



# SUCCESS STORY

## Bringing Together the Armenian Government and the Private Sector in Mining

### “Everybody Goes Home”



Photo: Bruce Dial

*Government agencies and mining companies come together in an exceptional roundtable to forge the way for inter-governmental and public-private collaboration to develop critically needed mining norms for Armenia.*



“Everybody goes home.” It’s the key lesson and reason for mining safety regulations, to ensure that every miner that sets foot in a mine leaves safe and sound at the end of the day to go home to his family. Mining accounts for approximately 5% of the GDP of the Armenia, with nearly 15,000 employees leaving every morning for the mines. However, mine safety is still at a nascent stage in the country, as employers and government adhere to mostly outdated Soviet regulations which do not even have the force of law. The result is a confusing maze of inspections, obligations, and procedures that is fragmented among government agencies. Lost in all of this is a focus on safety at the mines, and how to best protect Armenian miners.

Hoping to open a dialogue among interested stakeholders, the USAID Social Protection Systems Strengthening (SPSS) Project hosted a roundtable in Yerevan on August 31st that was a first of its kind: a meeting of representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues, the State Labor Inspectorate, the Ministry for Trade and Economic Development, National Center of Technical Safety and representatives of the private sector, including some of the most prominent mining firms in Armenia.

Participants in the roundtable exchanged views for three hours on the proper role of government in protecting safety in Armenian mining. US mining expert Bruce Dial, formerly of the Mining Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) illustrated the difficulties of inspecting mining companies and gave examples of the history of mining regulation in the US. Lively discussion ensured among participants, each voicing their concerns on the future of safety in mining in Armenia and training needs to reach higher levels of safety.

With no real history of public-private collaboration, the roundtable was a first step in involving the private sector in the regulatory process in Armenia. The conclusion was reached that only continued collaboration from all interested parties will ensure that miners in Armenia can be certain that their employers have done all possible to make sure they do indeed go home.