

**Second session of the General Assembly**  
**Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals**  
**Interactive exchange of views on conceptualizing the sustainable development goals and**  
**the sustainable development goals process**

Co-chair meeting  
April 17-19, 2013

Intervention by the Mining Working Group at the UN

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Thank you for this opportunity to address the Open Working Group today.

The Mining Working Group at the UN represents a number of NGO representing constituencies in all continents, engaging with people who are negatively impacted and impoverished by current natural resource extraction practices.

The importance of this discussion on Poverty eradication and Sustainable Development Goals cannot be underestimated. In furthering this conversation, the Mining Working Group at the UN offers three key concerns for consideration that highlight deeper issues at stake:

First: a focus on root causes of poverty.

Second: sustainability within planetary boundaries.

Third: the fallacy of natural resource extraction as key to sustainable development.

**First:**

To be truly transformative, SDGs must hone in on the root causes of poverty rather than focusing primarily on poverty eradication. Poverty eradication most often limits itself to the symptomatic management of poverty rather than striking at the reasons for, and thus the very heart of, poverty itself.

The Mining Working Group at the UN does support the current proposal in the Issues Paper on Poverty Eradication that that polices (quote) " that may accentuate or perpetuate poverty and exclusion, or cause a deterioration in the natural environment, would need to be identified and their impacts ameliorated. " (end quote) However, this proposal must also include one of the chief causes of poverty, that is, natural resource extraction as often currently practiced and the cumulative impact on communities where mining concessions are granted.

**Second:**

Poverty eradication must be considered within our planetary boundaries and in light of global sustainability.

An SDG transformative agenda must account for the negative economic, social and ecological impact of natural resource extraction and member states are advised to undertake scientific study of the cumulative impact of granting oil, gas and mining concessions on life, livelihood and health of local communities and the health of vital ecosystems necessary to sustain life. Moreover, in these SDG discussions the local people's experience of the negative and cumulative impact of natural resource extraction must be heard, understood, and heeded.

**Third:**

Natural resource extraction has been proposed by many member states as an enabler of SD and poverty eradication. This assumption must be critically challenged in SDG discussions and proposals.

One of the most urgent scrutinies in the SDG discussions ought to address the negative ecological, economic, social and, indeed, cumulative impact of natural resource extraction, in the manner in which it is currently practiced and understood in development.

In conclusion, the negative impact of natural resource extraction remains a cross cutting issue of deep concern and must be an essential component in any thematic considerations of the water, food, energy and ecological sustainability. These conversations are fundamental to addressing inequalities and injustices in the protection of vital ecosystems, poverty eradication, and the people's right to development and participatory democracy.

Thank you.