



IGF 20
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INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM
on Mining, Minerals, Metals and
Sustainable Development

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS
AND MINING**



MEETING REPORT

Responsible Sourcing, Inclusive Impact: Cross-sector solutions for gender- responsive due diligence

Partner session at the 2025 Organisation for Economic
Co-operation and Development Forum on Responsible
Mineral Supply

Organized by: Women's Rights and Mining network (with members from IGF,
IMPACT, IWIM, Solidaridad, ActionAid, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit [GIZ], MFA NL)

Paris, France

May 5, 2025

Summary and Key Takeaways

On May 5, 2025, the **Women's Rights and Mining (WRM) network**, together with the **Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF)** as its Secretariat, hosted a high-level

session at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains in Paris, marking the 5-year milestone of the WRM-OECD Stakeholder Statement on Gender-Responsive Due Diligence (GRDD). The session, titled **Responsible Sourcing, Inclusive Impact: Cross-Sector Solutions**

for Gender-Responsive Due Diligence, brought together upstream, midstream, and downstream industry actors alongside policy experts to assess implementation progress, share innovations, and chart a forward-looking agenda for inclusive sourcing.

The discussion emphasized a critical shift: GRDD must move beyond risk identification and compliance. It must actively serve as a tool for empowerment—addressing structural inequalities, enabling women's access to formal markets, and transforming mineral supply chains into drivers of gender equity and resilience.

The session was attended by 100 participants and included a panel discussion with the following speakers:

- Jan Knacksterdt, Mercedes-Benz (downstream)
- Alice Vanni, CSR Director at Italtrepreziosi (midstream)
- Bertha Kabengele from ActionAid Zambia (upstream)
- Julia del Valle, Policy Analyst, Centre for Responsible Business Conduct, OECD
- Ege Tekinbas, Senior Policy Advisor, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, IGF (moderator)

Key Takeaways

- **From compliance to empowerment:** GRDD must be proactive, not punitive. It should help bridge gaps—especially for women in artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), and it should support their full and fair participation in formal supply chains.
- **Cross-sector learning is essential:** While sectoral contexts differ, practical experience from other

sectors, such as garments and agriculture, provides important insights on how to operationalize gender due diligence. Approaches such as integrating gender clauses into contracts, incentivizing supplier performance, enabling women's engagement, and worker-led monitoring can be adapted to the sector in the context of mineral supply chains.

- **Industry leadership is evolving:**
 - **Mercedes-Benz** highlighted its dual focus on raising supplier awareness and using gender-disaggregated data to identify gaps. It is the first company in the automotive sector to request such data and has integrated digital tools to scale GRDD training.
 - **Italtrepreziosi** shared its Empower Your Counterpart model and the development of the **Empower ASM app**, aimed at supporting formalization, compliance, and capacity building for ASM—particularly women miners.
- **Local voices are essential:** ActionAid Zambia emphasized that without grassroots engagement, due diligence risks excluding women and entrenching informal practices. Participatory monitoring, community-led gender-based violence reporting, and culturally sensitive approaches (e.g., addressing myths that exclude menstruating women from mine sites) are critical to building trust and achieving impact.

Shared Priorities Across Speakers

- supporting **formalization and financial inclusion** for women in ASM
- leveraging **technology** for transparency, capacity building, and compliance
- investing in **local and grassroots capacity**, particularly women-led groups
- strengthening **cross-sector collaboration** for long-term systemic change

The session closed with a unified call to action: as the sector reflects on 5 years of implementation, stakeholders must reaffirm their commitment to GRDD not just as a standard of responsible sourcing but as a foundation for inclusive, empowering, and sustainable mineral governance.

“In 2019, we committed to integrating a gender lens into mineral supply chains. Today, we reaffirm that commitment—not only to responsible sourcing, but to truly inclusive and empowering sourcing.”

Key Issues Discussed

1. From Compliance to Empowerment

Moderator Ege Tekinbas (IGF) opened the session by framing GRDD as a proactive approach that extends beyond merely identifying risks. GRDD is fundamentally about addressing and correcting structural inequalities, ensuring that due diligence processes actively empower rather than

exclude women—particularly those working in ASM. The goal is not only to comply with standards but to actively support women's full participation in formal mineral supply chains, creating meaningful pathways for market access and economic empowerment.

2. Cross-Sector Insights and Data Gaps

Julia Del Valle (OECD) provided valuable cross-sectoral insights based on recent analysis of current GRDD practice, highlighting existing gaps and best practices from various industries:

- OECD responsible business conduct expectations on gender include adjusting the actions that enterprises take to identify, prevent, mitigate, and address impacts to ensure these are gender responsive and appropriate and secondly, addressing gender specific risks by thinking through how real or potential adverse impacts may differ for or may be specific to women.
- Despite growing public commitments, relatively few companies have integrated gender into their management systems. For instance, while 94% of companies set gender or human rights expectations for suppliers, less than 1/3 offer concrete support to meet them. Most efforts remain reactive rather than embedded in a proactive, six-step due diligence process.
- This gap is reflected in grievance mechanisms and data collection, with only 22% of mechanisms considered accessible, and fewer than 1% of companies tracking how gender-based violence and harassment cases are resolved, reflecting widespread gaps in gender-disaggregated monitoring, leading to often invisible and unaddressed gender-related risks.

- In order to move from commitment to action, companies should consider embedding gender considerations into core management systems, ensuring they're actionable, time bound, context-specific, and backed by data, resources, and meaningful engagement.
- GRDD must be context-specific, yet there are valuable lessons from sectors such as garments and agriculture. These include integrating gender clauses into supplier contracts, supporting and incentivizing suppliers, and operationalizing change through stakeholder engagement and collaboration, such as joint grievance mechanisms and worker-led monitoring committees.

3. Embedding GRDD in Global Supply Chains

Jan Knacksterdt (Mercedes-Benz) detailed the company's commitment to advancing GRDD within its global operations and supplier networks. With approximately **170,000 employees across 150 countries**, Mercedes-Benz recognizes that internal diversity and external supply chain alignment must go hand in hand. He described the company's twofold approach to facilitating supplier compliance with GRDD:

- Raising awareness among suppliers by actively communicating expectations related to human rights and gender equality and through established reporting frameworks.
- Identifying gender gaps through the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data—a practice that Mercedes-Benz is championing across its value chains.
- Jan emphasized the importance of transparency and the “chain of information,” particularly given the company's downstream position in the supply chain. Mercedes-Benz

relies on robust information flows from upstream partners to ensure alignment with responsible sourcing and GRDD standards.

- To support supplier engagement, Mercedes-Benz leverages digital tools such as e-learning modules, making knowledge accessible and scalable across its global network. He also highlighted the importance of aligning with existing mining standards to create consistency and reduce barriers to uptake.
- Importantly, Jan noted that Mercedes-Benz was the first in the automotive industry to request gender-disaggregated data from suppliers, underlining the company's leadership role in promoting gender-inclusive practices in the sector. He reaffirmed their full commitment to the WRM-OECD Stakeholder Statement and to advancing inclusive, responsible sourcing that reflects the complexity and diversity of the communities and workers involved.

4. A Shift in Mindset: Empower Your Counterpart

Alice Vanni (Italpreziosi) presented the company's transformative approach to GRDD, illustrating a deliberate shift from a risk-centric, compliance-driven model to one rooted in empowerment, transparency, and collaboration. Moving away from traditional **key performance indicators**, Italpreziosi now applies a strategy called **Empower Your Counterpart (EYC)**—an approach that recognizes suppliers not just as risk points, but as essential partners whose capacities must be supported and nurtured.

Key pillars of this approach include

- publishing transparent supply chain data and sharing it openly with stakeholders to foster accountability.

- using technology to support ASM formalization and compliance, including the development of a new digital platform, the Empower ASM app. This app is designed to assist ASM miners in tracking their practices, accessing information, and improving alignment with formal market requirements.
- direct communication channels with suppliers to ensure two-way engagement, not just top-down oversight.

Alice emphasized the importance of challenging cultural stereotypes and actively supporting women's participation in the sector. With approximately **30% of Italtrepreziosi's suppliers being women**, the company prioritizes inclusive practices that address safety, visibility, and access to formal markets.

The **Empower ASM app**, currently in development, exemplifies Italtrepreziosi's broader innovation strategy. Designed to be user-friendly and accessible in low-connectivity areas, the app offers ASM workers a tool to demonstrate compliance, improve business practices, and access training, thus laying a foundation for more equitable participation in the global gold supply chain.

Through EYC and innovations like Empower ASM, Italtrepreziosi reinforces its role as a midstream actor committed to driving inclusive change across mineral value chains.

5. Local Engagement Is Essential

Bertha Kabengele (ActionAid Zambia)

stressed the risks associated with applying generic due diligence frameworks, particularly their unintended negative impact on women miners in ASM settings:

- She underscored the necessity of meaningful grassroots engagement from the outset, emphasizing that inclusive stakeholder consultation

cannot be optional. Instead, genuine inclusion of women's groups and community-based organizations must be central to all GRDD activities.

- Civil society organizations are critical partners and watchdogs in ensuring effective implementation, continuous monitoring, and transparent reporting. Kabengele highlighted the unique position that they occupy, providing real-time, localized and contextualized feedback and ensuring that community voices directly shape GRDD practices. Especially contextualized feedback is important in this sector, since there is, for instance, the belief that women who are on their menstrual cycle make minerals disappear. In this case, standard due diligence would not suffice.
- Emphasizing accessibility, she highlighted the importance of grievance mechanisms being realistically reachable by women, youth, children, and individuals with limited literacy or digital connectivity, as these groups are often at heightened risk. She highlighted that 83% of site owners in the ASM sector in Zambia are male, while only 17% are female.
- Participatory monitoring methodologies were advocated as a key tool for ensuring continuous accountability, building community trust, and achieving sustained, gender-responsive outcomes. She gave a specific example, the Women Watch Communities in Zambia, which are supported by the European Partnership on Responsible Minerals. In this community, data on gender-based violence is gathered, and guidance is provided on how to deal with it. This initiative will hopefully be scaled up and taken up by the government in the future.

Shared Priorities Across Panellists

Throughout the session, several shared priorities emerged clearly:

- **formalization and financial inclusion:** Women in ASM require specialized support, including tailored training, improved access to financial services, and viable entry points into formal markets, to meet due diligence criteria effectively.
- **technology as an enabler:** Digital tools (mobile applications, online platforms, and e-learning) play a crucial role in facilitating compliance, ensuring transparency, and enhancing the dissemination and uptake of critical GRDD information.
- **capacity building for local actors:** Sustainable change hinges upon long-term investments in local capabilities. Developing grassroots capacities, especially those of women's groups, is fundamental to achieving effective, gender-responsive outcomes.
- **collaboration as an imperative:** Achieving meaningful, scalable change in GRDD requires strong, active partnerships across sectors. Collaborative actions and shared accountability were repeatedly emphasized as critical success factors.

Conclusion and Call to Action

The session closed with a call to action: GRDD must go beyond identifying risks; it must actively build pathways for inclusion, empowerment, and long-term sustainability. As both Mercedes-Benz and Italpreziosi reiterated their commitment to implementing the WRM-OECD Stakeholder Statement, attendees and sector stakeholders were encouraged to join in this renewed commitment, reinforcing collective efforts toward genuinely inclusive sourcing practices:

“In 2019, we committed collectively to integrate a gender lens into mineral supply chains. Today, we reaffirm this commitment—not merely to responsible sourcing, but decisively toward inclusive and empowering sourcing.”

Appendix A. Resources

- [WRM-OECD Stakeholder Statement on Gender-Responsive Due Diligence](#)
- [Women's Rights and Mining \(WRM\)](#)
- [OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals](#)

What Is WRM?

WRM is a collaborative effort of civil society organizations and knowledge institutions, including the Canadian organization IMPACT, ActionAid, Solidaridad, Alliance for Responsible Mining, and KIT Royal Tropical Institute. Several government organizations are also involved, including GIZ, Global Affairs Canada, and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Secretariat of the WRM is held by the IGF, supported by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, and implemented by GIZ.

Since the beginning of 2017, WRM has worked to secure commitments from governments, civil society, and companies in the mining sector to integrate gender equality concerns into mining policy and practice so that women and men benefit equally and women's rights are realized in mineral supply chains. The WRM-OECD Stakeholder Statement on Implementing Gender-Responsive Due Diligence and Ensuring the Human Rights of Women in Mineral Supply Chains is a broad-based call for support and action to uphold women's rights. This Gender Statement, which was prepared by the OECD Secretariat and WRM, includes various commitments on how states, the private sector, and civil society can work together to prevent gender inequalities along the supply chain. The statement is still relevant and available online.



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July 2025

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