

United Nations
18th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-18)
Children & Youth Caucus Statement: 5 May 3pm-6pm Mining

Thank you, Mr. Chair. We, recognize the significant but differentiated role the mining industry plays in developed and developing countries to make advancements in society. Significant strides have been made over the past decades to offset negative social, economical, and environmental impacts of mining. However, major obstacles remain. Approximately one million children are still involved in mining activities.

Representing children and youth, we strongly urge governments to eradicate child labor by 2015. A two-fold process is necessary to achieve this. Firstly governments should play a leading role in creating alternative income-generating activities, which eliminate the need for child labor. Secondly, governments should provide positive social incentives to shift reliance on child labor and create an environment where at least primary education is provided.

The financing of armed conflict and human exploitation through the purchase of mining resources is unacceptable. Resources should not be exploited to asymmetrically guarantee the prosperity of peaceful and developed countries while sustaining conflict in developing nations. Transparency in resource-extraction and production must be a priority for both producers and consumers. We should all be properly informed of the ways in which financial support for mining activities impacts the surrounding regional environments and population.

Prior to mining activity, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) should be performed according to international standards to reduce flora and fauna degradation and the social impact on local communities. Integrating these assessments into national law will hold mining companies legally accountable for all negative consequences of their activities: especially and not limited to, land rehabilitation.

At present, impacted communities are often neglected in the planning process of mining, leading to social instability and conflict. Comprehensive social management of mining related activities – including livelihoods, social support strategies and cultural integrity is vital for community ownership and participation. The inclusion of our youth in this process enables active citizens with the ability to safeguard these finite resources.

We appreciate this time and thank you.