



November 29, 2011

Press Release

NORTHERN LUZON MINING, HR SUMMIT SLATED

In response to the mining and human rights situation in Northern Luzon (Cagayan Valley, Cordillera and Ilocos Regions), people's organizations, non-government and church-based organizations have organized the Northern Luzon Mining and Human Rights Summit, taking place from December 13-15, 2011 at the Quirino Hall, Teachers Camp, Baguio City.

Convened by the Regional Development Center for Northern Luzon – Kaduami, Inc, Ecumenical Bishop's Conference-Northern Luzon, Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA), Save the Abra River Movement (STARM); the Save the Valley, Serve the People (Alliance for the Environment) of Cagayan Valley, the Isabela Ecumenical Council and the Solidarity of Peasants Against Exploitation of Ilocos Region, the conference will gather some 260 advocates and defenders of the environment to study the relationship of the Northern Luzon mining and human rights situation with national and international developments; the economic, social, cultural and environmental impact of large scale mining operations in affected communities; and to come up with a people's declaration and action plan to be addressed to government and other stakeholders. The summit will also serve as a venue for communities to voice out protest to destructive, large scale mining.

"Northern Luzon was not spared from extractive industries, particularly large mining. From reef to ridge, tons of non-renewable resources and minerals have been plundered for foreign and local businesses. In addition to devastated mountains, fields and rivers, coasts are now also destroyed as a result of large mining," explains Roxanne Veridiano, RDC-KADUAMI executive director.

CPA Chairperson Windel Bolinget adds that "Where large mines operate and where applications are approved is also the ever-heightening spate of militarization, which continues to result in grave violation of people's rights." He pointed out that even under the Aquino II administration which made promises of better governance, mining plunder continues through public-private partnership schemes with investors from China, India, the Middle East and North America. "The Cordillera is the watershed cradle of Northern Luzon, but extensive large mining threatens and endangers the region's ecosystem that is a source of life of communities in upland and lowland areas," he emphasized.

The three-day conference includes an array of informative and educational lecture-discussions, situationers, panel presentations; real-life stories and testimonies from communities adversely affected by large mining and human rights violations; exhibits and film-viewing. RDC-Kaduami will also launch its video documentary on offshore mining during the summit. The third and last day is highlighted by a people's march-rally, which is also in commemoration of the International Human Rights Day this year. Hon. Teddy Casiño, Chairman of the House Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship Development in Congress, will deliver the keynote address in the morning of December 13. #

For interviews, please contact Sarah at 0929-126-8162 or Angela at 0949-863-3698. There will a press conference on December 13, 2011 from 12 NN to 1 PM at the Venue.

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