

**Canada's Statement to the United Nations
Commission on Sustainable Development – 18th Session**

Mining

Mr., Madame Chairperson:

Canada would like to take this opportunity to thank the bureau for the thoughtful selection of the group of themes in this cycle of reporting. We would also like to remind the bureau and all participants of some of the links between mining and previous meetings of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, and would draw your attention to Canada's monograph on the Sustainable Development of Minerals and metals prepared for the meeting of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in April 1997, and to Canada's contribution to the land use dialogue at the Eighth Session of the UNCSD in April and May of 2000, monograph 10 on the sustainable development of Minerals and Metals. Our report to this meeting, details some of the initiatives Canada has undertaken since then, and some are further described in case studies.

The ability of Canada to transform its resource wealth potential into sustainable benefits for its citizens, while at the same time respecting the need to protect the environment is based on an approach that recognises that good governance policies and legislation are key factors towards ensuring that the benefits from mineral resource development enhance the contribution of mining, minerals, and metals to sustainable development.

Reliance on natural resources constitutes the primary engine for socio-economic development and regional economic diversification for many communities across Canada, including Aboriginal communities. Mining plays an important role in the economic prosperity and social development of Canadians, especially in rural (often remote), northern, and Aboriginal communities, as minerals and metals industries are among the largest actual and potential employers, offering a variety of short- and long-term employment opportunities.

Canada would like the CSD18 review to reflect both the successes and the challenges of the current situation for mining. The record shows that mining has contributed to sustainable development in many countries. Reinforcing the negatives and downplaying the significant progress being made fails to recognize the contribution of mining to sustainable development.

Canada recognises that good governance is a necessary condition for mining to contribute to sustainable development. Canada recognises that a number of challenges face mining related activities in a number of countries. This may lead some to the conclusion that mining is incompatible with sustainable development.

When managed properly, however, mining offers an opportunity for countries to deliver sustainable benefits to their citizens and to reduce poverty. For Canada and for many developing countries, the natural resource endowment represents a comparative

advantage for economic and social development. In 2009, the Government of Canada announced its Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy for the Canadian extractive sector operating abroad. The Building the Canadian Advantage Strategy includes four main pillars: 1) support for host country resource governance capacity-building initiatives; 2) endorsement and promotion of widely-recognized international CSR performance guidelines; 3) support for the development of a CSR Centre of Excellence; and, 4) the creation of the Office of the Extractive Sector CSR Counsellor. Building the Canadian Advantage will improve the competitive advantage of Canadian extractive sector companies operating abroad by enhancing their ability to manage social and environmental risks.

Canada would like to express the view that a balanced and informed discussion about the progress made over the last ten years to reinforce capacity to manage the mining sector is required to form a strong basis for moving forward in the policy year of the CSD work plan.

Canada is pleased to be working in partnership with the member countries of the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development to raise awareness about the many improvements made to address issues related to mining.

Mining can contribute to sustainable development as witnessed by many countries such as Canada.

Good governance is a key element required to achieve a successful outcome for societies that wish to develop their mineral resource potential for the benefit of their citizens.

A change is required in the conversation about mining to seek solutions to the challenges and to view mining as an opportunity for sustainable development in developing countries. There is a need for multilateral and international aid agencies to return to capacity building in the mining sector.

Mr./Madame Chair, Canada remains committed to working with our domestic partners and the international community to address the challenges we face in working to maximize mining's contribution to sustainable development. Continuing dialogue in international fora such as this one is essential to our continued progress. I thank you for the opportunity to speak. I look forward to our discussions and to sharing examples of best practices with other nations.