



KALIKASAN PEOPLE'S NETWORK FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Struggle for the People is the Struggle for the Environment

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Environmental advocates call for accountability of OceanaGold Corporation operations in the Philippines

PRESS RELEASE

February 3, 2015

On February 2, 2015, members of the Action for Peace and Development in the Philippines (APDP) based in Australia along with local environmental groups conducted an international solidarity investigation mission on the continuing environmental and human rights issues affecting the people and communities in Didipio, Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya and its neighbouring barangays. This is the area where OceanaGold operates the Didipio gold and copper mine. OceanaGold is a transnational corporation with headquarters in Melbourne, Australia. It trades on the Australian, Canadian and New Zealand stock exchanges.

During the mission, the APDP, Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, Agham, Amianan Salakniban, Alyansa ng Novo Vizcayano para sa Kalikasan and the Cordillera Peoples Alliance found that :

1. OceanaGold Corporation continues to resist paying its tax obligations to the province of Nueva Vizcaya, the Philippine government and the people of the Philippines;
2. Residents of Didipio experience the heavy-handed tactics of the company lawyers when these residents seek action on OceanaGold's failure to honour the company's commitments to buy lots, pay compensation, provide scholarships, or offers of employment.

The mission further received testimony alleging the failure of OceanaGold to acknowledge or respond to residents' concerns about release of sewerage water into the river adjacent to homes in Didipio. OceanaGold also requires residents to 'prove' infractions or land ownership issues, knowing full well the ordinary folk of Didipio lack the capacity and the resources to do this. If acting ethically and responsibly, OceanaGold would be proactive in monitoring and resolving issues, rather than rely on their superior economic power over the ordinary folks of the community.

The continuing concerns about human rights infractions by company security guards and Police units close to the mine have been documented by the mission. These reports are consistent with previous reports gathered by international and national missions since the 1990s. OceanaGold impairs the residents' exercise of economic and social rights by denying some residents access to their homes and farmlands by fencing off access and boundaries.

Aside from these violations, OceanaGold operations have a detrimental effect on the environment. According to scientific analysis by AGHAM, the river in Didipio shows elevated heavy metal (copper) and turbidity in Didipio River (below the mine). These levels are not present in comparison sites above the mine. The severely elevated level of copper renders the waters of the Didipio River unusable for irrigation. Residents also report skin irritation after contact with water from the river. The corporation is conducting exploratory drilling in extension areas on land without permission from or consultation with

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landholders. Oceanagold has exploration rights in Bokod, Benguet and it is feared that their poor practices will be exported to the Cordillera.

Oceanagold have announced major changes to the Didipio project technical specifications in the past 4 years. As amendments, are these major changes subject to the same approval and government oversight requirements as the original development proposal?

In 2011 the open cut operation was tripled in size, requiring a similar increase in the size of the waste storage and tailings dam, and a relocation of the tailings dam above the open cut mine site, with a bigger environmental damage footprint.

In October, 2014, Oceanagold announced a doubling of the size of the underground mine operation, with some decrease of the size of the open pit portion of the mine. 900 Didipio residents have signed a petition opposing this expansion of the underground mine. The petition cites the risk of mine collapse, environmental damage and rushed implementation and lack of consultation with the affected community as the basis for their opposition to the expanded underground operation. Although they fear a repeat of previous heavy-handed repression of their legitimate dissent, they are strong in their united voice opposing these latest changes in the mine's operation.

APDP is a full member of a national campaign in Australia for the Philippines. APDP will be challenging Oceanagold to act in a socially responsible manner. This is in the Philippines and also El Salvador where Oceanagold is seeking to use legal suits against the Government of El Salvador in the World Trade Organisation to overturn the El Salvadorean ban on the large scale and destructive mining operation oceanagold has acquired in that country

APDP will continue to support the legitimate grievances and demands of the people of Didipio. APDP will send a delegation to the International Mining Conference slated for July 2015 in the Philippines, which will include a return visit to Didipio. As a conference which will include participants from other countries investing in mining in the Philippines [such as Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and USA] the International Mining Conference will further strengthen and broaden international solidarity with the Philippine people's opposition to destructive large-scale mining conducted for maximum profit and not for the best interests of the people of the Philippines.

Calls:

1. End large scale, destructive mining in the Philippines.
2. Pass the People's Mining Bill.
3. Oceanagold - treat the people of Didipio justly and with respect for their dignity and rights.
4. Oceanagold - pay your tax obligations to the Filipino people!

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