



Republic of the Philippines

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KAGAWARAN NG KAPALIGIRAN AT LIKAS NA YAMAN

(/)

LOPEZ ASSURES LUMAD: ERRING MINING COMPANIES WILL BE SUSPENDED

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Environment Secretary Gina Lopez has assured the Lumad or indigenous peoples of Mindanao that mining operations in the region found in violation of mining and environmental laws and regulations would be suspended.

This, even as Lopez urged them to submit their proposed development plan for areas which have been affected by destructive mining activities.

"Sususpindihin natin ang mga mining company na lumalabag sa batas," Lopez told Lumad representatives during their dialogue held at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) in Manila last Sunday.

During the dialogue, the Lumad representatives complained about the new open pit mines and tailings ponds constructed in their areas, which have severely affected their livelihoods.

The group cited Sagittarius Mines Inc. in Tampakan, Sultan Kudarat; SR Metals Inc. in Tubay, Agusan del Sur; and Greenstone Mining and Taganito Mining, both in Surigao del Norte, as among those whose operations have seriously affected IP communities due to siltation, open pit mining and stockpiles.

The Lumad also appealed to Lopez to halt illegal logging and encroachment in watershed areas, and stop militarization in their areas which they claimed was related to the plan of large-scale mining companies to setup new businesses.

They likewise called for the return of all the Lumad displaced from their ancestral lands because of mining and illegal logging activities.

At the end of the dialogue, Lopez assured the Lumad that she was one with them in their cause and that an investigation and audit of the mining companies they have mentioned is underway.

She said the government will study the development plan submitted by the Lumad and address their concerns at the soonest possible time.

The Lumad present during the dialogue are part of the Manilakbayan 2016, a delegation from Mindanao which marched to Manila to bring their plight to the attention of their fellow-Mindanawon, President Rodrigo Duterte, in time for his first State of the Nation Address. ###

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