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Promoting RFG in conjunction with China's "the Belt and the Road" initiative

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The present over supply of mineral commodities in the global market led to the dramatic decline of prices, but that does not necessarily mean mankind has an absolute surplus of mineral resources. On the contrary, as the per capita mineral consumption of developed countries kept on high level and more than 6 billion people in developing countries are on the way to industrialization, the global demand for mineral resources is huge and definitely cannot be satisfied by the currently identified resources. Furthermore, the increasing concern over the environment requires geologist to discover high quality resources with low cost and less environmental disturbance. It was to meet those requirements that the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) launched the initiative, Resourcing Future Generations (RFG).

How to promote RFG? "The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road" (the Belt and the Road) initiative of China provides an opportunity. The initiative involving 64 countries situated in East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and other parts of the world. Most of the countries are less developed with backward infrastructure, but they have intense desire to develop. With the huge demand for mineral resources, they are and will continue to be the global consuming centre.

"The Belt and the Road" covers 3 metallogenic belts: West Pacific rim, Tethys and Pal-Asian. Featured with favourable metallogenic conditions, the area has good prospects of discovering enormous mineral resources. One problem it faces is the low level of geological research and the lack of geological capacity. Thus the following suggestion is made to IUGS: to promote RFG in conjunction with China's "the Belt and the Road" initiative and focus on: (1) cooperation among the countries concerned in 1/1,000,000 and 1/500,000 geological mapping; (2) initiating International Geological Correlation Programme (IGCP) in the concerning areas; (3) inter-government and inter-company cooperation in assessment of potential mineral resources in the important areas; (4) providing education by geological societies and other non-government organizations in the concerning countries to enhance the geological capacity.

References:

[1] Lambert I et al. (2013) Episodes 36(2): 82-86

