Let me begin by thanking my colleague Minister for Mining and the World Bank and sponsors and organizing committee for inviting me to deliver a keynote address at the opening of this very significant conference. When I received the invitation several months ago, I felt challenged because I was aware of my lack of specific knowledge on women in mining. Thank you for creating this intellectual challenge for me to research some international experience as well as reflect on women in mining in Papua New Guinea.

My address will ask questions rather than presume answers. The abstracts of papers to be presented at this conference indicate that the collective knowledge and experience of the presenters will suggest not only answers but also an affirmative action plan as an outcome of this conference.

Although I do not presume answers, my address will suggest a relationship between my department and the mining industry. There is a lot of unexplored potential synergy between the new policy directions of my department and the work of the Community Affairs Divisions of the mining companies as we all face the complex socio-economic and cultural issues experienced by societies in change. I hope we can explore mutually beneficial relationships as we all commit ourselves to be voices for change for women in mining and women in general in Papua New Guinea.

The concluding remarks of the Sustainable Mining Development Conference held in Madang in 2002 indicated the need for this special conference by the statement.
Women, youths, and children often remain outside the formal decision-making structures, especially when located outside the special mining lease area. Yet they are often the ones who bear the heaviest social costs associated with mining development closure, and thus warrant special attention to give them a voice that will be heard.

In 1997, Project Underground quoted the voices of women affected by mining, both past and present, in several developing countries – these voices stated realities that are known but are usually accepted as the way things are in a world that has always favoured men. This conference is about challenging the way things are and creating a future that reflects the ways things could and should be.

The realities spoken in Women Speak Out in Mining include:

- Unmanaged mining, like other extractive industries such as unmanaged logging, causes enormous environmental damage, and it is the women who have to cope with that damage on a daily basis as they struggle to feed their families in an environment that can no longer sustain their needs nor the needs of future generations. (an elder from Nevada).

- It is women whose total lifestyle, both now and beyond the mining, is more at risk when prostitution develops around mine site areas. (an Amerindian women).

- It is the women who had to cope with new diseases that came into their communities as a result of migration to mine sites – diseases like typhoid, hepatitis and sexually transmitted diseases that were unknown in their areas before. (a women from Bihar, India).

- It is women who have little or no access to the money and employment that are part of the mining industry and the women who work harder and earn less than the men, sometimes even doing the same job. (a Bolivian woman).

- For the women …… life has drastically deteriorated as the long-term affects of large scale mining take their toll (a Filipina woman).

- It is the women who watch like spectators while men negotiate mining lease agreements and royalties that deny women their traditional means of acquiring status and wealth. (a Papua New Guinean woman) and

- It is the women who have to face the disruption to family life caused by alcohol abuse and increased violence; and have to cope with the extra work burden caused by the changes in role expectations when their families are removed from their land for open cut mine operations and their young men look for work in the mines while the full burden of traditional activities is left to the women (A Papuan from Indonesia).
In fact the Community Aid Abroad news release on the conclusions of the June 2002 Forum stated that the “negative impacts from mining are most severely felt by women”, Their report, Tunnel Vision, revealed that “women often suffer physical, emotional and economic aggression as a result of mining operations”.

How many of these women’s voices from different places and times echo the experiences of women in mining in Papua New Guinea? And to what extent are the experiences of women in mining a more intensified reflection of the experiences of women in general in Papua New Guinea?

Mines, by their very nature, cannot be separated from the land that has provided a guarantee of life over the centuries for communities. Communities face the risk of losing their surface land property rights if mining resources are discovered in the area. Thus insecurity arises from the differing and often conflicting priorities and interests of communities, the State and the mining companies. The feasibility of changing the world socio-economic order is remote to say the least and the bulldozers of globalisation are difficult to manage. Is it possible to create conservation areas in a nation of landowners who are increasingly impoverished? If not, how can we balance national economic needs with long-term community interests in areas of large-scale extractive developments such as mining and logging?

To what degree can we create natural resources policies that accommodate government and investment interests on the grounds of ‘development’ but also accommodate the present and future needs of the resource owners? How can we limit the destruction of community political, economic and socio-cultural systems through land parceling, annexation, and the expropriation of community rights over resources?

The introduction of mining into traditional communities has resulted in the loss or marginalisation of traditional culture of these communities. Differential rates of socio-economic and cultural change are very difficult to manage, for example the introduction of cash into communities without appropriate learning programmes is almost always negative. It is natural that cash will be treated as a disposable commodity in communities that do not have a culture of saving. Can a culture of saving be created within the lifespan of a mine so that people can benefit from royalties that are managed sustainably? And indeed, how much access to royalties do women, who are the managers of the family, have? Unfortunately in the male dominated society of PNG, we all know the answer to that.

These are questions that I hope will remain central through the conference. As stated by Andrew Hewett (Executive Director of Oxfam Community Aid Abroad) “Mining companies are having an increasingly critical influence over human development. These companies must therefore ensure that they contribute positively to poverty alleviation and development by upholding the rights of women”.

Women’s rights are human rights but for too long human rights have been treated as ideological rhetoric to be acknowledged as a side issue in development while pure economics has always played center stage. Will we, as a nation, progress from the economic ‘trickle-down’ model for development to an integrated human rights model for development that focuses on personal empowerment and community renewal? Do we, as a nation, have the commitment and patience that is required to build our society from the bottom up so that communities can benefit in a more sustainable way from the economic benefits that mining can bring?

The mining industry is the world of multinational corporations, profit margins and globalisation. That is the reality not only women, but also developing nations themselves, must face. As a nation we need our mines to provide the financial injection into our economy to provide the services expected by our people. But we must also find ways to control the bulldozers of globalisation and manage the negative environmental and socio-economic impacts in the mining areas. We must also control our own internal problems such as greed and neglect of people’s real needs at many levels of society. But who will do it? Who will be that voice of change?

In the developed world, women have been important agents for change in the mining industry. Often it is wives and mothers who have led the on-going battle for community development and site rehabilitation before and after the closure of mines in many developed countries. And women can be forceful agents for change in Papua New Guinea also if they are given the required knowledge and skills and the opportunities to lead.

The process has already begun. Women have seen and felt the negative socio-economic and cultural impact of commercial mining. Women have felt the continuing frustration of being marginalized by men even in matrilineal societies. And in response, women, have organized themselves into development associations to take greater control of their future. This is in line with official policy in Papua New Guinea that requires mining companies to build social programs that will assist people and reduce the negative impacts of mining.

Several leaders of organized women’s groups in mining areas will present papers at this conference. Their voices for change must be heard, not only at this conference but also around the negotiating and decision-making tables on behalf of their communities. When society can make the cultural leap necessary to really listen to women’s voices for change, then we will see a different PNG emerge. The time for tokenism of one women sitting around the negotiating table must end.

I have noticed an interesting thing in many places that I have traveled in PNG, including my limited experience on Bougainville, and that is that most often men’s discussions are about power, position, and money whereas women’s discussions focus on sustainable
development that can strengthen the base of our society – the family and the community. BUT very few people really listen to the women’s talk and dismiss the social issues as less important than the economic issues and efforts to mainstream women’s concerns have been minimal. We continue to go in a vicious circle that is going nowhere with economic gain leading to social destruction not only in the mining industry but also in any development that brings sudden economic impact. Some MPs have expressed their concerns to me about the negative outcomes of the sudden influx of disposable cash in their electorates as a result of the push for economic development through vanilla farming. When will we really listen to the women’s voices for change and respond to the importance of social development and community and personal empowerment?

I stated at the beginning that I am interested to explore a mutually beneficial relationship between the Community Affairs Divisions in the mining industry and my department. Over the last year we have been redefining the policy, programmes and structure of the department to make it more responsive to PNG’s present financial reality and to Melanesian culture. A western welfare approach to social development is neither sustainable in the financial reality of PNG nor appropriate to Melanesian culture. The new direction of the department is to focus on integrated community development with attention to the special needs of disadvantaged groups. I will outline the direction briefly but would really appreciate it if a one-day workshop could be organized later to bring together the Community Affairs Divisions of the mining companies with the newly established Community Development Division within my department so that we can coordinate, learn from each other, maximize the impact of limited resources and share resources rather than duplicate. There is no time to waste. I believe passionately that the future of PNG depends on individual empowerment and community development. What I aim to do is not about “nice” little projects but about a systemic change in our approach to development need lots of partners to do it.

The Community Development Division of the Department will be promoting an integrated community development model that is designed as a long-term poverty reduction strategy. This model translates the noble rhetoric of our National Goals and Directive Principles and the Medium Term Development Strategy and the UN Millenium Development Goals into two simple visual models that anyone can relate to – a fork and wheel. I firmly believe that if this model is introduced to communities before mining starts and is developed parallel with the mining development the outcome effect of the economic impact will be far more sustainable

The four pillars for development as represented by the fork and wheel (attached) are:

- community governance
- community learning
- community income and livelihood (economic empowerment)
- community environment (physical and social)
Unfortunately, right throughout PNG, there has been “too little, too late” when the problems related to socio-economic and cultural break-down become apparent or reach crisis point. In general we have ignored the need to empower people and communities with the knowledge and skills to critically determine their own future and we have left our people in a time-warp of confusion and frustration.

It is invariably the women who suffer most in a shattered society so it must be ensured that issues for women, youth and children are mainstreamed into any model for community development as well as having the mechanisms to address specific needs. I repeat that I would like to investigate a partnership in community development strategies and methodologies between the mining industry and my department because our lack of resources prevents us from achieving optimum impact as quickly as is needed. The significant progress being made by the mining industry in responding to social and community needs should not be seen in isolation but should be apart of the total development mapping for their districts and provinces as well as providing models for our national community development strategy.

Some changes for women are occurring within the mining industry itself with a minimal increase in the number of female employees and the nature of their employment. Initially the male dominated nature of the mining industry employed men in all positions of influence and women only found employment in lowly paid jobs that did not include further training.

Slowly that trend seems to be changing but the mining industry falls well below the critical mass level of one third with regard to gender equity in employment and development. Statistics I obtained indicate that Porgera has about 4.5% female employees and Ok Tedi Mining Limited about 3% female employees. If these figures are accurate and reflect the mining industry in general then there is a lot of work to be done as these figures are not much better than those for women’s political participation in PNG and that is a national shame.

As well as mainstreaming gender (women) into the model for community development, the Gender Division of the department must also look at specific issues. One such issue is for a Gender management System (GMS) to be put in place in PNG. The annual budgets and all policy must be analysed at all levels of government and across all sectors to assess their gender sensitivity (youth & children). The Department of Mining with the resource back-up of the industry would be welcome to work with our Gender Division to help establish a model for a gender Management System for PNG. At present we have no easily accessible co-ordinated and user friendly data on gender in PNG. We have not yet completed the Situational Analysis on Gender as required by CEDAW. How can we judge our progress if we do not even have the benchmarks in place? If the mining industry, can be a partner in defining the macro-structure as well as mainstreaming at the micro-community level, that input would be much appreciated.
When it comes to gender, the mining industry is a reflection of society at large in PNG but it should not be. The mining industry has the potential to be progressive, high tech and innovative in all aspects of development, including gender.

The fact that this conference has been organized indicates a desire for change and a willingness to listen to the women’s voices for change. I look forward to the outcomes and recommendations of this conference and to a continued dialogue with the mining industry regarding gender and community development, including visits to the mining sites and associated community development and women’s empowerment programmes if possible. I would also invite the mining industry to become pilot sites for some of the community empowerment programs my department is introducing.
DIGGING A GARDEN FOR A BETTER FUTURE

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MODEL
COMMUNITY WHEEL OF PROGRESS

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MAPPING