



Mining for Development Conference 2013

Sydney, Australia

SESSION SUMMARY - LUNCH AND KEYNOTE Mining and equitable development HE Dr Esperance Bias

Mozambique aims to maximise the benefits from mining oil and gas to improve economic production in the country, said Dr Esperanca Bias, the Mozambique Minister for Mineral Resources.

She outlined three main methods the country will use to achieve this goal.

Firstly, Mozambique needs to establish mining and petroleum fiscal regimes that are fair to the investors but also maximise returns to the community.

The second approach involved encouraging mining and petroleum companies to include corporate social responsibility programs in their development agreements to benefit the communities in the locality where development takes place.

The third way was to develop and encourage the development of infrastructure for mining, oil and gas. This will have a broader, impact on local communities and the wider global community.

Mozambique is host to significant mineral resources according to Dr Bias. “The impact of developing this resource must be assessed in the early years to ensure at a minimum that the citizens of Mozambique benefit from resources which are efficiently mined with a view to the long term, and that environmental impacts are limited.”

It is also crucial that opportunities to link mining with other economic and infrastructure projects are optimised, said Dr Bias. The impact of this development will depend on how these issues are assessed and infrastructure constraints are properly understood. “This is particularly important for mega projects in the areas of local transport, power, water and other utilities to prevent over development of natural resources.”

The challenge would be to ensure that such benefits benefit the country as a whole plus the local communities where the resource and investments occur.

Expansion of the mining, gas, and oil industries since 2000 has lead to improvements in transparency, stability and effectiveness of investments. “Looking forward government seeks to work in partnership with civil society and mine companies to develop a sound environment and climate for investment,” Dr Bias said.

As a concrete example, Dr Bias noted that Mozambique became a compliant member of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in October 2012. The country has also developed a training plan and strategy for the next 10 years, which encourages organisations involved in mega projects to improve technical and professional education programs.

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Meanwhile, there is also recognition by industry and communities of the need to improve corporate social responsibility. “The government of Mozambique is interested in natural resources development to promote the country’s development, increase revenues from extractive industries, and to accelerate sustainable development of mining, oil, and gas sites where this is aligned with national development goals.”

However, Bias said the exploitation of revenues must be based on sustainable practices and must boost development of the local communities.

To this end, education has a critical role to play and the government understood its responsibilities. “It is an essential element in national participation in industry development. Education, training and skill development are very important to ensuring government institutions are prepared to address the range of challenging technical, legal and financial issues attached to the development of mining.”

Mineral resources are not renewable and how they are removed will forever impact the natural and economic environment of Mozambique, she said. In order to ensure these natural resources have a positive impact for the near and longer term, the establishment of clear, legal, regulatory and fiscal frameworks is essential and should support open markets. “Sustainable approaches and policies will ensure that the benefits accrue to today’s and tomorrow’s citizens.”

In conclusion, she said ensuring the social and economic benefits flow from developing Mozambique minerals was a critical government priority. “Government has an important oversight role to play but mining companies need to work closely with national, provisional and local authorities. This is essential for the development of the industry,” Dr Bias said.

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