilities, and failures to plan months before work begins.

"The incident starts long before the incident," she said in explaining that many of the conditions leading to injuries are created during procurement, contractor selection, mobilisation and planning rather than during the task itself.

She outlined Rössing's contractor management approach, explaining that accountability is assigned throughout the contractor lifecycle, from procurement and mobilisation to execution, monitoring and contract close-out.

Contract owners, operational leaders, contractor managers and governance structures

all have clearly defined responsibilities to ensure accountability does not fall between organisations.

"What belongs to everyone belongs to no one," she said, warning that ambiguity over responsibilities is itself a significant safety risk.

She said effective contractor management is not about imposing more rules but about ensuring leadership remains visible and accountable throughout every stage of a project's life.

As Namibia prepares for a wave of new mining developments, Wednesday said contractor leadership will become increasingly important as companies manage larger workforces, more specialised contractors and increasingly complex operations.

Her message to delegates was that while mining companies may outsource work, they can never outsource responsibility.

Regardless of who performs the work, leadership remains accountable for creating an environment in which every person has the opportunity to return home safely at the end of the day.

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.

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 Chief Inspector of Mines Presley Simataa 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.

Simataa 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.

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 Mwaenga 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," Kali said.

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 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.

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 during 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," 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.

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.

Debmarmine 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," Kali said.

Once critical controls had been identified, Debmarmine 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," Kali said.

She said Debmarmine 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 Debmarmine'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.

Debmarmine 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.

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.

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."

Finished mine safety regulations await Minerals Bill

Namibia has completed a comprehensive overhaul of its mine health and safety regulations, but the long-awaited framework cannot come into force until Parliament passes the Minerals Bill, leaving the country's mining industry to continue operating under legislation dating back to 1968.

Acting Chief Inspector of Mines Presley Kamuvi said the new Mine Health and Safety Regulations are complete following years of collaboration between the Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy and the Chamber of Mines of Namibia, and are expected to become among the first regulations gazetted once the Minerals Bill is enacted.

"I can say it's a finished document. It just awaits for a little consultation phase and then obviously, as Mr George, the president with the small 'p', has alluded to, we await the Minerals Bill to be promulgated," Kamuvi told delegates at the inaugural Chamber of Mines Health and Safety Conference in Windhoek on Tuesday.

"Safety regulations will be one of the first ones once the Minerals Bill becomes an Act of Parliament."

His remarks underscore the

extent to which Namibia's rapidly expanding mining industry is awaiting legislative reform. While the sector has grown into one of the country's largest economic contributors through uranium, gold, diamonds, base metals and critical minerals, occupational health and safety continues to be governed primarily by provisions contained in the Mines, Works and Minerals Ordinance of 1968, legislation drafted for a vastly different mining environment.

Kamuvi acknowledged that reality, saying both government and industry recognise that the current legal framework no longer adequately reflects the risks, technologies and operational practices of modern mining.

"We do take cognisance of the fact that we do have an old outdated piece of legislation. Unfortunately, it's what we have to live with right now," he said.

According to Kamuvi, the new regulations have been developed through an unusually close partnership between regulators and industry. Officials from the Ministry's Mine Safety and Operations Division worked alongside the Chamber of Mines' Health and Safety



Committee to draft provisions that incorporate international best practices while addressing the practical realities faced by Namibian mining operations.

He said the process went beyond simply replacing outdated legal provisions.

Instead, the objective has been to create a regulatory framework that can evolve alongside the industry itself. Unlike Acts of Parliament, regulations can be amended more easily, allowing government to respond more quickly to technological advances, emerging risks and changing international standards without reopening primary legislation.

"Fortunately regulations are not like an Act of Parliament; it is easy to amend. As the industry

evolves, it will be easier for the minister to gazette amendments to the regulations," Kamuvi said.

He argued that modernising the regulatory framework has become increasingly important because mining remains one of Namibia's most hazardous industries.

Operations routinely involve explosives, hazardous chemicals, heavy mobile equipment, underground workings, long shifts, fatigue and occupational diseases, creating risks that require stronger hazard identification, risk management and enforcement systems than those envisaged when the existing legislation was enacted.

"It is imperative that we regulate the industry through updated pieces of legislation that look at the dynamics of the industry," he said.

Kamuvi noted that mining employed more than 20,000 people and contributed about 14% of Namibia's gross domestic product in 2025, making effective health and safety regulation critical not only for protecting workers but also for safeguarding one of the country's most important economic sectors.

He said the Ministry's responsibility extends beyond

issuing mining licences and enforcing legislation. Through its Mine Safety and Operations Division, the Ministry oversees inspections, investigations, compliance monitoring, and policy development to ensure mining remains both productive and safe.

The Acting Chief Inspector also emphasised that international obligations are shaping Namibia's regulatory reforms.

As a member of the International Labour Organisation, Namibia aligns its occupational health and safety framework with international conventions, protocols and recognised global standards. Those principles have informed the drafting of the new Mine Health and Safety Regulations, alongside lessons drawn from international mining jurisdictions and recognised industry practices.

Kamuvi said the regulations are intended to strengthen protections for mine employees and visitors, improve inspections and investigations, reinforce employers' responsibilities to identify and control hazards, and promote a stronger health and safety culture throughout the industry.

He also called for greater participation by mining companies operating outside the Chamber of Mines, noting that serious incidents at non-member operations continue to affect perceptions of Namibia's mining industry as a whole.

"When somebody comes from outside, they hear fatality in the mining industry. Everyone gets affected. They don't really ask whether it was a Chamber member or not," he said.

Kamuvi said the government therefore continues to encourage non-member operations to engage with the Chamber because of the safety systems, technical expertise, and collaborative initiatives it has developed over many years.

For now, however, the implementation of the new safety regime depends on Parliament.

Until the Minerals Bill is passed and the Minister is empowered to gazette the regulations, Namibia's mining industry will continue operating under legislation first enacted nearly six decades ago, despite broad agreement between regulators and industry that a modern framework is ready to take its place.

Chamber pushes for permanent mine safety conference

The Chamber of Mines of Namibia has announced that its inaugural Health and Safety Conference will become a permanent feature of the annual Mining Expo and Conference, arguing that the industry's future depends not only on production and investment but also on creating a culture in which every employee returns home safely every day.

Opening the first-ever dedicated Health and Safety Conference on Tuesday, Chamber president George Botshiwe said the introduction of the event marked an important expansion of Namibia's premier mining platform, reflecting the growing importance of safety as a strategic business priority rather than simply a legal obligation.

Held under the theme "Safety for a Resilient Tomorrow," the conference brings together mining executives, regulators, legal experts and safety professionals to discuss leadership accountability, legal compliance, contractor management, road safety and workplace wellbeing.

Botshiwe said the mining

industry had evolved considerably since the Mining Expo was first introduced in 2010, growing into the country's flagship mining event showcasing investment opportunities, careers, and participation in the mining value chain. The addition of a dedicated safety conference, he said, reflects the industry's recognition that mining is ultimately built around people.

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

Botshiwe said the industry's commitment to safety extends beyond complying with legislation and has become a core value embedded in mining operations.

He noted that Chamber member companies have recorded years of fatality-free operations since 2004, describing the achievement as the product of strong leadership, disciplined operational practices and deeply rooted safety cultures. However, he cautioned



that those gains should not breed complacency, warning that new operational risks continually emerge as the industry expands.

A key contributor to those improvements, he said, has been the Chamber's Health and Safety Committee, which works closely with the Office of the Chief Inspector of Mines. Beyond formal meetings, the committee conducts quarterly peer-review visits at member operations, allowing companies to benchmark safety systems, exchange lessons from incidents and near misses, and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

Botshiwe described the willingness of competing mining companies to openly share safety knowledge as one of the defining characteristics of Namibia's mining industry.

Despite improvements among Chamber members, Botshiwe acknowledged that serious incidents at non-member operations remain a concern.

He said fatalities outside Chamber membership serve as a reminder that safety responsibilities extend beyond organisational boundaries and affect the entire mining sector, including employees, families and surrounding communities. To address this, the Chamber's Health and Safety Committee now reviews serious incidents at non-member operations, in collaboration with the Office of the Chief Inspector, to identify lessons that can be shared across the wider industry.

Botshiwe also called for the modernisation of Namibia's mine health and safety legislation.

He said the Chamber and the Office of the Chief Inspector have spent several years developing updated Mine Health and Safety Regulations designed

to replace provisions dating back to the Mines, Works and Minerals Ordinance of 1968. However, he noted that the regulations cannot come into force until Parliament passes the Minerals Bill, which will empower the minister to gazette the new framework.

According to Botshiwe, the new regulations will align Namibia's mining industry more closely with international standards while providing greater regulatory certainty for both operators and regulators.

Beyond mine sites, Botshiwe warned that road safety has become one of the industry's biggest concerns.

He noted that Namibia recorded 431 road fatalities during 2025, with thousands of mine employees and contractors travelling the country's roads daily. As a result, mining companies have increased investment in road safety awareness campaigns and supporting infrastructure around their operations.

He said the conference would officially launch the Erongo Region C28 Road Safety Campaign, describing it as

an example of what can be achieved when industry and government work together to reduce accidents and save lives.

Botshiwe also argued that modern safety management must move beyond physical hazards to include mental health, fatigue, stress and psychological wellbeing.

He said resilient organisations are built by caring for the whole person rather than focusing only on compliance, adding that these themes would form an important part of the conference discussions alongside leadership accountability, legal compliance, contractor management and safety culture.

Closing his address, Botshiwe said the Chamber intends making the Health and Safety Conference a permanent annual feature of the Mining Expo and Conference.

"By bringing together industry leaders, regulators, technical experts and safety professionals each year, we can continue strengthening our collective commitment to achieving our shared ambition of zero harm," he said.

Mining investment surges despite diamond downturn, Chamber says

Namibia's mining industry strengthened investment, tax contributions, exploration, and local procurement in 2025 despite a sharp contraction in overall output due to the global diamond market downturn, Chamber of Mines president George Botshiwe said on Wednesday.

Opening the 13th Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference, Botshiwe said the sector had demonstrated resilience during a difficult global economic environment, with growth in uranium, gold and emerging minerals offsetting much of the decline in diamond production and positioning the industry for another phase of expansion.

According to Botshiwe, Namibia's mining sector contracted by 9.4% in 2025, largely because of reduced diamond output. However, the industry's underlying performance remained strong, with total mineral sales increasing by 25%, rising from N\$51.3 billion in 2024 to more than N\$64 billion in 2025.

He said the figures reflected the growing diversification of Namibia's mining industry, with uranium, gold and

emerging minerals assuming an increasingly important role in sustaining the sector during weaker diamond market conditions.

The industry's contribution to government revenue also increased substantially.

Botshiwe said taxes paid by Chamber member companies rose by 39%, from N\$5.6 billion to N\$7.8 billion, driven largely by higher corporate income tax from gold mining operations.

Royalties increased by 9% to N\$2.5 billion, while export levies climbed by 90% to N\$685 million, underlining mining's continued importance to public finances despite challenging commodity markets.

Mining remained Namibia's largest contributor within the primary industries, accounting for about 14% of gross domestic product in 2025.

Botshiwe said the sector was also entering a significant investment cycle.

Gross fixed capital investment increased by 31%, reflecting the construction of new mines, expansion projects at existing operations and continued replacement of production infrastructure.

At the same time, exploration



expenditure rose by 22% to N\$1.5 billion, signalling sustained investor confidence in Namibia's mineral potential amid growing global exploration activity.

"That augurs well for the future of the Namibian mining industry," he said.

Botshiwe also highlighted the industry's growing contribution to the domestic economy through local procurement.

Mining companies spent approximately N\$24 billion on locally sourced goods and services in 2025, accounting for 65% of their total procurement expenditure.

He said the spending supported Namibian suppliers, strengthened small and

medium-sized enterprises, expanded domestic supply chains and sustained employment across sectors including construction, logistics, engineering and professional services.

Employment also remained strong.

According to Botshiwe, Chamber member companies employed just over 20,000 people during 2025, including permanent employees and contractor personnel, while 98% of permanent employees were Namibian citizens.

Employees in the sector contributed approximately N\$1.5 billion in Pay-As-You-Earn tax, providing an additional and stable source of government revenue beyond mining companies' direct tax payments.

Beyond mining operations, Botshiwe said the industry's contribution continued to extend into community development.

Since 2013, Chamber member companies have collectively invested almost N\$2 billion in corporate social investment programmes covering education, healthcare, enterprise development and infrastructure.

During 2025 alone, the

industry invested N\$1.8 billion in skills development and training, creating 568 bursary opportunities while equipping thousands of Namibians with technical and professional skills required by the sector.

"These investments demonstrate the mining sector's contribution cannot be measured solely in terms of production, exports or tax revenue," Botshiwe said.

"It is equally reflected in the opportunities created for individuals, for small businesses, through local procurement, skills transfer and long-term partnerships that continue to strengthen our communities."

Turning to the future, Botshiwe said the industry had moved beyond discussing opportunities and was now focused on implementation.

Referring to the conference theme, "From Dialogue to Delivery: Assessing Progress in Creating Mining-led Economic Growth and Employment Opportunities since Namibia's Public-Private Forum", he said the mining industry had already identified projects capable of generating substantial investment and employment.

The challenge now, he said, is removing the remaining

constraints.

"Translating this potential into reality will require continued efforts to remove obstacles that we have identified," he said, citing water infrastructure, regulatory constraints and the need for certainty around the pending Minerals Bill.

He said the conference was intended not merely to revisit discussions held during the Namibia Public-Private Forum, but to assess progress honestly and identify what government, industry and other stakeholders still needed to do to unlock the next generation of mining projects.

Botshiwe also described the inaugural Chamber of Mines Health and Safety Conference, held the previous day, as a milestone for the industry, saying it reflected mining companies' commitment to ensuring that continued improvements match future growth in worker health, safety and wellbeing. He congratulated the Chamber's Health and Safety Committee, chaired by Barcelona Tsauses, for successfully launching what is expected to become a permanent feature of the annual conference programme.

Beneficiation policy to reach President by month-end, Amutse says

Namibia's long-awaited mineral beneficiation policy is expected to be submitted to President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah before the end of August, as the government intensifies efforts to add more value to the country's mineral resources before export.

Speaking at the official opening of the 13th Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference, Minister of Industries, Mines and Energy Modestus Amutse said local beneficiation would be central to the government's strategy to unlock greater economic value from the mining sector and expand Namibian participation across the mining value chain.

Amutse said the ministry was working closely with the Chamber of Mines to advance the country's mining agenda and welcomed the industry's commitment to report on progress made in implementing commitments agreed under the Namibia Public-Private Forum (NAMPPF).

"I am fully confident that this is an industry capable of delivering even more for our people as we have fully aligned ourselves to the interests of our people and the country," he said.

He said increasing local participation in the mining value chain remained one of

government's highest priorities.

"At the heart of our vision for this sector is the absolute necessity of local participation in the mining value chain," Amutse said.

"To truly unlock the immense potential that the mining industry has to offer to our country, we must look beyond raw material extraction."

According to the minister, that objective will be driven through the new mineral beneficiation policy currently being finalised by the ministry.

"The mineral beneficiation policy, which is currently being developed, is expected to be delivered at your office, Your Excellency, by the end of this very month," he told President Nandi-Ndaitwah.

Amutse said beneficiation and domestic value addition were not simply economic concepts but essential building blocks for Namibia's long-term development.

"Local beneficiation and domestic value addition are not merely economic buzzwords. They are vital imperatives for our national sovereignty and sustainable growth," he said.

He added that the policy reflected the President's directive to accelerate value addition rather than relying primarily on the export of raw



minerals.

The minister encouraged delegates to make beneficiation one of the central themes of discussion during the two-day conference, saying it would play a decisive role in determining how much value Namibia retains from its mineral wealth.

"I hope that beneficiation shall be one of the major conversations during this event as we interact," he said.

Although brief, Amutse's address positioned the beneficiation policy as one of the ministry's immediate priorities, signalling that government intends to move from policy development to implementation as part of its broader industrialisation and value-addition agenda.



HEADSPRING
INVESTMENTS
ROSATOM

WINGS PROJECT: SUSTAINABLE URANIUM MINING IN NAMIBIA

- **Headspring Investments**, an affiliate of **Uranium One Group** (part of **ROSATOM**, Russia's state nuclear corporation), is developing the **Wings Project** in **Namibia's Omaheke region**.
- The project is based on a sandstone-type uranium deposit, ideal for **In-Situ Recovery (ISR)** mining.
- The project is positioned as a regional benchmark for sustainable uranium mining.
- Uranium One Group, a **global leader in uranium production**, provides:
 - **Advanced engineering solutions**
 - **Extensive technical expertise**
 - **Cutting-edge innovations** from leading Russian industrial partners
- The Wings Project employs Uranium One Group's efficient, **environmentally responsible, and technologically advanced uranium extraction methods**.

~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



Boost of mining sector
and contribution
to the energy security
of the country



More than 70 years
of experience
and expertise



Corporate social
responsibility
from the earliest
stages of the project



Full transparency
with stakeholders



Namibia must stop negotiating from a "poverty mentality", President says

President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah has called on Namibia to fundamentally change the way it negotiates with foreign investors, warning that the country should never approach discussions over its mineral wealth from what she described as a "poverty mentality" but instead recognise that its natural resources are strategic national assets capable of driving industrialisation, employment and long-term prosperity.

Delivering the keynote address at the official opening of the 13th Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference on Wednesday, the President said government remained committed to attracting investment into the mining sector, but insisted that negotiations must reflect the value of the resources Namibia brings to the table rather than focusing solely on the capital provided by investors.

"So let us, when we are negotiating with investors, do not just fill our minds with money, but the resources that we are having," she said.

"So that there's balanced negotiations."

The President said Namibia's mineral wealth places the country in a position of strength

and should enable government to negotiate agreements that create lasting value for present and future generations.

"Namibians, we must not negotiate with a poverty mentality," she said.

"We are not poor, we have those resources."

"If they cannot come out now, we are training our people, they'll bring them out another day, so we should not sell them out. They are not on auction, they are there to save us."

Her remarks come as Namibia continues to attract unprecedented international investment in uranium, critical minerals, and offshore oil and gas, with several large mining projects moving from exploration to construction.

While acknowledging that foreign investors provide finance, technology and expertise needed to develop those resources, Nandi-Ndaitwah stressed that Namibia contributes an equally important asset – ownership of the minerals themselves.

She said successful partnerships therefore depend on balanced negotiations that protect national interests while creating an attractive investment climate.

The President linked that



philosophy directly to the Eighth Administration's industrialisation agenda, arguing that the country's objective should no longer be limited to the extraction and export of raw minerals.

Instead, she said Namibia must progressively expand domestic value addition and beneficiation so that a greater share of the economic benefits generated by mining remains within the country.

She said local beneficiation and downstream processing would strengthen industrial development, broaden the economy and create employment opportunities beyond mining itself.

Although she acknowledged that mining is not inherently labour-intensive, Nandi-

Ndaitwah said the sector remains central to the government's target of creating 500,000 jobs over the next five years through the implementation of the Sixth National Development Plan.

She said mining's greatest contribution to employment would come through expanding value chains, encouraging downstream industries and creating manufacturing opportunities linked to the country's mineral resources.

"We know that when we go for value addition, we'll be able to find some value chain components that require intensive jobs," she said.

"In that process, the mining sector will then increase its contribution to job creation in our country."

The President also challenged mining companies to broaden their contribution to economic development by investing more deliberately in the futures of long-serving employees.

Rather than limiting support to corporate social responsibility programmes, she urged companies to equip experienced workers with the skills, capital, and business opportunities needed to establish enterprises and contribute to other sectors of the economy after leaving the

mining industry.

"In addition to its corporate social responsibility initiatives, the mining sector should also consider empowering its long-serving employees with skills, capital and opportunities, enabling them to diversify into other sectors of the economy that drive job creation," she said.

Nandi-Ndaitwah said the same thinking should guide Namibia's uranium industry.

Rather than remaining primarily an exporter of uranium concentrate, she said the country should position itself to participate more broadly in the nuclear value chain, arguing that access to reliable energy is essential for industrialisation and sustainable economic growth.

She said expanding participation in the uranium value chain would not only increase the value derived from Namibia's mineral resources but also strengthen the country's long-term economic resilience.

The President also welcomed progress made by the mining industry in implementing commitments announced during the Namibia Public-Private Forum, noting that companies had committed to facilitating more than US\$2.86 billion in new mining investments and creating over 18,000 direct

jobs, with implementation already under way.

She cited projects such as Bannerman Energy's Etango uranium project and Deep Yellow's Tumas development as examples of investments already translating into employment opportunities.

While reaffirming the government's commitment to maintaining a stable, predictable and investor-friendly environment, Nandi-Ndaitwah said Namibia's development objectives must remain at the centre of every investment agreement.

She said the country's mineral wealth should not be viewed simply as commodities to be sold to the highest bidder, but as strategic national assets capable of financing industrialisation, creating employment and improving the lives of future generations.

She concluded by urging government, industry and investors to work together to ensure that Namibia extracts the maximum long-term benefit from its natural resources while preserving them as an enduring source of national prosperity.

"Our natural resources are there to save us," she said, "not to be auctioned away."

Tumas targets fourth-quarter investment decision

Deep Yellow is targeting a final investment decision on its Tumas uranium project in the fourth quarter of 2026, after committing nearly N\$393 million to early civil and concrete works to reduce construction risks and prepare the project for full development.

Deep Yellow Namibia managing director Zebra Kasete told delegates at the Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference that the company had placed its immediate development focus on Tumas, where site preparation was under way ahead of the anticipated investment decision.

The company has awarded two construction contracts, with a combined estimated value of approximately A\$34 million (N\$392.6 million), to Namibia Construction and Nexus Building and Civils Contractors, both Namibian-owned companies.

Namibia Construction received a contract valued at about A\$18.5 million, or N\$213 million, while the Nexus contract is worth approximately A\$15.5 million, or N\$178 million. Mobilisation was scheduled to begin in August 2026.

"We have awarded contracts to two Namibian companies," he said, adding that local contractors should be the first option where they possess the

skills, experience and capacity required to execute the work.

"We want to get the Namibians on board."

The scope awarded to Namibia Construction includes reinforced concrete work within the beneficiation, leach-feed thickening, and tailings-transfer facilities; the fabrication and installation of precast concrete elements throughout the processing plant; and the design and construction of a retaining wall supporting the run-of-mine stockpile.

Nexus Building and Civils Contractors will construct foundations, plinths, slabs and embedded infrastructure across the balance of the processing plant.

Kasete said the project site, located in the Erongo Region along the C28 corridor east of Swakopmund, had already been cleared and prepared for the concrete works.

"What you are seeing there on the ground is a piece of land which has now been converted and prepared, ready to put concrete on it," he said.

He told delegates that the undeveloped site could become a major mining and processing complex over the next 30 months, although the company must first make the final investment decision for the



project.

Deep Yellow has stressed that the early contracts do not alter the planned 24-month construction schedule following FID. Instead, they establish several work fronts, secure critical construction capacity and reduce the risk of delays once full construction is authorised.

The company's public position earlier in 2026 was that the Tumas investment decision had been deferred pending stronger uranium price incentives, while detailed engineering and early works continued. Its July 2026 contract announcement subsequently identified the fourth quarter as the anticipated FID period.

Kasete similarly qualified the proposed timing, saying the decision remained dependent

on the uranium market and the absence of major unexpected developments.

“We still need to declare the final investment decision. All our work currently is to get that declaration done in the fourth quarter of this calendar year, given that the market remains the same and nothing abnormal happens.”

Tumas holds Mining Licence 237, which was issued in September 2023 and remains valid for 20 years until September 2043. Deep Yellow currently owns the project through its Namibian subsidiary, while local partner Oponona Investments has the right to acquire a 5% interest after FID.

An updated ore reserve estimate announced in December 2024 increased Tumas’ proved and probable reserves by 18% to approximately 79.3 million pounds of uranium oxide at an average grade of 298 parts per million, supporting a planned operating life of about 30 years.

Deep Yellow’s more recent corporate material rounds the figure to 79.5 million pounds, with the project designed for maximum annual production of approximately 3.6 million pounds of uranium oxide. The company says additional exploration could extend

operations beyond the current 30-year plan.

Kasete said Tumas could therefore operate for considerably longer than its initial mine plan, noting that other Namibian uranium mines had extended their operating lives well beyond their original projections.

He said the early civil and concrete programme was expected to support between 500 and 600 jobs, while employment could increase to slightly more than 1,000 during full construction after FID.

Once in production, Deep Yellow expects the operation to sustain about 600 permanent positions, according to the figures Kasete presented.

Kasete said the company did not intend to build its workforce primarily by recruiting experienced employees from Namibia’s existing mines.

Deep Yellow plans to recruit and train graduates and other new entrants for many operational positions while retaining experienced personnel for specialist and supervisory roles.

“This is a completely new mine, and we don’t need to go and poach from our colleagues,” he said.

“We want to start with a new build and a new culture with

people from the beginning.”

He said this would create opportunities for graduates who had never worked at a mine, including candidates who might not traditionally have been considered for plant and equipment operator positions.

Kasete also linked the project to Namibia’s beneficiation debate, saying the company intended to process the ore to the standard uranium product normally produced by uranium mines rather than export unprocessed ore.

However, he acknowledged that broader participation in the nuclear fuel cycle would require national policy, specialist capabilities, international agreements, and further investment beyond the scope of the Tumas mine itself.

Kasete said the project offered the company and Namibia an opportunity to build a long-life mine capable of creating employment, supporting domestic contractors and establishing another major uranium operation in the Erongo Region.

“When you walk into a place and see a piece of sand, and you visualise that this sand will be converted into something that is going to change lives, that is something special,” he said.

Appian plans N\$8 billion Omitiomire copper development

Mining-focused investment firm Appian Capital Advisory expects the development of Namibia's Omitiomire Copper Project to require more than N\$8 billion, as the company expands its local portfolio beyond the Rosh Pinah zinc mine and intensifies drilling and technical studies at the undeveloped copper deposit northeast of Windhoek.

Appian's Head of Africa and the Middle East, Khathutshelo "K2" Mapasa, told delegates at the Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference that the group had already begun funding exploration, water investigations, power studies and technical work at Omitiomire after completing its acquisition of a controlling interest in May.

"We estimate north of N\$8 billion in terms of capital to develop this asset," Mapasa said, adding that the mine could directly employ more than 800 people once developed, with further employment expected through contractors, suppliers and surrounding businesses.

Appian completed the acquisition of a 95% controlling interest in Craton Mining and Exploration, the company responsible for Omitiomire, on 13 May 2026.

The Craton Foundation

retained the remaining 5% interest, which is intended to support health and education initiatives in communities surrounding the project.

The Namibia Competition Commission had approved the transaction without conditions on 28 April.

The project lies approximately 140 kilometres northeast of Windhoek and has been studied by several owners since at least 2010, but has not yet entered production.

Mapasa said Appian believed earlier development concepts had relied on an unsuitable processing route and that the company's technical team was redesigning the project around conventional flotation.

Previous plans contemplated leaching the ore, but Mapasa said that about 95% of the copper mineralisation was chalcocite, making flotation a more appropriate and less risky process.

Appian's current project description envisages a mid-sized, long-life mine producing approximately 26,000 to 30,000 tonnes of copper annually over 16 years, with a concentrate grading more than 40% copper due to predominantly chalcocite mineralisation.

Mapasa said the change in



processing route was intended to improve recovery, simplify the development plan and provide investors with a credible technical and commercial case.

The company has started infill and step-out drilling to improve confidence in the existing resource and test potential extensions around the deposit.

"We closed the transaction in the middle of May," he said. "After that, we completed the power-supply benchmark and trade-off. The drilling programme is already under way, with four rigs on site."

He said Appian had also initiated investigations into water sources on surrounding farms, stressing that the expenditure discussed was not merely a future capital estimate but included invoices already being paid since the acquisition was

completed.

Mapasa said copper assets had become increasingly difficult to secure as global competition intensified around metals required for electrification, grid development, digital infrastructure and low-carbon technologies.

“Finding a copper asset is like trying to find a needle in a haystack,” he said.

Appian’s official project profile says the company has also identified near-mine and regional exploration potential across the wider Ekuja Dome, which could extend Omitiomire’s operating life beyond the current development plan.

Omitiomire is Appian’s second major mining investment in Namibia following its 2023 acquisition of the Rosh Pinah zinc-lead mine from the insolvent Trevali Mining Corporation.

Mapasa said Namibia now represented Appian’s largest country-level capital commitment, while Africa accounted for more than a quarter of the capital committed across its portfolio.

At Rosh Pinah, Mapasa said Appian had moved quickly to restart the long-delayed RP2.0 expansion shortly after taking control of the mine.

The expansion is intended to nearly double processing throughput from about 700,000 tonnes to 1.3 million tonnes annually, while increasing contained zinc output to approximately 170 million pounds per year.

Mapasa told delegates that the construction programme was about 97% complete by the end of June, with the remaining work centred on commissioning a new filter and preparing the operation for increased underground production in 2027.

Appian’s official updates had indicated the project was more than 90% complete in May, with construction expected to conclude before the end of 2026 and ramp-up to begin shortly afterwards.

The expansion includes a new underground portal and decline, processing infrastructure, a water-treatment facility and Namibia’s first commissioned underground paste-backfill plant.

The paste-fill system allows a mixture of processed tailings and cement to be returned underground to fill mined-out areas. It reduces the amount of tailings placed on surface, improves ground stability and enables the mine to recover ore that might otherwise have remained in supporting pillars.

Mapasa said the technology was not only an environmental intervention but an investment that would increase the proportion of the orebody that could be extracted.

Appian confirmed in February that the paste-fill plant had been commissioned, while an 80-kilometre diamond-drilling programme was continuing to test opportunities to extend Rosh Pinah’s mineral resources and operating life.

Mapasa said the mine had operated for more than 55 years and Appian believed further exploration and the RP2.0 investment could position it for several more decades of production.

He cited 2024 figures showing that Rosh Pinah paid more than N\$421 million annually in wages and salaries and had a workforce of more than 98% Namibians.

Beyond its two mining investments, Appian has also partnered with the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board and the Chamber of Mines on NamExplore, a project-pitch initiative intended to help holders of early-stage prospecting licences turn geological prospects into investment-ready opportunities.

Mapasa said Namibia’s main problem was not necessarily a shortage of international capital, but the wide gap between the thousands of exploration licences issued and the limited number of projects developed sufficiently to attract serious investors.

Appian had already placed senior exploration geologists into a workshop with about 20 applicants to help licence holders improve their geological arguments, development plans and investor presentations.

“The challenge for Namibia is not capital,” Mapasa said. “The gap between projects that are ready for that capital and the exploration potential is too wide.”

1,500 working on site at Osino's Twin Hills ahead of first gold next year

Osino Resources says construction of its Twin Hills gold mine is progressing on schedule, with 1,500 people working on site each day as the company targets first gold production by this time next year while expanding employment, community investment and regional economic development.

Speaking during a panel discussion at the Namibia Mining Expo and Conference on Wednesday, Osino Resources country director Venna (Werner) Schuchmann said the company had moved into full-scale construction in June last year and was making steady progress on what he described as a world-class mining project.

"We started constructing the mine in earnest last year in June," Schuchmann said, describing the construction site as "a playground for big boys with all the tools and machinery there."

He said approximately 1,500 people are working on

the project every day, with more than 60 contractors, as construction continues on the US\$500 million development.

Schuchmann said the project is backed by Osino's majority shareholder, China's Shanjin International Gold, whose financial capacity and technical expertise have strengthened confidence in delivering the mine on schedule.

"We are really moving along and hopefully by this time next year we'll have poured the first gold," he said.

Once operational, Twin Hills is expected to employ at least 1,000 people directly, while generating significantly more indirect employment through suppliers, contractors and businesses across the Erongo Region.

Schuchmann said the mine's economic impact would extend well beyond the operation itself.

"The multiplier effect, which we always talk about at the Chamber of Mines, job creation



multiplied five or six times, the whole impact on Omaruru, Karibib and Usakos," he said.

Beyond mining, Osino is investing in long-term community development programmes.

Schuchmann said the company is constructing a community centre in Karibib and supports 31 early childhood development centres in the surrounding area through a partnership with the Tobias Hainyeko Foundation, providing

daily meals to about 1,000 children.

He added that the company's Toro Trust will build 100 houses over the coming year for employees, benefiting surrounding communities.

"There are lots of little things which we're very proud of," he said.

Despite the progress, Schuchmann said regulatory delays remain one of the biggest challenges facing major mining investments in Namibia.

He said the pace at which regulators and public institutions make decisions can be frustrating, particularly during construction, when project schedules are tightly managed.

"The normal issues you have with dealing with the regulators, the public entities, is the speed of decisions," he said. "In the end it always goes well, but the speed of execution is sometimes frustrating."

Schuchmann urged Parliament to expedite the long-awaited

Minerals Bill, saying the legislation would provide greater certainty for investors.

He also highlighted ongoing challenges with obtaining and renewing work visas for specialised foreign personnel required during construction.

According to Schuchmann, companies are often forced to repeat lengthy recruitment processes when renewing permits for experts who have already been working on projects for years.

"It's really sometimes very frustrating for us to bring in, especially for a construction project, people from other countries," he said. "We've actually now got the thing that some people have been here for two years. The visas need to be renewed and we need to go through the whole process of interviewing again, which just doesn't make sense."

He warned that delays in processing visas and permits can have direct financial consequences by disrupting

commissioning schedules and delaying delivery of equipment and technical expertise needed to keep construction on track.

"In a construction project we've got a certain window to execute things without impacting the critical path," Schuchmann said. "We need to make sure that our product gets to the market when we say it is going to."

Looking ahead, Schuchmann said Namibia possesses the resources, partnerships and goodwill needed to unlock even greater mining-led growth.

"We are just too few to be poor," he said, echoing President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah's message delivered earlier in the day. "We've got the resources, we've got the people, we've got everything there. If there's goodwill from both sides, we can really work together and we can move mountains."

Koryx says Haib redesign has strengthened case for US\$1.6 billion development

Koryx Copper says the redesign of the Haib Copper Project has strengthened the commercial and financing case for the proposed US\$1.6 billion development, with the company targeting completion of a pre-feasibility study before the end of 2026 while advancing infrastructure, land-access and permitting requirements.

Speaking during a panel discussion at the Namibia Mining Expo and Conference on Wednesday, Koryx Copper country manager Lionel Coetzee said the project near Noordoewer in the Karas Region could have a significant regional impact through upgrades to water, electricity and transport infrastructure, while creating employment and contributing revenue to the national fiscus.

Coetzee, who joined Koryx about three months ago, said the company was frequently asked why Haib could now advance after decades of exploration and previous development attempts.

"Whenever I talk to people, the first question I often get is, 'We've known about Haib for 15 years. So what's different?'" he said.

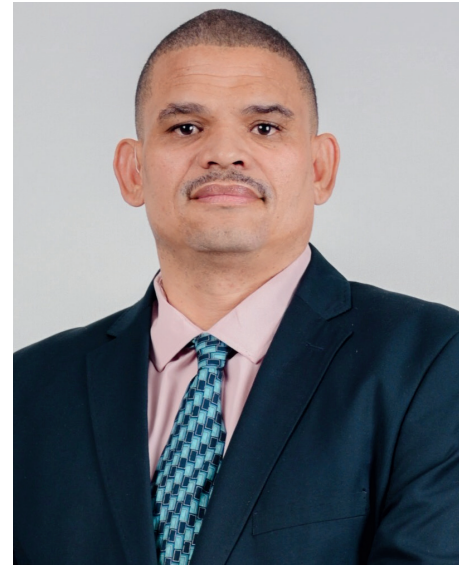
He said the first change was a stronger global outlook for copper, supported by digitalisation, artificial intelligence, decarbonisation and electrification.

"The first step is probably the macro environment for copper. Copper prices have appreciated significantly because of digitalisation, the rise of AI, decarbonisation and electrification. So that has made the macro environment better," he said.

The more important change, Coetzee said, was the project redesign undertaken since a new leadership and technical team assumed responsibility for advancing Haib towards development at the end of 2024.

Koryx inherited decades of geological, drilling and metallurgical information produced by previous operators, including Falconbridge, Rio Tinto and Teck. Coetzee said those companies had completed valuable technical work but had not converted it into a development plan capable of attracting investment.

"They did a lot of good methodological work, 80,000 metres of drilling, but they weren't able to put a credible



project plan together," he said.

Koryx's corporate information refers to more than 70,000 metres of historical drilling, while its current project material states that drilling completed at Haib has since increased to approximately 120,000 metres as the company continues to expand and upgrade the resource.

Coetzee said the team advancing Haib includes mining professionals with experience at Osino Resources and the Twin Hills gold project, bringing established Namibian expertise in exploration, feasibility, permitting, and project development to Koryx.

The redesign replaced the earlier reliance on sulphide heap leaching with conventional

milling and flotation for all sulphide material, reducing technical risk and simplifying the proposed processing route. Heap leaching remains under consideration only for oxide and transitional material.

"From a high-risk sulphide heap leach, which is not done anywhere in the world, to a conventional milling flotation at scale ... it de-risked the project significantly," Coetzee said.

Koryx's September 2025 preliminary economic assessment proposed processing about 35 million tonnes of material annually, comprising 28 million tonnes through milling and flotation and seven million tonnes through heap leaching.

Further optimisation announced in June 2026 could increase total processing capacity to about 40 million tonnes annually, while coarse-particle flotation could reject low-value waste before fine grinding, improve feed grade and reduce water and energy requirements.

Coetzee said the redesign involved accepting a higher initial capital requirement in exchange for a larger project that uses more conventional technology and carries substantially lower technical risk.

He said the work had transformed Haib from a high-risk project with a low probability of development into "a credible business case" and "something that investors can actually buy into".

The September 2025 PEA estimated initial construction

capital of US\$1.559 billion, including contingency, supporting Coetzee's description of Haib as an approximately US\$1.6 billion development.

The study envisaged average payable copper production of about 92,000 tonnes annually during the first 10 years of a 23-year mine life, although those estimates remain preliminary and are expected to change as Koryx incorporates new drilling, metallurgy and engineering into the pre-feasibility study.

The redesigned processing route is also expected to generate by-product credits for molybdenum and gold, with copper and gold contained in the primary concentrate and molybdenum in a secondary concentrate.

Beyond the processing changes, Koryx is advancing plans to obtain power from the Namibian grid, supplemented by solar photovoltaic generation and battery storage. Its water strategy is based principally on abstraction from the Orange River and the construction of storage infrastructure to manage seasonal availability.

Coetzee said infrastructure and permitting were central to financing a project of Haib's scale.

"This is going to be a US\$1.6 billion mine, so we will need partners to help us," he said.

Potential financiers, he added, would need evidence that all major development requirements were being addressed.

"They're going to ask us, 'Are you permitted? Do you have water? Do you have power? Do you have access to the land?'" he said.

Two environmental clearance processes are currently underway. Haib Minerals has applied for clearance of the proposed open-pit mine and associated processing and infrastructure, while NamWater has submitted a separate application for Orange River water abstraction works and associated pipelines.

Koryx said in June that 13 environmental specialist studies had been completed and environmental approval was being targeted for the first half of 2027.

Coetzee said the company was also engaging the Ministry of Agriculture on land-access rights, while its mining-licence application had already been submitted and would be supplemented after completion of the pre-feasibility study.

He said engagement with government institutions had so far been constructive but warned that delays could weaken the project's ability to secure financing within the required timeframe.

"But it's critical that we actually get those quickly over the line," he said.

"The longer you stay in there, you lose the validity to finance and actually bring this project, which is a transformative project for the IlKaras Region and Namibia, to fruition."

Botshiwe urges faster reforms to unlock mining investment

Namibia's mining industry has called for faster implementation of reforms needed to unlock billions of dollars in investment, saying the country has reached a point where dialogue must give way to delivery if the sector is to realise its full economic potential.

Delivering the opening address at the official opening of the 13th Chamber of Mines of Namibia Mining Expo and Conference in Windhoek on Wednesday, Chamber president George Botshiwe said this year's theme, "From Dialogue to Delivery: Assessing Progress in Creating Mining-led Economic Growth and Employment Opportunities since Namibia's Public-Private Forum," reflects the industry's determination to measure tangible progress made since commitments were announced through the Namibia Public-Private Forum (NamPPF).

"Over the past year, the Namibian government and the private sector, led by Her Excellency, engaged extensively through the Namibia Public-Private Forum to identify practical interventions needed to unlock economic growth, investment and create employment. The mining

industry has been an active contributor to the process, highlighting the considerable tangible investment and employment opportunities that lie within Namibia's mining pipeline," Botshiwe said.

He said the conference provides an opportunity to evaluate progress made over the past year and identify the remaining obstacles preventing mining projects from entering construction and production.

"This conference provides an important opportunity not to simply revisit the discussions of the Namibia Public-Private Forum, but to honestly assess where progress has been made, where challenges remain and how government, industry and other stakeholders can work together to accelerate implementation," he said.

Botshiwe said unlocking the sector's investment pipeline would require continued collaboration between government and industry, particularly to address infrastructure constraints and provide greater regulatory certainty.

"Translating this potential into reality will require continued efforts to remove obstacles that



we have identified. These could be technical, such as water supply, or regulatory, including providing certainty around pending legislation, particularly the Minerals Bill," he said.

The Chamber president also highlighted the growing scale of the Mining Expo itself, describing this year's event as the largest since its inception in 2010.

He said the Expo attracted a record 204 exhibitors, reflecting growing confidence in Namibia's mining sector and reinforcing the country's position as one of Africa's leading mining investment destinations.

Botshiwe said the Chamber deliberately continues to offer free public access to the exhibition because the country's

mineral resources belong to all Namibians and the industry should remain accessible to students, entrepreneurs, job seekers and members of the public interested in understanding mining.

He added that the Chamber also provides complimentary exhibition space to key public institutions and industry organisations, including the Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy, the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, the Namibia University of Science and Technology, the University of Namibia, the Namibia Institute of Mining and Technology, the Mineworkers Union of Namibia, the Emerging Miners Association of Namibia and the Namibian Uranium Association, strengthening collaboration across the sector.

Botshiwe said mining's contribution to Namibia extends far beyond production figures and tax payments, arguing that the industry's broader economic impact is reflected through local procurement, enterprise development, infrastructure investment, skills development and community programmes.

He said Chamber member companies have collectively invested almost N\$2 billion in

corporate social investment projects since 2013, supporting education, healthcare, community infrastructure and other development initiatives across the country.

In addition, he said the industry invested approximately N\$1.8 billion in education and skills development between 2011 and 2025, including the awarding of 568 bursaries, apprenticeship programmes, internships and technical training designed to build the next generation of Namibian mining professionals.

"These investments demonstrate that the mining sector's contribution cannot be measured solely in terms of production, exports or tax revenue. It is equally reflected in the opportunities created for individuals, small businesses, local procurement, skills transfer and long-term partnerships that continue to strengthen our communities," Botshiwe said.

He said mining companies continue to invest in strategic infrastructure, including water, energy and transport systems, which benefit both mining operations and surrounding communities while supporting future economic development.

Botshiwe also highlighted

the successful introduction of the Chamber's inaugural Health and Safety Conference, saying the event demonstrates the industry's commitment to ensuring that growth is accompanied by continuous improvements in worker health, safety and wellbeing.

He said the conference would also receive progress reports from mining companies on commitments made through the Namibia Public-Private Forum, allowing delegates to assess how projects are advancing and where further intervention is required.

Botshiwe expressed confidence that Namibia's mining industry remains well-positioned for continued expansion, but stressed that maintaining momentum will depend on effective collaboration between government and the private sector to remove the remaining barriers to investment.

"Our objective is clear: to ensure that the commitments made through the Namibia Public-Private Forum translate into real projects, real investment, sustainable employment and lasting economic growth for the benefit of all Namibians," he said.

Government speed is becoming a project risk, Bannerman says

Delays in government decision-making are increasingly becoming a risk to the successful delivery of major mining projects, with slow approvals threatening construction schedules, increasing costs and affecting commitments made to international investors, Bannerman Mining Resources Namibia chief operating officer and interim chief executive officer Danie van Aswegen has warned.

Speaking during a panel discussion on Namibia's mining project pipeline at the Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference, Van Aswegen stressed that the challenge facing mining companies was not government policy itself but the speed at which regulatory and administrative decisions were made.

"I think the normal issues you have with dealing with regulators and public entities is the speed of decisions," he said.

"But in the end it always goes well."

His remarks come as Bannerman advances the Etango uranium project towards a final investment decision after spending the past year securing critical infrastructure agreements,

strategic partnerships and early construction works.

Van Aswegen said the company had deliberately invested time in de-risking the project before entering full construction.

"We have worked really hard to get our agreement with NamWater, to get our agreement with NamPower, securing all the services, and then most importantly to onboard a joint-venture partner," he said.

"We are waiting to close the deal, after which the final investment decision will follow, and then we can finally go into full-time construction."

While Bannerman had encountered strong cooperation from government institutions, he said the pace at which approvals are processed could have significant consequences for projects that operate on tightly managed construction schedules.

He explained that large mining developments follow a critical path in which engineering, procurement, construction and commissioning activities are carefully sequenced.

A delay in one activity can postpone every subsequent stage.

One of the clearest examples,



he said, is the approval of work permits for specialist original equipment manufacturer (OEM) engineers required to install and commission highly specialised mining equipment.

Although Namibia has a growing pool of skilled professionals, certain equipment can only be commissioned by technicians accredited by the manufacturers.

If those specialists cannot enter the country on time, critical equipment cannot be commissioned, delaying construction milestones and ultimately postponing production.

"The whole issue of work visas is really sometimes very frustrating for us on a construction project," Van Aswegen said.

"We've actually now got the thing that some people have been here for two years. The visas need to be renewed, and we need to go through the whole process again."

He said the implications extend well beyond immigration administration.

Mining companies raise billions of dollars from investors based on carefully planned construction schedules and production forecasts.

Those investors expect companies to meet the delivery dates they commit to.

"We make promises to our investors as to when we will deliver product to the market," he said.

"We also need to make sure that our product gets to the market when we say that it is going to be."

"If you need a piece of equipment to be commissioned, and that expertise of the OEM has to come into the country, if those work permits are not approved on time then obviously it will have an impact on your project."

Van Aswegen said that reality demonstrated why efficient public administration had become an important component of Namibia's competitiveness in the mining sector.

He emphasised, however, that his remarks should not be interpreted as criticism of the government's overall approach to mining investment.

Instead, he said the focus

should be on improving turnaround times so that regulatory systems keep pace with the scale and complexity of projects now entering development.

Alongside regulatory efficiency, Van Aswegen said Bannerman was determined to ensure Etango became a genuinely Namibian project.

He revealed that four Namibian contractors were already working on the project, employing 477 Namibians and only three expatriates, despite the mine not yet reaching a final investment decision.

"From the start, we said we will be a Namibian mine, built by Namibians for the Namibian people," he said.

He said Bannerman's objective was to maximise local participation wherever possible while recognising that some highly specialised functions would continue to require international expertise during construction and commissioning.

Beyond construction, Van Aswegen argued that mining companies should view themselves not simply as owners of mineral projects but as stewards of national resources and the communities in which they operate.

Using a personal story about his daughter sharing a packet of chips, he distinguished between ownership and stewardship, saying long-term success depended on earning trust rather than asserting

entitlement.

"We are stewards in the community," he said.

"We are stewards of the resource."

"If we can build that trust to become real stewards and not entitled owners, then I think we will have made our mark."

He also challenged the industry to rethink how it develops its future workforce.

While acknowledging the importance of engineering qualifications and vocational training, Van Aswegen said technical competence alone would not guarantee success.

He argued that mining companies needed people who were willing to learn, prepared to start at the bottom and committed to developing through experience rather than expecting immediate advancement.

"For me, it starts with getting people that are really willing to learn," he said.

"They must be willing to grow and willing to start at the bottom."

Van Aswegen's remarks reflected the broader message emerging from the conference that Namibia has become one of the world's most attractive destinations for uranium investment, but that maintaining this momentum will depend not only on favourable geology and supportive policies, but also on the speed with which projects move from approval to construction.

Planning in silos must end to unlock Namibia's mining boom

Namibia will struggle to unlock the next wave of mining investment unless utilities, government institutions, and project developers abandon fragmented infrastructure planning and begin coordinating water, electricity, transport, and other strategic services from the earliest stages of project development, NamWater's Head of Legal Services and Company Secretary, Oni Ndangi-lithete, has warned.

Speaking during a panel discussion on enabling the next wave of mining growth at the Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference, Ndangi-lithete said the country's growing pipeline of mining projects was exposing the limitations of planning critical infrastructure in isolation.

He argued that while Namibia possesses the mineral potential and institutional capacity to support significant growth in mining, investors increasingly require integrated solutions rather than separate engagements with different utilities.

"The discussions of planning in silos must end," he said.

"We should have a solution which allows us to plan together in responding to our stakeholders' needs."

According to Ndangi-lithete, one of the biggest challenges facing water infrastructure

planning is that mineral deposits are frequently discovered in remote parts of the country where little or no bulk infrastructure exists.

Water pipelines, pumping stations, reservoirs and associated electricity infrastructure therefore have to be developed specifically to serve new mining projects.

Rather than waiting for investors to approach each institution separately, he said Namibia should adopt integrated planning that brings together NamWater, NamPower, TransNamib, road authorities and other agencies from the beginning of project development.

"These utilities are interconnected," he said.

"Where we put a water supply solution we will need energy to transport water to the mines."

To prepare for increasing mining demand, NamWater has divided the country into nine planning zones, mapping known mineralised areas and assessing how future water supply systems could reach prospective mining developments.

The approach allows the utility to anticipate where infrastructure may eventually be required, rather than reacting only after discoveries are announced.

Ndangi-lithete said the utility



had learned from previous experiences where investors expected water infrastructure to be immediately available despite projects being located far from existing supply systems.

"We have actually divided the country into nine zones looking at the mineralisation of the country," he said.

The zoning exercise enables NamWater to identify possible water sources, determine infrastructure requirements and prepare preliminary planning before individual investors request supply.

Once a mining company formally approaches NamWater, the utility conducts a detailed water demand assessment, which typically takes about six months.

The assessment determines how much water will be required, identifies potential

supply sources and estimates the infrastructure investment needed to deliver water to the proposed operation.

Ndangi-lithete urged mining companies to engage NamWater as early as possible rather than waiting until projects were close to construction.

"Should there be for us to be successful in responding to water demand of specific investors... it's important that you allow us to take you through that water demand assessment," he said.

Early engagement, he explained, gives both the investor and the utility sufficient time to develop technically and financially viable solutions before construction schedules become critical.

Although most mining water schemes are designed for individual projects, Ndangi-lithete said they almost always become permanent infrastructure that also serves surrounding communities.

He cited the Erongo Region as an example, where virtually every major water supply system was originally developed to support mining operations before later becoming an essential source of water for towns and other users.

"The water supply solutions to the local authorities currently were developed on the back of mining demand," he said.

As mining projects attract workers and stimulate urban growth, local authorities increasingly depend on infrastructure initially financed to serve mines.

For that reason, NamWater plans projects with the long-

term needs of communities in mind rather than focusing solely on the life of an individual mine.

"We always consider the long-term community needs when we are putting up water supply solutions for the mines," he said.

Ndangi-lithete also outlined progress on Namibia's next major desalination programme.

He said NamWater established a desalination steering committee to evaluate opportunities for increasing long-term water security along the coast, particularly in response to growing mining and industrial demand.

Three projects are currently receiving attention, including a proposed desalination plant for Lüderitz linked to developments in the oil and gas sector and the more advanced central coastal desalination project in the Erongo Region.

Following a feasibility study completed in 2021 and subsequently approved by Cabinet for implementation, NamWater entered into a joint venture with Swakop Uranium in December 2025 to establish ErongoSonam (Pty) Ltd, a special-purpose vehicle responsible for developing Namibia's second major desalination plant.

The proposed facility is expected to produce 20 million cubic metres of water annually, supplying future mining developments while also strengthening water security for coastal communities.

Ndangi-lithete said the partnership demonstrated that the government and the private sector could successfully work together to deliver

strategic infrastructure where responsibilities and objectives were clearly aligned.

However, he argued that Namibia's legislative framework has not kept pace with evolving infrastructure financing models.

Responding to questions from delegates, Ndangi-lithete said the country's current Public-Private Partnership legislation primarily caters for concession-type projects, limiting the flexibility available for more innovative partnership structures.

When NamWater developed the ErongoSonam joint venture, he said the utility quickly discovered that the proposed model did not fit comfortably within the existing legal framework.

"Our PPP framework currently only makes provision for concession-type projects," he said.

Globally, public-private partnerships are interpreted far more broadly, allowing governments and private investors to establish different forms of collaboration depending on the project.

He suggested Namibia should modernise its legislation to accommodate a wider range of partnership models, particularly in sectors such as water infrastructure where long-term investment requirements continue to grow.

Ndangi-lithete said the water sector also lacked legislation comparable to Namibia's electricity industry's modified single-buyer model, limiting opportunities for private investors to participate directly in bulk water infrastructure.

Early planning is key to powering Namibia's mining boom

Namibia has the electricity strategy, generation projects and transmission plans needed to support the country's next wave of mining investment, but mining companies must engage the national utility much earlier in their project development if power infrastructure is to be delivered on time, NamPower chief operating officer Benedictus Mingeli has said.

Addressing delegates during a panel discussion on enabling the next wave of mining growth at the Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference, Mingeli said the country's expanding mining pipeline would place unprecedented demand on the electricity sector, requiring coordinated long-term planning rather than reactive infrastructure development.

Mining already accounts for approximately 20% of Namibia's national electricity demand, a figure expected to rise significantly as new uranium, copper, gold, and critical mineral projects enter construction and

production.

"The mining industry has historically contributed about 20% towards our national demand," Mingeli said.

"With the pipeline of mining projects under development we expect that to increase significantly."

Every new mine therefore triggers the need for dedicated electricity infrastructure, often alongside new roads, water pipelines and communications systems.

He said the Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6) already provides the framework for coordinated infrastructure development by calling for reliable transport networks, bulk water infrastructure and expanded electricity generation and transmission capacity to support industrialisation.

"NDP6 is a strong basis for coordinated planning of integrated infrastructure," he said.

According to Mingeli, NamPower's response is built



around two priorities: expanding electricity generation and strengthening the national transmission network so that power is available when new mines are ready to begin production.

Central to that strategy is the government's objective of increasing Namibia's electricity self-sufficiency to 80% by 2030, while expanding installed generation capacity to approximately 1,100 megawatts, with renewable energy expected to account for

around 70% of the country's energy mix.

He said achieving those targets would reduce Namibia's dependence on imported electricity while supporting mineral beneficiation and broader industrial development.

NamPower has already completed approximately 94 megawatts of additional generation capacity, including the 54-megawatt Anixas Power Station and two 20-megawatt solar projects at Omburu and Khan.

Within the next two years, the utility expects to commission another 250 megawatts comprising battery energy storage, the 100-megawatt Rosh Pinah Solar PV project, a 40-megawatt biomass power station fuelled by encroacher bush and 44 megawatts of wind generation.

Beyond that, NamPower has identified another 250 megawatts of planned generation through expansion of the Omburu solar project, new independent power producer

projects, additional battery storage and other renewable developments.

However, Mingeli stressed that renewable energy alone cannot guarantee security of supply because solar and wind resources are intermittent.

NamPower is therefore pursuing dispatchable generation projects including gas-to-power developments based on Namibia's natural gas resources, the proposed Baynes Hydropower Project and additional battery storage capable of stabilising the national grid.

"Most of what I mentioned is intermittent renewables which we cannot necessarily bank on to ensure security of supply," he said.

Equally important, he said, is the continued expansion of Namibia's transmission system.

Mingeli described the country's high-voltage network as a world-class transmission system that has been progressively strengthened over

several decades, particularly in the Erongo Region where uranium mining has driven major infrastructure investment.

He cited the 220-kilovolt transmission network developed to support Swakop Uranium, Rössing Uranium, the coastal desalination plant, the Port of Walvis Bay and broader industrial development as evidence that strategic infrastructure investment can unlock regional economic growth far beyond individual mining operations.

For Mingeli, Erongo demonstrates how mining investment catalyses broader national development by creating electricity infrastructure that subsequently supports towns, industries, and future projects.

NamPower is now extending that strategy nationally.

The utility is constructing a second 400-kilovolt interconnector with South Africa, strengthening transmission between Keetmanshoop and Auas, expanding electricity

infrastructure around Arandis and Swakopmund through the newly completed Dune substation and pursuing the Angola–Namibia Interconnector Project.

Mingeli said the proposed Angolan interconnector would provide access to additional regional electricity supplies, improve affordability, and strengthen Namibia's long-term energy security.

Despite these investments, Mingeli said one challenge remained largely outside NamPower's control.

Mining companies often approach the utility only after completing much of their project planning, leaving insufficient time to develop dedicated electricity infrastructure.

Unlike national transmission lines, mine-specific infrastructure cannot be built in advance because each project requires its own technical studies, servitude acquisition, environmental approvals, engineering design and construction programme.

"The earlier the mining customers approach NamPower, the earlier we can do those

studies, secure the servitudes, procure contractors and undertake everything necessary to connect the projects to the grid," he said.

He encouraged developers to integrate electricity planning into feasibility studies from the outset rather than treating power supply as a final-stage requirement.

According to Mingeli, early engagement reduces project risk, allows infrastructure to be synchronised with mine construction schedules and improves investment certainty.

Responding to questions from delegates, Mingeli said Namibia currently generates roughly half of its electricity requirements domestically, importing the remainder primarily from South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The utility's current investment programme is designed to increase local generation sufficiently to achieve 80% self-sufficiency in electricity within the next four years.

He also confirmed that NamPower has begun working with government on the long-term possibility of deploying

small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs) through partnerships with international countries. However, he stressed that nuclear power forms part of the country's longer-term planning rather than its immediate expansion programme.

"On the nuclear front we are engaging with the government and we are working together with the government to develop small modular reactors through partnership with specific countries," he said.

For Mingeli, the message to the mining industry was straightforward.

Namibia is investing aggressively in generation, transmission and regional interconnections to support the country's next phase of mining-led growth.

But those investments can only be fully effective if project developers engage with infrastructure providers early enough to ensure that electricity systems are ready when mines move from feasibility studies to production.

Namibia: Where Responsible Mining Aligns with World-Class Conservation

A Global Destination Rooted in Responsibility, Sustainability, and Opportunity around the globe, countries are seeking a new model of economic development that fosters prosperity without jeopardising future generations.

Namibia is demonstrating that this balance is not only possible but achievable.

Rich in mineral resources, Namibia has emerged as one of Africa's leading mining regions and has gained international acclaim for its environmental stewardship, conservation achievements, and sustainable tourism industry.

Here, economic growth is pursued in harmony with nature, not at its expense.

This is the story of Namibia.

Purposeful Mining: Mining has been a cornerstone of Namibia's economy for decades, significantly contributing to employment, infrastructure development, foreign investment, and national revenue.

Today, Namibia is positioning itself as a global supplier of critical minerals essential for the world's energy transition, including uranium, lithium, rare earth elements, and other strategic resources.

However, Namibia recognises that success is not solely measured by extraction. The country's vision focuses on responsible mining, in which investment aligns with environmental stewardship, community development, transparent governance, and long-term sustainability. Companies operating in Namibia increasingly adopt international ESG principles, rehabilitation programs, renewable energy solutions, and meaningful partnerships with local communities.

Responsible mining is not just a policy goal; it is becoming Namibia's competitive edge.

Conservation-Driven Development; While many resource-rich nations struggle to protect biodiversity, Namibia has shown that conservation can drive economic growth.

Namibia was the first country to enshrine environmental protection in its Constitution, reflecting a national commitment to preserving natural heritage for future generations.

Today, millions of hectares of protected areas and community conservancies safeguard wildlife, landscapes, and ecosystems that attract visitors worldwide.

These conservation initiatives have created jobs, empowered rural communities, and reinforced Namibia's reputation as a leading sustainable tourism destination.

The result is a powerful synergy between conservation and development, where protecting nature generates lasting social and economic value.

Beyond the Boardroom, for international investors and attendees of the Namibia Mining Expo, the country offers more than just an investment opportunity.

It offers an experience.

Business may bring you to Namibia, but you'll leave inspired by a country where nature and progress go hand in hand.

From ancient deserts to life-giving wetlands, Namibia shows that responsible industry, thriving wildlife, and conservation are not competing priorities; they are the foundation of sustainable prosperity.

Luxury lodges, award-winning hospitality, exceptional cuisine, and authentic cultural encounters create an environment where business relationships endure long after meetings conclude.

In Namibia, business and tourism complement each other, strengthening investment, creating jobs, and fostering inclusive economic growth.

A Green Future

Namibia is rapidly emerging as one of Africa's most exciting investment destinations, not only for mining but also for renewable energy, green hydrogen, logistics, infrastructure, and sustainable industrial development. This transition reflects a national ambition to build an economy that is resilient, innovative, and environmentally responsible.

As global industries increasingly prioritise sustainability, Namibia offers investors confidence that economic opportunity can coexist with environmental integrity.

One Country. One Vision.

The Namibia Tourism Board proudly promotes a destination where visitors do more than witness remarkable landscapes; they experience a nation committed to responsible growth.

Namibia is more than a destination. It is where responsible mining fuels economic growth. Where conservation safeguards a global natural heritage. Where sustainable tourism enriches communities. Where investment delivers lasting value.



Namibia

Mining boom puts N\$150b road network under pressure

Namibia's expanding mining industry will only realise its full economic potential if government and mining companies jointly invest in protecting, expanding and maintaining the country's transport infrastructure, Road Fund Administration (RFA) chief executive officer Ali Ipinge has warned.

Addressing delegates during a panel discussion on enabling the next wave of mining growth at the Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference, Ipinge said Namibia had spent the past two decades laying a solid transport foundation and now faced the challenge of scaling up infrastructure to support a rapidly growing mining sector.

"I think as a country over the past 15 to 20 years we have gotten the basics right," Ipinge said.

"But I think for me the future is how do we then upscale? How do we then move from where we are?"

He argued that the next phase of infrastructure development could no longer be undertaken in isolation.

Echoing earlier contributions from NamPower, NamWater and TransNamib, Ipinge said roads, rail, electricity and water infrastructure must be planned as an integrated system if

Namibia wants to position itself as Africa's preferred mining investment destination.

According to Ipinge, the scale of the challenge becomes evident when examining the country's road network.

Namibia's national road network extends approximately 49,000 kilometres, linking almost every constituency and district across the country.

Describing the network as resembling "spaghetti" because of its extensive connectivity, Ipinge said the asset's replacement value now stands at approximately N\$150 billion.

Despite that achievement, maintaining the network is becoming increasingly difficult as mining activity generates higher freight volumes and heavier axle loads.

Ipinge revealed that approximately 20% of Namibia's bitumen road network already requires major rehabilitation, representing an estimated investment requirement of about N\$30 billion.

The situation is even more difficult on gravel roads.

Around 50% of Namibia's gravel road network requires complete regravelling or reconstruction, particularly in remote districts where many existing and emerging mining projects are located.



The financial implications are equally significant.

Ipinge said current funding levels allow government to address only about one-third of the rehabilitation work required.

Over the next three to five years, available resources are expected to finance only N\$10 billion to N\$12 billion worth of road rehabilitation and maintenance, substantially below actual infrastructure needs.

"The resources, of course, are limited."

"Within the next three to five years we can probably only invest about N\$10 billion to N\$12 billion."

"So that again is the extent of the challenge."

Against that backdrop, Ipinge argued that Namibia must rethink how mining commodities

are transported.

Rather than relying almost exclusively on heavy trucks travelling long distances to Walvis Bay, he said the country should increasingly combine road and rail transport so that trucks move freight only to the nearest rail terminal before bulk commodities continue by train to the ports.

Although such an approach requires additional cargo handling, Ipinge said rail transport remains considerably more cost-effective for bulk commodities while significantly reducing damage to the national road network.

Heavy mining vehicles, he warned, accelerate pavement deterioration and force road authorities to undertake costly rehabilitation much earlier than originally planned.

"The increased heavy loads and axle loads on our roads create a much faster deterioration of our infrastructure."

"It also requires that replacement actions happen much earlier than planned."

Ipinge also called for a new generation of partnerships between government and mining companies.

He highlighted Swakop Uranium as an example of the model he believes Namibia should replicate.

The company financed the construction of the access road linking the Husab Mine to the national highway before

transferring responsibility for long-term maintenance to government.

Mining companies, he argued, should regard transport infrastructure as part of the total investment required to develop a mine rather than treating roads solely as a government responsibility.

"I think it has to be part of that investment proposition."

Ipinge outlined several strategic road projects intended to accommodate increasing mining traffic.

The Karibib–Usakos upgrade is nearing completion and is expected to relieve congestion on one of Namibia's busiest mining corridors.

Construction is expected to continue from Usakos through Arandis to Swakopmund using a two-plus-one carriageway design to improve freight movement between inland mining operations and the Port of Walvis Bay.

In the north-east, rehabilitation of the Rundu–Divundu road is removing a long-standing bottleneck, while further upgrades are planned for the Kongola–Katima Mulilo corridor.

Additional work is planned between Mariental, Keetmanshoop and Grünau, where increased cross-border mining freight has accelerated deterioration of the road surface.

Beyond the national corridors, however, Ipinge said the greatest concern remained district roads serving mines.

Many mining operations rely on gravel roads that were never designed to carry sustained heavy truck traffic.

The RFA and Roads Authority are therefore inviting mining companies to work with the government on long-term maintenance partnerships to ensure those roads remain serviceable throughout the life of mining projects.

"We need to see how we partner to co-invest in the maintenance of those roads."

Responding to questions from delegates, Ipinge also disclosed that recent reductions in the national fuel levy had weakened the RFA's financial position.

He said the levy reduction had reduced the authority's revenue by approximately N\$500 million, delaying planned maintenance and rehabilitation projects while the organisation rebuilds its reserves.

"This fuel levy cut has weakened the balance sheet of RFA. Certainly it will take time for us to rebuild our reserves to support some of the projects that we intend to undertake."

Ipinge acknowledged that the fuel levy reduction had benefited motorists and industries, including mining, by lowering transport costs.

However, he cautioned that the unintended consequence was reduced funding available for preserving the infrastructure on which those same industries depend.

TransNamib pitches rail-first logistics for mining boom

Mining companies should begin planning their logistics long before construction starts and stop viewing rail as an option only for mines located alongside railway lines, as TransNamib positions integrated rail-first logistics at the centre of Namibia's next phase of mining-led growth.

Speaking on behalf of TransNamib chief executive officer Desmond van Jaarsveld during a panel discussion on enabling the next wave of mining growth at the Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference, TransNamib executive for commercial services Kendall Swarts said the railway operator was transforming itself from a traditional freight carrier into an integrated logistics partner capable of supporting Namibia's expanding mining industry and attracting mineral exports from across southern Africa.

Central to that strategy is what Swarts described as a "pit-to-port" logistics model, in which mining companies combine road and rail transport rather than relying exclusively on trucks.

"The mine does not necessarily have to be on the railway line," Swarts said.

"We can collect the product by road, take it to the nearest siding and from there move it by rail to

the port."

He explained that even where a mine is located approximately 50 kilometres from the nearest railway, the combined road-and-rail model can still reduce logistics costs because the efficiency of rail transport over long distances outweighs the additional handling required at the rail siding.

Swarts said the approach reflects a broader shift in how TransNamib wants mining companies to think about logistics.

Rather than asking whether a project has direct rail access, developers should ask how rail can be incorporated into the overall transport chain from the earliest stages of project planning.

That requires mining companies to engage TransNamib during feasibility studies so that logistics solutions, siding requirements, freight volumes and transport costs can be incorporated into project design before construction begins.

"We don't want to have the conversation after the mine has already been designed," he said, encouraging developers to integrate logistics planning into the earliest phases of project development.

To support that strategy,



Swarts outlined the current state of Namibia's rail network.

TransNamib operates approximately 2,382 kilometres of railway across the country, connecting mining regions with the ports of Walvis Bay and Lüderitz as well as neighbouring countries.

However, about 883 kilometres of that network remain subject to speed restrictions, highlighting the need for continued rehabilitation and infrastructure upgrades if rail is to accommodate the next generation of mining projects.

He said TransNamib has therefore embarked on an extensive modernisation programme aimed at improving reliability, increasing freight capacity and restoring confidence in rail transport.

Although the company's N\$2.6

billion investment in locomotives and rolling stock has previously been announced, Swarts said the programme forms part of a broader effort to prepare the railway for future mining demand.

The investment includes new locomotives, remanufactured locomotives and modern rolling stock intended to replace ageing equipment that has become increasingly expensive to maintain.

Modern equipment, he said, would improve operational reliability, reduce maintenance downtime and enhance safety across the rail network.

Swarts said TransNamib is also digitising its operations to provide customers with integrated logistics solutions rather than simply transporting cargo between stations.

Future mining customers increasingly expect end-to-end visibility of their supply chains, requiring rail systems that communicate seamlessly with road operators, ports and customers through modern digital platforms.

Digitisation, he argued, has therefore become just as important as new locomotives and upgraded railway lines in improving service delivery.

The railway operator is simultaneously upgrading key freight corridors serving Namibia's mining industry.

Swarts highlighted ongoing improvements to the Walvis Bay–Northern Line, where increasing axle-load capacity

will allow heavier trains to carry larger mineral volumes.

Higher axle loads reduce transport costs per tonne while increasing the competitiveness of Namibia's mining exports.

The northern corridor is expected to become increasingly important as uranium, copper and critical mineral developments continue expanding across central and northern Namibia.

Beyond Namibia's borders, Swarts said TransNamib's ambitions extend across southern Africa.

The company is positioning the Trans–Kalahari Corridor to serve Botswana's growing copper industry while using the Trans–Zambezi Corridor to attract freight from Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

He also identified opportunities to capture mineral exports from South Africa's Northern Cape, particularly iron ore and manganese producers seeking alternatives to increasingly congested South African ports.

"Lüderitz also presents opportunities," Swarts said, noting that Namibia's southern port could play a larger role in handling regional mining exports.

Rather than competing directly with road transport, Swarts said rail should become the backbone of Namibia's freight system.

Road transport would continue performing the first leg of the

journey by moving ore from mines to rail sidings, after which rail would undertake the long-distance haul to export terminals.

The integrated approach would reduce heavy truck traffic on national highways, lower road maintenance costs, improve safety and increase the efficiency of mineral exports.

He said it would also strengthen Walvis Bay and Lüderitz as regional logistics hubs serving not only Namibia's mines but also producers across southern Africa.

Swarts encouraged mining companies to work closely with TransNamib, the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board and other infrastructure institutions during project planning rather than after investment decisions have already been made.

Early collaboration allows TransNamib to assess freight requirements, determine whether additional sidings or infrastructure are needed and ensure logistics systems are ready when mines begin production.

For Swarts, the country's expanding mining pipeline represents more than an opportunity to transport additional tonnes of ore.

If logistics planning begins early enough, he said, rail can become one of Namibia's strongest competitive advantages as the country enters its next mining boom.

Bureaucracy, not tax, is locking Namibian suppliers out of mining contracts

Namibia's ambitions to increase local participation in the mining industry will remain difficult to achieve unless the government and regulators reduce the administrative barriers that prevent small businesses from qualifying for mining contracts, Deloitte Namibia tax director Gerda Brand has warned.

Speaking during a panel discussion on Financing Namibia's Mining Supply Chain for Local Growth and Industrial Development at the Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference, Brand argued that the biggest obstacle facing many local suppliers is not the availability of finance or even Namibia's tax system, but a regulatory environment that requires businesses to navigate multiple permits, licences, certificates and compliance requirements before they can compete for procurement opportunities.

"We have too many boxes to tick," Brand said, explaining that entrepreneurs often spend excessive time satisfying administrative requirements instead of growing their businesses and preparing to supply the mining sector.

According to Brand, Namibia has made considerable progress in promoting local content, but

policy ambitions must now be matched by practical reforms that make it easier for capable local businesses to enter mining supply chains.

She said discussions about supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) frequently focus on access to finance, yet many businesses never reach that stage because they must first meet numerous regulatory requirements that consume time and resources.

Brand stressed that her concern was not Namibia's tax rates.

Instead, she distinguished between tax policy and tax administration, arguing that the greatest frustration for businesses lies in the administrative processes surrounding compliance rather than in the taxes themselves.

Obtaining tax good-standing certificates, licences, permits, and other statutory approvals can take so long that businesses lose opportunities before they can even submit competitive bids.

"It takes forever," she said, describing the lengthy administrative processes that many businesses encounter when trying to comply with regulatory requirements.

She said businesses are often



required to submit numerous documents without receiving clear explanations of why each one is necessary.

In many cases, entrepreneurs simply comply because they have no alternative, even where different institutions request similar information under different legislative frameworks.

Brand argued that Namibia's regulatory system has evolved through separate pieces of legislation that do not always complement one another, resulting in duplication, unnecessary administration and higher compliance costs for businesses.

"The laws don't necessarily talk to each other," she said, calling for a more coordinated regulatory environment that reduces duplication while

maintaining proper governance standards.

At the same time, Brand acknowledged that mining companies have legitimate reasons for maintaining rigorous procurement standards.

Mining operations require suppliers capable of meeting strict safety, quality, environmental and financial requirements, and those standards cannot simply be lowered in the name of localisation.

The challenge, she argued, is ensuring that compliance systems do not unintentionally exclude capable Namibian businesses before they have an opportunity to demonstrate what they can deliver.

Rather than reducing standards, Brand said Namibia should simplify administrative processes to streamline compliance without compromising accountability.

She also challenged government and industry to move beyond discussions about reform and focus on implementation.

Referring to the moderator's earlier remarks about moving beyond initiatives that remain perpetually "in progress", Brand questioned whether Namibia was doing enough to convert

policy commitments into practical action.

She argued that improving the business environment often requires administrative reforms rather than new legislation or financial incentives.

Brand further highlighted the challenges many businesses continue to experience when dealing with the Namibia Revenue Agency (NAMRA).

Responding to questions from delegates, she said tax administration remains a significant concern, particularly for smaller businesses that often cannot afford specialist tax advisers to navigate increasingly complex compliance requirements.

She called for stronger taxpayer education, greater consistency in administrative decision-making and a more service-oriented approach to tax administration.

According to Brand, taxpayers should be treated as clients who deserve clear explanations and predictable administrative processes.

She also pointed out that Namibia still lacks a dedicated Tax Administration Act, meaning many disputes concerning administrative decisions are addressed through broader constitutional and administrative

law principles.

Businesses, she said, should not hesitate to challenge administrative decisions where they believe public institutions have acted unfairly or outside the law.

"Yes, you can. And we should," Brand said when asked whether businesses should challenge administrative decisions through the courts where necessary.

For Brand, simplifying regulation is not about weakening oversight.

It is about creating an environment in which local enterprises spend less time collecting certificates, renewing licences and navigating bureaucracy, and more time investing in equipment, creating jobs and developing the capacity needed to participate in Namibia's growing mining economy.

She said the country's local-content ambitions will ultimately depend not only on finance but also on the government's ability to remove unnecessary administrative barriers that prevent Namibian businesses from competing for opportunities generated by one of the country's fastest-growing industries.

Companies urged to redesign procurement to unlock finance for local suppliers

Namibia's mining industry can unlock substantially more financing for local suppliers by redesigning procurement contracts to make businesses bankable, rather than relying solely on new funding programmes or additional lending facilities, Bellatrix Investment Managers managing director Jesaya Hano Oshike has said.

Speaking during a panel discussion on Financing Namibia's Mining Supply Chain for Local Growth and Industrial Development at the Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference, Oshike argued that Namibia's biggest challenge is not necessarily a shortage of capital but the inability of many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to demonstrate the predictable income that banks and investors require before providing finance.

He said financiers do not lend against ambition alone.

They lend against certainty.

For that reason, mining companies have a greater role to play in supplier development than simply awarding contracts.

The way procurement contracts are structured can determine whether a local supplier qualifies for finance or remains excluded from the

industry's supply chain.

"The opportunity is there," Oshike said.

"The question is how we structure it so that capital can flow to local businesses."

According to Oshike, procurement should be viewed not merely as a purchasing function but as an instrument for industrial development.

Mining companies, financiers and suppliers should work together when designing procurement models so that contracts provide sufficient certainty for businesses to secure financing before production begins.

Instead of relying on short-term purchase orders or contracts that are renewed annually, he encouraged mining companies to award longer-term supply agreements that give local businesses confidence to invest in equipment, staff and production capacity.

Long-term contracts, he said, create predictable cash flows that financial institutions can assess when making lending decisions.

Without that certainty, even technically capable businesses often struggle to obtain financing because lenders cannot accurately evaluate future revenue.



A key element of Oshike's proposal is the greater use of cession agreements.

He explained that once a supplier has secured a long-term mining contract, the proceeds from that contract can be ceded to a financial institution as security for a loan.

Instead of demanding land, buildings or other conventional collateral, banks can lend against the future income generated by the mining contract itself.

He said that many SMEs could transform procurement contracts into financeable commercial assets, enabling businesses to purchase machinery, expand production and create employment.

Oshike said this requires procurement departments and

financial institutions to work much more closely together.

Mining companies should consider not only whether a supplier can deliver today but also whether the contract structure enables that supplier to obtain the capital needed to perform successfully.

He argued that procurement decisions and financing decisions should complement one another if Namibia is serious about increasing local participation in mining value chains.

He also challenged the perception that Namibia lacks investment capital.

The country already has significant pools of long-term institutional capital, including pension funds and other investors looking for commercially viable projects.

The problem, he said, is creating investment structures that match the risk profile of local suppliers while providing institutional investors with acceptable commercial returns.

Rather than expecting commercial banks to shoulder the responsibility alone, Oshike called for greater collaboration between banks, development finance institutions, private investors and institutional capital providers.

Each source of finance, he said, serves a different purpose.

Commercial lenders may finance working capital, development finance institutions can absorb higher levels of developmental risk, while institutional investors are often better suited to providing longer-term capital for business expansion.

Working together, those institutions can create financing packages that individual organisations would struggle to provide on their own.

Building competitive mining suppliers takes time.

Businesses often need to invest in equipment, technology, quality systems and workforce development long before they achieve stable commercial returns.

Investors therefore need financing structures that recognise the longer timeframes required to develop sustainable industrial enterprises rather than expecting immediate profitability.

He said Namibia should use the current mining boom to build companies capable of growing into manufacturers, service providers and exporters serving multiple industries and markets.

Supplier development should

create businesses that continue to grow long after individual mining projects have ended, rather than companies that remain dependent on a single contract throughout their existence.

Without access to appropriate finance, local businesses cannot purchase equipment, meet mining industry standards or expand production sufficiently to compete with established international suppliers.

Finance, he argued, therefore becomes one of the most important enablers of localisation and industrialisation.

Oshike also urged mining companies to engage financiers much earlier in project development.

Instead of waiting until procurement contracts have already been awarded, mines, suppliers and financiers should collaborate during the planning and tender design stages so that funding structures are already in place when local businesses secure work.

That approach reduces financing risk, lowers borrowing costs and improves the likelihood that Namibian companies will successfully deliver on major mining contracts.

Namibia has capital, but mining SMEs struggle to access it

Namibia does not face a general shortage of capital for businesses seeking opportunities in the mining supply chain, but many emerging suppliers remain unable to access available funding because their contracts, balance sheets, and risk profiles do not meet financiers' requirements, Eos Capital Head of Advisory Zack Kauraisa has said.

Kauraisa said the country had several pools of debt and equity capital, but local suppliers were often not structured in a way that allowed banks, private credit providers or investors to finance them.

"Namibia doesn't have a capital problem in terms of whether money is available," he said.

The central questions for financiers, he said, were whether suppliers held bankable contracts, whether those agreements were long enough to support the proposed

financing and whether the overall transaction presented an acceptable risk profile.

He said many of the weaknesses could be addressed, but doing so would require parties that were not always incentivised to assume additional risk on behalf of smaller suppliers.

Kauraisa said the scale of Namibia's mining procurement demonstrated that the potential market already existed.

However, Kauraisa cautioned against assuming that every dollar spent through a Namibian-registered supplier represented genuine domestic production.

He said the more important question was how much of the value remained in Namibia through local manufacturing, salaries, services, and domestic inputs, rather than simply passing through a Namibian intermediary that imports products from overseas.



He also warned against treating the remaining offshore procurement as automatically available for localisation.

Certain imported products and services, particularly those used in complex offshore diamond mining, relied on specialised technology, intellectual property and research developed over decades.

Replicating such capabilities locally would require substantially more

than establishing a basic manufacturing operation.

Kauraisa said policymakers and mining companies should examine the substantial amount already spent locally and identify suppliers capable of shifting from resale and distribution to domestic production.

That could include businesses currently importing equipment, chemicals and industrial products that might, with sufficient technical and financial support, establish local manufacturing or assembly capacity.

Kauraisa said Namibia already had several financing channels available to SMEs, including commercial-bank overdrafts, working-capital facilities and term loans, specialised private-credit products, equity funding and the national credit-guarantee scheme.

Those different sources of capital offered varying ticket sizes, repayment periods and

risk appetites.

He cited the experience of a roughly N\$500 million SME support facility introduced during the Covid-19 period as an example of how funds could go unused even when businesses urgently needed support.

According to Kauraisa, only 1.3% of the facility had been deployed initially after almost three years because many applicants could not meet the original evaluation requirements.

He said the criteria were later redesigned and broadened, after which approximately 430 SMEs gained access to the scheme.

Kauraisa said that experience illustrated how financing programmes could fail when qualification requirements were not aligned with the circumstances of the businesses they were intended to support.

A company might need N\$80 million to N\$100 million to purchase equipment, recruit

workers and execute a contract, yet qualify for only N\$30 million to N\$40 million because its existing balance sheet remained too small.

He said the same structural problem emerged when mining companies and financiers assessed suppliers through different lenses.

A mine might refuse to award a larger contract because the supplier did not yet own sufficient equipment or employ the required specialists.

A financier, meanwhile, might refuse to fund the equipment and recruitment because the supplier did not yet hold a sufficiently secure or long-term contract.

The business could therefore find itself trapped between the two institutions.

Kauraisa used the example of a company awarded a N\$100 million, 12-month contract but required to purchase equipment costing more than the funding a

bank was prepared to provide.

When the supplier returned to the mine without the full fleet or workforce required, the mine could conclude that the business was not ready, even though the short contract itself had contributed to the financing problem.

He said simply extending all mining contracts to several years was not necessarily an easy solution because mines used shorter contracts to manage performance risk and preserve the ability to replace suppliers that failed to deliver.

The more useful question was whether models could be developed that would allow mines to support suppliers without incurring unreasonable risk.

One option was reverse factoring, under which financing was based in part on the mining company's stronger balance sheet rather than solely on the supplier's weaker one.

That could reduce the cost

of capital and improve the contract's economics, but it would require the mine to accept some responsibility for the financing risk.

Kauraisa also proposed that mining companies consider taking temporary minority equity stakes in strategic suppliers.

Under such a structure, a mine could acquire 10% to 15% of a business that provides maintenance or another critical service, help it secure cheaper financing, improve governance, and extend the contract period before selling its interest once the supplier has developed a stronger balance sheet and track record.

He said such an arrangement could allow the mine to provide technical expertise, networks and management support while reducing the risk that the supplier failed to deliver.

It could also enable local businesses to grow into larger, self-sustaining companies

capable of competing for contracts beyond a single mine.

The intention would not be for mining companies to become permanent owners of maintenance, waste management, or chemical supply businesses.

Kauraisa described the model as a temporary supplier-development intervention that could be repeated with other businesses after the original supplier matured.

Ownership could, in some circumstances, give the mine greater oversight of management, recruitment, standards and service delivery while opening the supplier to cheaper capital and specialised technical support.

He acknowledged, however, that mining companies had legitimate reasons for outsourcing non-core services and would have to select such partnerships carefully.



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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

Andrada moves Namibian petalite into battery supply chain

Andrada Mining has launched a European Union-backed research programme that could transform how lithium is produced at Namibia's Uis Mine by testing a lower-energy processing route to integrate the country's petalite resources into the global battery supply chain.

Presenting the Pro-Lith Project: EU-Finland Partnership with Namibia Supporting Critical Minerals and Downstream Development at the Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference, Andrada Mining head of exploration Timothy Marais said the project would investigate whether petalite – a lithium-bearing mineral historically used mainly in the glass and ceramics industries – can be converted economically into battery-grade lithium chemicals using a new alkaline-leaching process.

The European Union funds the N\$78 million research programme under its strategic partnership with Namibia on sustainable raw materials and is being implemented in collaboration with the Geological Survey of Finland (GTK), Andrada Mining, and other technical partners.

Rather than simply supporting mineral extraction, Marais said the initiative aims to help

Namibia capture more value from its critical minerals by advancing local research, mineral processing, technology development and beneficiation.

Marais explained that the significance of the project lies in the type of lithium mineral found at Uis.

While most of the world's battery-grade lithium is currently produced from spodumene, the Uis deposit is dominated by petalite. This mineral has traditionally been supplied to the glass and ceramics industries because converting it into battery chemicals has generally been more complex and expensive.

Andrada has already demonstrated its ability to produce a high-grade petalite concentrate containing about 4.2% lithium oxide.

However, Marais said the company is now investigating whether it can increase overall lithium recovery by producing a slightly lower concentrate grade of approximately 3.5% lithium oxide, allowing more lithium to be recovered while simplifying processing and reducing costs.

He explained that conventional hard-rock lithium production requires concentrates to be heated to temperatures exceeding 1,000 degrees Celsius before they can be



chemically processed.

That roasting stage consumes a large amount of energy and is one of the most expensive parts of the conversion process.

Petalite can also be processed using this conventional route, but because it contains less lithium than spodumene, significantly more material must be processed to produce the same quantity of lithium chemicals, increasing production costs.

The Pro-Lith project is therefore investigating an alternative alkaline-leaching process that could allow petalite to bypass the high-temperature conversion stage altogether.

If the technology proves technically and commercially viable, it could substantially reduce energy consumption, operating costs, and greenhouse

gas emissions while simplifying lithium production.

By eliminating the roasting stage, the process could also reduce dependence on acid-based processing and lower the environmental footprint associated with conventional lithium conversion.

Marais stressed that Pro-Lith remains a research and development programme rather than a commercial processing operation.

Over the coming years, researchers will test, validate and optimise the technology to determine whether it can consistently produce battery-grade lithium products at commercial scale.

The Geological Survey of Finland will provide expertise in mineralogy, metallurgy, laboratory testing and process optimisation, while Finnish engineering company Metso will contribute internationally recognised mineral-processing technology and engineering expertise to evaluate and improve the proposed processing route.

The programme also extends beyond lithium conversion.

Marais said researchers will investigate improvements to dense-media separation, process-water recovery and recycling technologies to

improve resource efficiency at Uis.

Water management forms a significant component of the research because the mine operates in Namibia's arid Erongo Region, where every opportunity to recover and reuse water contributes to more sustainable mining operations.

"We are in Namibia. It is the desert," he said, explaining why improving water efficiency forms an important part of the project.

Another major objective is to advance what Marais described as circular mining.

Besides lithium, the Uis orebody contains significant quantities of tin, tantalum, feldspar, quartz and mica.

Many of those minerals currently remain underutilised, not because they lack commercial value but because additional research and processing technologies are required to recover them economically.

Instead of treating those minerals as waste, Pro-Lith will examine how more of the orebody can be commercialised, reducing waste while creating additional revenue streams.

"Those minerals can all be utilised," Marais said.

"At the moment they are not

processed and sold because it requires research and development."

Marais said the project also supports Europe's strategy to diversify critical mineral supply chains while strengthening Namibia's downstream processing capabilities.

If the alkaline-leaching technology proves successful at Uis, it could have applications beyond Namibia.

He noted that Portugal also hosts significant petalite deposits that face similar processing challenges, raising the possibility that technology developed through the Namibian project could be applied elsewhere.

Andrada's latest resource estimate places the Uis Mineral Resource at 77.51 million tonnes, making it one of the world's largest known hard-rock lithium-bearing pegmatite systems. Marais said the scale of the resource provides an ideal platform for testing new processing technologies that can support long-term beneficiation and industrial development.

If Pro-Lith succeeds, he said, Namibia will not simply produce more lithium.

Exploration breathes new life into Otjikoto

Just a year after completing open-pit mining at the Otjikoto Gold Mine, B2Gold Namibia says continued exploration has uncovered enough additional resources to underpin a new phase of underground mining while opening the possibility of extending the mine well beyond its current 2033 life.

Speaking during the From Investment to Impact session at the Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference in Windhoek, B2Gold Namibia managing director John Roos said the company had effectively pressed a "big reset button" on the Otjikoto operation after what many believed would mark the beginning of the mine's closure.

"We're no longer an open-pit mining operation. We process low-grade stockpiles and we operate an underground mining operation. We are also developing another underground operation which will come into production in 2028," Roos said.

The transition follows the completion of open-pit mining in October 2025, after which the company reduced its permanent workforce from around 900 employees to a steady-state complement of 404, supported by about 600 employees, including contractors. Roos said

those permanent jobs are now expected to remain in place until at least 2033.

The biggest reason for the renewed confidence is the rapid growth of the Antelope underground discovery.

When B2Gold released a Preliminary Economic Assessment in February last year, the deposit was estimated to contain 326,000 ounces of gold. Continued drilling has since increased the resource by about 67% to approximately 650,000 ounces in the indicated and inferred categories, and the company believes further drilling could expand the resource even further.

Roos said the Antelope discovery demonstrates the philosophy that underpins B2Gold's exploration strategy. Mining is inherently a depleting industry, with every ounce of gold produced reducing the remaining resource unless discoveries are made. Exploration, he argued, should therefore be viewed as a long-term investment rather than a discretionary cost, because it ultimately determines whether mines continue operating or move towards closure. Otjikoto's experience, he said, shows how sustained exploration can fundamentally reshape the future of an operation once



thought to be nearing the end of its productive life.

B2Gold has allocated a US\$6 million exploration budget to the Antelope project this year, with Roos saying the company expects to spend the entire allocation as it searches for additional resources to extend mining beyond the current plan.

The investment reflects Namibia's importance within B2Gold's global portfolio. Roos said the country now receives the second-largest exploration budget across the B2Gold group, underscoring the company's confidence in Namibia's geological potential and its commitment to finding additional gold deposits beyond the currently defined Antelope resource.

The renewed exploration success mirrors the broader

history of Otjikoto itself.

When B2Gold acquired the project, the company expected it to produce about 1.2 million ounces of gold over its entire life. Instead, the mine has already produced more than two million ounces since commercial production began in February 2015, and management now believes another one million ounces could still be recovered through continued underground mining and exploration success.

Over that period, the mine has generated approximately US\$3.6 billion in revenue, delivered US\$628 million in taxes, royalties, and other payments to the government, returned US\$700 million to shareholders, and contributed an estimated US\$2.1 billion in broader economic value through procurement, wages, and taxes.

Roos said those figures demonstrate that mining's contribution extends well beyond direct tax payments. Local procurement, salaries, contractor spending, and business opportunities created by mining generate broader economic benefits across the country, supporting communities, suppliers, and service industries throughout the mine's life. He said Otjikoto's economic footprint illustrates how successful mining projects

simultaneously create value for government, investors, employees, and local businesses.

While gold production has declined following the end of open-pit mining—from approximately 199,000 ounces in 2025 to guidance of 70,000–90,000 ounces this year—Roos said the strong international gold price has helped offset the reduction in production volumes and maintain the operation's commercial viability.

He said the transition has required a fundamental change in how Otjikoto operates. The mine has evolved from a conventional open-pit operation into a business centred on stockpile processing and underground mining while preparing the Antelope underground project for production in 2028.

According to Roos, that evolution demonstrates the company's ability to adapt operationally while preserving employment and extending the mine's productive life through exploration and continued investment.

Roos also highlighted B2Gold's investment in renewable energy as part of its long-term sustainability strategy. The company's solar power installation has reduced dependence on diesel-

generated electricity, lowering operating costs while helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. He said improving energy efficiency has become increasingly important as Otjikoto transitions into its underground phase, where operational costs require even greater discipline.

B2Gold has established a Namibian trust that will ultimately own the mine's 18,000-hectare farming properties, solar farm and tourism operations. The businesses are intended to remain profitable after mining ends, generating income that can continue funding community development projects long after gold production has ceased.

Roos said the trust represents a different approach to mine closure. Instead of limiting post-mining activities to environmental rehabilitation, B2Gold intends to leave behind productive commercial assets that generate sustainable income for surrounding communities. Farming, tourism and renewable-energy businesses will continue operating after mining, creating what he described as a lasting economic legacy rather than allowing development to end when the last ounce of gold is produced.

Diamond downturn wipes nearly N\$13 billion from Namdeb's value

A collapse in global diamond demand has wiped nearly N\$13 billion from Namdeb Diamond Corporation's net present value and slashed expected revenues by about 60%, forcing the company to embark on one of the most aggressive cost-cutting, technology and productivity drives in its history to safeguard a business that supports about 2,600 jobs.

Namdeb chief executive officer Riaan Burger said the natural diamond industry was experiencing one of its most severe downturns in decades, driven by weak global demand, geopolitical uncertainty, synthetic diamonds, and slowing economic growth in key consumer markets.

Only four years ago, the company announced a new 20-year business plan after proving that extensive diamond-bearing gravels remained beneath the Atlantic Ocean beyond its historic land-based operations.

The expansion plan was supported by reduced royalty arrangements with government and committed Namdeb to pushing mining a further 1.4 kilometres into the sea, maintaining employment for approximately 2,600 people and contributing an estimated N\$40 billion to Namibia's economy

over the life of the project.

Burger explained that Namibia has no diamond-bearing kimberlite pipes. Instead, the country's diamonds originated in South Africa and Botswana before being transported hundreds of kilometres downstream by the Orange River millions of years ago.

Over time, wave action repeatedly concentrated the highest-quality stones along Namibia's coastline and offshore seabed.

That natural sorting process has resulted in approximately 98% of Namdeb's production being gem-quality diamonds, among the highest-quality natural diamonds produced worldwide.

Burger said Namdeb's current operation represents more than a century of continuous technological evolution.

Over the past 100 years, the company has recovered approximately 84 million carats from its southern coastal mining licence, while Namdeb and Debmarine Namibia together have produced close to 100 million carats from Namibia's marine and coastal deposits.

Unlocking those resources required years of unsuccessful experiments, including specialised offshore mining equipment that Burger jokingly



described as an "engineering marvel" but "an utter failure".

Although those early attempts failed commercially, they generated the knowledge that eventually enabled successful probe drilling, advanced geophysical mapping and the coastal engineering techniques now used to extend mining beneath the Atlantic Ocean.

The company has already reclaimed about one kilometre of coastline by constructing massive seawalls, while moving more than 100 million tonnes of material every year and pumping approximately 415 million cubic metres of seawater annually to keep its mining areas dry.

Burger attributed the downturn to a combination of international trade tensions, geopolitical conflict, slowing

Chinese demand, higher living costs in the United States, weaker jewellery sales, increased competition from laboratory-grown diamonds and higher gold prices, which have increased the cost of diamond jewellery.

He said the company had originally modelled a 20% decline in revenue during scenario planning but had never anticipated the scale of the current downturn.

Despite those challenges, Burger said there were encouraging early signs that the market was beginning to differentiate between natural and laboratory-grown diamonds once again.

He said the strongest recovery was emerging in larger, high-quality natural stones.

"The big stones are really what drives Namibia more than anything else," he said.

Burger said recovery would also depend on rebuilding consumer demand.

De Beers has intensified its marketing campaigns in the United States, India and China through its Desert Diamonds campaign, promoting natural diamonds originating from Namibia while working with international celebrities and luxury brands to rebuild demand ahead of the important year-end jewellery-buying season.

The company has placed the

Sendelingsdrif operation on care and maintenance, undertaken three rounds of voluntary separation, reduced staffing levels, frozen labour-cost escalation and worked closely with contractors to reduce operating costs.

It has also deliberately reduced its strip reserve, mining much closer to the active mining face to minimise waste movement and lower costs, even though that approach leaves the operation with less operational flexibility.

"We are running right on the edge with our strip reserve," Burger said.

Technology has become equally important.

Namdeb has established a sophisticated remote operating centre that monitors equipment, vehicle movements, fatigue and production across its coastal operations.

The system has improved loading productivity by approximately 13%, while new surface miners, additional processing capacity and the introduction of the company's first dry mining unit have dramatically increased operational efficiency.

Between 2022 and the end of last year, treatment capacity increased by 35%, the area of bedrock cleaned rose by 83%, and diamond production increased by 63%, all while maintaining broadly stable

employment.

"If it wasn't for this, we would have been dead," Burger said.

Burger argued, however, that Namdeb's greatest competitive advantage was neither technology nor engineering.

Long before the downturn began, Namdeb deliberately built a culture centred on employee participation, continuous learning, innovation and shared responsibility.

Rather than imposing corporate values from management, employees helped define the company's culture, and staff are encouraged to pursue further education, experiment with new ideas, and learn from failure, provided safety is not compromised.

Responding to questions from delegates, Burger said technology had been one of the biggest drivers of productivity gains, particularly the introduction of surface miners.

He added that improvements in workforce performance had also contributed significantly, noting that female bedrock-cleaning teams initially outperformed male teams before the company adopted mixed teams supported by productivity-linked incentives.

"In the end, none of the improvements, none of the efficiency and none of the innovation happens without the right people," he said.

Sandpiper could anchor 50,000-job phosphate industry

Namibia should stop viewing the proposed Sandpiper Marine Phosphate Project as simply another mine and instead recognise it as the foundation of an entirely new phosphate-processing industry capable of creating more than 50,000 jobs, strengthening regional food security and positioning the country as a producer of fertilisers, industrial chemicals and battery materials, **Namibian Marine Phosphate chief operating officer Mike Woodborne has said.**

Presenting Marine Phosphate Mining as a Strategic Opportunity for Namibia's Next Phase of Economic Growth during the From Investment to Impact session at the Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference, Woodborne argued that the greatest economic opportunity lies not in extracting phosphate from the seabed but in building the downstream industries that transform the mineral into higher-value products.

"This is not just an opportunity to build a new mine," he said.

Woodborne opened his presentation by referring to President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah's call for Namibia to move from dialogue to implementation and to create

employment through value-adding industries rather than relying solely on the export of raw materials.

He said Sandpiper represented exactly the kind of project capable of supporting those national objectives because the mine itself was only the first link in a much larger industrial value chain.

The project has been under consideration for almost a decade and has become one of Namibia's most debated mining developments. While the mine itself is expected to create around 600 direct jobs, Woodborne said an independent economic assessment concluded that a fully integrated phosphate industry could support more than 50,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs across mining, fertiliser manufacturing, chemical processing, logistics, engineering, agriculture and supporting industries.

The same study estimated that such an industry could eventually contribute around 9% of Namibia's gross domestic product, illustrating that the greatest economic value lies not in mining phosphate rock but in processing it into finished and semi-finished products.

According to Woodborne, Namibia has a rare opportunity



to build an industry that serves two of the world's fastest-growing long-term markets: food production and the global energy transition.

He described phosphorus as one of the world's most strategic minerals because there is no synthetic substitute for it.

Every crop requires phosphorus to grow, livestock depend on it for nutrition, and agricultural productivity cannot be sustained without phosphate fertilisers.

"There is no substitute," Woodborne said, arguing that phosphorus occupies a unique position among mineral commodities because global food production cannot function without it.

He said that importance extends well beyond agriculture.

Phosphate is increasingly used in the production of lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries, one of the fastest-growing battery technologies for electric vehicles, grid-scale electricity storage, and renewable energy systems.

Instead of exporting phosphate concentrate, he said, Namibia should progressively develop the downstream value chain by producing phosphoric acid, fertilisers, animal feed products, industrial chemicals, and eventually battery materials.

Each additional stage of processing captures more value domestically, supports more skilled employment and creates opportunities for new manufacturing businesses that currently do not exist in Namibia.

Woodborne said the proposal also aligns with Namibia's broader food-security ambitions.

Although the country exports large quantities of mineral resources, it remains dependent on imported fertilisers and other agricultural inputs.

Developing a domestic phosphate-processing industry would allow Namibia not only to meet a greater share of its own fertiliser demand but also to supply neighbouring countries, strengthening regional food security while reducing reliance on imported products.

He argued that southern Africa's growing agricultural sector provides a natural regional market capable of supporting a domestic fertiliser manufacturing industry.

He said Namibia already possesses many of the competitive advantages required to support that ambition.

The Sandpiper project itself is among Namibia's most advanced undeveloped mining projects.

Public project information indicates that Mining Licence ML170 covers it, that it contains a substantial JORC-compliant phosphate resource, and that it has undergone extensive environmental investigations over more than a decade.

Woodborne said the project therefore already possesses many of the technical foundations required for development once the remaining regulatory processes are concluded.

He acknowledged that Sandpiper has remained controversial because sections of the fishing industry have raised concerns over the possible environmental effects of offshore phosphate mining.

While his presentation did not focus on the regulatory debate, Woodborne argued that years of scientific studies and environmental investigations had

been undertaken to understand the marine environment and assess whether phosphate mining and commercial fishing could coexist under appropriate operating conditions. Those questions continue to form part of the project's regulatory process, with fishing organisations expressing concerns about potential ecosystem impacts. In contrast, the project developer maintains that the operation can proceed responsibly under the approved environmental conditions.

He urged policymakers and industry leaders to consider what could follow if the country's phosphate resources became the foundation of an entirely new industrial sector.

He argued that the true measure of Sandpiper's success should not be the number of people employed offshore to extract phosphate, but the thousands of Namibians who could eventually find work in fertiliser plants, chemical manufacturing, logistics, engineering, maintenance, agriculture, and battery-material production.

"The real point is what's behind Sandpiper," Woodborne said. "This is not simply about building a mine. It is about creating an entirely new industry that can support Namibia's economy for generations."

Rössing's Coetzee urges faster regulatory decisions

Rössing Uranium is positioning itself to become one of the world's longest-operating uranium mines, with plans to develop a new open-pit mine that could extend production by another 20 years, but managing director Johan Coetzee has warned that slow regulatory decisions risk making major mining investments too expensive to proceed with.

Coetzee said Rössing's proposed expansion could increase the mine's operating life from its current outlook to almost 80 years, provided the project secures board approval and the necessary government approvals are issued within commercially viable timeframes.

"We are going into our 51st year of production now," Coetzee said.

"If the board approves our project next year, we will start up another open pit, add another 20 years to the life of Rössing and take us to 80 years."

According to Coetzee, that longevity has depended not only on the size of the uranium resource but on a willingness to reinvest continuously in infrastructure, technology and

people rather than allowing the operation to age without renewal.

Coetzee said Rössing currently spends about N\$300 million every year on sustaining capital simply to keep the existing operation running safely and efficiently.

Unlike a new mine, where modern equipment can be incorporated from the outset, Rössing must continuously replace ageing crushers, pumps, conveyors, electrical systems and processing infrastructure while production continues.

"We spend about N\$300 million every year just on sustaining capital," he said, describing the investment as essential to maintaining a mine that has now operated for half a century.

He said the proposed new pit would create an opportunity to introduce modern mining technology from the outset, rather than attempting to retrofit advanced systems into infrastructure designed in the 1970s.

"It is very difficult to build new technology into an old operation," Coetzee said.

"It is easier when you go into new expansions to bring in the



technology and the efficiencies."

Coetzee said the next phase of uranium mining would require a different generation of skills.

Automation, digital mining systems, advanced process control and modern engineering techniques are becoming increasingly important across the industry, requiring companies to develop highly skilled technical workforces capable of operating more sophisticated mining technologies.

"There are new mines starting up, there are all of us expanding, and it is really up to the youngsters now to go out and grab those opportunities," he said.

"We need youngsters to look

at the next 20 years and get us to 100 years."

Coetzee said Rössing was already investing in that future through education and skills development.

He referred to Namibian students studying nuclear-related disciplines in China as part of broader efforts to build technical capacity for Namibia's future energy and uranium sectors, arguing that mining companies must help prepare the workforce required not only for today's mines but for industries that may emerge in the decades ahead.

Coetzee warned that the project's economics could quickly deteriorate if regulatory processes are prolonged.

He stressed that mining companies require regulatory certainty as much as they require mineral resources.

Major mining projects involve years of geological work, engineering, environmental studies, procurement planning and financing before construction begins. During that period, inflation, contractor rates, equipment prices, and financing costs continue to rise.

If approvals are unnecessarily delayed, escalating costs can fundamentally change a

project's economics.

"The regulators are extremely important because, as we have also heard, the cost of developing a mine is high," Coetzee said.

"If you don't take your decisions quickly and get the regulatory equilibrium right, that cost just expands drastically and you might end up not doing the investment."

For mature operations such as Rössing, extending mine life requires substantial investment not only in new mining areas but also in processing plants, tailings infrastructure, electricity supply, water systems and supporting facilities. Delays in regulatory approvals therefore affect much more than construction schedules; they can alter the commercial viability of entire projects.

Coetzee said resilience had been the defining characteristic of Rössing's first five decades.

The mine had survived commodity-price downturns, restructuring exercises and changing market conditions because shareholders continued to support long-term investment while employees adapted to evolving operational requirements.

He said that resilience extends

beyond the mine itself.

Rössing continues to invest through the Rössing Foundation, which is approaching its own 50-year milestone and expanding digital learning programmes, modernising educational facilities, and strengthening partnerships with government, communities, and other private-sector organisations. Rather than delivering development projects alone, the company is increasingly collaborating with partners to maximise long-term social impact.

Coetzee added that Rössing also sees opportunities to support Namibia's small-scale mining sector through improved training, safer mining practices, stronger marketing structures and greater integration into the formal mining economy, arguing that collaboration across the industry will become increasingly important as Namibia's mining sector expands.

"If we get it right," Coetzee suggested, "Rössing will not simply celebrate 80 years of mining. It will help lay the foundation for Namibia's next generation of mining professionals and uranium development."

Namibia's next mines depend on today's exploration

Namibia's mining industry cannot rely on today's producing mines to sustain future economic growth because every mine eventually reaches the end of its life, making continued exploration the country's single most important investment if it wants to maintain jobs, exports and government revenue over the coming decades, Chamber of Mines chief executive officer Gabi Schneider has warned.

Schneider said exploration remains the foundation of the mining industry despite being the least visible and least understood stage of the mining value chain.

She said every mine currently operating in Namibia—from uranium and diamonds to gold and base metals—exists because companies invested in geological exploration years or even decades before a single tonne of ore was produced.

"If we don't continue exploring today, we won't have mines tomorrow," Schneider said, arguing that Namibia's mining future will depend on decisions being made long before the next generation of mines enters production.

According to Schneider, exploration represents the greatest financial risk undertaken in the mining industry.

Unlike producing mines that generate income from mineral sales, exploration companies spend millions of dollars drilling targets, conducting geological surveys, analysing samples and collecting scientific data without any guarantee of making a commercial discovery.

Most exploration programmes never develop into mines, yet every successful mine begins in the same way—with a company willing to invest in uncertainty.

She said that reality is often overlooked because public attention naturally focuses on operating mines, exports and royalties rather than on the years of work required before a viable mineral deposit is confirmed.

"It is a very long journey," Schneider said, explaining that exploration is not a short-term activity but the starting point of a development process that can take between 10 and 20 years before commercial production begins.

Schneider said junior exploration companies play a particularly important role because they assume much of the industry's early-stage risk.

Those companies often spend years raising exploration finance before carrying out mapping, geophysical surveys, drilling programmes and resource definition work, despite knowing



that most projects will never become producing mines.

Without those high-risk investments, however, there would be no discoveries capable of replacing mines that eventually become depleted.

She said Namibia's mining success today is the direct result of exploration decisions made many years ago.

The country's expanding uranium industry, growing gold production and increasing interest in critical minerals did not emerge overnight.

Instead, they are the product of decades of geological work, investor confidence, supportive mining legislation and companies prepared to continue spending on exploration even during difficult commodity cycles.

"The mines we are celebrating today were discoveries

made years ago," Schneider said, noting that the same commitment will be required if Namibia wants to sustain mining beyond the current generation of projects.

She said maintaining Namibia's attractiveness as an exploration destination should therefore become a national priority.

Exploration investment is highly competitive, with companies comparing geological potential, political stability, security of tenure and regulatory systems across numerous jurisdictions before deciding where to allocate scarce capital.

Namibia has earned an international reputation for predictable mining legislation, secure mineral rights and a stable operating environment, advantages Schneider said should be protected if the country wants to continue attracting exploration investment.

She warned that exploration capital is mobile and that investors will redirect funding to jurisdictions where approvals are predictable, regulatory frameworks are transparent and long-term investment is supported.

According to Schneider, protecting investor confidence is just as important as discovering new mineral deposits because without investment there can be no exploration, and without exploration there can be no future mines.

Schneider also challenged the perception that exploration contributes little to the economy until a mine is developed.

She said exploration already creates employment and business opportunities long before construction begins.

Geologists, drilling contractors, environmental consultants, laboratory technicians, surveyors, aviation companies, transport operators, accommodation providers, engineering firms and numerous local suppliers all benefit from exploration expenditure.

Many of those activities occur in remote parts of Namibia where exploration companies often provide one of the first significant sources of economic activity.

She said exploration spending therefore supports local economies years before mining starts and frequently introduces infrastructure, services and commercial opportunities into areas that later become mining centres.

Beyond employment, Schneider said exploration leaves behind a permanent scientific legacy.

Geological mapping, drilling records, geophysical surveys, geochemical analysis and laboratory results become part of Namibia's expanding geological knowledge base, allowing future explorers to build on previous work rather than beginning from scratch.

Even unsuccessful exploration programmes contribute valuable information by improving understanding of mineral systems and helping direct future exploration towards more prospective areas.

Schneider linked those observations directly to the

conference theme, From Investment to Impact, arguing that the economic benefits generated by mining today result from exploration investments made years earlier.

The taxes, exports, employment and procurement associated with Namibia's current mining industry all began with exploration companies willing to accept uncertainty in pursuit of future discoveries.

She said the same principle would determine whether Namibia remains a leading mining jurisdiction over the next half century.

If exploration investment slows today, the consequences may not become apparent immediately.

Instead, they will emerge gradually over the next decade and beyond as existing mines reach the end of their economic lives without sufficient replacement projects entering production.

Schneider called for continued collaboration between government, regulators, investors, research institutions and the private sector to ensure Namibia maintains an environment that encourages long-term exploration investment.

She said exploration should not be viewed simply as the first stage of mining but as a strategic national investment that underpins the country's future economic development.

"The future of Namibia's mining industry," she concluded, "depends on the exploration decisions we make today."

Grow skills instead of poaching workers, Galloway says

Namibia's mining industry must urgently shift from competing for the same limited pool of skilled professionals to jointly developing a much larger workforce if it wants to sustain the country's next wave of mining investment, Steve Galloway, a mining executive, has warned.

Galloway said the country's mining industry is entering one of the busiest periods in its history, with expanding uranium production, new gold and copper developments, growing interest in critical minerals, and the emergence of the oil and gas sector, all of which are increasing demand for skilled professionals.

He said the challenge facing the industry is no longer simply attracting investment or discovering mineral deposits, but ensuring Namibia has enough qualified people to convert those investments into operating mines.

According to Galloway, the country's mining boom is fundamentally changing the labour market.

New projects require engineers, geologists, metallurgists, mine planners, environmental specialists, surveyors, artisans, heavy equipment operators, and technicians, while existing operations are expanding and replacing experienced

employees approaching retirement.

Simply recruiting staff from another mining company may solve one employer's immediate problem, he said, but it leaves the industry with the same number of skilled professionals.

"The pool doesn't become bigger," he said, arguing that companies are merely moving scarce expertise from one operation to another rather than creating new capacity for the sector.

He warned that this approach is not sustainable if Namibia wants to realise the full value of the billions of dollars currently being invested in new mining developments.

Without a larger workforce, companies will increasingly compete for the same employees, driving up costs while doing little to address the underlying skills shortage.

He said mining companies routinely invest billions of dollars in processing plants, mining fleets, exploration programmes and technology, yet often regard skills development as an individual company responsibility rather than a strategic industry-wide priority.

That mindset, he argued, must change.

"The investment in people is every bit as important as the investment in equipment," he said, urging the industry to treat



workforce development as one of the foundations of long-term competitiveness.

Rather than competing against one another, Galloway called on mining companies to work collectively with government, universities, vocational training institutions and professional bodies to build a sustainable pipeline of mining professionals.

He said collaboration should extend beyond general discussions and translate into practical initiatives, including stronger apprenticeship programmes, graduate development schemes, technical training, mentoring and closer alignment between educational institutions and the skills required by modern mining operations.

No single company, he argued, can produce the workforce the industry will need over the next two decades.

That responsibility must be shared across the sector.

Galloway stressed that the education pipeline begins long before graduates enter the workplace.

Schools, vocational education institutions, universities and industry all have roles to play in encouraging more young Namibians to pursue careers in mining and related technical professions.

By engaging learners earlier and creating clearer pathways into mining, the industry would gradually expand the pool of qualified professionals available for future projects, rather than repeatedly recruiting from existing operations.

Modern mines increasingly depend on digital technologies, automation, remote operating centres, sophisticated maintenance systems and advanced environmental management.

As a result, tomorrow's mining industry will require professionals with expertise in information technology, data analytics, automation, instrumentation, environmental science, and digital engineering, as well as traditional mining disciplines such as geology, metallurgy, and mining engineering.

He warned that another challenge facing the sector is the gradual retirement of many of the experienced professionals who helped build Namibia's mining industry over the past four decades.

Those employees possess valuable operational knowledge that cannot easily be replaced through recruitment alone.

Companies should therefore place greater emphasis on structured mentoring, succession planning and knowledge transfer to ensure younger professionals acquire both the technical skills and practical experience needed to assume future leadership positions.

According to Galloway, Namibia's mining industry has already demonstrated that collaboration can deliver significant benefits.

Companies routinely work together on issues such as safety, environmental management and engagement with government through the Chamber of Mines.

He said that same spirit of cooperation should now be directed towards developing the industry's future workforce.

Joint training initiatives, shared learning opportunities, and stronger partnerships with educational institutions would strengthen the competitiveness of the sector as a whole, reduce duplication of effort, and ensure that scarce training resources are used more effectively.

Galloway linked his remarks directly to the conference theme, Lessons from the Past to Build the Next 50 Years, arguing that previous generations built Namibia's mining industry by investing not only in mineral resources but also in people.

The next generation of mining growth, he said, will require an even greater commitment to developing human capital as technology continues transforming the way mines are designed, operated and maintained.

He cautioned that investment decisions are increasingly influenced by whether jurisdictions can supply the skilled workforce needed to build and operate large mining projects.

Countries with abundant mineral resources but insufficient technical capacity risk losing opportunities as investors weigh execution risks alongside geology and economics.

Galloway said workforce development must become a national priority, supported by government, educational institutions, and industry alike.

He concluded that the country's next chapter in mining will be determined not solely by the quality of its mineral deposits but by the quality of the people available to develop them.

He urged the industry to stop measuring success by how many experienced employees it recruits from competitors and instead by how many new professionals it helps bring into the sector.

"The future of mining in Namibia," Galloway said, "depends on growing the talent pool, not simply moving it around."

Mining scholarships helped build technical leadership

Namibia's mining industry helped build the country's first generation of black engineers, metallurgists and mining professionals through deliberate investment in education and workplace training long before Independence, former senior mining executive Frans Ndoroma has said.

Speaking during the closing panel discussion, Lessons from the Past to Build the Next 50 Years, at the Chamber of Mines Mining Expo and Conference, Ndoroma reflected on nearly five decades of transformation in the mining sector, arguing that one of its most enduring legacies has been the development of local technical skills that later benefited both the industry and the Namibian state.

"It is gratifying to observe the composition of an audience like this," he said, noting that the diversity of professionals attending the conference today would have been unimaginable when he entered the mining industry around 1977 and 1978.

He said the mining industry that young Namibians see today bears little resemblance to the one that existed before Independence.

At the time, Namibia was still under South African

administration and apartheid policies had left very few black Namibians with opportunities to pursue engineering, metallurgy and other mining-related technical careers.

As Independence approached, Consolidated Diamond Mines (CDM), now part of Namdeb Diamond Corporation, began dismantling apartheid structures within its operations at Oranjemund.

According to Ndoroma, the company integrated its township, schools, workplaces, hospital and dining facilities before Independence, replacing racial segregation with a fully integrated operation.

Yet, despite those reforms, one major obstacle remained.

"The local skills were non-existent, especially in the mining-related jobs," Ndoroma said.

"There was nothing to integrate in that arena."

He said the absence of qualified black professionals forced the company to think beyond workplace integration and invest directly in education.

Around 1977, CDM introduced what Ndoroma believes was one of Namibia's earliest bursary schemes for black Namibians in mining-related technical disciplines.



Ndoroma recalled that he and another young Namibian were in Oranjemund after being forced to leave South African universities following the 1976 Soweto uprising against apartheid education.

One of the first bursary recipients received financial support to study electrical engineering at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa, although apartheid laws required him to obtain special permission from South Africa's Minister of Education before he could enrol.

Ndoroma himself received a bursary to study mineral engineering and metallurgy at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom, and another student later received support to pursue mechanical engineering there as well.

For Ndoroma, however, the bursaries represented only the beginning.

After graduating, the students returned to CDM, where they underwent just under two years of structured practical training before becoming permanent employees.

The graduate programme exposed them to every aspect of mining operations and management, enabling them to translate academic qualifications into practical engineering and leadership experience.

He said the success of those early initiatives encouraged the company to expand its investment in education, with many more black Namibians later receiving bursaries in engineering and other mining disciplines.

The benefits extended far beyond one mining company.

Many of the professionals trained through those early programmes went on to occupy senior positions across Namibia's mining industry, while others joined government and public institutions after Independence.

"Government has benefited and continues to benefit substantially from the pool of trained professionals from the mining industry in general,"

Ndoroma said.

He said the experience demonstrated that investment in people could produce benefits lasting decades beyond the careers of the original bursary recipients.

One consequence of the programme's success, however, was that many newly established mining companies chose to recruit professionals trained by CDM rather than immediately investing in comparable development programmes themselves.

"Many mines in Namibia, especially start-ups, benefited from the Namdeb scheme through, unfortunately, poaching rather than training their own professionals," Ndoroma said.

He noted that many companies later established their own sponsorship programmes, a development he welcomed because it broadened opportunities for young Namibians entering the industry.

Looking to the future, Ndoroma said the mining industry must not lose sight of the lesson taught by its own history.

The technologies now transforming mining require an even greater commitment to education and professional development than was necessary when his generation

entered the industry.

"I therefore wish the development of local skills to continue and to be accelerated by all the mines," he said.

"For Namibia to be competitive and self-sufficient, it is critical in this era of fast-changing technology to keep up and not to be left behind, lest we become dinosaurs."

Ndoroma said the audience gathered at this year's Mining Expo and Conference reflected how far Namibia had come since those early years.

The engineers, metallurgists, mine managers, executives and technical specialists now leading the industry were not produced overnight.

They were the result of deliberate decisions taken decades ago to invest in education when opportunities for black Namibians were severely limited.

Ndoroma said the greatest lesson from the past is that mines should continue to build people with the same determination with which they build operations, ensuring that future generations inherit not only productive mines but also the technical skills needed to lead them.



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- Notebooks
- Water bottles
- Key holders
- USBs
- Corporate gift packs



CORPORATE WEAR

Professional branded apparel that promotes brand identity, consistency, and team unity.

- Shirts
- Caps
- Jackets
- Overalls
- Branded uniforms



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