

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR MINING, MINERALS AND METALS MEETS IN GENEVA 7-9 NOVEMBER 2005**

The inaugural meeting of the Intergovernmental Forum on Sustainable Development for Mining, Minerals and Metals opened today at the United Nations Office at Geneva. Topics to be discussed include equitable distribution of economic and social benefits from mining; financial security mechanisms; and environmental protection during mine closures and rehabilitation. The gathering, which runs through Wednesday, is being attended by senior officials from 35 countries and international organizations.

In a message read out to the meeting, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, "The establishment of the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development is a significant step towards maximizing the contribution of the mineral sector to sustainable development". Mr. Annan concluded that the Forum can "help governments develop their capability to improve governance and address the economic, social and environmental issues raised by mining in an open and inclusive framework".

The Forum, sponsored by Canada and South Africa and hosted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), evolved from a dialogue launched at the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. Support is also being provided by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the World Bank, and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development.

Gary Nash, responsible for the Minerals and Metals Sector at Natural Resources Canada and co-chair of the Forum, said, "The Forum provides the framework for members to discuss expanding the benefits while responding to the challenges posed by mining".

Co-chair Elize Swart, from South Africa's the Department of Energy and Minerals, said members will share experiences and provide advice to governments, international organizations and stakeholders.

Current Forum members are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, the Philippines, Romania, the Russian Federation, Senegal, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, the United Kingdom, Uruguay and Zambia. Representatives of Chile and Thailand are attending as observers.

