



World Business Council for
Sustainable Development

Mining, Minerals and
Sustainable Development Project

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Breaking New Ground: What can minerals do for development?

Today marks the release of ***Breaking New Ground***¹– the result of the most ambitious global study yet undertaken of minerals and their role in development. Based at the International Institute for Environment and Development in London, with regional teams in South and North America, Southern Africa and Australia, and activities in a further 16 countries, the two-year project included broad opportunities for participation in identifying problems and solutions. The report is being released in advance of the World Summit for Sustainable Development.²

The goal was to unearth the most controversial problems of minerals development and its impacts on poverty, human well-being, the environment and other factors key to sustainable development. In this sector, these include the impact on indigenous communities, efficiency and resource consumption, armed conflict, protected areas and biodiversity, corruption, human rights, management of mining waste and many others.

“MMSD is a project covering a new, different and challenging topic that brings us into a discussion which might have been avoided in the past. The process that will follow the report will be something to look forward to,” says **Yolanda Kakabadse, President of IUCN – The World Conservation Union.**

“From the industry perspective, taking part in this project was a risky business. It was nevertheless an essential step, not least for business reasons. The industry realised it is difficult to do well as a business when you belong to an industry that has a bad reputation. If we allowed the widespread negative attitudes to our activities to go on, we would eventually have difficulty accessing resources in the ground and markets for our products,” says **Sir Robert Wilson, Chairman of Rio Tinto plc.**

¹ *Breaking New Ground, the Report of the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development Project* is available online at www.iied.org/mmsd. It will be available in final published form from Earthscan Publications in early July.

² The WSSD, scheduled for August in Johannesburg, will review world progress in sustainable development in the ten years since the first Earth Summit in Rio and attempt to set a future agenda.

Breaking New Ground calls for specific actions:³

- **An Industry Protocol for Sustainable Development**
- **A Commitment to Address the Negative Legacy of the Past**
- **Supporting Legalisation of Artisanal and Small-scale Mining**
- **Integrated Management of the Full Mineral Chain⁴**
- **More Effective Government Management of Mineral Investment**
- **A More Equitable International Trade Regime for Minerals**

“This attempt to surface the issues that affect the sector has resulted in an enormous agenda for work to be done now. The best performers are already doing many of these, but the worst have far to go to catch up. If we cannot get this sector collectively to contribute more positively to sustainable development they will not deserve the license to operate,” says **MMSD Project Coordinator Richard Sandbrook**.

“The Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development Project has made a serious effort to find out what concerns people about this essential but highly criticized industrial sector. It has been a rough journey. Many are in denial about its legacy.

“We have tried to run the most inclusive and open process possible, and to give everyone a chance to help define a better future. Some have chosen to avoid the issues, or have felt uncomfortable sitting down with others they are in serious conflict with,” says **MMSD Project Director Luke Danielson**.

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³ Details on these proposals are contained in the Agenda for Change, ***Breaking New Ground*** Chapter 16.

⁴ The chain consists of exploration, extraction, smelting, refining, fabricating, manufacturing, use, re-use, recycling and disposal, where applicable.

Notes to Editors

- ***Breaking New Ground*** offers a series of conclusions. Society's continuing need for various mineral commodities is clear. Equally clear is that simply meeting market demand for minerals will not achieve what society expects and insists on. A few of the many expectations are:
 - countries, especially emerging economies, expect that minerals development will be an engine of sustained national economic growth;
 - local communities expect that the industry will provide employment, infrastructure and other benefits that match the risks and impacts they experience, all within a framework that will leave people better off when the project is over than when it started;
 - the industry's own employees expect safer and healthier working conditions, a better community life, and some kind of security and consideration if and when their employment ends;
 - local citizens and human rights campaigners expect companies to respect and support basic rights, even when they are operating where government does not;
 - environmental organisations expect a much higher standard of performance, and that the industry will stay out of ecologically and culturally sensitive areas;
 - investors expect higher returns, and have shown dissatisfaction with the industry's financial results;
 - consumers expect safe products that will not degrade the environment, and that were not produced in substandard conditions.
- The Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development Project is an independent two-year process of research and consultation seeking to understand how the mining and minerals sector can best contribute to the global transition to sustainable development.
- MMSD is a project of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and was commissioned by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).
- Project conclusions are based on four regional processes, over 175 commissioned studies, 23 global workshops and experts meetings, and a 7-week public review of preliminary conclusions.
- More information on MMSD is available at www.iied.org/mmsd.
- To order the report published by Earthscan, contact:
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