

Responsible mining means transparency, citizen engagement and economic growth

There is no question that the minerals sector will play a major role in Mongolia's future. Mongolia has some of the world's largest mineral deposits but exploration and mining efforts are still in the very early stages because stakeholders, including government, civil society and industry, are all having trouble reconciling their views and agreeing on a way forward. Debates center around the benefits of profit sharing versus state equity, fair taxation policies, uses of revenues generated from mining, transparency and accountability in government spending and company operations, and environment and human health. As the debate rages on Mongolia stands paralyzed and continues to forfeit development, economic growth, jobs, prosperity and adequate environmental protections.

I do not want to get into the politics of government equity that is being discussed in Parliament now. I want simply to encourage all stakeholders to engage transparently, and more constructively, in a dialogue that will advance responsible mining for the benefit of all Mongolians.

The Responsible Mining Initiative (RMI) was created to respond to calls from stakeholders across sectors for greater dialogue, cooperation and information related to the development of the mining sector, and its impact on the economy, the environment and the future of all Mongolians. The RMI is an independent, Mongolian non-profit, non-governmental organization equally representing stakeholders from government, industry, civil society and academia with a common mission to promote responsible mining for the benefit of all Mongolians.

The RMI Board is comprised of an equal number of Mongolian experts from their relevant sectors, who bring to the table not only a desire to see Mongolia thrive, but also the experience and dedication to make it happen. The RMI seeks to build a common understanding of responsible mining among all stakeholder groups to advance mining that generates growth, jobs and prosperity. The RMI strives to be a reliable, objective and transparent source of information on responsible mining. It encourages equal participation of all stakeholders in the promotion and development of responsible mining in Mongolia.

The RMI is a relatively new NGO in terms of the date it was registered with the government, but in fact the Board members have been meeting for more than a year, and its members uphold a common definition of responsible mining and 8 guiding principles developed in 2007 through the multi-stakeholder forum for responsible mining in Mongolia. This definition and these principles were adopted by leading representatives from government, industry, civil society and academia for the benefit of Mongolians, and are based on international best practice.

Important to note is, the RMI is made up of and works for the Mongolian society. Its mission and goals include developing accountability systems in the mining sector that will transcend political volatility. The RMI ensures equal representation of stakeholders as it advances its work to promote responsible mining for the benefit of all Mongolians. This includes:

- Develop standards and norms for responsible mining
- Advocate for policies and programs that promote responsible mining

Educate the public on responsible mining and encourage public participation in the promotion of responsible mining.

The point is simple: Mongolia and all Mongolians can and should benefit from the development of a responsible minerals sector. The devil, as they say is in the details. We are at a critical time when politics should take a back seat to strong and well thought out policy that works for transparency and accountability of the industry and the government, long term sustainable economic and community development for communities and the nation, securing environmental and human health. The path to take this beyond politics and into reality is open and informed engagement between the stakeholders – in short it is the path of the RMI.

Mr. Z. Enkhbold, Member of Parliament
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Board Member