

**Statement by India at the Ministerial Roundtable during CSD-19 on
Creating an enabling environment for sustainable mining
12 May 2011**

(By Dr. Rajneesh Dube, Joint Secretary)

Mr Chairperson, Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

I am grateful for giving me the floor.

Mining is a major contributor to the national GDP of many countries. It is also a significant source of employment generation. India is no exception. The total value of minerals produced by India during 2010-11 was around US\$ 42 billion employing about 1.1 million people.

India recognizes that mining, unless properly regulated, can have adverse environmental and social consequences. 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.

Mr. Chairperson,

This brings me to four key issues related to the sustainability of mining operations.

The first issue is transfer of technology to developing countries for sustainable mining, zero waste or low waste mining and scientific methodologies, including for mining equipments and mining related software. Water quality and quantity is a major environmental issue here. Further, there is urgency for making available the requisite knowledge to

the mining engineers in developing countries by the developed countries and the Transnational Corporations.

The second issue is how do we plan for sustainable mining operations? India has managed to evolve a fairly robust system of environmental clearances as well as forest land diversion related clearances. The real challenge lies in monitoring and enforcing the conditions stipulated in these clearances. GIS/GPS based monitoring mechanisms could prove to be useful and need to be encouraged through greater flow of technology and resources to the developing world.

Mr. Chairperson,

The third key issue in terms of sustainable development in many countries is Relief and Rehabilitation. The solutions are not as easy as they seem and unless properly designed and implemented, can lead to problems of internal security. India has come up with a comprehensive National Relief & Rehabilitation Policy in the year 2007. To make it more pronounced, there is a need for comprehensive assessment of social impacts and displacement of mining projects at the household, community and mining region level and management commitment to address those impacts through mitigation measures and management plans.

The fourth issue is mine closure, which otherwise leads to land degradation. India has approximately 0.7% of its land mass under mines. Though the statutory provisions in India require restoration of land after mining, mine closure remains a big challenge. The situation would not be different in many other countries. There is a need for two pronged approach to address this issue namely; one, establishment of an effective

regulatory body at the national level and two, ensuring observance of Corporate Social Responsibility by the mining companies.

Mr Chairperson,

Any internationally agreed approach to mining has to be based on Principle 2 of the Rio Declaration in which States have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction do not cause damage to the environment of other States. Further, greater integration of mining sector in the national economies, including enhancing the participation of stakeholders has to be in accordance with the national legislations, policies and priorities.

The challenge is to do mining scientifically, with minimum waste and minimum degradation. The application of appropriate technologies, energy and resource efficient strategies, waste management practices, are the need of the hour. We hope that a mechanism is established whereby the developed countries come forward for technical support to the developing countries and the transnational corporations deploy such technologies in their countries of operation.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.