

HOLD MINING COMPANIES TO ACCOUNT

PROTECT MOTHER NATURE

(A STATEMENT OF PMPI SITES OF STRUGGLES (SOS) CONFERENCE)

09 October 2019, Koronadal, South Cotabato

We, the mining affected communities coming from different parts of the Philippines, together with our church leaders, our pastors, and Bishops from Mindanao, are gathered today and once again journeying together through a partnership forged by Philippine Misereor Partnership Inc. (PMPI).

With joy and in pain we shared our struggles and small victories in challenging mining companies and our duty bearers in our small corner of the world. Together we felt the struggle of families to survive the environmental damage as well as physical, moral and spiritual harm brought about by irresponsible activities of mining corporations to our people.

Thus, we are in mutual agreement and we share the same conviction to protect people in communities and all of nature:

- (a) Knowing that our communities suffer greatly from the negative impact of mining, such as the destruction of our forest, watersheds, rivers and mountains; and that this would not only affect humans, but also to our fellow species within an ecosystem;
- (b) Understanding that ecosystem devastation does not only affect people's livelihood and food security, but also people's health and well-being; and that the welfare of all creature on earth is connected to a healthy environment;
- (c) Becoming more aware that the perils brought about by mining operations are not only economic impoverishment and environmental destruction of ecosystems, but also psychological trauma, cultural displacements, and the painful divisions of our communities
- (d) Confronted with our community's experience, we observe that both mining companies and government clearly fail to take responsibility to rehabilitate the areas damaged by mining corporations;
- (e) Worried that the business-as-usual policy of government, like the lifting of the ban on mining application, is resulting to approval of new mining FTAA's and MPSA's that further add to the current climate crisis, that of which experts say can have a fatal consequence for human species and other living organisms;
- (f) Concerned that despite numerous good environmental laws in the country, implementation of the said laws to protect the people and the environment is very much warranted.

We now draw strength from each other's presence. We are in solidarity, as we listen, share and ask questions making us part of one community protecting mother earth and journeying towards one universal destination-God's kingdom.

We now commit to continuously inspire and be moved by our faith and our collective will to protect the environment against the giant extractive industry. We might falter, but we will struggle to heed the call of Pope Francis to CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME and the recent CBCP's pastoral letter: AN URGENT CALL FOR ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION, HOPE IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY. Both documents shall be our resource, our measures, and our guide as we move forward in our advocacy.

We will vigorously engage our government to demand greater responsibility and accountability from mining companies violating the rights of people and nature and will demand policy makers to push for laws that would protect all nature's rights. We will continue to help strengthen our communities to face bigger challenges and to claim their right to decide on their destiny as a people. This we will do "like our house is on fire" given the gravity of the climate crisis.

Together, we will continue to dialogue, listen and to stand in solidarity with Mother Nature and against any form of destructive mining.

Signed:

Most Rev. Cerilo Alan U. Casicas, D.D. Bishop of Marbel
Most Rev. Jose Colin Bagaforo, D.D., Bishop of Kidapawan
Arline Santiago, Kubungan, Benguet
Rhea Jean Atiwag, Kibungan, Benguet
Jose B. Gallano, Kibungan, Benguet
Julius Revilloza, Marinduque
Bernard Hintay, Marinduque
Fr. Reynato Padilla, Rapu-rapu Island, Albay
Florinda Canada, Rapu-Rapu Island, Albay
Esayra Abucejo, Manicani Island, Guian, Eastern Samar
Mauricia Sabito, Homonhon Island, Guian, Eastern Samar
Karol Patrick Amidao, Social Action Center – Borongan, Eastern Samar
Fr. Francisco Olvis, Cantilan Surigao del Sur
Marie Vic Guingging, Zamboanga Peninsula
Irene Socorro Teresa Sargado, Social Action Center, Tandag
Vilma Suan, Social Action Center – Dipolog
Rene Pamplona, Tampakan, South Cotabato
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Bonifacio Laborada, Vitali, Zamboanga del Sur
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