

Philippine Misereor Partnership
SOUTHERN TAGALOG CLUSTER

Mining Study Conference

October 3-5, 2006

Sacred Heart Pastoral Centre
Boac, Marinduque 4900 Philippines

BOAC DECLARATION 2006

We participants of the Mining Study Conference from the Philippine Misereor Partnership Southern Tagalog Cluster, representing the communities directly affected by mining, various Peoples Organizations (POs), Social Action Centres (SACs) of affected dioceses, Non Government Organizations (NGOs), Local Government and Church Leaders headed by His Excellency, **Most Rev. Reynaldo G. Evangelista**, D.D. Bishop of Boac, together with His Excellency **Most Rev. Edgardo S. Juanich**, D.D., Vicar Apostolic of Taytay, priests and representatives who care for and defend the environment and our national patrimony, gathered together from 3-5 of October at the Sacred Heart Pastoral Centre, Boac, Marinduque, hereby declare the following:

THE PRESENT SITUATION UNDER THE MINERAL POLICY REVITALIZATION PROGRAMME OF THE GOVERNMENT

We witness the continuous displacement of our Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in many parts of the country and the serious disregard of their human rights and disrespect concerning their rights over their Ancestral Lands and right to self-determination.

We witness the continuous destruction of natural water bodies that are sources of livelihood for many of our fishermen due to the toxic mine waste (tailings) that have been dumped in water bodies like Calancan Bay and municipal waters in the municipalities of Sta. Cruz, Boac and Mogpog in Marinduque.

We witness the dislocation of our farmers and the effects on their lives of the destruction of their farmlands caused by siltation and mine waste.

We witness the evil effects of mining on the health of our people that have continued to claim lives as evidenced by the victims of heavy metal contamination in Sta. Cruz and the sustained threat to people in Boac and Mogpog in Marinduque and the health victims in Bataraza, Palawan.

We witness the massive destruction to many of our forests, water sheds, mountains, fields, seas and natural sources of life and habitat of our people, flora and fauna, many of which are endemic to several of our towns and provinces, including Palawan, the remaining frontier in the country.

We witness serious human rights violations, prevalent cases of kidnapping and summary executions of environmental activists and people who directly oppose mining operations and the wanton destruction of the environment, as well as non-existent justice for victims underlined by what is happening in Aurora and other Southern Tagalog Provinces.

UNIFIED ASSESSMENT OF OUR SITUATION

Our joint study, sharing and assessment of our situation revealed that our experiences are not different or isolated from those of our brothers and sisters in many other parts of the archipelago. Mining in the Philippines is neither motivated by the need to improve the country's economy or a genuine desire to improve the distressing plight of the Filipino people, who are living in extreme poverty. Instead, the interests of the large foreign corporations, in their constant quest for profit, are always the focal point of mining in the Philippines. We have observed many of the resulting tragic experiences of our people due to the mining operations carried out by Marcopper-Placer Dome in Marinduque and Lafayette Mining Limited in Rapu-Rapu, Albay.

In these cases, we witnessed how the national and local government, the national police and military, judges and legislators have all served the interests of foreign corporations. These groups desperately pursue the Mining Act of 1995 and implement the Mining Revitalization Programme of the Government, in spite of the serious opposition from the people and the Government's supposed commitment to revise these anti-people and anti-Filipino policies. Moreover, such entities are pushing for changes to the Constitution which will only profit and further serve the interests of Mining Transnational Corporations (MTNCs), foreign investors and a few local corporations favoured by the government.

We also witness how the Government has become continuously insensitive and deaf to the appeal of ordinary people such as farm workers, fisher folk, indigenous peoples, other workers and sectors of society.

OUR UNIFIED DEMANDS AND CHALLENGE

The people of Marinduque, led by the Diocese of Boac, in the spirit and inspiration of this "Year of Social Concerns" and the sustained and fearless struggles of the peoples of Mindoro, Aurora and Palawan, continue to challenge us to strengthen and broaden our alliance and agreement to stop the greedy, anti-people and destructive programmes, policies and mining operations in the country, particularly in the Southern Tagalog Region and Aurora province.

We strongly face the new challenges of the present situation with renewed strength and creativity, to pursue the following demands:

1. Exclude from the Arroyo administration list of priority mining areas, the provinces of Marinduque and Mindoro and commence the long delayed search for justice for due compensation for all the affected population in the province of Marinduque with the needed environmental rehabilitation;
2. Make the Mining Transnational Corporations (MTNCs) accountable and cancel the mining permits and contracts of foreign and local mining corporations that violate the rights of the people and give rise to massive destruction of the environment, seriously affecting the lives of our people;
3. Condemn and address corruption and make concerned government officials particularly of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Mines and Geosciences Bureau (DENR-MGB) accountable for negligence and/or connivance with erring Mining TNCs.
4. Pursue proper investigations and bring to book concerned erring National Commission for Indigenous People (NCIP) officials and employees for their granting of falsified Certificates of Pre-Condition;
5. Implement a Moratorium in granting mining permits and ban large-scale mining operations and other mining activities that cause destruction to the environment;
6. Enact and implement an alternative pro-people and pro-environment mining/mineral policies;
7. Scrap the Mining Act of 1995 and Stop the present Charter Change initiative.

Signed this 5th day of October 2006.

Signed by:

His Excellency
**MOST REV. REYNALDO G.
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55 other Participants
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Philippine Misereor Partnership