



Investors increasingly want to be able to distinguish between companies that perform well, in terms of their social and environmental behaviour, and those which do not. Consumers too are looking for ways to ensure that their purchases are produced in ways consistent with sustainable development. Companies doing well in these areas would like to differentiate their products – and maybe their shares – from those which are not; governments and communities would like to know which companies they should favour, and which they should shun.



Mechanisms encouraging the minerals sector to behave in a more sustainable manner are necessary.

Seeking Alternatives: Voluntary Initiatives in the Mining Sector

Meeting of Experts, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 18 July 2001
Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development Project (MMSD)



Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development is an independent two-year project of participatory analysis seeking

to understand how the mining and minerals sector can best contribute to the global transition to sustainable development. The Project is sponsored by thirty of world's largest mining companies as well as a variety of non-commercial organisations, governments and foundations.

MMSD has been engaging with a variety of stakeholders – including local communities, labour organisations, national governments, industry, NGOs and others – to gather their perspectives on what each actor views as critical to achieving sustainable patterns of development. The Project is now evaluating options for initiatives capable of implementing its findings and seeing that the concerns of participating actors are addressed.



These include site and issue-specific options – those affecting one industry sector such as 'conflict diamonds' or the use of mercury by artisanal miners – and global options – the possibility of creating a global framework to improve the performance of the industry in general.

Some options include those that could be implemented by government and international institutions such as a UN-type intergovernmental agreement on mining, or a World Bank-type set of financing guidelines for the mining and minerals sector.

Other options could be based on voluntary initiatives such as industry codes of conduct, similar to ICMM/ICME's Sustainable Development Charter, or the IFC's ombudsman model, certification programmes, or others.



The Project is hosting one in a series of meetings of experts prior to the RMMLF meetings in Santa Fe. MMSD's meeting will take place on 18 July 2001 at the Hilton of Santa Fe Hotel (across from the RMMLF venue). Different voluntary industry initiatives in the mining and other sectors will be debated. Industry and NGO representatives will talk of their experiences in industry environmental initiatives and others advanced by the non-governmental sector.

