

National Mineral Policy and Disaster Risk Management in the mineral sector of Pakistan

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The first National Mineral Policy (NMP), framed in 1995 in consultation with provinces, private sector and other stakeholders has been implemented. With implementation of National Mineral Policy independence of the departments of Mines and Mineral Development has been established in the provinces. New regulatory and fiscal regime was tailored for investment friendly environment to make the mineral sector of the country more deliverable and vibrant. The new mineral concession rules are aimed at maximizing exploration and development in mineral sector by providing safety and security to mine workers. The environment related issues have been addressed by NMP to mitigate the adverse impact of mining on other sectors and make it universally acceptable. In mining sector the disaster management deals with three areas. These include safety management in mines, effect on external environments-weathering agents on mineral resources and impact of mining on environment. Mining is not only profitable profession but is also hazardous, therefore, the mining operations are regulated to ensure safety at mines under the Mine-Act 1923 and its subordinate rules and regulations. The provincial chief inspectorate of mines is responsible to ensure safety in mines in their respective areas. The role of management is to foresee all possible risks enlist them and design procedure to control them. The possible dangers in mines include roof fall, presence of noxious gases, uncontrolled blasting, and water inundation etc. The possible risk to safety in mines includes lack of supervision, absence of safeguard, and absence of protective devices and inter personnel communication. The role of management to avoid the dangers in mining includes proper planning, organizing staff and co-ordination, controlling and budgeting. The external factors disturbing mining environment include floods, glaciations /avalanches, earthquake, land sliding, public works programme etc. Very little can be done to divert the unalarmed generation of huge energy by floods, earthquakes and avalanches; however the mining operations should take into consideration the possible threats from such environments including the public works in selecting the mines location and methodology of mining. Public works should be so located to inflict minimum threats to the mining operations. To avoid the impact of mining on environment, post mining operations require rehabilitations after surface mining. The subsurface mining also has impact of vibration, sound and dust emission for which mitigating measures need to be adopted.