

SESSION SUMMARY

Call to Action

**Professor Paul Collier CBE, Professor of Economics and Public Policy,
Blavatnik School of Government, The University of Oxford**

Mining can take dormant resources and use them to vastly improve the fortunes of individual countries, but the outcomes reached are entirely the results of decisions made by the people in charge.

This was the key message in a speech given by Paul Collier, Professor of Economics and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford, who related his experience in Botswana, which had been an arid, impoverished, land-locked African country. Botswana harnessed its diamond resources so successfully that for a period it was the fastest-growing country in the world.

By contrast, he said Sierra Leone, which was both fertile and did not suffer from being landlocked, fell to the bottom of the development ladder after the discovery of diamonds.

In addressing attendees at the International Mining for Development Centre alumni day, Professor Collier said the choice between those two outcomes for any nation required certain things being known and done, and capacities had to be built within individual countries.

“In a generation’s time, you’ll either have kids either saying well done, or something very different,” Professor Collier said. “You’ve got to build the capacities. You’ve got to be the catalysts in your countries for building the critical mass of informed people.”

He also stressed the importance of using technology to support communications, which in itself was a great resource for capacity building.

“You’ve had wonderful opportunities to learn from Australians, but now learn from each other,” he said.