

Chair's Report of the Inaugural Meeting of the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development

Palais des Nations, Room XVIII
Geneva, Switzerland

November 7-9, 2005

Co-hosted by UNCTAD and co-chaired by the Governments of South Africa (Elize Swart) and Canada (Gary Nash), this inaugural Meeting was opened with welcoming remarks by Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Director, Division of International Trade in Goods and Services for UNCTAD. In her remarks, she relayed a message from the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan. In his message to the meeting, he stated, "The establishment of the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development is a significant step towards maximizing the contribution of the mineral sector to sustainable development ».(see attachment for full message)

The co-chairs thanked UNCTAD, co-host of the meeting, as well as other donors including UNDESA, the World Bank, the United Kingdom/Department for International Development as well as the Government of Canada for their support.

Keynote presentations followed by the Director General of IUCN, Mr. Achim Steiner, Mr. Igor Gavrilov from Zarubejgeologia, Russian Federation and Mr. John Strongman from the World Bank.

A number of member countries then presented a national statement highlighting their expectations for the Forum.

The Rules of Procedures of the Forum were adopted with a minor modification.

Members then proceeded to elect the Executive Committee. Gary Nash of Natural Resources Canada, was elected Forum Chair. The elected vice-chairpersons were Alemayehu Tegenu, Minister of Mines and Energy of Ethiopia (African region), Glenn Gemerts of the Ministry of Natural Resources of Suriname (South American region), Michael Cabalda of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the Philippines (Asian region) and Nikolay Miletenko of the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation (European region).

The Chair then informed that Canada would continue to provide the Secretariat but decided to do so through a not-for-profit organization in order to enhance its ability to better serve the members. There were no objections.

On day two, all delegates participated in breakout group discussions on three priority topics. The topics were:

1. The national mining policy framework: priorities, data collection and management.
2. The public and private sector policies that can best assure equitable local, regional and national distribution of economic and social benefits.
3. Financial Surety and environmental protection: mine rehabilitation and closure.

On day three, the Chairs of the breakout groups presented the outcomes of the discussions, including the recommendations for action. (See attachment). Members then agreed on a Press Release to highlight the outcomes of the three-day Forum meeting. (See attachment).

It was also agreed that the Chair would send a report to the UNCSD highlighting the preparations of the Forum for the 2010-2011 CSD session to review progress on paragraph 46 on mining/metals of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

Following an overview of market issues done by Canada, a decision was made to form a market outlook committee to monitor developments on issues that may affect the markets for minerals and metals. The Chair invited members to select at least one person from each region of the world to be member of that committee. Initial nominations include Senegal and Chile, once the latter becomes a member of the Forum.

UNCTAD, UNDESA, the World Bank, other international organizations and ICMM indicated their interest to contribute to the follow-up activities of the Forum.

It was finally agreed that the Chair would prepare a Chair's report of the meeting to be sent to members for their review and approval. UNCTAD's Olle Ostensson closed the meeting by congratulating members for the work done in the course of the meeting and wished the Intergovernmental Forum much success.

The Meeting was attended by officials representing member countries, observers from other countries, including Chile and Thailand, International Organizations (UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNIDO, UNEP, the World Bank and ILO) and the European Commission.

Following the meeting, the Chair met with representatives of international organizations. They agreed to send to the Forum Secretariat information on their programmes and key activities that relate to the mining, minerals and metals sector.