

Position Statement on Mining and Associated Activities in Relation to Protected Areas

Introduction

This position statement is put forward as a global framework statement which recognises that clear rules are easier to understand and defend than ones which depend too much on interpretation. It is considered more appropriate to provide clear global guidance in a statement such as this and leave it to countries to consider what adaptations are needed in local circumstances. This statement defines the position of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) towards mining¹ and associated activities in and adjacent to protected areas². WCPA is the world's largest network of protected area professionals with 1,300 members in 140 countries. This position statement acknowledged the increasing application of "best practices" environmental approaches and lower impact technology within the mining industry as well as examples of support for conservation activities. However, WCPA also notes that exploration and extraction of mineral resources can have serious long-term consequences on the environment.

WCPA has developed this position statement based on what it believes to represent best practice in respect of mining and protected areas. The guiding principle adopted in this statement is that any activity within a protected area has to be compatible with the overall objectives of the protected area. For this reason, this statement is based on the IUCN Protected Area Management Categories, which reflect manage-

ment objectives focused on the protection and maintenance of biodiversity and associated natural and cultural values.

The IUCN category system is being increasingly recognised and applied around the world. A summary of the protected area categories is attached. The position statement relates to protected areas, which are one part of a spectrum of land use. This statement thus needs to be considered in the context of broader efforts on the part of the mining industry, conservation groups, governments and others to promote ecologically sustainable development on the part of the mining industry.

The process for preparing this position statement has involved: (a) preparation of a draft statement; (b) wide circulation of the draft to a range of different stakeholders; (c) consideration of comments and amendments; and (d) review by the IUCN Council before adoption by WCPA.

Position Statement

WCPA (The World Commission on Protected Areas) believes:

1. A comprehensive approach to planning should be adopted where possible to establish an adequate and representative protected area system set within the broader landscape. Assessment should be based on good science including assessments of natural and mineral values. This is particularly relevant to the establishment of new protected areas.
2. Exploration and extraction of mineral resources are incompatible with the purposes of protected areas corresponding to IUCN Protected Area Management Categories I to IV, and should therefore be prohibited by law or other effective means.
3. In Categories V and VI, exploration and minimal and localised extraction is acceptable only where this is compatible with the objectives

of the protected area and then only after environmental impact assessment (EIA) and subject to strict operating, monitoring and after use restoration conditions. This should apply "best practices" environmental approaches.

4. That should exploration be permitted in category V and VI, an EIA should be required following such exploration before extraction is permitted. Approval for exploration should not imply automatic approval for extraction.
5. Proposed changes to the boundaries of protected areas, or to their categorisation, to allow operations for the exploration or extraction of mineral resources should be subject to procedures at least as rigorous as those involved in the establishment of the protected area in the first place. There should also be an assessment of the impact of the proposed change on the ability to meet the objectives of the protected area.
6. Exploration and extraction of mineral resources, and associated infrastructure, which are outside of, but negatively affecting the values for which protected areas were established should be subject to EIA procedures which consider, *inter alia*, the immediate and cumulative effects of the activity on the protected area, recommend operating and after use conditions, and ensure that the values of the protected areas are safeguarded.
7. In recognising the important contribution the mining industry can play, opportunities for co-operation and partnership between the mining industry and protected area agencies should be strongly encouraged. Collaboration with the mining industry should focus on securing respect and support for this position statement; broadening the application of best environmental practice for mining activity; and exploring areas of mutual benefit. □

* World Commission on Protected Areas.

See also page 270. (Welcomed by IUCN Council)

¹ The term mining in this position statement describes all forms of mineral, salt and hydrocarbon extraction.

² IUCN defines (IUCN 1994) protected areas as "an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means".