

**Ministry of Mines
Government of India**

F.no. 16/57/2005-MVI

New Delhi, dated 23rd December 2009

**Inputs invited from concerned members of public in preparation of
draft Sustainability Development Framework**

I am directed to state that India is among the ten mineral rich countries where development of a Mining Industry holds great promise. As demand from manufacturing sector has grown, mineral production has assumed importance. As mining sector has grown so have activities of exploration, prospecting and mining resulting in environmental disturbance and loss of ecological balance. This has necessitated fresh thinking on policy approaches and systems that ensure that Mining is done in a way that causes least damage to the natural resources such as air, water, soil, biomass, and also to human communities and life forms. One of the greatest challenges facing the world today is integrating economic activity with environment integrity, social concerns and effective governance systems. The goal of that integration can be seen as more sustainable development. This requires a robust framework based on an agreed set of broad principles, an understanding of the key challenges facing the sector at different levels and in different regions and the action needed to meet or overcome them; a process for responding to these challenges for protecting the rights and interest of all involved, ability to set priorities, ensure that action is taken at appropriate levels, and an integrated set of institution and policy instrument to ensure minimum standards of compliance as well as responsible voluntary actions. It also requires variable measures to evaluate progress and enable consistent improvements.

2. With the above mentioned objectives, the Ministry of Mines has appointed M/s ERM India (P) Ltd as their Consultants for preparation of a draft Sustainable Development Framework (SDF) for the Indian Mining Sector, in terms of the recommendations of the Hoda Committee. The draft SDF is likely to contain guidelines enabling formulation of project-level practices for sustainable mining, and shall include the following:

- (i) Specification of factors and parameters influencing sustainable and scientific mining (and indicators thereof)
- (ii) Broad criteria beyond which mining may not be deemed sufficiently sustainable and /or scientifically manageable
- (iii) Systemic measures needed to be taken or built in to increase sustainability of mining operations considering its entire life cycle, inter-alia
 - (a) Ensuring minimal adverse impact on quality of life of the local communities
 - (b) Protecting interests of affected persons including host populations
 - (c) Creating new opportunities for socio-economic development including for sustainable livelihoods
 - (d) Mineral conservation (both in terms of mining technologies/practices and mineral beneficiation)

- (e) Reduction in waste generation and related waste management practices
- (f) Minimizing and mitigating adverse environmental impacts particularly on surface as well as ground water (both in terms of its quality and availability as as resource), air, ambient noise and land
- (g) Ensuing minimal ecological disturbance, in terms of bio-diversity, flora, fauna and habitat
- (h) Promoting restoration and reclamation activities so as to make optimal use of mined out land for the benefit of the local communities
- (iv) Measurable indicators of sustainable development
- (v) Consultative mechanisms with stakeholder groups right from pre-mining stages (including exploration) through the life cycle and upto post closure stages to ensure that the stakeholder groups involvement and participation in identifying and addressing the sustainability issues,
- (vi) System of public disclosure of mining related activities and environmental parameters including indicators and mechanisms to facilitate formal and informal sustainability audits.

3. In order to take a holistic view towards sustainable mining in the country, comments of concerned members of the public are invited at the following e-mail – fidel.mehra@erm.com and anil.sub@nic.in or ppsdom@nic.in .

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(Anil Subramaniam)

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