

GLOBAL MINERALS PROFESSIONALS ALLIANCE



NEWS RELEASE – March 4, 2019

Global Minerals Professionals Alliance undertakes International Action on Tailings

In light of the global challenges faced around mine waste, particularly tailings, the Global Minerals Professionals Alliance (GMPA) will be undertaking ‘Global Action on Tailings’. The initiative was announced at a recent meeting of the GMPA – a collaborative partnership between leading professional organizations for minerals around the world – held in February 2019, in Denver, Colorado in conjunction with the 2019 SME Annual Conference & Expo.

In addition to examining tailings from the perspective of disposal and closure, the initiative will seek to advance discussions and solutions relating to tailings management, tailings reprocessing/repurposing, and ultimately moving towards tailings elimination. “Today, tailings management is the most pressing issue facing the minerals sector,” said Janice Zinck, President of the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum.

“Collectively, the GMPA has thousands of experts in all aspects of mining and milling relating to tailings generation, reprocessing and management, making its members well poised to address this complex topic from a scientific, fact-based perspective.”

“Over the next several months the GMPA organizations will collaborate on this initiative to develop working groups that can effectively address the significant challenges associated with tailings management at existing impoundments, as well as focus on the need to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, the use of conventional surface tailings storage facilities,” SME President Dr. Hugh Miller further added. “As a Society, we have tremendous technical capacity to confront these challenges through our members and fully recognize the need for global collaboration to make substantive change.”

The approach will be multi-pronged, with the first step involving data collection and the dissemination of existing best practices, case studies, and research through a forthcoming GMPA Global Action on Tailings website.

“IOM3’s members have significant expertise in these issues and the Institute itself holds an immense amount of research material from across the world on all aspects of tailings management,” said Prof. Serena Best, President of the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining. “This important initiative will help us apply this expertise and knowledge to address this significant challenge.”

AusIMM President Janine Herzig endorsed this initiative saying that the most recent tailings dam disaster in Brazil was a tragedy, and the AusIMM welcomed the report from a full inquiry.

“Australasia is respected as a world leader in best practice health, safety, community and environmental standards through a robust regulatory framework informed by sought-after mining health and safety experts,” Ms. Herzig said. “AusIMM continues to be committed to educating and promoting world class standards, and investing in the capability of professionals in the industry ensuring that all those who work in the resources sector continue to be safe and healthy.”

Tailings teams will be established in each of the participating GMPA organizations and experts on all aspects of tailings management and processing will be engaged in addressing this issue.

“The Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy fully supports this important initiative. Recent events have galvanized focus on the design, placement and management of waste storage facilities, while at the same time emphasising the need for research to reduce the need for such facilities. The sharing of global knowledge in these efforts is essential, not only to pool global knowledge, but also to prevent sub-optimisation on a local basis,” stated SAIMM President, Alastair Macfarlane. To emphasise support in a Southern African context, the SAIMM is holding a Tailings Storage conference in October.

A think tank event will be held in Arequipa, Peru in September, 2019 in conjunction with PERUMIN — Convencion Minera. “IIMP is delighted to host the inaugural Global Action on Tailings event in Arequipa this coming September,” said Antonio Samaniego, Past President of IIMP.

The GMPA also hopes to work collaboratively with the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) which recently announced its intention to establish an independent panel of experts to develop an international standard for tailings facilities for its member companies.

About GMPA: Comprised of the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy ([AusIMM](#)), the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum ([CIM](#)), the Peruvian Institute of Mining Engineers ([IIMP](#)), the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining ([IOM3](#)), the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy ([SAIMM](#)), and the Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration ([SME](#)), the GMPA strives to foster the exchange of knowledge and technology, promote technical and professional excellence across the minerals industries, provide programs for education and professional development, and facilitate opportunities for knowledge sharing, business networking, fellowship and public information.



#

SME is a professional society (nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation) whose members represent all professions serving the mining, minerals and underground construction industries in more than 100 countries. SME members include engineers, geologists, metallurgists, educators, students and researchers. SME advances the worldwide minerals community through information exchange and professional development.

*SME exists to be the premier resource and advocate for the mining community.
For further details, see www.smenet.org*