

MAY 06, 2010

Mining and Namibia: collaboration for sustainable future

Mr. Chair,

NAMIBIA is endowed with mineral resources including uranium. Namibia has a well established mining industry. We mine diamonds, copper, uranium, and many more strategic minerals. NAMIBIA is also a part to the Kimberly process. At present Namibia is experiencing what we call “a Uranium rush”. It is envisaged that Namibia will be the third uranium producing country by 2011. Mining is still a leading contributor to our GDP. The sector is also one of the leading employers in the country.

Namibia is well known for its sound environmental management practices. The Namibian Constitution serves as a foundation for our environmental legislation. All mining activities in Namibia follow the international best practices.

The White Paper on Mining of 1995 highlights issues pertinent to mining. This resulted into the enactment of Minerals Act, which makes provision for the establishment of Mining Commissioner. Namibia has in place Mining and Prospecting Policy in place as well as the ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACT. The Environmental Management Act of 2007 makes it mandatory to do an EIA before any mining or prospecting commences. The Namibian government in partnerships with the mining industry and supported by the Germany Geological Survey have recently commissioned a Strategic Environment Assessment for Uranium at regional level. This is the first study of this kind to be done in the world. This SEA aims to internalise environmental aspects in all mining activities in the region. It looks at short, medium and long-term as well as cumulative impacts of mining activities. It covers issues including social aspects, water, biodiversity, and infrastructure development associated with mining activities. All sensitive areas have been identified and mapped out and possible mitigations have been proposed.

Namibia considers mining as an integral part of its national development agenda and the need to include local communities. To this end the government has developed small-scale mining policy to ensure that small scale mining activities are conducted in an environmental friendly ways and benefit local communities. The small scale mining policy is premised to our success in community-based natural resources management, which ensure that benefits goes directly to the communities.

Namibia would like to see local beneficiation and value addition to mineral resources in countries where they are mined. We would like to see these minerals processed at home instead of the current trend. This will ensure further job creation to the inhabitants.

In conclusion, Namibia views mining as an important component for our poverty reduction efforts and in achieving our national development goal and the MDGs.

Namibia continues to review and improve our legal framework to guide our sound natural resources exploitation and to ensure sustainability.

THANK YOU.