

MEDIA RELEASE: AUSTRALIA-AFRICA MINING INDUSTRY GROUP

[Friday, 15 May 2015]

FEDERAL BUDGET SIGNALS NEW ERA FOR AUSTRALIA-AFRICA RELATIONS

The Australia Africa Mining Industry Group (AAMIG), the leading member association supporting the Australian extractive industry operating in Africa, said today that Australia will continue to build long-lasting and strategic partnerships with African countries as they grow and develop over the next decade, despite reductions in aid announced as part of the 2015 Federal Budget.

Some 220 ASX-listed companies operate in Africa, which is now the largest international market for Australian resource and METS (mining equipment and technology services) companies.

These companies are key partners for African countries exploring and developing their mineral endowment for broad-based economic and social development and over the last 15 to 20 years, Australia has been a major contributor with its entrepreneurial, ethical, responsible and well-run extractives companies making the ideal development partner for many African nations.

AAMIG is calling for public debate to shift from the outdated thinking of aid as philanthropy and charity, to aid as economic diplomacy delivering long-term development employing and sustaining generations of Africans.

“This is also what the people of Africa want; they want access to opportunities and to make those opportunities sustainable and permanent. They want to be involved and meaningfully engaged in productive economic enterprises. They often find such opportunities in well-managed, Australian mining, oil and gas companies working in their countries,” said AAMIG acting CEO Adel van der Walt.

In a further step towards stronger Australia-Africa relations, AAMIG has boosted its cooperation with the Australian Government including:

- Supporting Australia’s effective use of its embassies, ambassadors, trade commissioners and economic diplomacy programs to support African governments to create and maintain quality regulatory frameworks that will attract foreign direct investment;
- Representing industry to government on initiatives such as the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, anti-bribery and corruption measures, gender issues, local procurement, health issues and community development initiatives;
- Closely liaising with the Australian Federal Police (AFP), the Federal Attorney-General’s Department and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) in providing advice to Australian companies dealing with the challenges of operating in Africa, as well as working with agencies of the Western Australian government ; and
- Leading industry efforts to resolve barriers to investment in Africa and to ensure Australian companies operating in Africa operate to the highest possible governance, social and environmental standards.

On the eve of the budget, AAMIG held key meetings in Canberra with staff from Minister Bishop's Office and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Minerals Council of Australia, Office for National Assessments, Austrade and the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

"AAMIG acknowledges and supports efforts underway within government to bolster Australia-Africa relations and increase foreign direct investment and applauds both Minister Julie Bishop and DFAT staff for seeking new ways to collaborate with industry and make tax payers' dollars go further on the ground in Africa," said Ms van der Walt.

"We look forward to hearing more about the proposed centres of excellence for extractives from Minister MacFarlane's Department of Industry and to further discuss with DFAT how AAMIG can continue to engage with Australian and African governments."

"We urge the Federal Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Industry to maintain their focus on building strong strategic relationships with the countries of Africa to ensure that the mineral wealth of the continent is the driver for economic growth and jobs-led poverty alleviation."

"Australia and the Australian resources sector has a key role to play in making this happen."

ENDS

ABOUT AAMIG

Founded in May 2011, the Australia-Africa Mining Industry Group (AAMIG) is the leading member association supporting the Australian extractive industry operating in Africa. AAMIG facilitates the sharing of knowledge and experience to create better outcomes on the ground. We partner with Australian and African Governments to encourage productive engagement and promote the value of responsible corporate citizenship.

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 resources and extractives industry and governments as well as not-for-profits and academia.

AAMIG Contacts: Liam Foran, Project Manager, (08) 9226 0175
Adel van der Walt, Acting CEO

Media Contact: Annette Ellis
Cannings Purple
(08) 6314 6302

This Media Release has been issued through Cannings Purple.