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INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM
on Mining, Minerals, Metals and
Sustainable Development

PDAC-WEF International Mines Ministers Summit 2021

Preparing for the Future: Building resilience in the mineral industry

Summit Report

Virtual Summit
Monday, March 15, 2021

Prepared by the IGF

Summit Overview

The sixth annual International Mines Ministers Summit (IMMS) was held on Monday, March 15, 2021, and for the first time, it was held virtually. The Summit took place during the week following the annual Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) Convention, that was also held virtually for the first time in 2021. Government officials from twenty countries on five continents with responsibility for their respective mining sectors participated, as well as leaders of industry and civil society. PDAC, World Economic Forum (WEF), and the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF) co-hosted the Summit under the theme 'Preparing for the Future: Building Resilience in the Mineral Industry'. Considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, participants focused their interventions on the importance of a resilient mining sector to provide crucial financial and socio-economic benefits in a time of crisis. The IGF served as rapporteur for the Summit. The meeting followed the Chatham House rule.

Resource-rich countries were not spared from the disruption and hardship wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic: the virus afflicted operations of all sizes and complexity, and threatened the health of miners, support workers and communities. It disrupted the supply chains that both serve the mining sector and rely on its outputs. And it destabilised the global economy, leading to volatile swings in supply and demand for various metals and minerals.

IMMS participants representing governments, mining companies, and civil society described many of the policy responses they implemented to counter the affects of COVID-19 on their mining sectors. These policies ranged from deeming mining an essential industry and developing protocols to prevent virus transmission on mine sites, to grappling with severe outbreaks and shutting down operations. Participants also underscored that many mining companies worked to protect the health and safety of workers and surrounding communities by providing medical supplies, personal protective equipment, paid leave for staff, COVID-19 testing, and vaccine distribution.

There was recognition among participants that the unfolding crisis will not be the last. In addition to struggling to contain the virus and recover from its affects, governments around the world face the challenge of how to strengthen the resilience of their societies, economies, and environments to future shocks and stresses. These efforts at resilience-building must be broad, cross-sectoral, and require the support and participation of all stakeholders. IMMS participants stated that while there is room for further strengthening of the mining sector, in many cases it has proven to be among the most resilient sectors over the past year and provided important lessons that can be applied more broadly.

How Resilient was the Mining Sector in 2020?

Throughout the IMMS, mining ministers from across the globe spoke about the resilience demonstrated by the mining sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the crisis affected countries in unique ways, the industry was generally able to maintain operations and/or recover quickly from disruptions, particularly in nations with well-developed mining operations.

Health and safety measures to prevent transmission on mine sites were largely successful at keeping operations running safely and providing livelihoods, government revenue, mineral products, and other economic benefits as other sectors ground to a halt during the crisis.

Participants also shared that early concerns about major disruptions to mining supply chain proved to be largely unfounded, underlining the pre-existing resilience of mining-sector supply chains. Participants agreed that COVID-19 safety protocols have largely proven effective to date and expressed confidence in the continuation of mining operations as the pandemic plays out. This clear display of resilience left government officials with an enhanced appreciation for the mining sector and its unique value as a reliable part of national economies.

In contrast, speakers pointed out that mineral research, promotion, and other activities designed to attract new mineral development—specifically where these activities rely on foreign professionals—were and continue to be hindered by restrictions on global travel and convening.

Government-Industry Collaboration is Key

Participants from government, industry, and civil society echoed the importance of collaboration to promote resilience in the sector. In 2020, there were many examples of governments and industry working together to meet the challenges of the pandemic by establishing effective health and safety protocols as well as mitigating and preventing outbreaks in and around mine sites. Without this collaboration, the mineral sector would have been subject to more disruption, compounding the widespread economic damage experienced in other parts of the economy.

Government, industry, and civil society representatives applauded these collaborative initiatives, and underscored that continuing cooperation will help build trust among all stakeholders in the years to come.

Preparing for the Future to Promote Resilience

While the mineral sector proved relatively resilient during the crisis, ministers admitted that the crisis exposed some serious vulnerabilities. They committed to learning from these important lessons to build further resilience in mining and beyond. They also saw opportunity in the urgent need for climate action and the role of critical minerals and metals in the low-carbon energy transition and efforts to build back better. The wind turbines, solar panels, batteries, and electric vehicles needed to power the green recovery will depend on material inputs from mining, and many countries are working to better understand – through geological surveys and collaboration with industry – how they can help meet this demand. At the same time, mining – as a significant global energy user – must adapt in order to support the push toward net zero emissions by 2050.

Risk management is firmly embedded in the DNA of mining, and participants agreed that maintaining this forward-looking disposition is central to strengthening resilience in the industry. Important emerging technologies are rapidly changing the nature of work, alongside growing calls for inclusivity, equity, and social justice that underline the need for governments to adopt laws and policies that promote a well-managed and trusted industry.

Governments expressed strong intentions to promote new mineral investments and developments in their territories through a variety of measures, such as adopting laws and policies that are in line with international best practices to attract investment, promote inclusive growth, ensure environmental stewardship, and improve the reputation of the mining sector. Ministers also agreed that supporting workers is critical, not only during the pandemic, but in the years ahead, and that they must help ensure workplace safety and boost skills and capacity building programs to strengthen workforces and protect employment opportunities.

Annex 1: Delegate List

Afghanistan	Mr. Mohammad Ateeq Zaki	Deputy Minister of Mines and Petroleum
Algérie	H.E. Mohamed ARKAB	Minister of Energy and Mines
Burkina Faso	Hon. Bachir Ismaël OUEDRAOGO	Minister Delegate to the Minister of Energy and Mines
Cameroon	M. DODO NDOKE Gabriel	Minister of Mines, Industry and Technological Development
Canada	Hon. Seamus O'Regan	Minister of Natural Resources
Chile	Mr. Juan Carlos Jobet	Minister of Energy and Mines
Colombia	Hon. Diego Mesa Puyo	Minister of Mines and Energy of Colombia
Dominican Republic	Mr. Miguel Diaz	Vice-Minister of Energy and Mines
Ecuador	H.E. Rene Ortiz	Minister of Energy and Non-Renewable Resources
Finland	Mr. Petri Peltonen	Under-Secretary of State
Guatemala	Lic. Alberto PIMENTEL	Minister of Energy and Mines
Mongolia	Batnairamdal Otgonshar	Vice-Minister of Mining and Heavy industry
Namibia	Hon. Tom Alweendo	Minister of Mines and Energy
Nigeria	Arc. Hon. OLAMILEKAN ADEGBITE	Minister of Mines and Steel development
Peru	Mr. Jaime Gálvez	Minister of Energy and Mines
Republic of Uzbekistan	Mr. Bobir Islamov	Chairman, State Committee for Geology and Mineral Resources
South Africa	Hon. Samson Gwede Mantashe	Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy
Sweden	Mr. Emil Högberg	State Secretary
United Kingdom	The Rt Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan	Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth
Zambia	Hon. Richard Musukwa	Minister of Mines and Minerals Development

Annex 2: Invited Guests

B2Gold	Bill Lytle	SVP Operations
BMO Financial Group	Hon. Scott Brison	Vice-Chair, Investment & Corporate Banking
BMO Financial Group	Ilan Bahar	Managing Director and Co-Head, Global Metals & Mining Group BMO Capital Markets
Canadian International Resources and Development Institute (CIRDI)	Wendy Harris	President and CEO
Development Partner Institute	Wendy Tyrrell	Executive Director
Golden Valley Mines Ltd.	Glenn Mullan	CEO
International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM)	Aidan Davy	COO and Director, Environmental Programme
Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, and Sustainable Development (IGF).	Greg Radford	Director
IWIM	Barbara Dischinger	Director
PDAC	Felix Lee	President
The World Economic Forum	Jörgen Sandström	Head of Mining and Metals Industry
World Bank	Demetrios Papathanasiou	Global Director
World Gold Council	Peter Sinclair	Senior Advisor