

MEDIA RELEASE



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EMPOWERING WOMEN CREATES PATHWAYS FROM POVERTY

Perth, Australia – Gender equality in organisations and communities around the world brings significant benefits to both women and men. It can be life changing, for the individuals and their families.

This year's Mining for Development Conference 2015 will shine the spotlight on mining and women's economic empowerment, equal share of voice in decision making for minority groups, and bringing an end to violence against women and girls. These key themes of the Conference program will challenge participants to consider how they can work across sectors, cultures and geographic boundaries to better use the resources from the minerals and energy sector to improve people's lives.

A key event of the conference will be the Empowered Women in Mining Breakfast on 30 April. This by-invitation event will include keynote presentations from Dr Vanessa Guthrie, Managing Director/CEO of Toro Energy Limited; Sabina Shugg National Lead, Mining Performance KPMG and the founder of Women in Mining and Resources in Western Australia; and Kalpana Maharage Development Superintendent at Rio Tinto Iron Ore who was recently recognised at the 2015 Women in Resources Awards as 'Outstanding Young Woman in Resources'.

The event will be chaired by Nicole Roocke, Deputy Chief Executive of The Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia. She and expert panellists will share strategies, insights and inspirational stories. They will challenge the audience to consider how they could personally do more to champion gender equality and women's inclusion in their organisations and communities.

Case studies about empowering people to act as agents of change will be a theme throughout the two-day Mining for Development Alumni Forum and Conference program. One such story comes from Herizo (Zo) Harimalala Tsviverisoa, trainer in the Lapidary and Jewellery Training Department of the Institut De Gemmologie de Madagascar.

Zo will share the journey taken by team of alumni to uplift the lives of artisanal women miners in Madagascar who despite mining sapphires and rubies that are worth millions on the global market, still live in poverty. Their project, funded by IM4DC, involves identifying and training women small scale miners in lapidary, setting up a women's small miners association and enabling them to access to fair trade and a more inclusive, equitable supply chain.

The Conference provides a unique platform for presenters and participants to share goals, strategies and learnings of what can come from more equitable distribution of benefits from mining and resources. High calibre participants, male and female, include keynote speaker Joanne Farrell, Global Head of Health, Safety, Security Environment and Communities for the Rio Tinto Group - recognised as one the '100 Global Inspirational Women in Mining'.

IM4DC Director, Ian Satchwell explains, "the high profile of women at this event is an indication of how, in an industry so long dominated by men, women are taking a leading role in how the resources from mining can benefit their communities."

For a full list of sessions and speakers at the M4D Conference 2015, visit www.m4dconference.im4dc.org. Media are invited to attend – please register online.

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