

CSD18/Mining

Intervention by Finland during the high-level Round Table discussions

Distinguished Ministers, Dear Colleagues,

I would like to start by emphasizing that mining and the mineral sector plays a significant role in more than 30 national economies. According to ILO estimate, 25 million people are involved in mining – half of whom are informal workers.

It is quite clear that exploration, extraction and processing of minerals pose great challenges to sustainable development. It is of utmost importance that governments recognize the crucial stewardship role that they have in making laws and raising Corporate Social Responsibility standards in extractive industry practice.

Finland is among the leading countries in the world when it comes to the development of mining technologies. This is partly due to the fact that we have for decades invested in high technology and innovative approaches as well as in capacity building and knowledge-sharing.

In addition, our national government has had an active role in facilitating the development of the mining sector.

We think it is crucial to review government policies in the mining sector at regular intervals. This is because the exploration and mining scene is changing fast due to globalization of world commodity markets.

Finland is currently evaluating its mineral strategy, which is the main government policy instrument in steering the mining sector. We are aiming at developing our extractive industry in a sustainable way by taking full advantage of the latest innovations for example on recycling and re-use of minerals.

We are also currently reviewing the Finnish mining law. The purpose is to ensure that mining and ore prospecting will be carried out in a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable manner.

One of the underlying objectives of the new mining law would be to reconcile various public and private interests. It should take into account environmental impacts, citizens' and landowners' rights and facilitate municipalities' possibilities to influence decision-making – all this while ensuring the preconditions for prospecting and mining operations.

Mining is an old industry, which is characterized by a high level of experience and knowledge collected over many decades. In Finland we have created a cluster of key actors involved in the mining sector, comprising inter alia the private sector, academia, local and national authorities. The cluster is to facilitate development of sustainable technologies and innovations, based on the whole life-cycle approach.

Finland is also supporting sustainable use of mineral resources in third countries. These projects include geological mapping, developing of administration and support for capacity building in mining related matters. Improved governance of the mining sector ensures that natural resources are used in a sustainable way and contribute to poverty eradication.

Thank you madame/mister Chairman