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### **Northern Mining Workforce Initiative Partners Conclude Successful Meeting**

**YELLOWKNIFE (September 6, 2011)** – The members of the Northern Mining Workforce Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Initiative re-affirmed their commitment to achieving the objectives of this partnership at a productive steering committee meeting held on August 29, 2011.

The success of training through partnerships, and the need for a continued emphasis on training was identified during the meeting. The GNWT and the diamond mines companies agreed it is important to build on their successes by continuing to work on training, including skills development, leadership, safety, and financial literacy training.

The Steering Committee meeting also gave the partners the chance to review and discuss the efforts that have been made together to attract and retain an NWT workforce. In 2011 the three mines and the GNWT launched a *SayYes* campaign that highlights the benefits of living in the NWT. The campaign focused on the personal and career advantages of living in the NWT and profiled mine families who have made the move to the NWT and are glad they did.

“Maximizing opportunities for residents in all NWT communities is a GNWT priority. This MOU is an important initiative that will help us achieve our goals,” says Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment Bob McLeod. “Our focus is always on how we can continue to work together for the betterment of the people of the NWT, and this meeting provided us all with an opportunity to talk about the progress we have made and to lay out priorities to pursue in the future.”

“Preparing, recruiting and retaining workers is an issue that affects all sectors in the Northwest Territories,” says Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jackson Lafferty. “It is important to be specific about the mines' future needs and to prepare our residents for those needs by collaborating together and ensuring they have the tools needed to lead healthy, productive lives.”

“Since the discovery of diamonds in the NWT by BHP Billiton, we have provided employment, training and business opportunities for the people of the NWT at EKATI Diamond Mine, at levels rarely seen elsewhere in the resources industry,” said Paul Harvey, Asset President. “We are proud of our record, and are committed to continuing to work closely with government and industry partners under the MOU, to ensure that the NWT continues to prosper. Our commitment is to achieve a lasting positive impact in the communities where we live.”

Diavik Diamond Mines Inc. Acting President and Chief Operating Officer, Alasdair Martin, states that Diavik is fully committed to sustainable northern benefits for all stakeholders from its operations, including maximizing northern recruitment and retention. “Supporting the MOU initiative is a critical way forward to work together in partnership with the GNWT and the two other diamond operations to evaluate, recommend, and implement actions that will bear benefits to increase northern employment, training, recruitment, as well as addressing retention issues.” He adds: “One example is our work to continue to exceed our apprenticeship numbers beyond our 8-18 commitment. We currently have 27 apprentices on our mine site and our overall plan is to bring our total to approximately 100 northerners with trades training skills and journey person certifications during our life of mine. Since opening our mine, 30 individuals have achieved journey person status.”

“Developing and keeping the skills we need here in the NWT continues to be a high priority for De Beers,” said Cathie Bolstad, Director External and Corporate Affairs on behalf of De Beers Canada. “The diamond industry has been a trail blazer for success models that build community capacity and develop new sustainable skills here in the NWT. By working together, we have a better chance of success and De Beers remains committed to working with industry partners and government.”

The MOU was signed in November of 2008. Its members include the Departments of Industry, Tourism and Investment; Education, Culture and Employment; BHP Billiton Canada Inc.; Diavik Diamond Mines Inc.; and De Beers Canada Inc. The purpose of the MOU is to maximize employment opportunities from diamond mining for NWT residents. Through the MOU, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the diamond mines are working collaboratively towards two main objectives – develop the skills of NWT workers, and attract and retain a skilled NWT workforce.

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