

Foreword

This book brings to the interested public the discussions and propositions delivered during the First Iberoamerican Seminar on Mine Closure held in La Rabida, at the monastery where Colon lived upon his return to Spain, after reaching the American Continent.

Such a Seminar was a product of an open competition among 197 candidates, from several nationalities, all of them recognized professionals or academicians, acting upon the thematic of mine closure in these last years. From these, 101 were eligible to scholarships awarded by CYTED - Science and Technology Programme for Development - and UIA - The International University of Andalucia, since, as announced, it was open to iberoamerican citizens only.

Out of these 101 eligible candidates, 50 sent their experiences and proposals on the thematic thus proposed, Mine Closure, to this very first seminar, on an international level, that discussed the questions of mine decommissioning focusing all the angles of such question :

- from its economics and financial angle ;
- from its social and community angles ;
- from its legal aspects ;
- from its political and psico-social angles ;
- from its environmental aspects ;
- from its technological aspects ;

From this group of 50 highly qualified people it was necessary to select 10 full scholarships and 20 partial ones ; moreover, due to the extraordinary contemporaneity of the discussion it was open the possibility that officials from the mining companies could participate at their own costs ; another group of 10 people so did that way.

One very important issue of the question was the great interest aroused from engineers, scientists, lawyers, social scientists, geologists, environmentalists, community leaders, on the understandings of what is the problem related to mine closure and what this terms really means, within the new proposals and constraints of sustainable development. Thus, questions as mine rehabilitation, reclaiming, recovering of the site and more recently mine decommissioning rise, here and there, sometimes intermixing without a clear cut frontier between one and the other and even competing amongst themselves.

Classical mining already introduced the problems of reclaiming as one of its unit operations within the orebody ; this we, mining engineers learned at our mining schools, even 30 or 40 years ago ! This is not new ! What is in fact new is to incorporate the social dimension, besides the environmental one, as well as enlarging the latter, and generating a wholly new conception of the mining enterprise : its physical, economical, social, political and ethical effects !

We, the editors, are quite sure that the subjects that are at the disposal of the reader in this book, being concepts, discussions or case-studies will well serve the purposes of steering new discussions and proposals hopefully to reach some consensus in the way mine closure is being seen today. As immediate results of this Seminar, the following actions are under way :

- editing of a CD-R of all the presentations, in spanish, portuguese and english and distributed by Panorama Minero of Argentina, in its October 2000 edition, coordinated by Hugo Fernandez.
- Panamerican Workshop on Mine Closure, coordinated by COCHILCO's Patricio Cartagena, in Santiago Chile, June 2001.
- Cuban Workshop on Mine Closure : its Geodynamic Approach, Moa, Cuba, June 2001, Coordinated by Roberto Blanco, of Red D - CYTED-XIII.

- establishing of a NGO in Vancouver, Canadá, february 2001, coordinated by Marcello Veiga of UBC.
- a comparative study on mining closure realities between the American Continent and the Iberian Peninsula, february 2001, coordinated by Laura Barreto.
- witting up of the La Marisma-Huelva Declaration as a guideline for mine closure concerns, coordinated by Hugo Nielson.
- and others. ...

Good reading !

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Editors