

Mining Sustainability actors concur on urgent implementation of the Africa Mining Vision

Addis Ababa, 10 February 2014 (ECA) - As the thousands of exhibitors, investors and industry experts scrambled for last minute business cards in the winding down of the 3-5 February Mining Indaba, an issue that resonated prominently at the sustainable mining discussions was the importance of the Africa Mining Vision, which sessions agreed, needs partnerships and must be fast tracked at the national level in order to catch up with the rapid developments on the continent.

African Union Commissioner for Trade and Industry, Fatima Haram Acyl said the Africa Mining Vision is a shared responsibility whose implementation requires the collaboration of many actors, including private sector civil society, parliaments, funding partners and governments. “The vision needs partnerships that are based on mutual benefits.” She said.

“We are extremely pleased that this year marks the first time Mining Indaba has featured AMV Day as a key feature of the Conference. This marks an important juncture in the dialogue between the private sector, policy makers and civil society on pertinent sustainability concerns,” said Antonio Pedro, Director at the Economic Commission for Africa’s Subregional Office for Eastern Africa

Organized by the African Minerals Development Centre (AMDC) partners, (African Union Commission, Economic Commission for Africa, UNDP Africa Bureau and the African Development Bank), as well as the World Bank, AMV day opened up a space for a much-needed frank dialogue with key industry leaders, government representatives and funding partners of the AMDC. There was agreement that the AMV is a journey whose success will depend on the formulation of Country Mining Visions.

Debates across the sustainability realm agreed that the AMV is about developing a competitive mining industry that is world class, is knowledge driven and can deliver value to shareholders. The AMV, it was stressed, speaks of the need for a well-governed mining sector that is equitable and that contributes to local linkages development as part of Africa’s structural transformation and industrialization process.

“Translating the AMV ambition requires a diversity of skills as well as solid partnerships and a broad range of interventions”, agreed discussants.

Pedro said the dialogue established at Mining Indaba achieved a number of key milestones. “AMV day will be a permanent feature of the Mining Indaba. This is an important outcome, for without permanent platforms for dialogue the AMV’s ambitious agenda cannot be realized,” he said.

He underlined that the collaborating partners, and in particular, through the African Union Commission will engage the business leaders through such associations as the chambers of mines.

Further, the platform for dialogue established at the Mining Indaba should lead to a much-needed global compact on mining sustainability as we move towards the post-2015 MDGs goals.

Other key issues featured in the week, included the need for tools to measure the contribution of mining to development and the need for a 'skills revolution' in building and strengthening local content linkages to the mining industry.

As stated by many of the mining companies exhibiting at Mining Indaba "What would make a huge difference to our operations is procuring services and implements locally." It cuts costs and contributes to jobs at the local level. Overall, this is good for business and for the economic growth of mining countries. They echoed the skills revolution call, stating that even at the local content level, much skills enhancement is needed.

It's not just skills in mining that are needed. We need to build collaboration across the sectors; Universities alone cannot meet the skills demand, stated Pedro.

"Once we have identified the skills gaps, it makes it easier to build a financing plan. UNDP's corporate framework has a best practice in this regard, said Angela Lusigi.