

## FOURTH UNECE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEETING ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*GENEVA, 1-2 December 2009*

### **Agenda item 8. Mining**

#### Intervention by Poland<sup>1</sup>

Poland fully supports the EU Presidency Speaking Note. I would like to present some information about Polish experiences in the area of sustainable mining.

All process of management of a mineral resource deposit and environmental protection in connection with the deposit's exploitation is based on the principles of sustainable development – legally on Geological and Mining Law Act.

Considerable part of the activity regulated by the Act -searching for or recognition of resources deposits, extraction of resources from deposits, tankless storage of substances and storage of waste in rock demand a concession. In most of the mining enterprises there is a need of providing the environmental impact assessment.

Regarding the Geological and Mining Law Act, the participation of local governments in undertaking concession decisions should be considered as a symptom of the sustainable development principle and environmental protection.

It is also significant in terms of environmental protection that the Act provides for the possibility to establish securities of claims that may arise due to operation of activities under concession, if a particularly important social goal connected in particular with environmental protection weighs in favor of it. Such protection is obligatory in case of storage of waste in the rock body. Another important instrument of environmental protection is the project for deposit development. This project specifies the intensions referring to protection of mineral resources deposits and exploitation technology providing limitation of its detrimental impact on the environment. The project must cover an optimal variant of the deposit's resources, requirements in connection with environmental protection, public safety, safety of human health.

In terms of the sustainable development rule of extreme importance is the obligation to create a mining plant liquidation fund, which is imposed on the entrepreneur that was granted a concession for mineral resource extraction, tankless storage or storage of waste in the rock body. Occupational safety of mining plant workers is also an important aspect of the sustainable development principle.

The Geological and Mining Law Act regulates also entrepreneur's obligations connected with the last stage of mining activity – liquidation of a mining plant. The entrepreneur must secure or liquidate mining workings and mining plant structures and equipment; secure the unexploited part of mineral resource deposit; secure adjacent mineral resources deposits; take measures required for protection of adjacent facilities' workings; take measures required for environmental protection, land remediation and development of areas of previous mining activity.

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<sup>1</sup> The text is presented as received from the author.

During operation of mining activity and liquidation of a mining plant, mining supervisory authorities conduct inspections regarding rational management of deposit and protection of respective environmental elements, as well as inspection of mining plants in terms of occupational health and safety.