

Non-Ferrous Metals Consultative Forum On Sustainable Development

The Hague, Netherlands
November 25-26, 2002

CHAIRMEN'S SUMMARY

The three international non-ferrous metals study groups – the International Copper Study Group, the International Lead and Zinc Study Group and the International Nickel Study Group – and their member countries convened the third Non-Ferrous Metals Consultative Forum on Sustainable Development in The Hague, Netherlands, on November 25 and 26, 2002. The Forum was co-chaired by Sauli Rouhinen, Ministry of the Environment, Finland, and Léon Doyen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium. Some 60 delegates from 18 countries attended, including government officials and representatives from environment, social and other non-governmental organisations. There was a strong Forum attendance from industry, industry associations and governmental organisations such as UNCTAD, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). A list of Forum delegates is attached.

The Forum was convened to review the results of the three Working Groups and consider a path forward. The Production Working Group, the Product Stewardship Working Group and the Science, Research and Development Working Group were established with a mandate to bring together existing work, share information, identify gaps, and rapidly initiate activities identified by the Forum for future action. Over 100 participants from governments, industry, industry associations, non-governmental organisations, academia and intergovernmental organisations have been collaborating in the work of the three groups over the past two years.

The co-chairs from each of the three Working Groups presented their achievements and recommendations to move the work forward.

PRODUCTION WORKING GROUP

The Working Group reported on its evaluation of the effectiveness of drivers for Sustainable Development (SD) and Community Engagement (CE) approaches in non-ferrous metals production. The financial community was included in its review, as this sector is considered to be a potential driver for sustainable development in the mining and minerals sector. To analyse the SD and CE initiatives, the Working Group compiled inventories on SD practices and CE approaches. Although the inventories are not comprehensive, they still provide a representative overview of existing initiatives. Most of the SD initiatives appeared to be government led and mainly environment oriented. Only a few drivers included a “triple bottom line” approach, addressing simultaneously issues related to the economic, social and environmental pillars of the SD concept. Most of the CE initiatives included in the inventory were initiated by industry, mainly directed towards capacity building tools for solving local problems. About 30% of the reported SD drivers and half of the CE initiatives were reported as being successful. However, respondents did not provide information on the indicators and criteria used to evaluate the initiatives. The Working Group therefore recommended selecting criteria and indicators for assessing specific initiatives. The Working Group concluded that although the financial sector is a potentially important driver for SD in the mining and minerals industry, there is currently no evidence that companies with good SD practices get preferential treatment from banks and other institutions. To evaluate the potential impact of the financial sector, the Working Group recommended assessing the possible role of this sector more thoroughly. Further work would also be needed to appraise more clearly the role of governments in assisting SD policies related to the mining and minerals industry.

SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

The Working Group reported that the Science Research Network was now functioning on the Forum's web site at www.nfmsd.org. The Forum recognised that the Network was an important output of the Forum and that it represented a useful tool in understanding the link between science and the sustainable development of non-ferrous metals. It endorsed the work done and recommended that further work be done to analyse key users of the Network to guide future work on science issues. It was also recommended that steps be taken to establish formal links with the web sites of the non-ferrous metals industry associations, with government members' research sites, and with the web sites of research institutes that appear on the Network to help the Network's visibility to improve further. The Working Group's report on scientific and policy issues relating to risk assessment of non-ferrous metals was approved and the Forum recommended that future work undertaken on risk assessment should be widened to include elements of risk management – following a broader approach that could be termed risk analysis. It proposed that work should be done to show how risk analysis as a tool could contribute to product stewardship; that linkages between the tools used in risk analysis and approaches to life-cycle management should be explored; that workshops or working groups on specific issues such as the current state of knowledge in the science of bio-availability of metals or risk assessment methodologies should be convened; and that future presentation of work on risk analysis should be targeted carefully at audiences to ensure that recommendations are taken up. The Forum endorsed the valuable work undertaken to date that had contributed to improving understanding of both the use of life-cycle analysis (LCA) as a tool and its potential limitations, and agreed that a broader "life-cycle thinking" that included elements of materials choice and the efficient use of resources should be analysed. The Forum recommended that detailed consideration be given to how the LCA work undertaken could be used as a tool within a product stewardship scheme and risk analysis; that consideration should be given to fostering understanding of a life-cycle management approach to non-ferrous metals; that an approach to LCA that recognised the different priorities of the developed and developing worlds should be elaborated on; and that the shortcomings regarding LCA that had been identified should be communicated to regulatory agencies.

PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP WORKING GROUP

The Working Group reported back to the Forum on its efforts to develop tools and guidelines for a product stewardship scheme for non-ferrous metals. Among the

achievements to date, the Working Group developed a template of product stewardship principles, criteria and indicators and tabled the results of a preliminary questionnaire on product stewardship performance within selected companies in the non-ferrous metals industry. The Forum recommended continuing to develop a product stewardship framework in close collaboration with industry and other key stakeholders. Recognising that responsible product management should be an integral part of good business practice, the Forum identified the need to demonstrate more clearly the benefits of adhering to a product stewardship scheme. Aiming at developing the "business case for product stewardship," the communication of benefits should be directed to both industry and other supportive key stakeholders such as consumers, governments and NGOs. The Forum recommended that future work should continue to take stock of existing experiences within the non-ferrous metals industry. The preliminary questionnaire was regarded to be a useful tool for assessing the current product stewardship performance of industry. Building on the outcomes of the results of the questionnaire, the Forum recommended that future work should expand the exercise to reach wider global coverage and to arrive at a representative crosscut of the industry. Furthermore, the questionnaire should aim at identifying the benefits and difficulties related to the product stewardship concept from the industry's perspective. While broadening the questionnaire exercise to include companies without prior knowledge of product stewardship, the questionnaire should be refined, aiming at clarifying definitions and avoiding extensive use of technical jargon. While referring to the Forum's original "Vision statement," it was highlighted that any framework to be developed should be compatible and consistent with management tools and schemes addressing other aspects of sustainable development. The Forum recognized the need to address a common set of principles and criteria that allows for flexibility of implementation depending on regional conditions and commodity variability.

Key findings and outputs from each of the three Working Groups and background papers presented at the Forum meeting are available on the Forum's web site at www.nfmsd.org.

THE WAY FORWARD

Forum participants restated their commitment to the Forum process and support for the work accomplished to date by the three Working Groups. It was recognised that the outcomes of this work were already having an influence on discussions in other forums with an interest in mining, minerals and metals. The Forum recognised that as a multi-stakeholder group, the Consultative Forum was unique in its ability to look at issues related to the mining, minerals and metals sector from a non-ferrous metals perspective.

Recognising the need to take actions forward in an integrated and targeted approach, the Forum agreed to refocus its future work plan and build on the outcomes from the work of the three Working Groups in a co-ordinated manner under the unified theme of stewardship. To take its work forward, the Forum approved the establishment of an "Implementation Task Force" to comprise co-chairs of the three former Working Groups, Working Group Champions, the Study Group Secretariats and other interested parties. The Task Force will consider the Working Groups' results, use of analytical tools, and communication issues, and look at further development of the Forum's product stewardship framework and draw up a work plan for consideration by Forum participants. As a first priority, the Task Force will focus its efforts on:

- Further developing a product stewardship framework for the non-ferrous industry;
- Issues related to life-cycle management and risk analysis;
- Building the business case for sustainable development;
- Indicators for community engagement;
- Enhancing the Science Research Network;
- The development of a communications strategy for improving the Forum's visibility and ability to interact with other forums; and
- Analysing the role of the financial sector as it impacts on the non-ferrous metals industry.

The Implementation Task Force will draw up a draft work plan early in January 2003 that will then be submitted to the participants in the Forum in The Hague and the Study Groups. A revised work plan will then be developed by the Implementation Task Force at the end of January.

At its last meeting in Porto, the Consultative Forum recommended that a workshop be organized to address issues regarding recycling technology transfer and sound policy development on metals recycling with special focus on developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Recognizing this, the International Copper Study Group, the International Lead and Zinc Study Group, and the International Nickel Study Group will jointly organize an international workshop on metals recycling in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, September 10-12, 2003. The theme of the multi-stakeholder workshop will be to look at metals recycling from a developing world and economies in transition perspective. Workshop participants will identify issues and outline possible solutions towards the development of national and international policies or strategies to encourage the sustainable management of recoverable metal-bearing materials and resources.

The co-chairs noted the continued strong commitment of Forum participants to work collectively to achieve tangible results through the Forum process. Considerable

progress has been made already through the entirely voluntary efforts of this global group of stakeholders.

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