

Statement by India at the thematic discussion on Mining

IMP CSD-19, 2 Mar 2011

Thanks you Mr Chairman. The report rightly points out that there is a need to ensure a fair distribution of benefits from mining activities among citizens and that the mining activities should provide benefits to and respect the cultures of local communities, disadvantaged groups and indigenous peoples.

It is well recognised that mining, unless properly regulated, can have adverse environmental and social consequences. It contributes to the livelihood of millions of people. However, unsustainable and unsafe mining increases occupational hazards for workers besides leading to the destruction of virgin forest areas. On the one hand, mining disturbs the soil, water and ecological regimes and on the other hand, unless accompanied by proactive measures to promote inclusiveness through social education, health and other interventions, it can lead to alienation of the local population and assume socially unacceptable dimensions.

India has a fairly robust system of environmental clearance as well as forest land diversion related clearances. The National Mineral Policy mandates creation of a framework for sustainable development designed to conserve biodiversity and ensure restoration of the ecological balance in areas impacted by mining operations. The Policy ensures that the interests of indigenous people are protected and comprehensive relief and rehabilitation measures are taken by the miners. Legislations require scientific mining activity clearances, enforcement of environment protection measures and inspections by statutory bodies, approval of mine closure plans before start of mining and penal action for departures from mining plans.

The National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy adopted in 2007 prescribes that large scale displacements should not take place and directs setting up of projects in wastelands or degraded lands. The Indian Bureau of Mines which is the regulator in mining sector takes into account environmental conservation measures which include disposal of various kinds of wastes, stabilization of slopes, safety of miners and nearby populations and elaborate mine closure plans while approving mining plans.

Mr Chairman, India welcomes international support for financial resource mobilisation and capacity building for development of mining sector in a sustainable manner and for adoption of environmentally sustainable mining technologies.

Thank you.