



# CASUALTY OR CATALYST: GENDER EQUALITY AND THE FUTURE OF MINING

OTTAWA, CANADA

JUNE 12, 2019

## MEETING SUMMARY

The Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF), Carleton University and the Canadian International Resources and Development Institute (CIRDI) co-hosted *Casualty or Catalyst: Gender equality and the future of mining* on June 12, 2019, in Ottawa, Canada, at Carleton University. The audience of over 70 people included policy-makers, members of civil society and academics.

Expertly moderated by Mora Johnson from the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, the event focused on six overarching themes:

- Indigenous approaches to gender equality in mining
- Persistent challenges that constrain gender equality in mining across artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), small and medium enterprises, and large-scale operations

- Exploring how and why solidarity matters, and how we build spaces for cooperation across all stakeholder groups
- Data transparency
- Lessons learned from emerging and advanced industrial economies to advance gender equality
- Sexual and gender-based violence in the mining sector.

The keynote presentation, delivered by Canadian mining engineer and ASM expert Jennifer Hinton, drew from her deep experience with mining in sub-Saharan Africa to explore the complex interlinkages between social hierarchies, gendered divisions of labour, and mining forms and dynamics.

The first half of the event focused on “lightning talk” presentations from four speakers before transitioning into a panel discussion and Q+A with participants. The lightning talks focused on a number of timely topics related to gender equality and mining, including: the impact of



mining activities on Inuit women in Canada's Arctic; the role of local communities in designing and executing data gathering on mining and its effects; the need to identify and address workplace sexual harassment and violence in the extractives sector; how to attract and retain women in large-scale mining operations; recognizing the difference between inclusivity and diversity within mining operations; and integrating gendered criteria into mining project assessments to strengthen policy gaps.

The Q+A portion explored the opportunities and challenges of centring a female Indigenous perspective in research and how organizations, as well as communities, can shape this space. Panellists also addressed the issue of working to dismantle gender issues in mining operations in collaboration with local women's rights organizations to respect the on-the-ground realities communities face. Discussions also explored entrenching accountability mechanisms within mining operations and companies, creating reconciliatory methods and conducting gender consultations.

The second half of the event was allocated to roundtable discussions centring on one crucial question: What solutions, if implemented today, could ensure gender equality is a catalyst and not a casualty in the future of mining? Tables tackled this question through four lenses: community-led, industry-led, multistakeholder and policy-led solutions.

## WELCOME REMARKS

Professor Doris Buss, Department of Law and Legal Studies at Carleton University, opened the event by sharing a story about a woman in Kenya's mining sector and the importance of achieving gender equality in mining by listening to impacted communities.

Alice Beaudoin, Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, provided an impactful land acknowledgement noting that Carleton University is on unceded Algonquin territory.

Matthew Bliss, Deputy Director, IGF, welcomed participants and thanked the panellists and partners for their involvement in the event.

## KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Dr. Jennifer Hinton, Director, East Africa Operations, M2Cobalt, Uganda and Adjunct Professor, Institute of African Studies, Carleton University, began her keynote presentation by asking participants: What do you want from the mining sector, and how can we do that while supporting gender equality?

She highlighted issues of gender inequality in Uganda's ASM sector, ranging from power hierarchies in how mining sites are supervised to the importance of understanding the division of labour and how this impacts women's health, safety and financial empowerment.

Dr. Hinton's comments drew attention to issues of social impacts of unfair gender norms, unequal pay and access to good quality jobs for women and men, and the mining sector's impact on sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls. It also acknowledged that, although the illustrative case is drawn from an economically developing country context, the highlighted issues play out in advanced industrial economies as well.

## LIGHTNING TALKS

Lema Ijtemaye, Manager, Socio-Economic Development Department, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, kicked off the lightning talks by focusing on a project undertaken by her organization detailing the impacts of mining projects on Inuit women in the Baker Lake region. Specifically, she noted the opportunities the sector brought to the community as well as the problems to mitigate, which include increased alcohol use and workplace violence, including those experienced by Inuit women working in the mine.

Kelly Cooper, President, Centre for Social Intelligence, highlighted experience from other sectors and how to leverage private-public collaboration to achieve gender equality in the mining sector. Cooper stressed the need to build an evidence base of best practices and challenges, foster an inclusive culture, and communicate and recognize progress within large-scale mining operations in order to attract and retain women in the mining workforce.



Jamile Cruz, Board Director, Women in Mining Canada and Co-founder, I&D 101, presented on the Women in Mining National Action Plan from Brazil. Cruz then explored the difference between soft and hard actions to be taken to foster gender equality in mining companies and operations, such as the difference between steps toward diversity versus inclusivity.

Sarah Daitch, Conflict Prevention, Extractives, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UN Development, closed the lightning talks with a presentation on policy approaches for emerging mineral-producing governments and new training materials for gender-inclusive governance and mitigating gender-based violence.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

The four lightning talk presenters came together for a panel discussion and Q+A with participants.

Presenters were asked about the possibility of women-led and focused mining operations. They noted that Africa's mineral wealth is meant to benefit all community members, and 50 per cent should be directed to women's initiatives. They also remarked how a female-owned multinational targeting small-scale mining operations benefiting other women is a very feasible idea.

Challenges in conducting research centring on Indigenous perspectives and how communities

can support these efforts was also highlighted by participants. Panellists explained the importance of incorporating quantitative and qualitative data from impacted communities and the need to be mindful about the "parachute in, parachute out" approach many organizations have to on-the-ground projects in general and the negative impacts this can have on Inuit women.

Questions also touched on companies not being ready, or willing, to address gender inequality, whether internally, on mine sites or as an effect of their presence in wider communities. Presenters expressed the need to conduct gender impact assessments prior to beginning mining projects and entrenching accountability mechanisms in all levels of mining companies and operations.

## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Participants broke into groups to discuss the importance of gender equality in mining, with each lightning speaker and a few additional government representatives acting as table moderators.

Tables structured their discussions around four angles: community-led, industry-led, multistakeholder and policy-led solutions.



## COMMUNITY-LED SOLUTIONS

Participants explored innovative solutions to support communities in furthering gender equality in mining. The importance of supporting women's organizations, including women's cooperatives, in participating in resource governance and monitoring was a theme echoed in various conversations. Supporting and working with women's organizations must not be tokenistic, it was emphasized. Governments and companies need to ensure substantive roles for these organizations and compensate organizations for their time and expertise.

Groups stressed the importance of mining companies and governments using culturally and contextually relevant language to address key issues. Examples of this include gender inequality and colonization, particularly when working with Indigenous communities. They also discussed the importance of working with local advocacy organizations and community members to help inform this language.

Participants also noted the need for governments and mining companies to establish capacity-building resources within local communities to address the gendered impacts of the extractives sector.

## INDUSTRY-LED SOLUTIONS

Groups discussed the Natural Resource Charter and how this initiative contributes to socioeconomic growth and environmental

sustainability. Discussions focused on how the Charter could be leveraged to review the gendered impacts of mining.

The need to increase transparency and accountability related to mining companies' operations overall, as well as the requirement for early needs assessments to adequately scope the gendered impacts and resources of mining projects, were also emphasized. Participants explored innovative solutions to addressing social issues through a systemic lens, including using procurement strategies to integrate gender quotas.

A key theme throughout the discussions was the need to look at issues holistically and develop interconnected solutions in a collaborative manner with various stakeholders.

## MULTISTAKEHOLDER-LED SOLUTIONS

Participants explored effective or innovative policy approaches from mineral-producing governments addressing gender gaps in collaboration with other stakeholders. Specifically, this group discussed governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) collaborating to establish land rights for women, bringing together various government ministries to lead policy reform to improve gender equality and women's rights in mining. It also discussed NGOs and the private sector working alongside community members to inform impact assessments before mining companies begin projects.



Discussions also focused on where governments are struggling to formulate effective policy responses in a multistakeholder manner, as well as possible solutions. These included regional and local governments collaborating with influencing actors for policy change.

Participants also discussed the various ways to enable women’s voices to be heard and included in community consultations, with ideas ranging from implementing social impact assessments, to gathering gender-disaggregated data, to providing adequate gender-sensitive training for mine project assessors.

## POLICY-LED SOLUTIONS

Groups discussed strategies to increase the number of women and visible minorities in the mining sector, while reflecting substantively on the Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan. These included addressing violence against women and girls in communities and in the workplace, providing gender training to miners, investing in early childhood education in Indigenous communities, and providing capacity building and training in relation to the emerging technologies in mining. The Government of Rwanda’s quota of 30 per cent mining jobs to be held by women was flagged as one possible practice that could be adopted elsewhere. The Government of Canada’s new Pay Equity Act and the proposed legislation to require implementation of Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) were also flagged as promising developments. It was noted that international norms around women working underground (such as International Labour Organization Convention 45) and generalized allusions to “child labour” in mines need to be addressed.

Participants emphasized the need for overall policy convergence and a coherent action plan with improved collaboration between governments that have gender equality or feminist policies in place and for the extractives sector to enact meaningful change. Lastly, groups stressed the need for governments to begin collecting gender-disaggregated data in sector-related disclosure and transparency initiatives to help inform gender-transformative policy efforts.

## CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Priya Bala-Miller, Director, Partnerships and Program Development, CIRDI, closed the event with a call for action to continue the discussion as a community of practice and by expressing the need for innovative solutions from all stakeholders in the sector if we wish to foster gender equality and women’s empowerment in mining.

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