

**Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals
and Sustainable Development**

Fourth Annual General Meeting,

Geneva, Palais des Nations, October 26-29, 2009

**Welcoming remarks by Mr. Kwabena Baah-Duodu, Senior Adviser to the
Secretary-General and Officer-in-Charge, Special Unit on Commodities, UNCTAD**

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, I am pleased to welcome you all to Geneva for the Fourth Annual General Meeting of the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development.

The importance of mining in resource rich countries cannot be overestimated. It is a documented fact that mining has contributed to sustainable development in countries such as Canada, Australia, Chile, Botswana, South Africa, and many others. At the same time, mining remains one of the most complex sectors to manage. This challenge increases when there is a problem with governance in the countries concerned. The absence of good governance in some resource-rich countries has led to conflicts. It is unfortunate that these have too often been interpreted as a rationale for refraining from supporting capacity building, instead of their being seen as an opportunity to overcome a significant challenge.

Indeed, investments in mining in developing countries can present an opportunity to generate sustainable benefits and help countries reduce poverty. It is in this context that UNCTAD recognizes the role your organization is playing, especially as the global forum for policy dialogue in the mining/metals sector with the overarching objective of enhancing capacity for good governance in the sector at all stages of the life cycle of minerals and metals - production, distribution and recycling.

Of particular importance and relevance, are the Forum's preparations for the deliberations on mining in the framework of the thematic cluster for 2010/2011 vis-à-vis the Multi-year programme of work of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSTD). I am pleased to learn that the Forum has identified the upcoming UNCSD meeting as an opportunity to bring a more balanced perspective on mining, not only to the UN system but to rest of the world as well. We are encouraged to observe that as part of its UNCSD strategy, the Forum is asking its members to send national Reports on Mining to the UNCSD secretariat. We are of the view that the message will be stronger if more members respond to this request.

The Forum is also taking place on the eve of the historic Copenhagen Summit on climate change, which makes its deliberations on the sustainability aspect even more important. The dangerous level at which greenhouse gas emissions are reaching has become one of the major concerns of the international community in recent years. Without adequately tackling this

problem, sustainable development will not be attainable and even mankind's future cannot be assured. It is our common hope that the Copenhagen Summit will take a decisive step towards a UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

During the next few days, you will be reviewing the outcomes of the extensive survey that the Forum has conducted. These outcomes will form the basis of a policy framework to be tabled by the Forum at the 2011 UNCTAD meeting. This policy framework can establish the credibility of the Forum on identifying best practices to deal with the issues related to mining. It could also be an opportunity for more donors to consider increasing their support for mining related good governance. UNCTAD looks forward to the outcomes of the survey and the policy framework. We also believe that UN organizations can play a greater role in helping more developing countries to benefit from mining and we will continue to be open to cooperation in this sector. I can assure you that UNCTAD will not only be interested in the decisions that you take but will continue to work with you closely.

UNCTAD has a long history of research analysis and policy initiatives in the area of mining and development. In recent years, we have focused on both the ways in which the mineral sector can contribute to national economic development and its associated requirements, and on the impact of mining on local and regional economies.

One of UNCTAD's new initiatives, the Global Commodities Forum, will be convened from 1st to 2nd February next year focusing on extractive industries. Its mandate, among others, will be to try to find answers to perennial problems affecting the commodity economy such as the instability of commodity markets; and review commodity policies that make the commodity sector a real engine for growth and development. By definition, these also relate to commodities and sustainability issues - the theme of this Forum. There is, therefore some complementarity between your Forum and GCF and hence the need to strengthen our cooperation, while pursuing the common goal of designing sustainable and effective models for development in commodity dependent economies.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, we wish you successful deliberations.

Thank you.