

JUNE 2021

# WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY



## DRDGOLD CONNECTS WITH THE 2021 WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY THEME OF **REIMAGINE, RECREATE, RESTORE**

For DRDGOLD, **World Environment Day 2021** is an opportunity to reflect on what is being regained in our natural world, and to contemplate the essence of our company and its role in the mining sector. The World Environment Day 2021 theme of Reimagine Recreate Restore resonates so closely with our purpose that we are compelled to reflect on what we do and how we contribute to each of these ideals.



## RESTORE

In our context, restoration is to evaluate that which has been lost or damaged in the pursuit of wealth and progress, and formulate plans to regain or repair it to the point where it once again offers a healthy environment in which humans and nature can flourish.

The discovery of gold in Johannesburg's Witwatersrand swiftly changed the landscape while drawing an unprecedented influx of people looking to find their fortune amidst the growing mining activities. Today, as a result of apartheid-era forced removals and continuing ill-managed housing development, hundreds of thousands of people live in both formal and informal settlements close to mine dumps, which can present a source of fine dust, blight the landscape and create stark, un-policed environments where criminal activity—not only illegal mining—can be carried out.

A significant part of our business involves permanently removing these mine dumps and cleaning and restoring the land they occupied to a space that can be redeveloped for sustainable purposes. To date, our rehabilitation efforts have liberated hundreds of hectares of land, much of which has or is being redeveloped. In addition, we have vegetated hundreds of hectares of tailings storage dam surfaces to reduce dust, encouraging the growth of indigenous plant life and the ecosystems they support.

Beyond the environmental revival this involves, is the restoration of quality of life and, with that, human dignity, to the communities surrounding our operations. In this quest, we have in place our Broad-Based Livelihoods (BBL) Programme.

This began some years ago with the provision to local communities, via an initiative called My Food, of training, support, mentoring and initial infrastructure to set up agriculture initiatives that helps them to ensure themselves of a sustainable source of food.

Then, by subsequently introducing business and entrepreneurial skills training through two supporting initiatives called My Business and My Future, participants are encouraged to produce surplus food and to market this within their own communities, thus earning an income. A driving principle is that "value created in communities, stays in communities" and doesn't "bleed" into more distant parts of the formal economy.

Almost 4 000 households have been "touched" by the BBL Programme to date. Sustainability is an ongoing theme which has resulted in a number of practical solutions such as a basic drip bucket system for the safe re-use of grey water. Another is independence, where any committed grower earns the tools to prosper independently of the company, government or financiers.



Image 1



Image 2

**Image 1 and 2:** Extensive vegetation by DRDGOLD of its tailings deposition sites is transforming the central Witwatersrand, from east to west.

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## RECREATE

Recreation is at the heart of our business proposition, where we remine the waste produced by the mining sector. In this way, we ensure that a percentage of the waste produced is not waste at all and is recreated as economic benefit.

This process, however, does not make us exempt from a reliance on water and energy. Each year, we improve how we consume these resources. With regard to water, we use as much 'grey' and treated acid mine drainage water for our business as possible, keeping this circulating in a 'closed system' through a central water plant and minimising our use of more costly, scarcer potable water.

Regarding energy, we work as closely and intelligently with the national power utility as possible, meanwhile laying plans to put renewable sources in place.



## REIMAGINE

Mining has traditionally been heavily reliant on scarce resources. It has also introduced hazardous reagents into previously healthy ecosystems. All of this has taken a toll on the natural environment.

By pursuing our core business responsibly, we are – as a consequence – helping to reverse mining's environmental legacy. Simply stated, we create added value, not by "digging new holes" but rather, by "cleaning up". Our investment in technology and specialised skills development aims to help monitor and manage our operations so that the waste created historically by the mining sector releases more value.

We take a cutting-edge approach to the responsible management of the tailings storage facilities (TSFs) that ultimately receive the waste that we generate. Each of our TSFs is monitored by an Internal Tailings Performance Management System for dedicated data collection, storage and processing so we can be certain of the integrity of the data and thus the functioning of the TSFs every day. Not only do we use satellite data to monitor our TSF's but we regularly deploy drones to survey TSF sites employing technology that assists in early detection of anything that could impact the condition of the dam and its influence on the surrounding environment.

Our impact, both environmentally and socially, is a constant focus. As an industry, we should do everything in our power to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems in the areas where we have influence.



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5

**Image 3:** DRD GOLD has implemented Umsizi-STI's Broad-Based Livelihoods (BBL) programme in its host communities, empowering people to rehabilitate and restore their household yards and open spaces to become productive units of self-sustaining livelihood activities.

**Image 4:** Practically, people are taught to collect, recycle and reuse available organic materials found in the communities, into their food trenches. They are then able to reimagine their own future through their own household enterprises and livelihood diversification. The broad-based application of this productive effort to masses of households and communities, results in social restoration and bottom-up economic growth.

**Image 5:** Reusing and repurposing readily available materials and land. Restoring dignity and productivity. Reimagining the rebuilding of the economy from the household level up.