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Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, organizers of the Euromining fair,

The special themes of Euromining are technology, financing, as well as safety and environmental matters. These are very acute themes not only for the mining industry but for all the industries and economy of the world in general.

Today the globe we are living is facing both severe environmental and economic challenges. Environmental challenges, including climate change, environmental pollution, depletion of natural raw materials and sufficiency of clean water cause threat for billions of people. We need solutions for these challenges and in many cases clean and efficient technologies are the answer.

Mining industry, as well as other industries always have an impact on the nature but by using cleaner technologies these impacts can be minimized. Finland has great potential here as we are one of the leading countries in cleantech in the world. Our special strongholds include bioenergy, water treatment and material and energy efficiency of industrial processes like in mining industry. Many of our companies are world leaders in sustainable mining technologies and many of these companies are also present here at the fair.

On the other hand, when we today look at the economic situation of the world, we can say that it is also very challenging. The economic growth, in general, is low and many of the investments planned do not realize at the moment. Mining industry is also sensitive for economic fluctuations. During last months the need of metals and minerals has decreased and the declining metal prices have had an effect on the mining and refining business globally. In 2012 the production volumes of mining increases 6 % but this year the turnover has turned down and the revenues are decreased.

However, it is expected that the global economy soon starts to grow again and the need for metals again increases. In order to be in frontline in global market when the growth starts, we must be well prepared. Thus we today have to work to make our mining business most innovative, sustainable and competitive to be able to take our share of the global business when the economic situation turns.

Mining industry is still one of the economic priority areas of Finland's government. Earlier this year the government prepared together with all important stakeholders an action plan to raise Finland the global forerunner in sustainable mining. In the action plan there are 35 action points for the industry, public sector and also for international collaboration. To be the global forerunner in sustainable mining and to increase the market share globally means that environmental, social and economic aspects must be taken into account and must be in balance. Sustainability is a prerequisite for profitable business today. I believe that in future only sustainable companies are competitive.

Sustainable mining business is always done by the companies. The companies must not only fulfill the requirements of the licenses and permits, competitiveness and also "the social licence to operate" requires voluntary actions, for example, with the local communities and also in field R&D&I. We propose voluntary actions for the mining companies including, among others, development and adaptation of water balance plans and recycling of mining side products and residues and also measures how to solve the conflicts of interests between mining and other business sectors. These are matters that are also discussed here at Euromining.

Even when the companies are mainly responsible for sustainable mining business the public sector has an important role in developing a well functioning, attractive and innovative business environment for the companies. This means that the regulations must support sustainable mining business, permitting processes should be smooth and predictable, and education and research of mining sector must be developed and strengthened. When we have well functioning, encouraging, and innovative business environment for mining sector in Finland, it improves the competitiveness of our own industry. In addition it also attracts foreign companies and investors which are most welcome to Finland when they operate in a sustainable manner.

Third point in the action plan is to enhance collaboration in all levels; local, Nordic, European and global levels. International collaboration is a prerequisite for sustainable mining. Examples are among others, EU-regulations and international actions and also R&D collaboration. We can not live in silos as the world around us is global.

In order to boost international collaboration we at Ministry of Employment and the Economy most warmly welcome all international endeavours in mining sector most welcome to Finland, and the Euromining fair is one of the prime examples for this kind of collaboration.

I wish you all have a very successful three days and find new partners and get new ideas and innovations.