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05/12/2010



Vale holds International Workshop on Sustainable Development

"On their own, governments will not be able to save the world from major environmental disasters caused by ongoing climate change." This warning was delivered yesterday by Professor Mohan Munasinghe, during a speech given at the first International Seminar on Sustainable Development, promoted by Vale.

Mohan Munasinghe, a Sri Lankan physicist who runs the Sustainable Consumption Institute at the University of Manchester, and winner of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, highlighted the role of emerging countries in the fight against rising planetary temperatures. In Professor Munasinghe's opinion, solutions that the world is hoping for in sustainable development and pollution control are likely to be developed in countries such as Brazil, India and China. He emphasized initiatives such as that taken by Vale, which through the Vale Technology Institute (ITV) is supporting research on technology and projects to find ways of using natural resources without causing major environmental harm.

Vale's International Workshop on Sustainable Development, runs until Saturday, May 15, in the Brazilian cities of Belém and Rio de Janeiro, and is being organized by the Vale Technology Institute (ITV). Brazilian and foreign researchers have been invited by the company to discuss issues related to the environment and sustainable development. This consultation with the international scientific community will help to guide the agenda of research work to be undertaken at the ITV research center to be built in Belém, the capital of the state of Pará, which will focus on scientific research into sustainable development.

In all, 30 researchers from 19 countries are participating in the workshop, including Sri Lankan economist and physicist Mohan Munasinghe, one of the most renowned intellectuals in the environmental field and director of the Sustainable Consumption Institute at the University of Manchester, UK. As a result of his work as vice chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Dr. Munasinghe won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, together with former US president Al Gore, and other members of the IPCC. Dr. Munasinghe is today giving a talk in Belém open to researchers and other members of the academic community.

In Rio de Janeiro, three days of debates will be held, from 13 to 15 May, with researchers discussing sustainable development-related issues and exploring how mining activities can contribute to the wellbeing of local communities, minimizing the impacts caused by these operations. The researchers will also take part in a technical visit to Vale's mines in Itabira and Brucutu in the state of Minas Gerais. ITV was created by Vale to coordinate the company's science and technology activities and support the production of scientific research in Brazil.

ITV's director, Luiz Mello, explained that the workshop is the institute's first formal commitment to building a scientific research agenda and to collaborating with the academic community of Belém. Mello stressed the importance of Mohan Munasinghe's talk. "Dr. Mohan is a renowned researcher who can make a contribution to ITV in Pará by sharing his knowledge and experience gained from decades of study and research into climate change, an issue that is very important to the region, given that the Amazon plays a significant role in the planet's climate," he said.

Mello also emphasized that, with the establishment of ITV, the state of Pará will take a major step forwards in science and research. "In Pará we will have a world-class institute, a center for research into sustainable development that will benefit

from the work of 50 scientists and researchers, hired in Brazil and from abroad, to carry out studies on the environment and sustainable development."

Vale Technology Institute (ITV)

The first of three ITV research centers will be built this year in the state of Pará. The other two centers will be built in Ouro Preto (Minas Gerais), to specialize in mining, and São Paulo, which will focus on innovations in energy. The center in Belém, Pará, will prioritize research on sustainable development.

The site for the Pará ITV center is currently being selected. The campus will feature infrastructure and laboratories to accommodate an initial group of around 50 researchers, administrative staff and students, giving a total of approximately 400 people. Naturally, the center's architectural design was created with sustainability in mind, taking into account land use issues, the use of rainwater and solar panels to generate power.

Even before the center is built, ITV's initiatives to promote research in the state of Pará have already begun: in 2008, ITV, the Pará State Research Promotion Foundation (FAPESPA) and the State Development, Science and Technology Secretariat (SEDECT) awarded 84 scholarships for post-graduate studies in Pará.

The following year, ITV, FAPESPA and SEDECT launched a project to provide financial support to researchers conducting research on issues related to the mining industry in Pará. In 2010, ITV signed an agreement with the state research promotion foundations of Pará (FAPESPA), Minas Gerais (FAPEMIG) and São Paulo (FAPESP) to invest R\$120 million in scientific work in the fields of mining, energy, eco-efficiency and biodiversity, and ferrous products used in steelmaking.

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