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Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0A2

Fax: 613-941-6900

Dear Prime Minister,

Tomorrow marks the anniversary of a landmark date in the history of corporate social responsibility in Canada. On March 29, 2007 a ten month long process of roundtable discussions and public consultation terminated in the release of a consensus report of the mining industry, academia, civil society organizations and labour, entitled, “**The Final Report of the National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility and the Canadian Extractive Industry in Developing Countries.**” As you know, the roundtable process involved representatives of eight federal government ministries and was preceded by several years of Parliamentary Committee study and recommendations wherein Canadian politicians attempted to grapple with these important concerns. The Report’s 27 consensus recommendations provided your government with a road map forward so that Canada might overcome the challenges to its reputation as a respectful and lawful member of the international community which does all in its power to ensure its companies assume the highest standards of corporate practices.

At one point, it seemed as if your government was prepared to accept and implement the major consensus recommendations of the Report. Indeed, in Heiligendamm, Germany at the closure of the June 2007 meeting of the G8, you noted before the international press corps that “Canada has recently completed a nation-wide consultation process involving stakeholders with the Canadian extractive sector (mining, oil and gas) in developing countries. Implementation of the recommendations from this process will place Canada among the most active G8 countries in advancing international guidelines and principles on corporate social responsibility (CSR) in this sector.” (PMO website: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1688>)

In the autumn of 2007, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace presented members of your government with over 150,000 signed petitions asking for quick implementation of one of the central recommendations of the Report: the establishment of an Ombudsperson’s Office where complaints could be received, investigated and reported upon. As well, in 2007, the Leadership Team of the Congr gation de Notre Dame has twice written to your Ministers, requesting action on the adoption of the Report’s consensus recommendations. (See: <http://www.jpdc-visitation.org/news/letters.html>)

Yet, this first anniversary of the release of the Report marks one year of government failure to move from rhetoric to action. The Report's recommendations have unfortunately yet to be adopted, much less implemented. Canada's international reputation, as well as the ecology and social rights of affected communities overseas, remain in jeopardy.

Mr. Harper, sisters of the Visitation Province of the Congrégation de Notre Dame have had direct experience working in Central American countries where Canadian companies have detrimentally affected local communities. By our presence as Canadian Christians we have tried to share with others the best values our privileged country and our faith have had to offer. Canada's friends overseas expect us to be present in responsible and beneficial ways, and many see the implementation of the Report's recommendations as a concrete indication of our government's willingness, in the economic sphere, to ensure that our actions match our stated intentions and commitments.

Mr. Prime Minister, we fear that the lengthy delay in implementing these measures harms Canada's international stature, continues to allow detrimental change to the ecology of several localities where Canadian mines operate, and creates social tensions in mining communities where local people have no adequate recourse to challenge the power of large Canadian firms.

We respectfully request that your government adopt, without further delay, the consensus recommendations of the Final Report of the National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility and the Canadian Extractive Industry in Developing Countries.

Yours sincerely,



Members of the Leadership Team
Visitation Province
Congrégation de Notre Dame

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