



United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) Review of Mining

Introduction

This report, the seventh in the series of ICSG Insight briefing reports, is intended to give members a concise update on the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) as it prepares to review mining. The Commission will be holding meetings focusing on mining and related themes 3-14 May 2010 (CSD-18) and May 2011 (CSD-19). The objective of this paper is to provide member countries with information on the potential impact the UNCSD review process may have on the mining and metals industries as well as furnish information on how member countries may become involved in shaping the outcome of these meetings.

The UNCSD meetings give Study Group members an opportunity to influence the policy discussion about mining and metals. The UNCSD review also provides a unique opportunity for mining ministries to highlight the contribution mining makes to sustainable development. While the UNCSD meetings will be held in 2010 and 2011, it is important that governments wishing to shape the outcome be involved early in the process.

The Study Groups have an ongoing interest in the topic of metals and the environment, including the issues surrounding sustainable development. In addition to this Insight report, the secretariat has organized presentations on this topic as part of the regular Study Group meetings.

Why UNCSD is important to the Metals Industry

The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development makes recommendations that may result in international agreements and/or form the basis for action by national governments. Such recommendations can have far reaching consequences for the mining and metals industry. UNCSD drives agendas within the UN system. The UNCSD takes credit for the following policies which have had an impact on the metals industries:

- It assisted in the process of setting targets for the share of renewable energy sources in the total energy supply. Subsequently, the European Union **set a target of cutting carbon-dioxide emissions** by 20 percent from 1990 levels by the year 2020 and a target to increase the share of renewable energy to 20 percent.

- In 1994 the UNCSD made recommendations which were important in the **adoption of the 1998 Rotterdam Convention** on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.
- In 1995 it proposed a global **phase-out of leaded petrol**.
- It encouraged governments to develop **sustainable development indicators** in accordance with specific national conditions.
- The UNCSD has significantly **contributed to enhanced dialogue and partnerships at international, national and local levels**. At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development it worked to further the intergovernmental process through new approaches and formats for participation.

The UNCSD Cycles

The UN Commission on Sustainable Development has organized its multi-year program of work on the basis of seven two-year cycles, with each cycle focusing on selected thematic clusters of issues. The seven two-year cycles are taking place between 2004/2005 and 2016/2017.

The fourth implementation cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development will begin in May 2010 with CSD-18 (review year), followed in May 2011 by CSD-19 (policy year). According to its multi-year programme of work, CSD will focus on the following “thematic cluster” in the fourth cycle:

1. Chemicals
2. Mining
3. The 10-year framework of programs on sustainable consumption and production patterns
4. Transport
5. Waste management

These thematic areas will be addressed holistically, taking into account economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Member States of the UN are encouraged to provide national reports, on a voluntary basis, that reflect developments in these five areas.

The Two UNCSD Meetings Related to Mining

Mining will be part of the focus of the two meetings in the 2010/2011 CSD18/19 cycle. The first meeting, CSD-18 will be held in New York from 3-14 May 2010. This meeting will examine the contribution mining makes to sustainable development. The objective is to look at progress achieved to date and in particular to review progress made toward the goals established under earlier meetings such as Johannesburg 2002. Paragraph 46 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI 46) specifically refers to mining.

The second meeting, set for May 2011 and referred to as CSD-19, is more forward looking and can be expected to make policy recommendations. One of the topics for discussion at the 2011 meeting is a ten-year framework of programs on sustainable consumption and production (SCP). This framework program could potentially have an impact on mining, metals, waste and chemicals. The recommendations emerging from this meeting can be expected to guide the debate on environmentally related topics for several years following the meeting.

Key Dates and Meetings

In anticipation of the May 2010 CDS-18 meeting, the following events are scheduled:

Late 2009/Early 2010

- **Regional Implementation Meetings**
 - 24-26 June 2009 African Regional Meeting on SCP, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
 - 11-13 August 2009 Green Growth Meeting back to back to the Global Environment Fair, Republic of Korea - for the Asia Pacific region
 - 17-18 September 2009 Latin American Regional meeting on SCP, Colombia
 - Oct/Nov 2009 Subregional European meeting on SCP (tbc)
- Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development meeting end of October 2009 to review the Forum's input to CSD.
- Series of preparatory committee meetings in January/February 2010.

The CSD-19 will follow a similar schedule the following year.

How member countries can become involved

If they wish, member countries can become involved in the UNCSD process in a number of ways. The most direct manner is to submit a national report to the UNCSD. Further details of this process are provided below.

Another option for member countries to become involved in the process is through the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development. The Forum was established as a partnership initiative of Canada and South Africa at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, and proposes to make an input to the UNCSD process.

http://www.globaldialogue.info/wn_e.htm.

A third option is for governments to encourage companies and NGOs from their country to become involved in events which are expected to be organized to take place at the same time as the UNCSD meetings.

Guidelines for National Reporting

The United Nations has recently issued a document “Guidelines for National Reporting to CSD-18”, a copy of which is attached to this Insight. The guidelines describe the process for countries to submit national reports. Further information can be found at the website <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natinfo/natinfo.htm>. Click on “National Reporting Guidelines” on the menu on the left side of the screen to go to the page, then click on English/French/Spanish at the bottom of the page to see the “Guidelines for National Reporting to CSD-18”.

Two approaches are suggested. First, countries may submit case studies only.

Or, alternatively, countries may provide case studies as well as comprehensive reporting linked to the 2007 CSD indicators of sustainable development. Information on the indicators is available at the UN website.

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natinfo/indicators/guidelines.pdf>

Expected Long Term Outcomes

It is anticipated that the meeting in May 2011 (CSD-19) will produce a “Ten year Framework of Programs (10YFP)” to guide work toward Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP). The Framework is likely to define the key programs that could support the transition towards “resource efficient/green economies” and “sustainable/low-carbon economies” as well as the measures of success.

Among the objectives which could be considered as guiding the 10YFP are:

- decouple economic growth from environmental degradation (e.g. increase resource and energy efficiency)
- change unsustainable consumption and production patterns
- dematerialize
- move to a low-carbon economy.

Conclusions

The UNCSD meetings may potentially have a major impact on the direction of future regulations affecting the non-ferrous metals industries. Among the impacts could be recommendations on targets, timelines, and permissible levels of emissions. The outcome of the UNCSD meetings may eventually be reflected in local, national and international regulations.

The ICSG secretariat will continue to monitor developments in the UNCSD process and will bring any issues of importance to the attention of member countries either through briefing notes or at upcoming Study Group meetings.

Comments or Questions

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