



Cordillera Peoples Alliance

For the Defense of Ancestral Domain and for Self Determination

PRESS RELEASE

September 9, 2009

CPA Supports BAKUN AYWANAN Vs. ROYALCO *Affirms need to strengthen sustainable agri*

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—The Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) extended continuing support and solidarity to BAKUN AYWANAN, a municipal wide organization of Bakun indigenous peoples on its recent picket-lobby at the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples-Provincial Office to stop any attempt of Memorandum Of Agreement (MOA) signing in Phase III, Bakun relative to the mining exploration by the Royalco Phils., an Australian mining corporation. The 250-strong mobilization was led by its Council of Leaders and Elders.



“We are alarmed at the turn of events in Bakun, where indigenous peoples’ rights to ancestral land and democratic participation to the FPIC process are ignored and violated. We support BAKUN AYWANAN’s continuing actions to save their ancestral lands against destructive mining and instead develop sustainable agriculture as their livelihood source,” said CPA Vice Chairperson for Internal Affairs Xavier Akien.

The Gambang mobilization that boarded 11 trucks was accompanied by local government officials of Bakun and Gambang headed by Municipal Mayor Marcelo B. Contada and Punong Barangay Alvaro Paquito. Delegations from nearby areas affected by Royalco’s application in Madaymen, Kibungan, headed by Punong Bgy. Homer Teliaken and Mankayan residents supported the Gambang mobilization.

Representatives from the Itogon Inter-Barangay Association (IIB-A), Mankayan-Quirino-Tadian-Cervantes Danggayan a Gonglo (MAQUITACDG), and Benguet Mining Alert and Action Network (BMAAN) also signified support at the mobilization at the Provincial Capitol.

The picket-lobby was successful in frustrating the attempted MOA signing for Phase 3 of Royalco’s mining application, and further strengthened the communities’ resolve to assert their rights to the NCIP and provincial government. Dialogues were also reached with provincial officials, such as the board members and Gov. Nestor Fongwan.

The lobby and dialogue continued at the regional office of the NCIP, where recent petitions were also submitted. # **CPA Public Information Commission**