

MEDIA RELEASE: AUSTRALIA-AFRICA MINING INDUSTRY GROUP

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Australian resource industry sits poised to support UN Sustainable Development Goals in Africa

Australia's mining industry can play a key role in helping Africa meet the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be launched in New York later this month, according to the Australia-Africa Mining Industry Group (AAMIG), the leading member association supporting the Australian extractive industry operating in Africa.

Speaking today at the Africa Down Under Conference in Perth, AAMIG CEO, Ms Trish O'Reilly, said Australian mining companies' track record of investment in Africa meant the industry could play a lead role in meeting the SDGs.

"In-ground discoveries made by Australian companies in Africa amount to A\$687 billion, and it is this mineral wealth that Australia can help unlock and translate into socio-economic growth, benefitting Africa's people" Ms O'Reilly said.

"The predicted investment by Australian companies in mining, and the resulting jobs growth, training, tax revenue and infrastructure development – including roads, rail and electricity – will be vital in efforts to permanently lift millions of people out of poverty. In this sense, the Australian resources industry's future investment in Africa is a potential game changer."

More than 200 Australian resources companies and 700 service and supply firms are involved in exploration, extraction and processing activities in Africa. There are more than 1,100 projects in various stages of development across 38 countries in Africa.

AAMIG's interaction with African governments over the past year has reaffirmed the belief that African nations are hungry for investment from Australian companies.

"In Australia, we have developed world-class technology and expertise in the resources sector over 150 years. We have refined a model that has strong regulatory standards, transparency, good governance, works well with local communities and integrates indigenous people into the associated economy through employment and procurement. We are proud of the quality of our domestic resources industry and we are exporting it to the world" Ms O'Reilly said.

"Against that background, 2015 is emerging for its Australian mining counterparts in Africa, as a watershed year for socio-economic development in Africa. On a global policy level, the SDGs – to be launched later this month in New York – will focus policy-makers' efforts on economic inclusion and participation.

"The challenge for Africa will be to attract investment which can lead to increased revenue for governments, employment of thousands of people and provide the training and opportunity for a new generation of African leaders with the global skills required to compete on the international stage.

“Mining can provide those opportunities and Australian companies operating across Africa are already well-regarded for their ability to provide positive social impacts on their host communities. However, they must continue to be innovative in their approach in order to both increase these positive impacts and improve their standing on that continent” Ms O’Reilly said.

AAMIG is engaged in a public debate about Australia’s relationship with Africa, to shift perceptions from outdated notions of Africa as a homogenous continent dependent on foreign aid, to an understanding of Africa as an investment destination comprising 54 sovereign states, a billion people and an emerging middle class which could number 300 million people in fifteen years.

AAMIG is also calling for those working between Australia and Africa to align their efforts and work towards a common purpose.

“We often use the term ‘Team Australia’ to describe the manner by which Australian industry, government, NGOs and universities work in concert with our African partners to support socio-economic development but at the moment, this is not happening as fluidly as it could. If we can achieve this, the Australian resources industry can be a key contributor to socio-economic development in Africa, and an important partner for African governments in their focus on the Sustainable Development Goals through to 2030” Ms O’Reilly said.

AAMIG is working hard to make this happen, building stronger Australia-Africa relations, and improving the positive social impacts that the resources industry has on the ground in Africa including:

- At Africa Down Under, AAMIG – along with UWA, DFAT and Murdoch University – is hosting a strategic discussion focusing on the future of Australia’s relationship with Africa. A range of topics will be addressed including; mining, foreign affairs, security, agriculture, health, education and sport. This information will be captured and form the basis of a discussion paper to be released early in 2016 on “Australia’s evolving relationship with Africa.”
- AAMIG is working with government on initiatives such as the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. AAMIG has signed up to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and is involved in a broad group of public and private actors on anti-bribery and corruption measures, gender issues, local procurement, health issues and community development initiatives;
- AAMIG is closely liaising with the Australian and African governments and will be hosting a number of historic roundtable meetings to discuss with senior diplomats, ministers and government personnel, the future of Australia Africa Relations;
- 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;
- Each year across Australia, AAMIG facilitates a range of events, presentations, roundtables and workshops for members across the following industry themes: risk management and social licence to operate

“We urge policy-makers, industry, NGOs and academia to get behind the Australian resources footprint in Africa, help refine the model to make it work for the people of Africa, get involved with the SDGs and play a part in the development of the countries of Africa over the next 15 years,” Ms O’Reilly said.

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

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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.

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