

MINING WORKSHOP

OPENING REMARKS

The first question posed at the mining workshop was in the form of a statement: 'sustainability and mining do not go together'. Nonetheless it was agreed that mining is happening in every one of the APEC economies. And that high on the 'trade liberalization' agenda of APEC is the goal to "free up mining investment", whatever that may mean.

Two basic aims of the workshop were outlined:

- (1) to respond to APEC; more generally to 'globalization', and more specifically to mining, and
- (2) to share stories and perspectives with the objective to strengthen our knowledge and to make links.

Melissa Bengullo-Morales (Center for Environmental Concerns - Philippines) noted that "the gap between rich and poor is widening. Transnationals continue to profit and still not work for the interests of the people. This is an example of market forces taking control of our lives. The Philippines' government has now liberalized mining too, like other APEC countries. By sharing 'mining stories' with people from Mexico, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and here in Canada, we know of the displacement of indigenous people and others, the loss of community control, and the environmental damage. We know that the interest of the Filipino and the Philippines' environment is compromised by mining. Yet the problem for the first world and the third world remains the same: the standard of living. These issues need to be addressed with caution, seeking benefits for all, and remembering that only once will our earth be wasted."

Chris Harris (Mineral Policy Institute - Australia) said that his organization was formed out of concern about the mining industry in the Asia Pacific region, most specifically in the areas of human rights and environment. "There is major mining expansion in virtually every country of the region; it is not an isolated activity."

- Mining in Vanuatu has increased 4-fold in two years; in 1995 there were nine mines and in 1997 there are 42.
- In the Philippines, in 1994, there were four foreign companies, and by 1996 this increased to 20; now there are over 100 Financial and Technical Assistance Agreements (FTAA) covering 30% of the land area.
- In Indonesia, from 1992-95, coal mining increased by 80%, copper by 58%, gas by 77%, and gold by 108%; in 1993 there were 66 Contract of Work (COW) opportunities while in 1997 there were over 250.
- In Vietnam there has been a 660% investment increase.
- In Chile a 75% increase in copper mining has been projected for 1995-2000; exports of copper increased 41% in 1995.