

Minister extends Mining Charter deadline

Mineral Resources Minister, Gwede Mantashe, has extended the deadline for public comment on the proposed Mining Charter to the end of August, while promising the new legislation will be finalised towards the end of the year.



Mineral Resources Minister, Gwede Mantashe. Photo: sanews.gov.za

“Our view is that by October, November we must have a Charter in place,” said Mantashe, addressing a media briefing at the end of a two-day Summit on the Mining Charter. At the publishing of the charter in June, the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) said the public has until 27 July 2018 to submit their comments on the draft before it is finalised and gazetted, but the minister said is extended by a month.

In the meantime, the draft will be taken to the Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for a socio economic impact assessment. “That is not going to wait until we complete the process of consultation, so it can go ahead and we will start that. We will also take it to cabinet as it’s the final arbiter,” said Mantashe, adding that the DMR is also going to look into areas of how to align the charter to the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) Codes.

The minister, who took over the portfolio following a February cabinet reshuffle, said that he was satisfied with the progress made around the charter so far.

“It’s not a total shifting of the goal posts, it’s a question of appreciating that we have done what should have been done and now we must go through the more involved government processes including approval of the charter by cabinet before gazetting it,” he said in response to a question.

Investor sentiment

Speaking on investor sentiment regarding the country’s mining industry, Mantashe said South Africans have a negative attitude towards themselves.

“The most costly thing is our ability to talk ourselves down, that scares investors away. We must begin to talk positively about ourselves, if we don’t do that, we are not going to grow,” he said.

He added that it was time that mining companies started putting impetus on the relationship they have with communities in which they mine.

“Running mining companies in South Africa in a modern way where you invest in relationship with communities you’re mining in can’t scare investors away. Mining companies must begin to appreciate that developing a concrete relationship with employees is not a cost it’s an investment,” he said.

In his comments, the minister alluded to the lengthy strike experienced by platinum producer Lonmin, back in 2014.

“If they had a good relationship with employees they wouldn’t have had a five month strike.”

Building trust

Mantashe said the mining sector was starting to build trust among each other, saying that the two-day summit placed stakeholders under one roof.

“We are beginning to build trust with one another. Trust is a process issue, it will have to be built on an ongoing basis. The trust levels are better today than three months ago,” he said.

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