Woman and Mining II Conference

Background and Overview

BACKGROUND

The Woman and Mining II Conference which took place in Madang in June 2005 was the fourth in a series of mining conferences jointly organized by the Department of Mining and the World Bank as follows:

- Mining and Community Development, July 1998
- Sustainable Mining Development, September 2002
- Women in Mining, August 2003
- Woman and Mining II, June 2005.

Mining and Community Development, July 1998

It was only in the 1990s that social issues started to come to the fore in the mining sector and the first Madang Conference in 1998 took stock of how social issues were being addressed in the various mining projects in Papua New Guinea. Broadly speaking it addressed the "Social License to Operate" in the mining sector. The conference revealed that social issues were being addressed to a greater or lesser extent in all of the mining projects in PNG and that, because of the customary land ownership, mining companies in PNG required not only required a "de facto" social license to operate but also required a "de jure" social license to operate. This was embedded in the Forum process by which large scale mining licenses are granted. Presentations were made regarding each of the major mining operations not only by company representatives but also by community members which provided a rich opportunity for the two sides to better understand not only what the companies were doing but also how the communities were being impacted.

The conference was extremely well attended. When it was first proposed, the organizers expected sixty to one hundred attendees. When it took place the attendance exceeded two hundred and one of the attendees commented that it was the first conference he could remember where the number of people in the conference room on the last day was the same as on the first day. Attendees included both local participants and international participants from a dozen countries in the Pacific and Africa and there was a general view among the international participants that social issues were being addressed in a more advanced manner in the PNG mining sector than in the other countries represented, even including Australia.

The event was well attended by all the three main stakeholder groups – companies, communities and governments and proved to be a very constructive place for the parties to better understand the concerns of each other – which was not always happening well in site specific situations. While the conference demonstrated a strong
willingness on the part of companies to address social issues, it also showed that the results were very mixed and that in some cases a pre-occupation with what company management considered the right things to do was not always meeting the needs and interests of the communities themselves.

Sustainable Mining Development September 2002

The positive outcomes from the first event provided the basis for a second follow up conference, which broadened and deepened the theme from mining/community relationship issues to issues of long term community sustainability. In particular the 2002 “Sustainable Mining Development”. conference looked at the issues of the sustainability of communities after mines are closed. The focus of the Conference addressed an emerging shift from the traditional concept of an enclave mining operation to sustainable mining development. As one speaker said, “the new paradigm is ask not what the community can do for the mining operation, instead ask what can the mining operation can do for the community”. In this context, the mining operators also recognized that they would be judged in part by the legacy they left behind after the mining operation ceased and one company executive noted that companies were moving into a situation where they would need a “Ticket to Exit”.

The second conference built on the trust and mutual respect that had been developed during the first conference and demonstrated that considerable strides were being made at each of the mine sites on community related issues. The Conference also benefited from background papers for a Government White Paper on Sustainable Mining Development – prepared with support from the World Bank Papua New Guinea Mining Technical Assistance and Institutional Strengthening Project. While the initiative taken by the Department of Mines to develop a Sustainable Mining Development Policy was very positive, the results of the work raised some key questions regarding the capacity of government at all levels - local, provincial and national - to use mining related income well. The participants included a group of community women from Lihir who talked with the staff from the Department of Mining and the World Bank about the profound and often unrecognized impacts that mining was having on the lives of women and children in the community. The outcome of these discussions was that the Department of Mining and the Bank made a commitment to put on a third conference which would address Women and Mining issues.

Women in Mining, August 2003

The third Conference, Women and Mining, represented yet again new ground for both the Department of Mining and the World Bank. Like the 1998 Conference, it was organized with great uncertainty as to how well it would be attended, what would happen and what the outcomes would be. Like the first two conferences, the Program was built around presentations on each of the main mining operations, presentations on relevant themes and presentations by international participants. As it turned out, like the first two conferences the event was very well attended – with about two hundred participants – but with a very noticeable change in constituency. First, more then three quarters of the
participants were women – compared with about one quarter at each of the first two events. Second, about half of the participants were community women who were attending because they saw the conference as the first opportunity for their views to be heard and because, in many cases, they wanted to find out more about mining and women’s issues.

The event was enthusiastically attended by the participants. As an example, in the case of Porgera the women hired a bus themselves and drove for thirty six hours to attend the conference. By the end of the first day, the organizers knew this would be different from the previous events. Several of the NGO participants expressed concerns that they had not been sufficiently consulted on the Program and that the event would be managed by the Department and the Bank and would not be an authentic opportunity for the women to express themselves or their frustrations. Consequently, one of the keynote speakers and international participants, Dr Geraldine McGuire, with no forewarning at all, was thrust into the role of moderator – to be an independent voice to make sure that the women were able to fully express their views.

One of the major outcomes from the conference was the preparation of a “Vision Statement” which clearly articulated the main issues for women in mining communities and their vision for a better future where each of the issues were addressed in an effective manner. This vision included the mitigation of the adverse impacts occurring in mining communities and the strengthening and expansion of the positive effects and improvements in opportunities for women.

During the conference, a Women in Mining Steering Committee was formed that started meeting in Port Moresby. The Steering Committee helped review and finalize the Outcomes Reports for the 2003 Conference, and later helped shape the program for the 2005 Women and Mining II Conference. In the interim, the Steering Committee met from time to time to support progress on women’s issues. The Steering Committee also helped guide a Rapid Assessment of Women’s Issues and Activities at each of the main mining sites in PNG which was undertaken with funds from Norwegian-Dutch Trust Fund for Mainstreaming Gender (GENFUND) and was presented at the 2005 Conference.

OVERVIEW - Woman and Mining II Conference

Introduction

The 2005 Conference was then organized and took place, again with a strong attendance and a program built around presentation for each of the PNG major mining and petroleum communities, as well as some thematic and international presentations. There was a significant change in the PNG women’s outlook since the first event. The conference participants demonstrated a real desire to take charge and responsibility for themselves and to be seriously part of the processes of mining and petroleum and not to be sidelined. Government, companies and international institutions were on notice that they could no longer treat women’s concerns as mere ‘add-ons’. The participants showed
that they are people with rights, who know their rights, and who are now speaking with a united voice.’

The conference demonstrated that women can clearly articulate their concerns and propose a constructive way forward to improve the situation. It also recognised the need to find ways to raise the awareness and understanding of the male managers of mining and men in mining communities. There was a concern that men do not seem to recognize that their own development is hindered because they’re stifling the development of their women.

**PNG Presentations**

The Conference was opened by the PNG Minister for Mining, the Hon Sam Akotai, who noted that the Government was taking the voice of women very seriously. At the national level, the Minister pointed to the role of women in moving forward the peace process at Bougainville where a Provincial Parliament has just been re-constituted and now includes three seats for women. Regarding the mining sector, he pointed to the establishment of a women’s desk in the soon-to-be-created Mineral Resources Authority and a proposed amendment to the Mining Act that will earmark some of the mining royalties specifically for women’s projects. The GENFUND-supported Rapid Assessment of Women’s Issues and Activities included community by community comparisons that generated considerable interest among the attendees and for some items even controversy. It was noted that this was a rapid assessment and that the results needed to be disseminated and discussed and that further in-depth work follow-up work should be considered. The Chamber of Mines and Petroleum indicate it plans to organize a response from the various mining companies.

The project by project presentations outlined considerable initiatives that benefit women and their families. Ok Tedi is providing medical teams to visit remote villages with 10,000 children under eleven years of age immunised, over 2000 adults treated as patients and 5000 injections provided to protect against the yaws disease. Ok Tedi also has broad based initiatives to address HIV/AIDS in both the workforce and the community. The experience at Ok Tedi is not unique. All of the major mining operations – Ok Tedi, Lihir, and Porgera, as well as newer, smaller projects such as Tolukuma, Morobe and Kainantu have now appointed Women’s Officers to be responsible for women’s issues in the workforce and women’s projects in the community.

Presentations at the conference demonstrated that not only are the companies starting to specifically support women’s activities but the women are taking initiatives to improve the situation themselves. For example, the Porgera Women’s Association was first registered in 1995. Today it supports 65 sub-groups, and has many diverse and successful programs including a strong micro-credit program for women, delivery of literacy programs to women and support for subsistence agriculture and environmental projects.
Representatives of the Department of National Planning & Rural Development reported on progress being made at the national level on women’s issues especially regarding women’s microfinance credit schemes for women. In addition, microfinance training programs were provided at Porgera, Lihir and Tabubil (Ok Tedi) as part of the World Bank funding for Sustainable Development Training.

**International Presentations**

The Madang Conference included international speakers whose presentations indicated that Papua New Guinea and South Africa are in the forefront of addressing women’s issues in the mining sector whereas India and Pakistan are lagging far behind. Presentations indicated that women are being better included in traditional, community based small scale-mining in the Philippines and the Fiji mining law is being modernised and changes will include revising outdated provisions that restricted the role of women in the mining workforce because of their gender.

In Poland, the “Women in Mining Project” which was undertaken with support from the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP) has helped train 24 women leaders from local communities impacted by the mining contraction on issues such as Psychology; Legislation; Small Business Development; Public Speaking; Public Relations; Employment Counselling; and Entrepreneurship Basics. These women leaders are now helping women in the Polish communities to overcome the negative impacts such as social breakdown, domestic violence and high crime rate which have resulted from the downsizing of the Polish coal industry.

**A Five Year Women and Mining Action Plan**

While there were many examples of improvements in the lives of women in the mining communities, there was also an emerging concern on the part of the conference participants that women’s issues were not being addressed in a systematic manner. The 2003 Conference identified several key actions that needed to be taken in order implement the Vision Statement. There was a general recognition by all of the participants that the follow-up to the previous Conference had not been undertaken in a systematic or well organized manner. The Papua New Guinean participants requested that rather than taking time to come up with a new set of recommended actions, the program for the last day of the Conference be revised to allow an open discussion of how to implement all of the actions as identified in the Summary Outcomes Report of the 2003 Conference.

As a result, the agenda for the last day was thrown out and instead the Papua New Guinean women met most of the day in their own plenary session moderated by Dame Meg Taylor. The language of this plenary session was changed from English to pidgin and thereby truly giving a voice to all of the "grass roots" participants, not just those comfortable speaking English. The international participants met in smaller groups and had their own discussions, graciously allowing the PNG participants to engage together. This provided a unique opportunity for the community women and the government
representatives to engage on what had or had not been done over the past two years and how to get more organized implementation of the previously recommended activity.

The outcome of the PNG internal deliberations – which lasted most of the final day – was one that no one would have easily predicted - a commitment by all concerned to prepare a Five Year Women and Mining Action Plan. The participants agreed that the representatives from each of the mining communities would prepare an implementation Action Plan for their community and that a follow up meeting would be held in September to amalgamate the individual plans into a 5 year National Action Plan. The national Action Plan would be prepared by the Government representatives with the Department of National Planning and Rural Development with the Department of Mining taking the lead. The five year period was chosen to align with the Government’s Medium Term Development Strategy. The conference participants for the petroleum sites who had been active during the conference and made some presentations regarding women’s issues in the petroleum sector requested that the Department of Petroleum and Energy (who had participants at the Conference) be included in the workshop so that it would become an Extractive Industries Women’s Initiative (EIWI). All of the participants also called upon both the World Bank and the Chamber of Mines and Petroleum to support the process.

In closing the Conference Dame Meg Taylor commended the participants and assured them of the World Bank Group’s support. “This is an important day for the women in the mining and petroleum sectors in Papua New Guinea” she said, “their actions in taking responsibility for developing the five year National Action Plan to realize the Vision Statement set an example for other sectors to follow. This is what is needed if mining development is to be inclusive and bring about long lasting improvements for women – both during the mine life and after closure.”

September 2005 Follow-Up Workshop

Following the conference the various groups departed with the next follow up step being the September Workshop at which the various mining communities would present their Action Plans and the Department of National Planning and Rural Development and Department of Mining would start the process of amalgamating them into the National Women and Mining Action Plan. The outcomes of the September Workshop would be shared with the World Bank representatives through a video conference at that time.

Footnote: This note was prepared by John Strongman with assistance from Graeme Hancock. CD ROM Proceedings of the previous conferences are available from Department of Mining, the World Bank or Margaret Reid, the Conference Organizer for all of the events. The Conferences have been organized with the support (in alphabetical order) of several donors including AUSAid, the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP), the Norwegian-Dutch Trust Fund for Mainstreaming Gender (GENFUND) and several mining companies including Highlands Kainantu Limited, Lihir Gold Limited, Placer Pacific, Porgera, Ok Tedi Mining Limited, and Mineral Resources Development Corporation (MRDC), Placer Dome Niugini Limited, and PNG Chamber of Mines & Petroleum and Rio Tinto.