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Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

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United Nations Environment Programme Statement on Mining

The mining sector presents various challenges and numerous opportunities for sustainable development.

The aggregate output of the mining sector has significantly grown over the last decade and is set to expand in the coming decades to meet the growing demand of the global economy for primary resources. Hence, ensuring the development of the mining sector on a sustainable basis is a critical challenge that needs to be addressed by the global community.

There have been a growing number of initiatives and programmes aimed at reducing the environmental or social impacts of Mining and enhancing its contribution to sustainable development especially abandoned ones or addressing a proper mining closure. While there are some encouraging improvements as a result of such initiatives, such as those that the Environment and Security Initiative has achieved in South Eastern Europe, there remains much to be done in terms of addressing the core issues and challenges.

As raised by CSD 18, there is a growing need for the development of a global coordination and collaboration mechanism, such as a global initiative on sustainable mining, in order to improve the overall effectiveness of existing initiatives and programmes, and to address some of the existing gaps and enhance the contribution of mining to sustainable development.

In response to the outcomes of CSD-18 with regard to the need for a global initiative, UNEP initiated a consultative process so as to effectively respond to such need. This process consisted of the following components:

- **Firstly the preparation of a background study** to review the lessons from past and on-going initiatives on the sustainable development of Mining; establishment of an International Expert Group to review, provide input and guidance for the background study, and prepare a working document that explores available options for responding to gaps and needs.
- **Secondly convening a consultative Group Meeting** to further discuss the outputs from the background study and propose possible elements for a way forward. Institutions and organizations that have a leading role in existing programmes and initiatives and major stakeholders of the sector have been associated in the review process and will be invited to participate in this meeting.

The following are some of the major findings and conclusions that came out from the background study.

1. There are ongoing initiatives that seek to address almost all of the issues and needs identified by CSD-18 in some way. While these initiatives are making some contribution towards improving the performance of the sector, they face a number of limitations in terms of ensuring the



contribution of mining to sustainable development.

2. The major factors that have adversely affected the effectiveness of both past and existing initiatives are held to be the generally fragmented or stand-alone nature of most initiatives and the lack of mechanisms to coordinate and achieve synergies between complementary initiatives.
3. Key limitations would be significantly improved by the creation of a global coordination mechanism. The key functions of such a mechanism should include: knowledge consolidation and dissemination, promotion of synergy and innovation between complementary initiatives, and advocacy on mainstreaming sustainability in mineral sector development.
4. A coordination mechanism for the sector would be effectively complemented by clustering of complementary initiatives under four programmatic pillars, namely: governance for sustainable mining, knowledge and data management, greening the mineral supply chain, and environmental accidents and legacies.

A Consultative Group Meeting that will discuss the findings from the background study and propose the possible elements of the way forward is scheduled to be held on 13 April 2011 in Paris. Options for global coordination suggested by the study, and to be discussed at the meeting include:

- Developing a coordination platform to facilitate information exchange and synergies amongst existing and future initiatives on mining and sustainable development;
- Strengthening of an existing international forum on mining so that it could function as a global coordination platform for various initiatives; and
- Establishing a Global Initiative on Mining for Sustainability to facilitate coordination and synergy amongst existing initiatives and involving all categories of concerned stakeholders public and private and to promote the development of new programmes that respond to needs and gaps not presently addressed.

Finally, with reference to the initiative on mining by the IGF to be hosted by UNCTAD, UNEP will consult and coordinate with UNCTAD so as to join efforts, improve synergies and limit overlapping towards sustainable mining.

Question for the panelists:

1. *What are the panelists views on the corporate environmental and social responsibility of global and international mining companies vis a vis the delicate situation of ASM and related risks from a supply chain perspective*
2. *What are the panelists views on the interest and usefulness of a multi stakeholders consultation mechanisms (including governments, municipalities, big companies, ASM and civil society) in promoting safer and sustainable mining*