

JUSTICE PEACE & INTEGRITY OF CREATION COMMISSION



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STATEMENT FROM THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE JPIC & MINING SEMINAR

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Casa La Salle, Rome

We, the participants of the Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) and Mining Seminar, representing 36 different catholic organizations and religious congregations from about 14 countries were gathered in Rome from 25 to 27 September 2019. As persons committed to JPIC, we came together in response to the ongoing crisis concerning the impact of mining activities on the environment and human rights and the role of church organizations. In the spirit and light of the Synod on the Amazon which is creating new paths for the Church, we are grateful and inspired by the blessings and fruits of creation: the land that gives us food, the rivers and seas that nourish the earth and all that nurtures life itself. We celebrate the interconnectedness and the sacredness of creation while recognizing that the earth's goods are finite and some of them are nonrenewable.

We hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor and we are deeply saddened by the reality, as we have witnessed the continuing destruction of our common home. This destruction, as also described by *Laudato Si'*, causes great distress. In turn, it calls for a prophetic response on behalf of the communities and nature affected by the extractive development model.

The current model of extractivism is devastating and destroying our common home. It devours the earth's finite goods, creates cycles of violence and injustice, displaces people from their homes, livelihoods and cultures, and fosters a materialistic and throwaway culture.

As animators and network of justice, peace and integrity of creation, we see and recognize the following key issues related to mining and extractives that need to be addressed:

1. power imbalance affecting the very people who are facing the threats and risks of mining and other extractive projects;
2. impunity, corruption, and other factors that are imposed on the communities, affecting their ability to say no to destructive mining projects and exercise their right to self-determination;
3. the disrespect of human rights, the disregard of human dignity and the continuing acts of violence;
4. the mistreatment of nature as merely things to be used for the satisfaction of humanity.

When God's creation is disrespected, we are distressed and outraged. And so we turn to Pope Francis and are guided by his words in *Laudato Si'*...

it should always be kept in mind that "environmental protection cannot be assured solely on the basis of financial calculations of costs and benefits. The environment is one of those goods that cannot be adequately safeguarded or promoted by market forces". Once more, we need to reject a magical conception of the market, which would suggest that problems can be solved simply by an increase in the profits of companies or individuals...Moreover, biodiversity is considered at most a deposit of economic resources available for exploitation, with no serious thought for the real value of things, their significance for persons and cultures, or the concerns and needs of the poor. [190]

As we discussed and reflected during this JPIC and Mining Seminar, we realize that JPIC has a distinct and unique role to play in ensuring that we effectively and meaningfully implement *Laudato Si'* and carry out our mission of accompanying the people of God and protecting our common home.

We need to respond and act, and thus we are committed to:

1. on-going integral ecological conversion resulting in responsible personal and collective choices that lead us to a lifestyle that honors the creation.
2. be an active Church for the victims, where from our spirituality, we spread the Gospel and Catholic Social Teachings, in particular *Laudato Si'*. With a prophetic role of informing, raising-awareness and mobilizing communities to action, we live in solidarity with the affected peoples. We want the voices of the poor amplified against destructive mining and other forms of extractivism, but we will not replace them to speak for themselves. We will always respect the rights of people to self-determination. We also cherish and acknowledge the diversity of spiritual sources of indigenous communities and are respectful companions of the grassroots communities. Knowing that violence can be brought against us and the communities we serve, we promote and pursue nonviolent actions and resistance.
3. build bridges and facilitate connections between and among congregations, with Church and non-Church actors and with religious living among the grassroots communities, as well as foster ecumenical and interfaith initiatives and inclusive intercultural dialogue. We work within the Church structures and with Church leadership, so they may be informed of the mining realities and advocate for rights of victims and affected communities. Together, we participate in platforms for sharing resources and expertise, to sustain interaction, communication and solidarity. As we create and nurture conditions for dialogue and negotiation between actors involved in mining issues, we shall practice a preferential option for the poor and work to build their capacities for meaningful engagement.
4. join our voices and engage in the continuing advocacy work that includes stronger protection of human, environmental and land rights defenders, holding governments accountable for their responsibility to end the impunity of corporations for their human rights abuses and ensuring access to justice for the victims. Such advocacy work may include United Nations initiatives, such as the Legally-Binding Instrument for Transnational Corporations and Human Rights, Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights Sustainable Development Goals, etc.
5. contribute and complement the work of faith-based organizations, social movements and civil society about the Action Agenda of the Thematic Social Forum on Mining and the Extractive Economy and explore ways of creating synergy and mutual advancement.
6. broaden and deepen our understanding of thematic issues related to mining and extractives, including—i) the right to say “no”; ii) the alternatives such as fair trade and a solidarity economy; local integral development; iii) just transitions; iv) artisanal and traditional mining; and v) reflection on the rights of nature.

With confidence in the Spirit of God, we unite our reflection, endeavors and prayers with those of the whole Church at this time of grace and this important moment during the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region.

May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope. (LS 244)

Many thanks and God's blessings,

The 36 Participants of the JPIC & Mining Seminar
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