



The Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development

PRESS COMMUNIQUÉ

Intergovernmental Forum on Mining advances the preparations to report to UN Commission on Sustainable Development in 2010

Geneva, October 29, 2009.

About sixty participants representing thirty countries participated in the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF) held October 26-29 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

The Forum, hosted by UNCTAD, is an outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg in 2002.

The IGF is the only global intergovernmental policy forum in the mining/metals sector. It is a voluntary initiative officially established in 2005 by national governments interested in promoting the contribution of the sector to sustainable development by enhancing capacity for good governance.

On behalf of the Secretary General of UNCTAD, the meeting was opened by Mr. Kwabena Baah-Duodu, Senior Advisor to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Officer-in-Charge, Special Unit on Commodities, who noted the importance of mining in resource rich countries. He noted that investment in mining in developing countries can present an opportunity to generate sustainable benefits and help countries reduce poverty, that UN organizations can play a greater role in helping more developing countries to benefit from mining and that UNCTAD will continue to be open to cooperation in this sector.

It is in this context, he announced a new initiative by UNCTAD, the Global Commodities Forum (GCF) that will be convened in February 2010 and will focus on extractive industries. The GCF will try to develop answers to issues such as instability of commodity markets and to develop policies that make the commodity sector a real engine for development.

Reflecting the global scope of the Forum, delegates were informed and consulted on the European Commission's Raw Materials Initiative, the International Council on Mining and Metals on its work program, the World Economic Forum Mining Group's 2030 scenarios project, the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UNDESA) and the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (UNCSD) 2010-11 review of mining, the work of the Communities and Small Scale Mining (CASM) initiative, as well as the emerging Natural Resources Charter, (Study Groups' contribution).

Delegates highlighted the significant progress made by countries towards addressing the issues outlined in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation for mining. Delegates also noted that more work needs to be done to better understand the full contribution of mining to sustainable development and that capacity is needed so that countries can capture the full range of benefits mineral resource development represents.

Delegates recognized the important role that UN and international development agencies can play towards providing development assistance in this area.



The out-going Chairman, Jonathan Hobbs noted that “ the IGF has “come of age”. It is helping countries harness mineral wealth more effectively for sustainable growth, development and poverty reduction. In that process governments face many choices. The Forum helps its members address those choices learning from the experiences of their counterparts from around the world, invited guests and observers. The agenda considers ways to address things such as governance, environment and social issues, community engagement and the equitable distribution of benefits to all citizens.”

This year’s meeting focused on further advancing the preparation of the Forum and its members for the upcoming UNCSD meetings that will review progress on the mining sector’s contribution to WSSD’s Johannesburg’s Plan of Implementation. We highlighted the significant progress that countries have achieved in addressing the issues raised in the JPOI. Members also noted the need for more work need to be done to better understand the contribution of mining.

Members recognized the importance of mining for their development and the importance to reflect this contribution by submitting a national report on mining for the UNCSD 2010 meeting.

Consistent with its objective to promote the contribution of mining to sustainable development, delegates reviewed the results of the extensive survey conducted by the Forum on mining in developing countries. They elaborated a list of recommendations that will be tabled at UNCSD 2011 as an integrated policy framework. This framework will be a compendium of best practices in dealing with the complete set of issues related to mining, social, environmental and economic issues. As well, the framework will be the opportunity for members to inform the United Nations and the international community on the challenges they face in exercising good governance and how their needs could be best addressed to enable them to optimize the generation of benefits from mining investments and their contribution to poverty reduction.

The meeting was also the opportunity for member to elect a new Executive Committee. They thanked the UK’s Jonathan Hobbs for his work and support over the last two years as Chair of the Forum. Dr. Leonard S. N. Kalindekafe, Director, Geological Survey Department, Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Environment of Malawi was elected as the new Chair for a two year term.

With the accession of Namibia, the Forum now has 43 member countries. Germany and Australia participated as observers along with international organizations such as the World Bank, World Economic Forum, ICMM, UNDESA, UNCTAD etc

Finally, delegates thanked the donors, the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development, Canada’s Department of Natural Resources, UNDESA, and UNCTAD for their support of the Forum.

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