



**The Global Mining Initiative Conference**

**Resourcing the Future**

**Toronto – May 11-14, 2002**

**Building a Sustainable Development Framework II**

**Sub-plenary Session 5**

**Community Relations**

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## **Community Relations**

### **The Global Mining Initiative Conference Resourcing the Future**

It gives me great pleasure to be able to share with you our approach to community relations.

Let me begin today's presentation by sketching some background that sets out the context for our community relations activities.

#### **Project Location**

The Diavik Diamonds Project is a new mining venture slated to come on stream early next year. The project is located on what we informally call the East Island of Lac de Gras, about 300 km northeast of Yellowknife in Canada's Northwest Territories.

Aboriginal communities in Canada's North are willing to consider non-renewable resource projects provided the project has no adverse long term effects on the Land, waters, caribou and other wildlife - and also that the three the tenets of sustainable development are part of the equation for their communities.

#### **Communities of Interest**

We have among our communities of interest; five Aboriginal groups who have historically used the Land in and around Lac de Gras, notably the Dogrib, Yellowknives and Lutsel K'e First Nation, the Inuit of the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut and the North Slave Metis Alliance. Many other public, non-governmental and other institutions have joined our Aboriginal communities in shaping the Diavik Diamonds Project.

#### **DDMI's Community Relations**

For Diavik, we directly link the way we work to the progress we make as a company towards our sustainable development goals. Our Community Relations are underpinned by our corporate wide commitment to treat those we meet with respect, to foster active partnerships and to establish long term relationships with our communities.

#### **Sustainable Development and our Communities**

The concepts of sustainable development fits very comfortably with the traditions of Canada's North. The respect for the Land and the wise use and stewardship of natural resources, wildlife and habitat for future generations are all guiding principles brought into assessments of sustainable development. Traditional knowledge is passed from generation to generation, which in turn contributes to the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

In practice, - this means that our communities should be partners with us to sustain ecological integrity, to enjoy improved social well being through increased human and community capacity and to share in the project's economic prosperity.

### **The Road to Sustainability...**

Our path to development has followed a three-step engagement process.

At the start, we developed a shared vision with our communities with regards to project development. As part of that vision, right from the beginning we integrated social and environmental dimensions into our project plans.

We had regular meetings with our all neighbouring aboriginal and other communities. We incorporated traditional knowledge learned from community elders and members. We are proud to say that information learned from our Aboriginal communities has definitely led to a better designed project.

As a third step in the engagement process, we entered into a number of formal agreements for the project. There are three legs to this framework, the Environmental Agreement, the Socio-Economic Monitoring Agreement, and, separate Participation Agreements with each of our five Aboriginal groups.

DDMI's Participation Agreements are legally binding, private contracts which contain mutually beneficial provisions for both the company and individual Aboriginal communities. Parts of these agreements address shared responsibility for training, employment and business participation.

### **Ecological Integrity**

Our communities have consistently indicated that ecological integrity of The Land is a foremost consideration. Through mechanisms set out in our Environmental and Participation Agreements, our neighbouring communities are partners with DDMI and government to help us sustain ecological integrity throughout the life of the project.

The Environmental Agreement for the Diavik Diamonds Project is thought to be the first of its kind in Canada to feature majority representation by Aboriginal groups – both as Parties to the agreement and as members of the independent board that monitors not only the project proper - but also - regulatory agency activities associated with the project.

Our environmental agreement contains provisions for progressive reclamation and security provisions for closure and forms the cornerstone of DDMI's "social licence to operate".

All aspects of the project, - including our "Design for Closure" plans, - are reviewed on a regular basis by our environmental monitoring board.

Government buy-in has been key in this area. Canada's Territorial and Federal governments are committed to increased devolution of responsibility for regulatory monitoring to local communities and Aboriginal governments in the North.

### **Social Well Being**

The Diavik Diamonds Project has created opportunities for capacity building and improved social well-being in our communities - notably through empowerment and shared responsibility for our community-based training programs and - through broad based scholarship, stay in school, apprenticeship and other continuing education programs.

Our activities augment public government resources and provide opportunities for partnerships between the company, communities and government institutions.

### **Economic Prosperity**

Our project has resulted in significant opportunities for Northern and Aboriginal businesses to build financial and human capacity for the future.

Early on, we established a Northern Business Participation Policy which guides our efforts to ensure our neighbouring communities share in the economic benefits flowing from the project. Community business capacity and aspirations are mutually assessed and supported so that the best chance for successful outcomes is attained.

Northern business participation has been remarkable and a testimony to the growing capacity of our northern Aboriginal communities to manage and operate business ventures. More than 70% of the project's goods, services and construction contracts have been won by Aboriginal joint ventures or other northern companies.

Over two hundred individuals have completed our community based training programs - contributing to northern residents making up nearly one-half of our construction workforce of which individuals of Aboriginal descent make up in turn more than 50%.

### **Building Relationships – a Corporate Responsibility**

None of our sustainable development goals could have been achieved without the sustained commitment on the part of all of our employees to build and maintain relationships with our communities.

The watchwords for DDMI are communicate, consult, and collaborate with our communities of interest, respecting always community traditions and cultural values.

Our goal is to be part of our communities. More than 90% of our employees live in the North. The North is our home and all of us are involved in one way or another in the evolving social and community fabric of the North.

## **Sustaining Relationships – A Shared Responsibility**

We strive for continued community involvement in a collaborative dialogue with many points of contact.

We have continuing dialogue with our community-based advisory boards and with the many members of our communities who are serving as employees, either directly with the company, or with the various northern and Aboriginal businesses who are working with us.

We have a small community liaison department spearheaded by individuals who have deep roots in our northern communities.

### **In Closing**

*“For centuries,  
people of the North have used the resources wisely,  
... Diavik is continuing this tradition.”*

The Diavik credo underscores the way we work towards our sustainable development goals, seeking a balance between ecological integrity, social well-being and economic prosperity in much the same way as Canada’s Aboriginal peoples have balanced their use of the Land over the centuries.

Our company’s relationships with our neighbouring Aboriginal communities are rooted in the respect we have for the Land, its peoples and traditions, nurtured by mutually beneficial partnerships in all that we do and matured through our long term commitments to one another. These thoughts go to the essence of Community Relations for DDMI – total commitment to meaningful community participation in the Diavik Diamonds Project.

Thank you and Mahsi Cho