

Coal and the Sustainable Development Goals Roundtable

4 October 2018, Bogota

Summary of discussions

The roundtable was held under the Chatham House Rule

The World Coal Association (WCA) co-hosted a half-day roundtable in Bogota on 4 October, in partnership with the [Colombian Mining Association](#). The event brought together a range of stakeholders for a high-level discussion on coal and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The roundtable was the third in a series of events that WCA has hosted throughout 2018, where it is seeking to get external input on the work that it should undertake in this space. The first roundtable was held in London in March and the second in Johannesburg in July. Summaries of discussions at both events are available on the [WCA website](#).

The roundtable process aims to consider the role of coal and the coal industry in supporting the SDGs and will help to inform a potential mapping exercise in 2019.

Bogota Roundtable

WCA opened the roundtable by highlighting the ongoing role of coal in driving the global economy but also that responding to climate change is its biggest challenge. WCA also emphasised that the SDGs are holistic and we need to think about the entire coal value chain.

Participants then introduced themselves and provided initial thoughts on coal and the SDGs. The roundtable was welcomed for creating a space for discussion on the Colombian coal industry and the SDGs.

Following the opening remarks, participants engaged in a moderated discussion on areas of interest such as specific regional issues, the mapping process, establishing baselines and measuring impacts, what SDGs to cover, challenges and next steps.

A number of key themes emerged from the discussions, which are outlined below.

Key themes

1. Vital role of coal in Colombia

Throughout the discussion, participants made clear the important role played by coal in Colombia. Coal mining has a positive impact on economic development, through job creation, royalty payments and through development activity within local communities. The importance of



coal to economic development has implications for its contribution to the SDGs and shapes specific regional issues that should be considered.

2. Local vs national context

Discussions covered how local SDG issues can often be more challenging and complex than the national context. While national governments may set targets for development, there can often be huge disparities at the regional/territory level. Participants noted, for example, that some territories in Colombia haven't seen the full benefits of mining in their communities because of changes to the royalty system.

While noting that it was important that this was a process global in outlook, participants highlighted that it also needs to be informed by regional issues and include specific regional/country/community case studies to provide examples of positive contributions or challenges.

3. Baselines and measuring impact

Discussion emphasised the importance of data and baselines in measuring the contribution of the industry to the SDGs. "Approximation is a concern on the SDGs" noted one participant, highlighting that a lack of evidence to support claims about the contribution of industry could lead to questions about accuracy.

Companies highlighted that establishing a baseline had been key to their work in this space, as it enabled them to show how progress is being made. Participants noted that demonstrating improvement was important – stakeholders don't expect challenges to be instantly fixed but they do feel that there should be a focus on improvement and progress.

4. Importance of strong institutions to support the SDGs

Participants also emphasised the role of institutions in providing data to facilitate measuring impacts and noted the historical challenge of weak institutions in Colombia. Some participants questioned the roles and responsibilities of companies compared to the state. Companies have often taken on some of the responsibilities that would typically be assigned to the state, such as around education and social services.

While mining companies cannot overcome these challenges by themselves, they do have an important role to play. Participants noted the need for dialogue between companies, civil society and the state and along the importance of discussions across the full supply chain.

5. Focusing on SDGs of most relevance and impact

Participants were concerned about the scale of the challenge of covering all 17 SDGs. They emphasised the importance of focusing on SDGs where the industry adds most value but also has most significance. It was suggested that materiality analysis could be a way to edit down the SDGs covered in a mapping exercise. Discussions emphasised the importance of SDG17 – the need to pool resources, work together and have partnerships.

6. SDG learning curve

Discussions covered the significant contribution that the Colombian coal industry has made in terms of sustainable growth and work on human rights. However, the industry is still on a learning curve and it's important to learn lessons from other sectors, other companies and from other organisations. It's also important to work in partnership to ensure that the industry can enhance its contribution to the SDGs.

7. Importance of transparency

Participants emphasised the importance of openness and transparency in a mapping exercise, bringing different stakeholders together for a more balanced, informed conversation that is built on trust. The SDGs provide an opportunity for a fuller, more constructive conversation around coal. Participants also noted the importance of being clear in communicating the results of this work.

8. Longer-term timeframe

Participants highlighted that governments can often operate in a much shorter timeframe than the 2030 Agenda. They emphasised the importance of looking longer-term on the SDGs, to 2030 and beyond.

Next steps

Discussions at each of the WCA roundtables held throughout 2018 will help to shape WCA's strategic plan for the 2019 mapping exercise. This will be presented to the WCA Board at the end of the year for discussion and agreement on how to proceed. WCA emphasised that it will maintain transparency throughout the process and, as part of these efforts, will make this summary note of discussions available online.

Participating organisations

A number of individuals from the following organisations participated in the roundtable.

Asociación Colombiana de Minería	Agencia Nacional de Minería
Carbocoque	Cerrejon
Coquecoal S.A.	Drummond
Global Reporting Initiative	Guajira 360
Ministerio de Minas y Energia	Peabody Energy
Portex	Prodeco
The Dragonfly Initiative	UNDP
World Coal Association	

Please note that participation in the event does not mean endorsement of the process.

This note is a summary of discussions at the 'Coal and the SDGs' roundtable and does not necessarily represent the views of the World Coal Association or its members or roundtable participants.