

Workshop on “United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Reserves and Resources- 2009 (UNFC-2009) Applications in Uranium and Thorium resources: Focus on Comprehensive Extraction”

Santiago, Chile, 9-12 July, 2013

Remarks delivered by Mr. Roberto Urquiza on behalf of the Minister of Mines of Chile

Thanks to:

- International Atomic Energy Agency
- Ibero-American Programme for Science, Technology and Development
- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
- Colegio de Ingenieros de Chile A.G
- Chilean Nuclear Energy Commission

that contributed to the completion of this workshop in Chile.

Chile is a small country in terms of area and population, as well as considering their contribution to global GDP. However, when we mention mining and particularly copper mining, Chile takes on another dimension. We have 28% of world reserves and produce about 34% of the world total. We also have excellent reserves of lithium, in quantity and quality, a mineral with particular relevance when we talk about new technologies.

Moreover, human capital that has developed the country is very well priced in the global labor market. The same engineering companies and support services for mining.

It is relevant to consider the mining cluster that happen around the mine sites. For instance, in the mining districts the workers receive on average higher wages than in those districts where there are other industries.

In many countries, mining is seen as a predatory activity; however, Chile has shown it can be done under the criteria of sustainable development.

In turn, being a high risk activity, it has the lowest accident rates. The safety of workers is an essential element for the Government and for the industry.

The traditional mining has been an important engine to achieve the level of the country development; however, in recent years the Government has emphasized the transition to a new phase of exports, ie, exports of services and expertise. To these ends, the government has provided funding mechanisms for the development of Centers of Excellence with the participation of prestigious foreign institutions.

Innovation and entrepreneurship are cornerstones in the new phase of the development challenges facing the country, and mining is part of this process.

Therefore, we have been enthusiastic about this workshop and having the opportunity to have this level of experts meeting in Santiago today.

The advantages of using new technologies to better exploitation of the deposits, the uranium recovery in those copper mines where some quantities has been discovered, as in Radomiro Tomic, opens new opportunities for the mining sector and for Chile.

The energy shortage in the north is something well known to the mining sector and a major concern for the government. The use of nontraditional renewable energy is still in the development process, since they have not yet achieved efficiency levels similar to the traditional ones.

Therefore, on behalf of the Minister of Mines, and with the conviction that Chile will achieved adequately the challenges that we will face in the future, through the development and application of new and more modern technologies, the Government welcomes the experts who have come from all around the world, to this important workshop.
