



GLOBAL WIM CALL – 16 NOVEMBER 2021

Gender Equality in the Supply Chain

English

WIM organisations worldwide bring together a variety of women working in, with and around the mining sector, including many employed by the suppliers and service providers who are an integral part of the industry. As the focus on responsible supply chains intensifies across all sectors, principles of equity, diversity and inclusion among and within mining supplier businesses is becoming an important agenda point, particularly in remote areas where local content and contracting also represent key levers for economic development and fair distribution of the socio-economic benefits of mining.

The issue of supply chains, and their positive or negative impact on societal issues, can be considered both downstream and upstream from mining companies; in both cases, there is a global trend towards

- more **transparency** i.e., disclosing information about suppliers in addition to corporate information; and
- more **corporate accountability** for suppliers i.e., applying the same standards and expectations of suppliers as the company would apply to its own operations and personnel.

This also applies to diversity and inclusion, and particularly empowerment of female employees, entrepreneurs and leaders.

It's often said that for every job in a mining company there are 10 among suppliers and service providers connecting into this company: the stakes are high for women to take their due place and have access to the employment, entrepreneurship and leadership opportunities that this entails, particularly in producing countries where this ties in with wider development and industrialisation stakes.

Increasingly, **policy shapers** and international organisations are promoting regulation and practices that encourage female participation in mining supply chains, for wider and more inclusive distribution of economic benefits. This connects with local content policies and practices, in terms of reaching out to communities around mining operations, integrating indigenous communities to the mining sector and having positive impact on national economic and industrial networks.

Barriers usually identified include socio-economic hurdles around education, skills and opportunities, which may be exacerbated by societal perceptions of the role of women.

WIM organisations have a role to play in this evolution, both in terms of their initiatives at local, national or regional levels and to ensure that their profound knowledge of these realities informs purposeful and sound policies at global level, which will drive real positive impact once implemented.

The experience of various WIM organisations was discussed. In some cases, this aspect is not yet developed as an action pillar of WIM organisations, but it is on the radar in terms of focused initiatives or increasing awareness among industry stakeholders.

WIM Brazil integrated a supply chain commitment to their eight-point action plan, which is endorsed by mining companies and now large mining suppliers; this entails monitoring and reporting on diversity and inclusion KPIs which extend to suppliers. This initiative is progressing well, with first reports being published, and WIM Brazil is collaborating with companies to continue to define the KPIs and implementation frameworks.

WIM Colombia is also working on an initiative, aligning with government and corporate local content initiatives; this is focusing on capacity building and support to women suppliers in accessing commercial opportunities and formalising their business to strengthen their competitive position.

WIM Mexico shared their experience in seeking to empower women in the mining sector, both in companies and further down in mining supply chains. This focused on skills development and training to enable women to be able to undertake mining and relating activities, and promotion of female entrepreneurship at local level to provide supplies and services to mining operations. A second phase focuses on diversity and inclusion training, changing social perceptions and informing stakeholders of the opportunities for women – and the value of their contribution – in and around the mining sector.

In terms of how WIM organisations can take a position on these issues, a first positive action by WIM organisations is to map their **membership**, to understand whether and to what extent it integrates women in the mining supply chain, i.e. working for and/or owning supplier and service businesses connecting into mining operations.

In most WIM organisations the membership includes both professionals within mining companies and women in the mining supply chain: in such cases women in the supply chain can be very active in WIM organisation membership, leveraging the network and advocating for increasing consideration of their contribution to the industry.

In some countries however these are mostly separate communities and even organisations: increasingly these organisations are finding areas of common interest, and focusing on their common purpose as women working in, around and with the mining sector.

Français

Les organisations WIM du monde entier rassemblent une variété de femmes travaillant dans, avec et autour du secteur minier, y compris de nombreuses employées par les fournisseurs et prestataires de services qui font partie intégrante de l'industrie. Alors que l'accent mis sur les chaînes d'approvisionnement responsables s'intensifie dans tous les secteurs, les principes d'équité, de diversité et d'inclusion parmi et au sein des entreprises de fournisseurs miniers deviennent un point important à l'ordre du jour, en particulier dans les zones reculées où le contenu local et la passation de marchés représentent également des leviers clés pour le développement économique et l'équité et la répartition des avantages socio-économiques de l'exploitation minière.

Les défis rencontrés par les femmes pour accéder aux opportunités socio-économiques autour du secteur minier peuvent être d'ordre social, juridique, financier ou commercial, y compris les systèmes d'approvisionnement des entreprises minières bénéficiant aux fournisseurs et prestataires de services internationaux, au détriment de sociétés plus petites et locales, notamment celles qui appartiennent ou regroupent principalement des femmes. Cependant des mécanismes de partenariat, centrés sur le partage de compétences, peuvent répondre à ces problématiques et faciliter l'accès des femmes aux opportunités découlant du secteur minier.

Des exemples ont été cités d'initiatives de sociétés minières à **Madagascar**, qui forment des femmes aux métiers sur lesquels elles sont moins présentes, dépassant les préjugés qui pourraient empêcher leur accès à ces professions. Ces initiatives ont valeur d'exemple, encourageant les autres sociétés à favoriser l'accès des entreprises regroupant des femmes à leurs opportunités d'approvisionnement et/ou de services.

Au **Bénin**, des entreprises de fournisseurs et prestataires sont regroupées en groupement économique, mais sont peu ouvertes aux femmes. Il en est de même pour l'artisanat minier, qui privilégie le travail masculin ; celui-ci est même écarté dans certains cas par la mécanisation des opérations. Les opportunités pour les femmes sont réduites, souvent limitées à l'administration dans le secteur public. Les préjugés desservent les fournisseurs et prestataires locaux, surtout les femmes.

Il importe aussi de prendre appui sur les **tendances internationales** : les entreprises internationales, que ce soit les sociétés minières ou les entreprises qui acquièrent la production minière y compris la production artisanale, sont de plus en plus sous pression pour améliorer leur performance environnementale, sociale et de gouvernance, y compris en matière d'égalité des genres. Dans les pays de production, les organisations WIM peuvent s'appuyer sur ces standards internationaux pour s'engager auprès des autorités, des sociétés et des fournisseurs et prestataires miniers pour faire reconnaître la contribution, le potentiel et le rôle des femmes.