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Senior African civil servants benefit from minerals contracts and negotiations course

Dakar, Senegal, 15 September 2017 (IDEP) – The African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) recently brought together 30 senior government officials from 24 African countries in a course to help hone their skills on minerals contracts and negotiations.

The course was organized jointly with the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), a regional organization operating in 10 countries in West Africa.

IDEP Director Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane said the course was aimed at contributing to the development of a critical mass of highly-skilled middle and senior policy and decision makers who will be suitably or better equipped to design and manage mineral contracts for the development of their countries, sub-regions and the continent.

“Africa is not fully benefitting from its mineral wealth and its high time we start empowering our policymakers on how to negotiate well when it comes to our minerals as we work hard for the transformation of our economies and adding value to our raw materials,” she said.

“Above all, our extractive industries are dominated by multinational corporations so we need to ensure all negotiations and contracts benefit the continent. On the other hand, our governments should implement development plans that consider this sector in accordance with Agendas 2030 and 2063.”

Economic Affairs Officer with the African Minerals Development Centre (AMDC), Mr. Mkhululi Ncube, told participants it was crucial that the continent’s decision-makers were well-equipped in the designing of and managing of mineral contracts that do not shortchange the continent but support its structural transformation.

He also talked about the importance of artisanal small-scale mining and the role played by the AMDC and their interest in having civil society being invited to attend such meetings.

Course director, Oliver Maponga, from the ECA Southern Africa Office, talked about some of the constraints facing Africa in this area. He spoke about the limitation of knowledge, poorly designed frameworks and limited linkages between mining and other sectors on the continent.

Successful mining contracts, he said, will help Africa drastically reduce poverty levels within its communities.

Mr. Ibrahim Ansu Bangura, Program Officer responsible for Economic Governance at OSIWA, said good governance was key to making sure Africa made the most of its resources. He asked

participants to always have their country and continent's interests at heart when negotiating mineral contracts.

Representatives of the diplomatic missions in Dakar hailed IDEP for hosting a course they said was critical in tackling problematic issues in the continent's mining sector.

They urged participants to go back home and share the knowledge they gained during the course and also to remain active in their newly-formed network.

The course provided training on mineral contracts and negotiations, doing so primarily on the basis of the African mining vision as the framing standard which African leaders have adopted under the auspices of the African Union to ensure African countries get the best benefits from their mineral resources.

Participants came from Bissau Guinea, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

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