

Principles for Sustainable Development-Based Decision Making

To ensure that economic, environmental, and social considerations are integrated effectively in its decisions on minerals and metals issues, the Government will be guided by the following:

- the requirement for a responsive public policy framework;
- the recognition that the market mechanism is the most effective instrument for allocating resources among alternative activities and investments;
- a performance-based regulatory framework that recognizes the benefits of harmonization and minimization of uncertainty, delay, and costs;
- the recognition of the complementary value of nonregulatory approaches as sometimes offering a more effective and efficient means to achieve policy objectives;
- the importance of science;
- the endorsement of the concept of pollution prevention;
- the affirmation of the precautionary principle; and
- the recognition of the polluter pays principle.

The Government, in supporting the responsible use and management of minerals and metals, has indicated that industry needs to continue to assume greater responsibility for environmental performance and for stewardship of minerals and metals throughout their life cycle. Key elements of this approach follow.

Life-Cycle Management

In managing minerals- and metals-related health and environmental issues, the principle of life-cycle management for both *process* and *product* life cycles plays an essential role. Process life-cycle management applies to specific operations and their