

## **MEDIA RELEASE: AUSTRALIA-AFRICA MINING INDUSTRY GROUP**

**Wednesday, 11 June 2014**

### **IDRAM Initiative commences in Katanga Province, DRC (Congo)**

The **IDRAM Initiative** has commenced in the Katanga Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo. This is an emerging infectious diseases project focused on the resources industry, led by the **Centre for Global Health Security** at Chatham House in London, managed by **International SOS** and funded by **USAID**.

The mining companies in Katanga involved include **Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold** (Tenke Fungurume Mine), **Tiger Resources** (Kipoi Mine), **MMG** (Kinsevere Mine) and **Mawson West** (Dikulushi Mine). **International SOS** is coordinating the field work and providing the interface between the mining companies, the provincial health authorities, the University of Lubumbashi and the medical team. Four of the five companies above are AAMIG members.

In November 2012, the Australia-Africa Mining Industry Group ("AAMIG") attended a meeting at **Chatham House** in London on emerging infectious diseases in tropical hotspots around the world, referred to as the **IDRAM Initiative** (Extractive Industry Infectious Disease Risk Assessment Management).

The IDRAM Initiative is part of the **USAID Emerging Pandemic Threats Program**, which aims to pre-empt or combat at their source, emerging infectious diseases of animal origin, that pose a threat to human health. As approximately 75% of new human infectious diseases are believed to have emerged from animal reservoirs, they present a risk to resource companies as they, and their surrounding communities, push further and further into animal habitats. USAID has funded extensive research on these issues over the past five years. Its partners, **Ecology & Environment** and **FHI 360** have developed a toolkit that resource companies can use to examine vulnerabilities to zoonotic disease and consider mitigation measures to reduce the vulnerability.

AAMIG proposed field testing the toolkits in Katanga Province, DRC with well-established mining companies. This region of the world is home to emerging infectious diseases and outbreaks. As AAMIG's mission is to provide advice and support to the Australian extractives sector companies operating in Africa, our members have enthusiastically supported IDRAM.

The IDRAM Initiative will be a first for this kind of collaborative work with the extractive industry and AAMIG is pleased that this work will be initiated in the Katanga Province in collaboration with, and supported by a number of our member companies, the Governor of Katanga and the Provincial health authorities and Lubumbashi University. Results from this initiative may be applied in other tropical regions of the world.

The roll-out of the toolkit field testing scheduled for June of this year is also timely, given the recent outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, and underlines how relevant this work is to the extractive industry and its host communities.

The successful delivery of the IDRAM Initiative will enable companies to develop appropriate mitigation strategies with respect to emerging infectious diseases and disease outbreaks. It will also enable directors and officers of resource companies to better deliver on their duty of care responsibilities to their employees, as well as to the citizens of the regions in which they operate.

## IDRAM PARTNERS

**Chatham House** ( <http://www.chathamhouse.org> ) is home to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, a world-leading source of independent analysis, informed debate and influential ideas. It was founded in 1920 and is based in St James' Square, London. The Chatham House Rule, famous around the world for facilitating free speech and confidentiality at meetings, originated there. The Chatham House Centre on Global Health Security webpage can be found at: <http://www.chathamhouse.org/research/topics/global-health>

**USAID** ( <http://www.usaid.gov> ) is the lead U.S. Government agency that works to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient, democratic societies to realize their potential. USAID has been the primary funder of the IDRAM Initiative from its beginning in 2012.

**FHI 360** ( <http://www.fhi360.org> ) is a non-profit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways. Its work is grounded in research and science, strengthened by partnerships and focuses on building the capacity of individuals, communities and countries to succeed. **FHI 360** has co-developed the risk assessment toolkits that have underpinned the IDRAM Initiative.

**Ecology & Environment** ( <http://www.ene.com> ) is a global network of professionals and industry leaders in 85 engineering and scientific disciplines working together to develop and deliver solutions that promote environmental sustainability.

**International SOS** ( <https://www.internationalsos.com> ) is a worldwide medical support and evacuation service provider, actively involved at the mine sites of a number of the companies participating in the IDRAM Initiative. Given their medical in-country experience, ISOS will provide ongoing project leadership and coordination of initiative.

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## ABOUT AAMIG

Founded in May 2011, the Australia-Africa Mining Industry Group ("AAMIG") represents Australian and Australian-based exploration, mining, service and supply companies active in Africa.

AAMIG aims to support member companies and enhance their Social Licence to Operate, with a key focus on stakeholder engagement, sustainable community development, human rights and governance.

AAMIG is committed to supporting a "Team Australia" approach in regard to Australia's engagement with Africa, which includes building meaningful relationships between the mining industry and governments, not-for-profits and academia.

*This Media Release has been issued through Cannings Purple.*