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Impactful mining

I currently work as a principal transactor in the Mining and Resources team at Nedbank Corporate and Investment Banking (CIB), but I started my career as a chemical engineer in Unilever's graduate programme. While working as an engineer, my interest in the application of mathematics in financial markets was piqued and I began studying Mathematical Modelling of Derivatives at Unisa. After my career had transitioned to investment banking, I obtained my Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) qualification and worked in various roles relating to risk before joining Nedbank's Mining and Resources team in 2007.

The mining industry is often subject to criticism and negative perceptions. In my experience, when done in a responsible and sustainable way, mining has a positive impact on both the environment and society.

Mining is an absolute necessity. We mine the sand required to make concrete to build, and the raw materials for fertilisers that ensure our food security. As the global community focuses on renewable energy sources and decarbonisation, the importance of minerals, and the mining of them, has become increasingly clear.

While mining investors have rightfully turned their focus to commodities that have a tangible

utility value or are required for the energy transition, it is important not to forget the social component of environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG). Mining is not only essential in addressing environmental change, but also has an enormous impact on communities within the ecosystem of a mine. This factor should not be underestimated, particularly in countries with economies that are still highly mining dependent.

I have led many interesting mining transactions in South Africa and other African countries, such as Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Namibia and Lesotho. I remember sitting at a mine site and thinking that it is incredible what the development of a mine entails. The development and operation of a successful mine requires skills and resilience from everyone involved. The deep knowledge of processes and engineering that it demands makes the industry a rich source of innovation and ingenuity. Responsible miners have been at the forefront of environmental research and land rehabilitation for many years, and these skills are essential for successful mining and the innovation required to lead the world in its decarbonisation and sustainable development initiatives.

During a site visit to a successful underground mining contractor, I experienced their simulated training, which teaches mine workers to drive and navigate large underground mining trucks. It was fascinating to get a sense of what is required from miners underground, and inspiring to hear that women miners are also being trained in this work. This is but a single

piece in the mining mosaic that illustrates the standards of excellence in the industry and its ability to upskill people of all genders in these interconnected societies.

In conclusion, we should focus not only on growing commodities, which are the perceived winners in the green transition, but also remember that mining companies make a far larger contribution to society as a whole, most obviously through their contribution to a country's fiscus via taxes and royalties, but also to communities through direct and indirect employment. There are, however, many other less obvious contributions – responsible mining companies provide community upliftment through education, healthcare, and agriculture and environmental projects, to name a few.

I am fortunate to have had various mentors throughout my career, who provided guidance along the way. One key lesson that a wise woman taught me is not to take yourself too seriously, but rather focus on the message that you want to get across. I am privileged to have experienced, first-hand, the positive difference that a good mining company can make to society when it uses its abilities positively and respects its communities and environment.

I am thankful for a position in which I can use my expertise to support the industry and companies that mine in a respectful and sustainable way. It is important not to lose sight of all the things that really matter in the rush to transition to the world's future, and to use mining to do good. 