



# MiningWatch Canada

---

## Mines Alerte

## Newsletter

### Contents:

- *Mining's Privileged Access to Land Under Challenge Across the Country*
- *Iskut Women Stop Mining Company from Destroying Trout Spawning Stream*
- *BHP-Billiton Recognizes Diamond Workers*
- *Amended Metal Mining Effluent Regulations Published – Two Newfoundland Lakes to be Destroyed by Mine Waste*
- *Political Assassinations Increase Sharply in Philippines; Links to Mining Opposition*
- *Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines Statement on Mining Issues and Concerns*
- *Indigenous Kanaks Take On Inco in New Caledonia*
- *Chain Letter Brings Attention to Pascua Lama Struggle*
- *MiningWatch Participates in National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility*
- *MiningWatch Canada and Canary Institute Reach Out to Youth*
- *Community Rights and Corporate Responsibility: Canadian Mining and Oil Companies in Latin America*

Number 22: Spring 2006

### Mining's Privileged Access to Land Under Challenge Across the Country

Opposition to the "Free Entry" system of mine claim staking is being challenged across the country by Indigenous people and private property owners.

In southern British Columbia, a "landowners' rights group" has been formed to take on staking of the mineral rights on their lands by prospectors. (See theTye.ca web site)

At the same time, elders and community members of the Tahltan First Nation in northern BC blocked a road in June, refusing to give bcMetals access to its mineral properties at the Sacred Headwaters on the Togadin Plateau. "We, the people who use and occupy these lands, will decide which and how many projects are appropriate for our traditional territory", said spokesperson Rhoda Quock. "We owe it to our children and grandchildren to protect our sacred lands." See the June 23, 2006 news release below.

In northern Ontario, Kitchenumaykoosib Inninuwig (KI, previously known as Big Trout Lake First Nation) prevented Platinex from conducting exploration on its mining claims last February, and are now in court challenging the constitutionality of the Ontario Mining Act. Platinex says this could spell the "end of mining in Canada". See "Far North Peoples Walk 2100 kilometres to say "no" to mining" on our web site.)

KI is one of nine First Nations in northern Ontario with a moratorium on mining development on their traditional lands. In April, Muskrat Dam First Nation went to their annual com-

munity  
goose  
hunting  
grounds

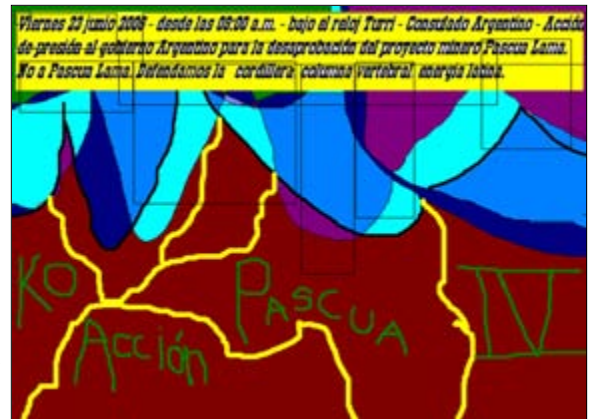
only to find that De Beers' exploration crews had been there first and scared away all the geese. (See "De Beers Accused of Ruining Spring Goose Hunt" on our web site.)

In southern Ontario, Bedford Mining Alert and the Citizens Mining Advisory Committee continue their battle to give property owners a veto over mineral staking on their property. (See "Ontario: the Old Mining Act Works" on our web site.)

The free entry system is the dominant means of granting mineral tenures in Canada today. It gives mining companies the exclusive right to Crown-owned mineral substances from the surface of their claim to an unlimited extension downwards. There are 3 primary rights associated with the law of free entry:

- the right of entry and access on virtually all lands;
- the right to locate and register a claim without consulting the Crown; and
- the right to acquire a mineral lease with no discretion on the part of the Crown.

For more information see our web site section on "Free Entry".



Poster for a protest rally against the Pascua Lama project, June 23, 2006.

## ***Iskut Women Stop Mining Company from Destroying Trout Spawning Stream***

(Iskut, B.C.) On June 16, First Nations grandmothers from the town of Iskut prevented a mining company from driving heavy equipment through a trout spawning stream. The company and the B.C. government have been rushing to establish road access and widen the scope of drilling in the Todagin Wildlife Management Area, located east of Highway 37.

“We will not allow bcMetals to degrade the spawning grounds surrounding the Todagin Plateau in the Sacred Headwaters without the free, prior and informed consent of our people,” said Rhoda Quock, a spokesperson for the Iskut elders group Klabona Keepers.

Quock and Erma (Nole) Bourquin physically blocked bcMetals contractors from driving an excavator, a D6 Cat and drilling equipment sleds through trout spawning in Coyote creek, a tributary to Eddontenijon Lake and the Iskut River.

“Fish and wildlife are the lifeblood of our people, and we cannot let them be destroyed simply because bcMetals is in a rush,” said Quock.

These events mark the next chapter in a conflict over the shared headwaters of the Nass, Stikine and Skeena Rivers. The mining exploration rush in northwest B.C. has put pressure on government agencies to approve permits as quickly as companies apply for them.

Quock says her organization is not opposed to mining, but that currently, there are too many projects being pushed forward all at once, without adequate community consultation. Last summer, numerous elders including several grandmothers were arrested trying to prevent Fortune Minerals from accessing the Headwaters.

“We, the people who use and occupy these lands, will decide which and how many projects are appropriate for our traditional territory,” said Quock. “We owe it to our children and grandchildren to protect our sacred lands.”

The Klabona Keepers decision to stop the bcMetals equipment was supported by the elected Iskut Band Council and the Tahltan Central Council.

Regulations under B.C.’s Water Act forbid working in and around trout bearing waters until after July spawning and rearing has concluded.

## ***BHP-Billiton Recognizes Diamond Workers***

*Submitted by Alternatives North*

What is BHP-Billiton so afraid of? That’s the question Mining Watch’s Joan Kuyek asked recently in Yellowknife, NWT, while speaking about the strike at the Australian mining giant’s Ekati diamond mine, 300 kilometres north of the city.

The strike at Canada’s first diamond mine began on April 7th, 2006. It ended on June 30 when the first union contract at a Canadian diamond mine was ratified, bringing significant improvements for workers. Ekati workers voted 66% in favour of the one-year contract that contains a full grievance procedure to protect workers from arbitrary and unfair treatment, wage increases, a signing benefit, more vacation days and other improvements.

Diamond workers, represented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada, had rejected an initial company offer in a strike vote in March. The strike has been characterized by company efforts to undermine the union, made easier by the fact that some striking workers have returned to work. The strikers are trying to obtain a first collective agreement. Outstanding issues included pay equity, seniority, job security and vacation entitlements. The company’s earlier contract offer demanded that the union provide amnesty to strike breakers but offered no such protection for strikers. Kuyek wondered out loud why a company with 2005 profits of \$7.5 billion is afraid of having a union at the mine.

Kuyek described communities’ experience with BHP-

Billiton in Papua New Guinea, Colombia, the United States and other countries. Her examples showed environmental degradation and poor working conditions, but also some positive experiences where communities, indigenous peoples and workers stood united, and engaged in tough negotiations.

“No company is better or worse than others. The behaviour of any company depends on the local pressure brought to bear,” says Kuyek. This prompted a discussion about the difficulty during this strike of consolidating worker support in Yellowknife and surrounding aboriginal communities, where many of the striking workers live.

The ghost of the 1992 Giant Mine strike still hovers in Yellowknife. A striking miner is serving a life sentence for murdering nine replacement workers in an underground blast during one of the ugliest incidents in Canadian labour history. Many of the striking workers at BHP live in southern Canada, posing yet another challenge to community support. As well, the union faces community perceptions that BHP workers are already well-paid, and the labour movement has a historically uneasy relationship with NWT First Nations and Métis.

Ken Georgetti, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, was also in Yellowknife recently to offer the support of 3.2 million unionized Canadian workers. The Public Service Alliance of Canada had asked consumers not to buy Ekati diamonds being produced by strikebreakers under the Aurias and CanadaMark trademarks.

## ***Amended Metal Mining Effluent Regulations Published - Two Lakes in Newfoundland to be Destroyed by Mine Waste***

The amended Metal Mining Effluent Regulations (MMERs) have been published in the Canada Gazette Part One, and the public comment period has closed. They will become final when published in the Canada Gazette Part Two.

One of the amendments to the MMERs adds two lakes in Newfoundland to Schedule 2, which redefines them as mine waste dumps (for environmentally toxic tailings). Both lakes currently provide habitat for trout and Atlantic salmon as well as otter and other species.

In response to the proposed amendments, the government received 47 submissions from individual Canadians, 11 from non-governmental organizations, and 4 from aboriginal organizations. All of these submissions protest the planned destruction of two lakes in Newfoundland by mine waste through their

inclusion on Schedule 2.

Three independent fisheries and aquatic habitat experts also provided scathing critiques of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans assessments of these natural water bodies and of Environment Canada's decision to include these lakes on Schedule 2.

See "Comments on Regulations Amending the Metal Mining Effluent Regulations" on our web site for MiningWatch's submission to the government in response to the Gazetted regulations.

***Mining Projects Expected to Request Listing of Tailings Impoundment Areas (TIAs) on Schedule 2 of the Metal Mining Effluent Regulations***

Project/Mine Name	Proposed or Existing TIA	Location - Province/Territory
1. Kemess North Project	Proposed	British Columbia
2. Red Chris	Proposed	British Columbia
3. High Lake	Proposed	Nunavut
4. Doris North	Proposed	Nunavut
5. Meadowbank Gold	Proposed	Nunavut
6. Goldfields	Proposed	Saskatchewan
7. Yellowknife Gold Project	Proposed	Northwest Territories
8. NICO Property	Proposed	Northwest Territories
9. Damoti Lake Project	Proposed	Northwest Territories
10. Wabush Mines (mine has a transitional authorization)	Existing	Newfoundland and Labrador
11. Duck Pond	Proposed	Newfoundland and Labrador
12. Iron Ore Company of Canada (mine has a transitional authorization)	Existing	Newfoundland and Labrador
13. Mount Wright	Existing	Quebec

– source: Environment Canada

## ***Political Assassinations Increase Sharply in Philippines; Links to Mining Opposition***

Political killings of left-leaning activists, clergy and journalists in the Philippines have been escalating steadily under the Presidency of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The majority of the victims belong to the Bayan Muna, a political group that is represented in parliament, of which as many as 95 members have been killed since 2001. However, other politically active groups have also been targeted, such as the Movement for National Democracy (KDP), an umbrella grouping of trade unions, farmers' and fishermen's organizations, and women's and youth groups. KDP has lost 5 members to extra-judicial killings this year alone.

Over the past two months, unidentified assailants in various areas of the country have murdered at least 18 activists. The human-rights group Karapatan estimates that 601 activists have been killed since Macapagal-Arroyo came to power in 2001. Nearly all of the cases remain unresolved.

An additional 140 activists are considered "disappeared" and remain missing. Almost all of those that have been executed are known leaders and local level organizers. In some cases witnesses have identified soldiers, police or members of paramilitary and vigilante groups. Other victims are shot dead by masked men on motorcycles (Herbert Docena: *Killing Season in the Philippines*, 2006).

A number of the killings and death threats received by activists, clergy and journalists are related to their open criticism of large-scale mining in the Philippines. Most recently,

mining campaigner and activist Joey Estribar has gone missing and is now presumed dead. A community organizer from the South Tagalog region, Noli Capulong, who openly spoke against mining activities in the region, was killed. Rafael Markus Bangit, the Coordinator of the Elders Desk of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA), was gunned down in public in similar circumstances to José Doton, another tribal elder, killed in May. Both had spoken out against large-scale mining in their region. There are concerns for other members of the CPA who are on a death-squad hit list that the CPA obtained in February of this year (see [www.minesandcommunities.org](http://www.minesandcommunities.org) for details.).

The Arroyo government, spurred on by the World Bank, has made mining a central plank of its economic recovery program, naming 24 proposed large-scale mining projects as "priority projects" that the government is determined to permit in the coming years.

National opposition to mining is widespread and well organized. Leaders of major religious organizations, including the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, have expressed concern over liberalized mining laws that pave the way for natural resources to be mined by foreign companies that will export most of the profits. In a statement issued on the 29th of January, the bishops questioned the presumed link between development and mining: "The promised economic benefits of mining by these transnational corporations are out-

## ***A Statement on Mining Issues and Concerns***

***29th January 2006***

*“Do not defile the land where you live and where I dwell” (Num. 35:34)*

Sisters and Brothers in Christ: We are Pastors. We listen to the voice of the flock and take care of them. In our task to care for them, we reiterate our concern for the Earth, the source of life for all.

1. In 1998, we in the CBCP issued “A Statement of Concern on the Mining Act of 1995”. We declared that the government mining policy is offering our lands to foreigners with liberal conditions while our people continue to grow in poverty. (par 4) We stated that the adverse social impact on the affected communities far outweigh the gains promised by mining Trans-National Corporations (TNCs). (par 8) In our 1998 statement we also forewarned that the “implementation of the Mining Act will certainly destroy both environment and people and will lead to national unrest.” (par 9)
2. We reaffirm our stand for the repeal of the Mining Act of 1995. We believe that the Mining Act destroys life. The right to life of people is inseparable from their right to sources of food and livelihood. Allowing the interests of big mining corporations to prevail over people’s right to these sources amounts to violating their right to life. Furthermore, mining threatens people’s health and environmental safety through the wanton dumping of waste and tailings in rivers and seas.
3. Our experiences of environmental tragedies and incidents with the mining transnational corporations belie all assurances of sustainable and responsible mining that the Arroyo Administration is claiming. Increasing number of mining affected communities, Christians and non-Christians alike, are subjected to human rights violations and economic deprivations. We see no relief in sight.
4. President Arroyo’s “Mining Revitalization Program” is encouraging further the entry and operation of large-scale mining of TNCs. Alarming, the mining tenements granted through the program have encroached into seventeen (17) of important biodiversity areas, into thirty-five (35) of national conservation priority areas, and thirty-two (32) of national integrated protected areas. The promised economic benefits of mining by these transnational corporations are outweighed by the dislocation of communities especially among our indigenous brothers and sisters, and the risks to health and livelihood and massive environmental damage. Mining areas remain among the poorest areas in the country such as, the mining communities in CARAGA, Bicol and Cordillera Regions. The cultural fabric of indigenous peoples is also being destroyed by the entry of mining corporations.
5. Moreover, we are apprehensive that the proposed deletion of the nationalist provisions in the Constitution by the Consultative Commission (CONCOM) can pave the way to the wholesale plunder of our National Patrimony, and undermine our Sovereignty.
6. We reiterate our request to the President to recall all approved mining concessions, and to disapprove pending applications.
7. As Shepherds we remind the faithful of God’s injunction to us through our first parents to care for and cultivate the Earth (Genesis 2:15). As believers, we should live a lifestyle that is outwardly simple yet inwardly rich and compassionate to the Earth community. We therefore call on all religious leaders:
  - a. To support, unify and strengthen the struggle of the local Churches and their constituency against all mining projects, and raise the anti-mining campaign at the national level;
  - b. To support the call of various sectors, especially the Indigenous Peoples, to stop the 24 Priority Mining Projects of the government, and the closure of large-scale mining projects, for example, the Rapu-Rapu Polymetallic Project in Albay, HPP Project in Palawan, Didipio Gold-Copper Project in Nueva Vizcaya, Tampakan Copper-gold Project in South Cotabato, Canatuan Gold Project in Zamboanga del Norte, and the San Antonio Copper Project in Marinduque, among others;
  - c. To support the conduct of studies on the evil effects of mining in dioceses;
  - d. To support all economic activities that are life-enhancing and poverty-alleviating.
8. As we have said our 1998 statement, “even our best efforts will come to nothing without the help of God, our Creator. We invoke upon you the grace of the Holy Spirit who renews the face of the earth. With gratitude in our hearts we ask the intercession of Mary the Mother of Jesus and our Mother to obtain for us a renewed land and a converted people.”

For the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines,

Angel N. Lagdameo, D.D.

President

Archbishop of Jaro

weighed by the dislocation of communities especially among our indigenous brothers and sisters, the risks to health and livelihood, and massive environmental damage.” (see the Bishops’ statement, facing.)

Canadian company TVI Pacific is operating on indigenous land in Zamboanga del Norte, a conflict zone in the Philippines, and is the subject of long standing local opposition. TVI Pacific’s operations are protected by paramilitary forces and have been plagued by killings and violence. Crew

Gold, also based in Canada, is trying to start a nickel mine in Mindoro. This proposed mine is also strongly protested by a broad coalition of local citizens including the indigenous Mangyans. At least 40 community activists have been killed in Mindoro in the past three years.

On May 30, 2006, the US Ambassador to the Philippines made a public statement at a press conference calling for a stop to extra-judicial executions. The Canadian Embassy in Manila has not made any public statements on the killings.

## ***Indigenous Kanaks Take On Inco in New Caledonia***

On June 8th, 2006, magistrate Jean-Paul Briseul of the Administrative Court of Nouméa in New Caledonia called on his fellow magistrates to declare Goro-Nickel SA’s licence to operate the Goro mine illegal. On June 15th, the Administrative Court revoked Inco’s 2004 mining licence. The arguments laid out by Briseul are a testimony to the hard work of the indigenous Kanak organization Rhéébù Nùu to make a case for their right to be meaningfully consulted and their right to a healthy environment in the face of Inco’s proposed nickel mine at the southern tip of New Caledonia.

Briseul argued that the permit-granting authorities of the Southern Province had not responded appropriately to the following transgressions by Goro Nickel:

- violating the rights of affected peoples to be fully informed about the proposed project in a culturally appropriate manner;
- providing an inadequate and flawed Environmental Impact Assessment; not applying the precautionary principle in adopting standards for the projects emissions; and
- not preparing a social and cultural impact assessment, especially in the light of the fact that the project will impact on indigenous peoples.

Briseul argued that these concerns are particularly serious given the lack of environmental legislation in New Caledonia, which is a French “overseas territory”.

Rhéébù Nùu was established in 2001 to represent the rights of the local Kanak communities that will be affected by Inco’s Goro project. But Rhéébù Nùu has quickly come to represent a much wider constituency of Kanaks from all parts of New Caledonia who are struggling for recognition of their indigenous rights in the French colony.

MiningWatch Canada has worked closely with the leadership of Rhéébù Nùu since 2001, as well as with members of the Kanak Customary Senate. We have hosted Kanak delegations who have come to Canada to meet with Inco to try to explain their concerns and requirements, and to meet

with indigenous leaders in Canada to learn about indigenous rights struggles in Canada and the use of negotiated Impact and Benefit Agreements to settle issues related to resource extraction on indigenous land in Canada. Kanak leaders from Rhéébù Nùu and the Customary Senate also attended Inco’s Annual General Meeting in 2004 to voice their concerns.

In April of this year, MiningWatch’s Catherine Coumans was able to travel to New Caledonia with Australian colleagues. At the time of her arrival in New Caledonia, Rhéébù Nùu was blockading the Goro site where all work had stopped since the blockade started on March 30th. The hotel in the capital of Nouméa was full of Filipino construction workers that had arrived just days before the blockade started and were stranded, waiting to see what their fate would be.

On April 22nd, just days after the blockade was brutally broken up by French military police, Catherine attended a large demonstration in support of Rhéébù Nùu in the New Caledonian capital Nouméa. Later that day she was able to visit the Goro site and witness first hand the burned plastic water pipes that had supplied the construction site, as well as the burned pipeline that was under construction to bring large amounts of process water in from Yaté Lake kilometres away. The proposed use of large amounts of water from Yate Lake is one of the concerns expressed by Rhéébù Nùu, as is another proposed pipeline that will carry wastewater from the mine into the sea.



Kanak protest rally. C. Coumans photo.

It became very clear on this unofficial site visit that Inco will not be able to successfully run this operation without community consent. In a subsequent meeting with Rhéébù Nùu leader Raphaël Mapou, who was still in hiding from authorities at the time, Catherine learned that Rhéébù Nùu’s struggle extends beyond the confines of the Goro project. It is in essence a struggle for recognition of indigenous Kanak rights in New Caledonia.

While Inco’s mining permit has been revoked, it still has its construction permit allowing construction on the facility to continue.



### ***NEW CALEDONIA: Serious Setback for Giant Nickel Mining Project***

Pacific Magazine, June 15, 2006 <http://www.pacificislands.cc/pina/pinadefault2.php?urlpinaid=22658>

(Oceania Flash) Canadian mining giant Inco's nickel project in the South of New Caledonia has suffered a significant setback on Wednesday, when a court in Nouméa ruled to void local company Goro-Nickel to operate on the mineral massif.

The exploitation permit had been granted in October 2004 by local authorities of New Caledonia's Southern Province. However, it was challenged by a group of concerned citizens and environmentalists who argued serious environment impact studies had not been performed.

Wednesday's ruling however does not put into question the construction of the Goro-Nickel nickel project (for a capital investment estimated at 1.88 billion US dollars). Construction resumed on the site last year, but it has since encountered staunch opposition from indigenous concern and environmental group "Rheebu Nuu".

The group, on April 2, moved to sabotage some ten million US dollars worth of equipment on the construction site. The site was subsequently occupied for several weeks before French police stepped in to "liberate" it.

Last week, an estimated 2,500 people took to the streets of the capital Nouméa in support of a march to protest against the environmental impacts of the Goro-Nickel project which,

organisers said, had not yet been properly assessed.

They say they do not oppose the project per se, but demand that a proper environmental study be carried out.

Other indigenous groups, including a so-called CAUGERN (indigenous council for natural resources management in Kanaky-New Caledonia, Conseil autochtone pour la gestion des ressources naturelles en Kanaky-Calédonie), are also hinting at indigenous royalties claims for the traditional land owners.

Reacting to the court decision on Wednesday, Rheebu Nuu's secretary general Raphaël Mapou said he was "elated" and that the ruling was a strong signal for the respect of environment and of indigenous peoples' rights.

Meanwhile, after the Goro-related unrest in April, the French High Commission and the Southern Province of New Caledonia have called on all stakeholders to take part in a series of roundtables to discuss environment and development issues and ways to address them.

Meanwhile, New Caledonia is this week celebrating "environment week" as part of the global initiative.

Organisers of local festivities have decided to choose this year the following theme: "Tomorrow, our island: a desert?"

### ***New Caledonia mine protesters score court victory***

Radio Australia, June 15, 2006, 11:26:08

Protesters in New Caledonia have secured a legal victory in their struggle against what is planned to be one of the world's biggest nickel mines.

An administrative court has cancelled Goro Nickel's licence to mine at the still unfinished site because of what it called insufficient study of the environmental impact.

The AFP news agency says the ruling has no immediate impact on the facility, as the mine is not yet operational and its construction licence remains valid.

However, AFP says it marks a victory for the indigenous

Kanak Rheebu Nuu movement fighting to block it.

The court found a previous study had not sufficiently proven that samples used represented the level of toxins which would be produced when the mine is operational.

Another analysis is already under way on the impact of the site.

Rheebu Nuu has repeatedly complained that the site will harm the environment and say they should get royalties from the mine.

## ***Chain Letter Brings Attention to Pascua Lama Struggle***

The controversy around Barrick Gold's Pascua Lama project in Chile has gone global. Thanks to a chain letter that has "gone feral" on the Internet, literally millions of people around the world have learned about this ill-conceived mine that will endanger entire watersheds on both sides of the Andes.

The chain letter itself has some inaccuracies and exaggerations, and like all chain letters will have no impact on its own - no decision-maker will take letters or petitions seriously unless the signatures can be verified. However, people soon discovered that the case is real, and the opposition to this project in Chile and Argentina is also very real. The chain letter quickly made it into the Snopes Urban Legends Reference Pages (among others), and Barrick felt compelled to post a web page responding to "misleading and inaccurate statements" with some of its own, for example stressing that 95% of the ore is NOT underneath a glacier, and neatly avoiding having to acknowledge that the company will pay no tariffs or

royalties on the project and is not required to post any form of closure bond - or even file a closure plan!

Unfortunately it's too late for the public to intervene in this case; the CONAMA decision (see our web site) is being challenged in the courts and the validity of the Additional Specific Protocol to the Treaty of Mining Integration between Argentina and Chile is being challenged following Barrick's



loss of two of the Pascua Lama mining leases (see our web site).

Meanwhile, it seems Barrick will have to renegotiate its controversial \$60 million deal with the Huasco Water Users Cooperative after the agreement was declared invalid by the General Directorate of Waters of the Public Works Ministry

because it had been signed by the Cooperative executive and not brought to a vote by the membership. As far as we can determine, the Cooperative received no money from Barrick, although the protocol certainly served Barrick's purposes as one of the most important groups affected by the mine did not participate in the environmental assessment.

## ***MiningWatch Participates in Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility, Canadian Extractive Sector in Developing Countries***

In March 2005, MiningWatch Canada facilitated the presentation by two of our partners from Zamboanga del Norte in the Philippines before the parliamentary Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Development. As a result of the presentation these community leaders gave on the impacts they are suffering from the operations of TVI Pacific in their municipality of Siocon, the subcommittee conducted further hearings to investigate the mechanisms that the government currently has at its disposal to hold Canadian mining companies to account in Canada for their actions overseas.

In June 2005, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (SCFAIT) tabled a landmark report, "Mining in Developing Countries and Corporate Social Responsibility".

The report recommends that the Canadian government move away from reliance on a voluntary approach to corporate social responsibility. It calls for policies that condition public assistance for Canadian companies on compliance with international human rights and environmental standards, including core labour rights. The report also identifies the need for legal remedies to hold companies accountable for their actions overseas. Finally, the report asked the government to conduct an investigation of the activities of TVI Pacific in the Philippines.

In its response, tabled October 2005, the government failed to adopt the majority of SCFAIT's recommendations, but it did commit to hosting a series of national roundtables. These Roundtables are to identify ways for Canadian extractive companies to meet or exceed international corporate social responsibility standards and best practices, including means by which to hold companies accountable if they do not meet the highest possible standards.

The "National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility and the Canadian Extractive Sector in Developing Countries" are headed up by Foreign Affairs Canada. Other government departments are involved in the roundtables through the government Steering Committee including: Environment Canada, Natural Resources Canada,

Industry Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs, Department of Justice, the Privy Council Office, and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

The government also created an Advisory Group made up of five members from civil society, six members from industry, one aboriginal member and one member from the socially responsible investment community. Catherine Coumans from MiningWatch Canada is part of this Advisory Group.

The first of four Roundtable discussions was held in Vancouver on June 14 and 15 and explored the question of which standards Canadian extractive companies should meet when they operate abroad. Subsequent Roundtables will be held in Toronto, Calgary and Montreal. Each roundtable will take place over two days. The first day will provide an opportunity for the public to provide input into the process through participation in a public forum.

There are five themes that run through the Roundtables:

- Corporate social responsibility standards and best practices;
- Positive and negative incentives for compliance with standards;
- Verification/assurance and dispute resolution instruments;
- Host country governance and capacity building; and
- Support for industry implementation of standards and best practices.

Both Foreign Affairs and the civil society groups have set up web sites where further information can be found, as well as ways to get involved or provide input. The government web site can be found through [www.international.gc.ca](http://www.international.gc.ca). The civil society web site can be found through the Halifax Initiative web site [www.halifaxinitiative.org](http://www.halifaxinitiative.org). Members of the public can also learn more about the Roundtables by contacting Andrea Botto at [cnca@halifaxinitiative.org](mailto:cnca@halifaxinitiative.org) or calling (613) 789-9368.

If you care about how our extractive companies behave when they operate in developing countries then let your voice be heard through this process!

## ***MiningWatch Canada and Canary Institute Reach Out to Youth***

MiningWatch Canada and the Canary Research Institute of Mining, Environment and Health displayed information and presented two workshops at the 'Embracing the Change' symposium in Kemptonville, Ontario on May 17, 2006. Over 350 student and teacher delegates participated in a full day conference hosted by Upper Canada District School Board. The focus was the environment and the purpose was to motivate youth and teachers to be part of bringing about change. The conference encouraged student participation in voluntarism, environmentalism and global causes to improve life for us all.

Students and teachers could attend their choice of 17 workshops on how to get involved in issues, find a cause to help their fellow wo/man, and do whatever it takes to see it through.

Ryan Hreljac, the keynote speaker, urged students to take action to change the world into the place they want it to be. His message was that everyone, no matter how old, young, tall, or small, can make a difference. Hreljac started ten years ago when he was in grade one. He wanted to raise \$70 to fund construction of a well for an African village after hearing a

story about people who didn't have clean drinking water. His initial success in raising those funds eventually led to him establishing Ryan's Well in 2001. The foundation has grown into an international organization that has raised \$1.5 million so far and created well and sanitation projects that provide clean water for about 350,000 people in Africa and South America.

For most participants who visited the MiningWatch Canada and Canary Research Institute display booth or attended the workshops, it was their first time to learn about the work of these organizations and the impacts of mining on the environment. Visitors to the display viewed a short film, picked up printed material and took home a pebble to remember the waste generated by mining activities. The workshops were presented by Marilyn Crawford, a retired teacher who became involved in environmental issues and advocacy in 2001 when a mining claim was staked on the land where she lives with her husband. Hearing about the issues first hand and what needs to change lead many people to confirm their commitment to bring about awareness and change.

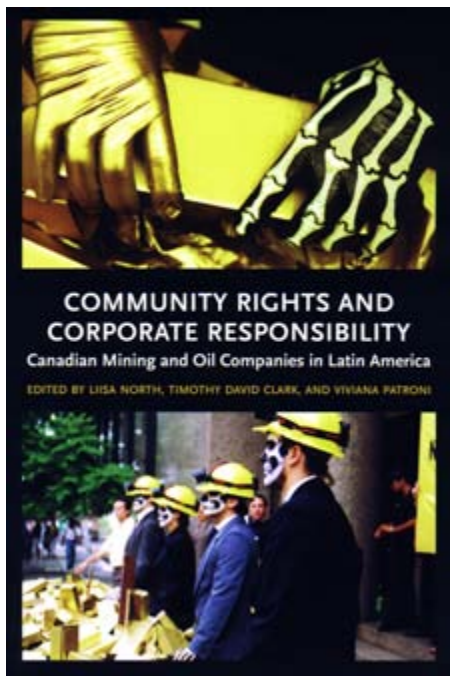
A workshop for students and teachers set out indicators for recognizing what issues to become involved in, where to begin and how to motivate others to become involved in environmental advocacy. Strategies for identifying what has to change and examples of what others have done to bring about change were included. A simulation activity illustrated the cumulative effect that our increasing need for mineral extraction has on the environment.

A separate workshop encouraged teachers to bring examples of environmental issues and concerns into the classroom in order to foster understanding and involvement of students. Small group discussions identified challenges to making large



The MiningWatch Canada/Canary Institute kiosk. M. Crawford photo.

environmental issues 'real' and enabling students to identify with the issues. The workshop included an overview of "The Mining Controversy", an 'Awareness and Education Kit' for Ontario Grade 7, published by the Canary Research Institute, that investigates mining as it relates to aspects of the economy, the environment, and communities. Prepared by Beth Nicol and Marilyn Crawford, the cross-curricular programme relates to Reading, Geography, and Science, and contains everything needed to deliver an effective, skill-based unit. It leads students to consider the impact and benefits of resource extraction, to develop their own point of view and to gain skills in organizing materials and thoughts to debate a controversial issue. The Mining Controversy is available on the Canary Institute web site [www.canaryinstitute.ca](http://www.canaryinstitute.ca) as a PDF file.



## **New Book: *Community Rights and Corporate Responsibility: Canadian Mining and Oil Companies in Latin America***

*Edited by Liisa North, Timothy David Clark, and Viviana Patroni  
Between the Lines (Toronto)*

**\$29.95 CDN (paperback). 288 pages. ISBN 897071-10-8**

Canadian mining activity in Latin America has exploded over the past decade and a half. Investors have responded to neo-liberal policies of deregulation, privatization, state-downsizing, and export promotion encouraged by leading capitalist nations and international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The result, predictably, has been sharp conflicts between the communities affected by mining and their advocates on one side, and the transnational mining companies supported by the local state and the Canadian government on the other.

This collection, the most comprehensive in the English language to date, investigates these conflicts in Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Mexico, and Nicaragua. Contributors address the related sustainable development, community, corporate, legal, and social issues. A valuable contribution to Latin American development studies, this collection will be of interest to students and specialists in the field, journalists, NGOs, and policymakers.

See [http://btlbooks.com/New\\_Titles/crcr.htm](http://btlbooks.com/New_Titles/crcr.htm) for ordering information.