

Manantashe: "We need to change our narrative as an industry"

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

8 Oct 2018

The South African mining industry needs to stop badmouthing itself, so it can change how it is perceived locally and internationally.



Mining Minister Gwede Mantashe

In his keynote address at the Joburg Indaba, Mining Minister Gwede Mantashe said the sector destroys value in how it talks about and projects itself. "For example, retrenchments will get coverage, but no-one will talk about a new colliery opening. As a result, everyone thinks the mining industry is heartless and destroys jobs.

"We can change our narrative as an industry, our rating overseas will change. What the industry says will change the picture. The industry needs to talk more positively about itself and highlight its victories because this industry is doing more positive than negative, but the public view it as negative. When we talk badly about ourselves, it is essentially killing the industry."

There are four elements can make the industry a better one, he said. "Growth, investment, the potential to create employment, and giving young people opportunities will make us a better industry."

Mining Charter

The mining sector is an economic one, not a sector of charters, and it must contribute to the GDP of the country. "The charter allows us to get into the business of mining."

However, to be sustainable the mining industry must see transformation as a business imperative that reflects the demographics of the country.

It is in this light that the new charter makes provision for mining communities, he said. "Mining companies must coexist with communities and if you do not accept that then you are going to see tyres burnt in front of mines."

But, he is very hopeful. "Unlike my colleagues in cabinet who believe it is a myth that this industry is a sunrise industry, I believe it is not a question of believing but of understanding. After 130 years, gold mining is in trouble. Coal has a bigger revenue. Why, do we say, when there is a problem in one part of the industry, that the entire industry is dying? The industry is not dying, it is growing."

Technology

"When we disrupt mining, we disrupt value and profits. This industry is dangerous and dirty, but it can make a big contribution to this country because this industry is about development."

"Mining and minerals make it possible for you to move into the 4th and 5th revolution because it is minerals that enable technology."

He urged mining companies to be proud of their contribution and ensure that the various sectors in the mining industry are recognised. Not only the traditional minerals, but to pay attention to the minerals of the future. "It is our responsibility as a country to ensure there is demand. I love the industry. I think it can still grow. It is not a sunset industry. It can be a great industry again."

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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