



Kilusang Mayo Uno Cordillera

Statement from the Kilusang Mayo Uno Cordillera on the 2008 Mines Unsafety Celebration

The Kilusang Mayo Uno-Cordillera with the militant mine workers of the region joins the rest of the people of the communities directly and indirectly affected by the massive mining operations of big mining companies which are destructive to lives and properties and causes environment denudations in the observance of the unsafe mining week coinciding with the mining safety week of the big mining corporations in collaboration with the Mines and Geosciences bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Cordillera Administrative Region (MGB-DENR-CAR).

The many documented as well as non-documented cases of mining related accidents and destructions in the communities contradicts the claims of the mining companies and the MGB of promoting safe and responsible mining. This year, community people of Sitio Loakan, Antamok, Itogon Benguet were again disturbed by a big landslide during the typhoon Nina last September because of weak soil wall left by the open-pit mining of the Benguet Corporation in the 1990's. A number of houses were destroyed and people were injured because of that incident. There are also related occurrences of soil erosions in another mined out places. If these areas which have hosted mining operations before continue to suffer the consequences of massive operations of big mining firms without prior responsible considerations on their impact to the environment, how much more in communities were there are active and large-scale mining activities.

Communities especially farming areas are by large numbers continuously pestered with the destructive effects of toxic wastes which are being released in the river affecting the water resources of the people. The ill effects of mining operations cause severe loss of food sustenance of communities due to massive soil degradation and damages. And yet, mining companies such as Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company (LCMCo) arrogantly denies all the impacts of its operations to the agricultural lands and water systems of municipalities and adjacent provinces surrounding Lepanto.

The mining business was seemingly designed for profit extraction only not prioritizing the workers who are making the mining productivity as productive as the mining capitalists please. The case of the trapped 16 miners where two died during typhoon Nina in Antamok Goldfield owned by the Benguet Corporation in Itogon, Benguet proves that the safety of the workers are nothing compared to the unending wanting of higher and higher profit.

In the celebration of the mining capitalists and their cohorts in the government, they will again boast promises of job availabilities and giving good incentives for their employees. In Lepanto, the company still does not give their workers what is due to them. Delayed wages, non-remittances of SSS contributions and income taxes still are the big issues since the end of the workers strike in 2005. The management even imposed rotation scheme that changed the work schedule as well as the job continuity of the workers. They are also being threatened by lay-offs and retrenchment as the company blames it to low production. Inside the mines, there are reported mining related accidents fatal and non-fatal.

In Philex, most of the rank-and-file workers were felt fooled by the collaboration of the management and some officers of their union most recently is the questionable Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) where it was not properly explained if not at all to the members. There are also reported deaths because of erosions of loose soil thanks to the open-pit mining of the Philex mines. Two died and some were injured in that landslide.

Claiming that large scale mining is safe and environmental friendly is immoral when many lives and properties and livelihood are being destroyed and more and more communities are being

displaced because of the massive and intensive mining operations without minding the welfare of its surroundings and the people. It is ironic to say that mining ensures employment as more and more workers are being retrenched because of the employment of mechanized mining method and contractualization. And it is ridiculous to announce a mine safety week when the right to ancestral land of indigenous people are out rightly violated because of insensitive mining expansions and unlawful applications that will surely shoo the people away from their lands, the democratic rights of the workers to living wage, benefits and political rights are being set aside in the name of profit. Large scale Corporate mining not only here in the Cordillera but through out the country is never safe and will never be unless the industry be nationalized and the people will take hand in planning and running the production that will be much of great help to many lives and not for greed.

NATIONALIZE THE MINING INDUSTRY!

JUSTICE FOR THE VICTIMS OF IRRESPONSIBLE AND DESTRUCTIVE MINING!

RESPECT PEOPLES' RIGHTS AND WELFARE!

STRUGGLE FOR JUST WAGE, JOB SECURITY AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS!