



## Statement by Australia to the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting of the 19<sup>th</sup> UN Commission on Sustainable Development

Thank you, Mr Chairman for the opportunity to speak today.

Australia recognises the opportunities and challenges that countries face in managing their resources sectors. We support a balanced approach to mining that acknowledges both its significant contribution to sustainable development, as well as areas for ongoing improvement. In this regard we welcome the approach of the Secretary General's report on mining.

We consider that to be sustainable, mining needs to be undertaken in a cooperative manner and supported by strong legislative and governance structures.

Australia is recognised internationally for the strong performance of our resources sector. Like many countries represented here, our performance is underpinned by strong legal and governance arrangements that protect indigenous rights, heritage, land ownership and the environment, but also legislation that secures the rights of mining companies.

With these rights comes an expectation that multinationals and Australian mining companies will demonstrate a strong commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility in their activities. This is something that all countries should expect of mining companies operating in their jurisdictions.

In Australia, industry, governments and communities work cooperatively, within a robust, transparent and objective framework. This structure secures the willingness of companies to invest and to operate domestically. And this investment extends to the application of best practice mining techniques and leading edge technologies.

Australia is willing to share our experience worldwide, through open dissemination of information on how to strategically and sustainably exploit resources and drive sustainable growth.

Practically speaking, Australia is working with organisations including the UN, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and its mining task force, 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 transfer knowledge and provide practical guidance, where assistance is sought, and to support efforts to promote environmentally sound mining. The collective experience of these parties is also being shared on matters such as sound investment frameworks, stewardship and corporate social responsibility.

Through our Foreign Affairs and Resources departments, and through our Government Aid and trade organisations, Australia is working with other governments to support capacity building:

- By 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, and public sector reform; and
- Through our trade organization, AusTrade, who can provide linkages to Australian mining technology companies that can supply technology, on a commercial basis.

This allows countries to adopt practical solutions to address their challenges. And once knowledge is transferred and governance and regulatory reforms are implemented, our experience is that investment will come, as will the leading edge technology that is sought.

Australia is also working to address issues raised during this IPM.

For example, we are working with China on the Australia-China Coal Mine Safety Demonstration Project, to showcase mine safety practices and technology, and share knowledge and experience.

We are also committed to sharing our knowledge more broadly, through the Leading Practice Sustainable Development Program for the mining industry, which targets 14 themes central to improving sustainable development of individual mining operations, and improving awareness in governments and communities about the progress that is being made by the industry.

Issues covered include engagement with Indigenous communities; biodiversity, water and tailing management; hazardous materials management; and product stewardship. CD copies of the handbooks are available at the back of the room.

We have also just released our new Strategic Framework for Managing Abandoned Mines. This publication is also available free of charge, and we have brought a number of these handbooks with us to this forum.

We recognise the issue of appropriate technology usage and encourage the application of leading practice, rather than obsolete technologies, to address issues such as: water consumption and reuse, emissions controls, mine site remediation, reduction in the use of chemicals in the mining process, and best practices in the management of wastes from the sector.

Mining generates significant income for the Australian federal and state governments through taxation and royalties. This income is redistributed to communities for a range of purposes, including the development of multi-user infrastructure, such as: all-weather roads, rail links, and port facilities, as well as electricity and communications networks.

If managed properly, the sector can deliver ongoing benefits across the economy and for indigenous and non-indigenous citizens.

Thank you.