

STATEMENT BY AUSTRALIA AT CSD 18 – MINING

Thank you Mr Chair for the opportunity to speak and thank you panellist for your insightful presentation this afternoon. We all face many of the issues that have been outlined today.

Australia considers that mining is sustainable in both developing and developed countries - if it operates as a partnership between the mining companies, communities and government within a robust, transparent and objective regulatory system. This system should see:

- Strong and transparent governance, regulations, legislation and revenue arrangements;
- Trained and experienced government officials who can implement these regulations and undertake assessments such as Environmental Impact Assessments; and
- A legislative system that offers protection to the environment, biodiversity, indigenous and non-indigenous communities, and security to the mine operations themselves.

We also consider that, if done right, mining can be a great economic driver that reduces poverty in rural communities and throughout the economy, and offers the opportunity for development of side industries. It can also deliver countries, and indigenous and non-indigenous communities, secure energy and water and hard and soft infrastructure; and men and women, employment and training opportunities. Certainly this has been our experience over the past 50 years.

Over the last few days we have heard about the issues developing countries face. These can be distilled down to three things:

- having appropriate legislative and regulatory regimes in place and suitably trained personnel to implement them;
- securing access to financing; and
- acquiring the mining technology that is vested in the private sector.

These issues can be overcome.

For example, as one of the major mining nations, Australia is working with multinational organisations, including the UN, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the seven members of the Asia-Pacific Partnership for Clean Development and Climate, and the Asian Development and World Banks, and with many of the countries represented here today, to do just that. To transfer knowledge and provide practical guidance, where assistance is sought, to support efforts to promote environmentally sound mining. For example, APEC has established a Mining Taskforce, an organisation founded on sustainable mining principles, and Australia is working in this partnership. China is there. The US is there. Canada, Russia, Chile and Mexico are all there, as are many others. And the collective experience of these countries is being shared.

Australia is also working in China on a Australia-China Coal Mine Safety Demonstration Project to showcase mine safety technology, and share knowledge and share experience.

Australia is also open to working, on the ground, with other governments. As an example, we are working with African governments through our Foreign Affairs and Resources departments, through AusAID and AusTrade, to sit down and figure out what forms of assistance these governments and their resource sectors require and how we can help:

- through funding initiatives such as the Australia-Africa Partnership Facility; Australian Development Scholarships; and Australia Africa Fellowships program; to assist in the development of regulatory regimes, trade policy, public sector reform, and
- through AusTrade, who can link you with Australian companies that can provide technology, at a commercial rate.

This allows African countries to adopt practical solutions to address their challenges. And once knowledge is transferred and governance and regulatory reforms become apparent, investment will come, as will the technology and exploration data that is sought.

And this is one thing that we can address today. Australia has produced the Leading Practice Sustainable Development Program for the mining industry, which is targeted at improving sustainable development of individual mining operations, and improving awareness in governments and communities about the progress that is being made by the industry. Many of you are already aware of this program, which has produced and distributed free of charge 14 handbooks, covering fundamental information on leading or best practice sustainable development and mining techniques on thematic issues that cross most mining countries, including engagement with indigenous communities; biodiversity, water and tailing management; hazardous materials management; and product stewardship. The handbooks provide case studies that show how companies have addressed issues and leading practices that can be applied universally. They also complement the handbooks that have been produced by the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) and World Bank. We are happy to share our handbooks with you, and copies of the handbooks are on the desk near the front door.

Australia considers that by addressing governance structures and regulations, by adopting leading practice mining techniques and by committing to work as a partnership, developing countries can receive a positive return from this sector.

And while the issues surrounding ASM are a challenge, we are seeing some progress in addressing the issues. In the meantime, there is an opportunity to work with multinationals and large miners.

Multinational and large mining companies are strongly committed to Corporate Social Responsibility in their activities, are participating with voluntary initiatives such as the

Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), and are committing to sustainable development principles such as those of the ICMM. And they are committed to working in partnership with developing countries.

In summary, this cooperative approach, between governments, industry and communities, and support for the leading practices that the industry is implementing, is a model that the CSD could adopt to assist developing countries to gain the greatest benefit from the development of their mineral resources, and should be recognised as we go into the next policy year.

Thank you.