

## Mining as a Catalyst for Sustainable Development

### **Bradshaw, Dee**

Professor, University of Cape Town, South Africa, [dee.bradshaw@uct.ac.za](mailto:dee.bradshaw@uct.ac.za)

Minerals and metals fundamentally underpin the functioning of every aspect of modern society. From electricity generation to the provision of the tools of connectivity; from the agricultural and manufacturing industry to the health industry and toothpaste ingredients. The dependency increases as the world embarks on the fourth industrial revolution and the need for a circular economy is recognised. However, society's negative perception of mining activities is also increasing with its contribution to increased inequalities, community confrontation and conflict as well as environmental degradation receiving widespread attention.

Thus, in spite of its relatively small size as an industry, the mining and extractives sector has the extraordinary potential to support the achievement of or impede or compromise the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Since mining is a global industry and is often located in remote, ecologically sensitive and less-developed areas, it has the unique potential to catalyse the sustainable development of the region by delivering on Goal 9: 'Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation'

This goal addresses the role of investments in infrastructure, transport, irrigation, energy and information and communication technology, which are crucial to achieving sustainable development and empowering communities in many countries. It has long been recognized that growth in productivity and incomes, and improvements in health and education outcomes require investment in infrastructure.

If carefully managed, inclusive and sustainable industrial development can provide the suitable environment to promote income generation activities and allow for the development of sustained livelihoods and stable communities.