

**Global Dialogue of Governments on Mining/Metals and Sustainable
Development
Preparatory Meeting
1-3 October 2003
Palais des Nations, Geneva**

Chairmen's Summary

The governments of Canada and South Africa, together with the assistance of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) convened the first preparatory meeting of the Global Dialogue of Governments on Mining/Metals and Sustainable Development 1-3 October 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland. Some 65 delegates representing 36 countries together with observers from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Bank met to discuss the key elements towards launching an Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development as a Type 2 Partnership initiative in the context of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The meeting was Co-Chaired by Richard Ballhorn of Canada and Nchakha Moloi of South Africa.

In a welcoming address to delegates, UNDESA outlined the key role and history of supporting natural resources development and mining in particular as part of a mandate given to UNDESA and its predecessor organisations. Mining issues will receive priority as part of the work programme as set out for the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development in 2010/2011. The formation of an intergovernmental forum as proposed through the Global Dialogue, represents an ideal opportunity for governments to prepare their input into this work programme over the next 5 years.

The Co-Chairs identified the need for the group to work towards a light structure that could provide governments with an opportunity to work collectively on issues of primary importance, keeping in mind the objectives of the Plan of Implementation as they relate to mining, minerals, metals and sustainable development. The Chairs recognised that the inclusion of a positive statement about mining in the Johannesburg Declaration was a significant achievement. Governments with an interest in this sector now have an opportunity to further advance issues related to this sector in a positive and constructive manner.

Delegates welcomed the initiative as proposed by Canada and South Africa and recognised the need for countries to work together in co-operation to address some of the key challenges facing the long-term sustainable development of the mining, minerals and metals sector. In particular, delegates identified the need to share information, exchange views, share best practice, address the needs of developing countries and work in a collaborative way towards enhancing the capacity of government ministries, departments or agencies with a responsibility for mining, minerals and metals issues in the context of

sustainable development. Many delegates identified issues of particular importance to their countries, including the need for information and the desire to develop governance structures that can encourage exploration and development of the sector. They also spoke of the need to address legacy issues and of the need to develop policies such that these legacy issues are not repeated. Many raised the need for transparency and mechanisms for meaningful community consultation, and how to address the variety of social and environmental concerns, while at the same time, encourage the economic benefits that mining and mineral development can bring to domestic economies. Many delegates identified the need to address small-scale and artisanal mining issues and all of its implications.

Observers from UNCTAD and the ILO highlighted their active role in mining, mineral and metal related issues, outlined their broad mandate under which such initiatives can be undertaken and welcomed the opportunity to be included in the discussions. It was recognised that the proposed Global Forum could fill a need for governments to take a co-ordinated approach to the wide-range of issues facing the sector.

The World Bank made a comprehensive presentation of its activities in this sector to the delegates and highlighted several issues, including the observation that the mining, minerals and metals sector evolves in a dynamic environment of change; that expectations on the part of civil society are increasing, that industry is starting to respond and that there is a need for a government forum to address sustainable mining issues so that good practice that leads to sustainable mining development can be identified and shared. The presentation also highlighted some key opportunities for consideration by governments.

Delegates agreed to a set of draft terms of reference and draft rules of procedure for an Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development. The objective of this Forum will be to promote the enhancement of the contribution of mining, minerals and metals to sustainable development and will comprise representatives from national governments with responsibility for the mining, minerals and metals sector.

By way of example of the type of projects that can be undertaken successfully in partnership between government, industry and local communities, a representative from Placer Dome was invited to give a presentation on a project sponsored by mining companies in South Africa to address HIV/AIDS at the company, family and community level.

Discussions on a preliminary work plan led to the identification of at least six areas for consideration and further development by delegates. Countries recognised the need to focus the work on tangible projects that are global in scope, that will have the potential to attract interest and support from donor organisations, that will demonstrate results in the short to medium and long-term, and do not duplicate work already being done.

Six key themes were identified that could form the basis for a future work programme for the Forum:

- 1) Small-scale and artisanal mining – including informal sector issues.
- 2) Legacy issues – including orphaned and abandoned mines/mine site rehabilitation and monitoring.
- 3) Governance issues/Mining regimes/Investment climate - including sound legal framework for mining and mine development.
- 4) Indigenous peoples and community issues.
- 5) Planning for sustainability – including post closure plans, value added, product stewardship, and recycling.
- 6) Climate change and mining.

A small working group of countries will be tasked with elaborating more fully the specific issues and potential project items that can be identified under each of these 6 main themes.

Information related to the outcomes of the meeting will be posted to the website at www.globaldialogue.info. Delegates were also encouraged send any comments to the central e-mail address at info-globaldialogue@nrcan.gc.ca.

Delegates agreed to meet again in Cape Town, South Africa 5-7 February 2004.

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