



# CORDILLERA PEOPLES ALLIANCE

*For the Defense of the Ancestral Domain and for Self Determination*

22 November 2011

## RESULTS AND HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BAMPIS MINING SUMMIT

The BAMPIS (Benguet-Abra-Mountain Province-Ilocos Sur) Mining Summit was successfully held from November 18-19, 2011 at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, Bangued, Abra, guided by the theme *Bantay, Baybay ken Karayan Saluadan! Makadadael a Panagminas Lapdan! Militarisasyon, Pasardengen!* The Summit came out with an Action Plan in the BAMPIS communities' ridge to reef mining and human rights campaigns, and resulted to the formation of the BAMPIS Mining Watch network. It was attended by over 200 participants representing people's organizations from the municipalities of Bakun and Mankayan in Benguet province; Tubo, Malibcong, Baay Licuan, Tineg and Bangued in Abra province; Tadian, Bauko, Besao and Sagada in Mountain Province; Cervantes, Quirino and Santa in the province of Ilocos Sur; and advocate groups, regional sectoral organizations, and individuals from Baguio City, Metro Manila and other areas in the four provinces. Guided by the theme, , the summit was organized by the Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA) and the Save the Abra River Movement (STARM), and hosted by Kakailian Salakniban Tay Amin a Nagtaudan (KASTAN)-CPA Abra.

On the first day, the program was formally opened through an indigenous prayer by elders from Tubo and an opening prayer by Moises Mardo, UCCP Pastor and STARM member, after which KASTAN Chairperson Villamor Pati and Secretary General Marcelo Masadao welcomed and acknowledged the participants, respectively.

In his Keynote Address, Jeremy Jesus "JJ" Bueno, Mayor of the Municipality of Santa, Ilocos Sur, articulated how mining destroys communities, citing as example the case of Santa municipality that is now literally on the verge of destruction due to offshore mining. He challenged the summit participants for a united action to stop the continuing plunder of our environment and resources. Following the keynote address, a message of solidarity from Ifugao Representative Teddy Brawner Baguilat, Chair of the House Committee on National Cultural Communities, further inspired the participants. In his message, Baguilat mentioned that "Mining leaves a scar on the earth, with wounds running deep beneath the earth's surface. The people of Benguet, Abra, Mountain Province and Ilocos Sur must be forever vigilant against destructive mining operations."

### Community Testimonies

Representatives from the different municipalities cited above were clustered in two panel presentations for the sharing of testimonies on community experiences and struggles against corporate mining. These municipalities are covered with mining applications of foreign-



owned companies such as Royalco Resources Ltd., Vale, Phelps Dodge-Freeport Macmoran, Nickel Asia/CEXCI, Solfotara, Pacific Metals Canada, Gold Fields, Bezant Resources, Canex and Adanacex. The first panel of presentors, composed of community leaders from Mankayan, Bakun, Quirino and Cervantes, discussed the impacts of the operations of the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company especially its toxic mine wastes that are being dumped in the Abra River. The heavy militarization of their communities that serve to protect mining companies and mining interests was likewise tackled including ensuing human rights violations and vilification of community leaders and people's organizations. All presentors called for a stop to the Lepanto mining operations and its expansion projects.

The second panel of presentors, composed of representatives from Sagada, Tubo, and Lacub, shared their experiences in collectively opposing exploration projects and the militarization of their communities. Mining companies at present are actively processing mining applications in these areas using bribery and deception, and accompanied with military deployment. But the communities remain resolute in their opposition against corporate mining and militarization.

One highlight of the summit is the discussion on offshore mining which, for some Cordillera communities, has yet to be heard of. Sherwin De Vera, from the University of Northern Philippines, Ilocos Sur and STARM member, gave a thorough background of the operations of offshore mining in Ilocos Region and its impact to the environment and the people's livelihood, including massive damages to the coastal reefs and marine life, and the extinction of endangered fishes such as *bulidao* and *ludong*. Among the mining companies with operations and applications in Ilocos Region are: Colossal Mining Corporation which owns 5 mining permits covering 80% of the magnetite iron ore deposit in northeast Luzon; Altamina Exploration and Resources Inc. which has an approved Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement covering 9,794.99 hectares; Mina Fortuna Integrated Mineral Resources; Grand Total Exploration and Mining Corporation with exploration applications covering a total of 44, 203.63 hectares; High Density Mineral Resources with exploration application covering 21, 753.88 hectares; and Minprocess Group, Inc. with exploration applications covering a total of 14, 676.51 hectares.

The presentation was followed by a sharing of the Cordillera, Ilocos, national and international mining situation and updates by CPA Deputy Secretary General Santos Mero, after which Leon Dulce of Kalikasan-Peoples Network for the Environment presented the People's Mining Bill, an alternative, beneficial and environment friendly mining law that is currently being pushed in Congress by Bayan Muna, Gabriela, Anakpawis, ACT Teachers, and Kabataan partylists. The day ended with a viewing of several short video documentaries about mining and human rights in the evening.

Common in all of the testimonies and presentations about onshore and offshore mining and militarization is the recognition that mining brings about destruction of water and forest ecosystems, livelihood, people's lives, and violations of human rights and indigenous peoples' rights, thus, the need for inter-community solidarity and support.



## **BAMPIS Action Plan and Formation of BAMPIS Mining Watch**

In the morning of the second day, a BAMPIS General Plan of Action was discussed and approved by the participants. Foremost point in the Plan of Action is the formation of a network composed of organizations and individuals from different BAMPIS municipalities and advocate groups, to coordinate and strengthen the onshore and offshore mining and human rights issues and campaigns. The participants united to form the BAMPIS Mining Watch. Representatives from each municipality constituted the BAMPIS Mining Watch convenors, one regular convenor and one alternate convenor for every municipality. Spokespersons and staff members were also chosen at a provincial level. The convenors then elected the lead convenor for the network – Xavier Akien from Tadian, Mountain Province and presently the Vice Chairperson for Internal Affairs of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance. After all the convenors, spokespersons, staff and members of the BAMPIS Mining Watch took an oath to uphold the orientation and plan of action of the network, Cordillera Elders Alliance adviser Jovencio Balweg delivered a speech challenging everyone to live out the spirit of unity and solidarity in order to achieve the BAMPIS communities' aspirations in defending the environment, land and resources against the operations and entry of corporate mining accompanied by militarization.

## **March-rally against militarization, corporate mining and environmental destruction**

The BAMPIS Mining Watch was launched in a militant march-rally at the town center of Bangued in the afternoon, joined by different organizations and individuals in Bangued. A *Maeng* ritual was performed by elders from Tubo at the Bangued Plaza to affirm the results of the summit and for more strength and unity of the BAMPIS communities in facing challenges in the defense of the environment, land and resources. Members of the BAMPIS Mining Watch convenors expressed the urgent mining and human rights issues and concerns in their respective communities, the people's demands to the government and mining companies, and soliciting the support of the public in this endeavor.

The summit was concluded by a solidarity cultural activity in the evening where the participants shared indigenous music and dances, and their reflections on the 2-day activity.#

