

On March 12, 2007, the members of the Leadership Team of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame, based in Montreal, asked Canada's federal government to adopt the consensus recommendations of the Report of the Roundtables on Extractive Industries. The letter is reproduced below:

Honourable Mr. Peter MacKay  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Lester B. Pearson Building  
Tower A, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
125 Sussex Drive,  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

March 12, 2007

Dear Mr. MacKay,

The Sisters and Associates of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame appreciate the work that your government has continued to develop through the multi-stakeholder roundtables on extractive industries and corporate social responsibility. Thank you for providing this opportunity for debate and discernment among representatives of Canadian industry, government and human rights and environmental NGOs. Together we must strive to respect social and environmental justice while enhancing Canada's good name through best practices in overseas mining operations.

At the most recent Chapter of our Congregation, our Sisters from Guatemala impressed us all by passionately recounting how this issue affects everyone, and is the responsibility of everyone. Our Sisters work in an area where Glamis Gold Ltd. (subsequently bought by Goldcorp) began to mine gold and silver in spite of the opposition of the local indigenous community. One person even lost his/her life in the unfortunate series of events leading up to the production phase, when the Guatemalan Army confronted community members. Canadian Sisters have worked for decades in this country and have been well-accepted, but it has become difficult to feel proud of the way this project by a firm linked to our country, and supported by our Embassy, has proceeded.

Our Congregation notes with appreciation the recent letter directed to you by the Social Affairs Commission of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, which stated, "...the fundamental question before us is whether Canadian resource extraction corporations should be governed by Canadian values and Canadian laws when operating overseas." Ideally, host governments should be responsible for regulation of foreign mining companies which operate in their territory, yet in practice, many governments have weak legislation and lack capacity or political will to adequately regulate. This reality should not exempt any company from the responsibility to operate with the highest standards of environmental and social justice.

For our part, the Congrégation de Notre-Dame requests that our government require

Canadian companies operating internationally to meet clearly defined corporate accountability standards, including existing international human rights and environmental standards, as a condition for receipt of both financial and political assistance; that effective monitoring, verification and compliance mechanisms be enacted to ensure that Canadian companies are meeting these standards; and that legislation be passed to hold Canadian companies and their directors accountable in Canada when found complicit in human rights abuses and environmental destruction abroad, so as to offer victims grievance mechanisms for any such violations. We also propose that Canada further promote the inclusion of human rights and environmental standards in World Bank policies.

Mr. MacKay, we would appreciate hearing your commitment to the public release of the Report and Recommendations from the Roundtables on extractive industries and corporate responsibility as soon as these are completed. This would of course ensure a further step of accountability in the process undertaken to date, in which so many Canadians were involved. We look forward to government adoption of those recommendations which were able to be reached by consensus. In this way, Canada could lead the world in the promotion of just and environmentally sensitive extractive industry processes throughout the globe.

Thank you sincerely for your attention to our concerns.

Signed by;

Members of the Congregation Leadership Team - Congrégation de Notre-Dame

Josephine Badali, CND

Andrée Déry, CND

Anne C. Leonard, CND

Monique Courchesne, CND

Sheila Sullivan, CND

Donna Rose, CND

cc

Archbishop Roger Ébacher, Chairman, Episcopal Commission for Social Affairs,  
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

Mr. Michael Casey, Director, Canadian Catholic Organization for Development  
and Peace

Members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International  
Development

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