

Changes pending for mining laws

BRITS - The much-anticipated Mining Summit has yielded mixed results and did not address a review of the Mining Charter that some had been expecting ahead of a sweeping range of amendments to legislation governing mining and changes to the charter.

The summit, which was attended by representatives from mining companies, labour and government, addressed two broad issues, namely transformation and sustainable growth, or rectifying the industry's competitiveness so as to catch the next commodities boom and not miss out again.

While representatives from the three sides sounded upbeat during a media conference, some of the delegates said that the talks behind

closed doors had been intense and heated, particularly around transformation.

Task teams drawn up from each side investigated various key issues, finding out what the impediments were to transformation and the competitiveness of the mining sector and then presenting these findings to delegates at the summit.

The requirement was for delegates to reach consensus on what the hurdles were and assign the relevant task teams the objective of coming up with a set of

proposals on how to remove these obstacles, said DMR director general Sandile Nogxina.

These obstacles included legislation,

productivity, managerial matters and the quality of applications for mining and prospecting rights submitted to the DMR, he said.

"The breakthrough of this summit is that there is consensus from all stakeholders on understanding what the impediments for the sector are," Nogxina said.

One delegate, who declined to be named, said: "It was a real fight over certain things and there are a number of sensitive issues that still need resolution."

The finalised set of proposals must be completed by June this year when mines minister Susan Shabangu wants the review of

the charter to be completed too so she can take the changes on an international road show in the second half of 2010.

The issue of transformation, unsurprisingly, generated the most heat within the summit, with a number of items set aside for further study, like removing white women from the definition of historically disadvantaged South Africans, a politically correct term used to broadly define those who are to benefit from the drive to rectify racial injustices of the past.

Shabangu declared the department dissatisfied with the rate at which black equity ownership of mining companies is being achieved.

The targets were 15% by 2010 and 26% by 2014 (miningmx.com).



Susan Shabangu, SA Mines Minister.