

For Immediate Release

Rio Tinto and CEMI sign \$10M agreement for new centre in Sudbury, Ontario

Toronto, ON – On December 6th, 2010, new partners Rio Tinto and the Centre for Excellence in Mining Innovation (CEMI) celebrated the official signing of an agreement that will showcase CEMI's capabilities to the world.

The historic signing follows the announcement last week when global mining company Rio Tinto committed to establish the Rio Tinto Centre for Underground Mine Construction (RTC-UMC) at CEMI located in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada. Rio Tinto is investing \$10 million dollars over five years to undertake research at the centre into rapid underground mine construction.

Ontario government minister and one of the founding members of CEMI, the Honourable Rick Bartolucci MPP, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, today joined with the Honourable Michael Gravelle MPP, Minister of Northern Development, Mines, and Forestry, together with parliamentary colleagues and guests from Rio Tinto, CEMI and the mining community to witness signatures being applied to the agreement.

Rio Tinto is focusing on mechanized excavation including a shaft boring system (SBS) and tunnel boring systems (TBS). Rio Tinto has selected CEMI as the agent for collaborative research leadership in support of high speed construction associated with underground mine construction. For Rio Tinto, this investment reflects the company's long term commitment to science, engineering and innovation, and is central to its approach to research partnerships. This is the fifth global long-term research centre to be established by Rio Tinto.

The Rio Tinto Centre for Underground Mine Construction at CEMI will undertake research with respect to ground and machine performance. For this purpose, prototype test sites will be instrumented to improve ground characterization techniques and to develop innovative support systems to facilitate high speed, mechanized tunnel and shaft development technologies for underground mines in highly stressed ground and at depth.

John McGagh, Head of Innovation at Rio Tinto, states that, "In order to satisfy the increasing global demand for minerals Rio Tinto is seeking a step change improvement in the construction of the next generation of large underground mines. In announcing the formation of the Rio Tinto Centre for Underground Mine Construction we confirm our commitment to supporting the development of advanced technologies to help Rio Tinto turn the mine of the future into reality."

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Dr. Peter K. Kaiser, President/CEO of CEMI remarked, “I’m excited about this development as it demonstrates that CEMI has established the means to tackle industry’s most challenging problems.”

With the support of Rio Tinto, CEMI will be collaborating with recognized researchers to address ground control and machine performance issues. With eventual test sites, possibly on three continents, CEMI has matured to handle industry’s most strategic problems and to strengthen collaborations with expertise beyond our immediate boundaries. This program will utilize homegrown expertise and benefit Ontario universities and small-medium enterprises alike. The program will also help develop highly qualified personnel for the mining sector.

About CEMI

The Centre for Excellence in Mining Innovation (CEMI), located in Sudbury, Ontario, is continuing its R&D efforts to facilitate the delivery of step-change research initiatives which are deemed critically important to the mining industry. It strives to establish excellence in strategic areas of research: deep mining, mineral exploration, integrated mine engineering, environment and sustainability. Please visit our website at www.miningexcellence.ca to review CEMI’s 2010 Annual Report and project catalogue highlighting the achievements of its team of innovators.

About Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto is a leading international mining group headquartered in the UK, combining Rio Tinto Plc, a London and NYSE listed company, and Rio Tinto Limited, which is listed on the Australian Securities Exchange.

Rio Tinto's business is finding, mining, and processing mineral resources. Major products are aluminium, copper, diamonds, energy (coal and uranium), gold, industrial minerals (borax, titanium dioxide, salt, talc) and iron ore. Activities span the world but are strongly represented in Australia and North America with significant businesses in South America, Asia, Europe and southern Africa. www.riotinto.com

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