

HON. ABRAHAM MITRA
Governor
Province of Palawan
and
Mearl Hilario
Office of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD)

26 July 2010

Dear Sirs,

PIPLinks is a UK and Philippine based NGO that exists to uphold and promote the collective and individual human rights of Indigenous Peoples and other land-based communities. We are extremely concerned about the situation of the Indigenous Peoples of Palawan province as they are currently threatened by mining.

We understand that MacroAsia mining corporation and Celestial Nickel Mining Exploration Corporation (CNMEC) – presently being operated by Ipilan Nickel Corporation (INC) - have been granted rights over the land of indigenous Palawan communities without their consent. We are aware of the continuing opposition of the indigenous peoples in Palawan, particularly in questioning the mining operations in Brooke's Point of the Macro Asia Corporation (MAC) and the Ipilan Nickel Corporation (INC). As you know there have been signed petitions, mobilization rallies, community forums against mining, and actual holding of balloting that resulted in rejection of the mining projects

These documentations provide overwhelming evidence that the mining projects are posing serious threats not only to the fragile ecology that surrounds Mt. Mantalingahan Protected Landscape, but also to the culture, livelihoods and very lives of the indigenous peoples there. Equally informative is the excellent documentation by way of photo, mapping and geo-tagging that has been done by the local groups, notably ALDAW.

We reiterate some of the serious assertions of the indigenous peoples in their resistance:

1. The free, prior and informed consent process was not conducted with adequate regard to transparency and diligence. Sacred grounds and burial sites are going to be impacted directly by the mining projects. In these cases, the genuine consent of the indigenous peoples has not been secured, and therefore, the operations of these mining projects have failed to comply with necessary requirements and must be halted.
2. We understand that the proposed mining projects encroach on the buffer zones, the core zones and even the restricted zones of the protected areas. We believe that data provided by the geo-tagging project of the ALDAW network supports the claims of local organisations in the area on these points.
3. Violations of several laws and international treaties – including the SEP, NIPAS, IPRA and CBD– by the mining projects point to a serious flaw in the process of securing permits. These violations cast doubts on the feasibility and the appropriate mitigation that are said to be in place to protect the ecology, the indigenous culture and systems and the very existence of the impacted communities.

In this context, we urgently request your honorable council, the PCSD, to not issue the SEP clearance for MAC and INC. The PCSD is tasked in ascertaining the social acceptability of development projects in the province. The people have documented and publicly rejected the

projects of MAC and INC. It is therefore the responsibility of PCSD to uphold the true will of the people in this case by the non-issuance an SEP clearance.

We look forward to hearing that the PCSD and the Provincial Government of Palawan will remain true to their calling of serving the best interest of the Palawenos.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Nettleton

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geoff Nettleton". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

PIPLinks Coordinator