



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN AND MINING NETWORK

“Mujer y Minería”

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(Should any of our members find information on campaigns that is inaccurate we apologize for the same and request you to write to us with the corrections)

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EDITORIAL

We are happy to bring out the first English e-newsletter for the International Women and Mining Network. We hope that the voices of the women and children in the mine pits, of indigenous women, of displaced women, and of all the women who suffer atrocities, violence and discrimination as a result of mining activities in their lands, homes and territories are heard by the outside world through this newsletter. We want to continue to share our experiences and struggles among our members and non-members, whoever feel a concern for humanity and for Mother Earth. We want governments and international bodies to listen to the stories of indigenous women and mine workers as their policies and

programs have become more detrimental to their lives, corporate violence against them more glaring than before and privatization having pushed women completely out of the formal sector leaving them outside the collective bargaining power of trade unions or legal safeguards. Therefore, we need our voices to be heard more assertively today and across sectors and regions of peoples affected by national and global economics.

We will be happy to receive contributions to this newsletter by way of news, stories and insights into your campaigns and struggles and by way of policy analysis or research documents that you wish will help us widen the scope of our solidarity to the women and children affected by mining.

RIMM CAMPAIGN UPDATES

Australia

Woodside Energy's Pluto LNG Gas Plants threat to indigenous rock art

Off the North West coast of Western Australia in the Burrup Peninsula rests a silent heritage of



immeasurable worth: a group of islands filled with close to a million indigenous rock carvings six times older than the Pyramids and eight times older than Stonehenge. This heritage site has been chosen by Woodside Energy to set up its \$20 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant called Pluto project threatening to destroy this world renowned and priceless aboriginal art.

RIMM members had extended their support to the local campaign against setting up of the gas plant and demanded that the government of Australia list the same as a national heritage site and ask industries to find alternate sites for their plants. Pressure from the campaigners worked with the government and Woodside in November 2006 reversing their position against the heritage listing. However, Woodside have stated that they only support the listing on the condition that the proposed area for their Pluto development project is excised. The then Minister for Environment Senator Ian Campbell decided not to emergency list the site in January 2007 and called for public comment and consultation on the heritage process. Woodside is awaiting approval of a Public Environmental Review from Federal Environment and Heritage bodies. The Environmental Protection Authority is currently assessing the complete development plan for the Pluto project. The joint Public Environment Report-Public Environmental Review is open for public comment until

February 19, 2007. The EPA's review stage is another opportunity to get your message across to the interested parties - Woodside will have to respond to the submissions made by the public following the close of submissions.

Bolivia

Nationalization of mines

In October 2006, 16 people died and over 60 were injured when clashes broke out between rival bands of miners. Hundreds of miners belonging to independent cooperatives and state-employed miners fought each other with gunfire and dynamite over access to the state-owned Huanuni mine, south of La Paz, which holds Bolivia's richest tin deposits. The violence began when the miners from cooperatives stormed the Huanuni mine, demanding more access to its tin deposits. State-employed miners counter attacked to regain control and the groups exchanged gunshots and threw dynamite. Miners, some only in their teens, carried sticks of dynamite in backpacks and tucked in their belts. The cooperatives had strongly backed President Eva Morales' election last year, and the administration has already granted them access to a portion of the Huanuni deposits.

Both groups see Huanuni's rich vein of tin as a source of steady employment in South America's poorest country. The government has proposed expanding the operations of national mining company Comibol at Huanuni and other mines, and offering the independent miners salaried state jobs. However, the independents have rejected the offer, demanding that their cooperatives be granted greater access to Bolivia's mineral deposits.

Though nationalized in 1952, many of Bolivia's mines have since been privatized. While now under state control, the Huanuni

mine was operated between 2000 and 2005 by the British firm Allied Deals, now known as RBG Resources. Morales announced in October 2006 that all mines in Bolivia would be nationalized. This however has been postponed until 2007 due to lack of funds.

Colombia

Protest against the illegal action against Yesenia Echavarría Zuleta and attempts of government to evict the union of Sintraminercol

In November 2006 the Colombian government and the management of Minercol Ltda, unleashed an offensive to exterminate Sintraminercol, illegally firing Yesenia Echavarría Zuleta, attempting to evict the union from its headquarters and unjustifiably accelerating the liquidation of the company.

The Colombian government of President Alvaro Uribe Velez, following policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, had begun liquidating the state mining company, Minercol Limitada, in 2004 through a code drafted by lawyers working for Colombian and foreign mining companies thereby undermining Colombian sovereignty and eliminating the Sintraminercol Union at the company.

Yesenia, a Sintraminercol member and important union leader is a member of the National Claims Commission of Sintracarbon and Funtraenergética, coordinator of the International Network of Women and Mining, as well as belonging to the sub directors' board of Fenasintrap (central zone). She was recently a witness at the Permanent People's Tribunal, which found several mining multinationals guilty of serious and repeated human rights violations in the country. In spite of the legal protection she enjoyed she was illegally fired by the Minercol management, which is loyal only to the Uribe government and the multinationals. She and Sintraminercol are being targeted for their role in defense of national sovereignty over

Colombia's mineral resources and for charges brought by union leaders against the Uribe government, some foreign country governments, and multinational corporations in the mining sector for their crimes. This arbitrary and illegal decision by the Minercol management was carried out in the context of a continuing repression against its unionized workers and the suspension of fundamental rights and guarantees.

In December 2006 RIMM sent a letter to the Colombian government denouncing the illegal firing of Yesenia and condemning the attacks, bombings and threats that were undermining the fundamental rights of workers. The letter demanded that representatives of the multinationals that are exploiting Colombia's mineral resources should assume responsibility for the repression and cease their policy of dismantling the union organization, which operates under the protection of the Social State of Law.

India

Tribal people campaign against proposed bauxite mining in the hills of Andhra Pradesh

Since last year the new government in the state has tried to force the tribal people to agree to the mining. With false promises of jobs the government has been taking youth for training in mining activities while the adivasi (tribal) women have been strongly opposing such moves. The women are clearly saying that the mining will not get them economic sustenance nor retain their social cohesion as with the traditional farming, coffee plantations and forest produce that are in abundance in this area. The constant intimidation from the agents of the mining companies and local government and police officials has not deterred the women from conducting rallies, press meets and protest meetings. Using the legal instrument of right to self-rule, women from threatened villages passed resolutions that they will not part with their lands for mining. Gearing up to face this opposition, government has been recruiting tribal youth as tribal police battalions in the

guise of bringing peace to this politically disturbed area. While mainstream political parties have been wavering between support to the tribal people and demanding proper rehabilitation, the women are singular in their demands – no mining for us. The Indian company, Jindal South West Ltd (JSWL), which is contesting for the mineral extraction, is using all means of muscle and money to get its hand on the ore. While it is well known that the company has entered into a secret MoU with the government of Andhra Pradesh and the company itself publicly admitted to the deal, the attempts to make the lease ‘legitimate’ through influencing policy changes on tribal and mineral laws is going on discreetly. In mid-February the proposal comes up for clearance in front of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The threat gets more serious.

Human rights violations in Lanjigarh, Orissa

Tribal people terrorized by Vedanta actions: Sterlite (Vedanta) has been unlawfully going ahead with its construction of the bauxite refinery in the tribal block of Kalahandi district in Orissa. Ever since the proposal and surveying activities were taken up in the early ‘90s, the tribal people have been campaigning against the project, which would displace them from their homes.

When the company went ahead with construction of the perimeter wall even without permission the people protested. In response the company demolished their huts forcing them to flee their homes. Today while all have left fearing violence one woman holds out against the might of the company. Tula Parghoi, wife of Ketri Parghoi from Singhbhaoli village refuses to leave the land in spite of threat to her life and continues to live there in her hut with her three children.

mm&P has taken up the legal case at the Supreme Court of India in support of the tribal people. The Centrally Empowered Committee appointed by the Court had conducted a fact finding of the project and submitted its report stating that the company

was going ahead with construction activities without obtaining due clearances and that it was encroaching on forest land. This was followed by the Supreme Court direction that a Forest Advisory Committee be set up. Meanwhile the company with the administration’s backing has started going ahead with construction of the boundary wall. Police quelled protests by filing false cases against people who were obstructing the construction of the perimeter wall. Thirty-five people were jailed by the police who had to release them, as there were no strong grounds for detaining them. The police then forcibly took them away to a religious shrine located in the town of Puri keeping them there for seven days saying that since they had done the ‘impure’ act of going to prison, ill-omen to their villages could be averted only with a purification ceremony at the holy shrine of Lord Jagannath. However, this was only a tactic of the company, to keep them away from the project site until they completed the construction, state the women who rushed to the temple town with local activists to bring the men back. The police refuse to register complaints against the company filed by the affected people and are, in turn, booking several false cases on them at the instance of the company. The tribal people are now also protesting against the deliberate killing of Sukra Majhi, a tribal leader, in 2005, reportedly by hired goons of the company and the manner in which the police have struck the case down as a ‘road accident’. In Lanjigarh and surrounding areas where Vedanta has its proposed projects, there is simply no presence of the State or law of the state and if it exists, the people say, it is the ‘company’s government’.

Philippines

Women’s groups call to end states violence against women and fight political repression under President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Innabuyog-Gabriela the regional alliance of women’s organizations in the Cordillera is campaigning against the repressive regime of

Arroyo and increasing extra judicial killings. In a statement released by Innabuyog it said that state violence is being felt through heightened political repression, which is happening to its worst through execution of women, their husbands and children whose known involvement is promoting the rights and interest of the people. The women victims are mostly peasants involved in struggles to defend their rights to land, life and natural resources. Since Arroyo assumed power in 2001, 83 women and 54 children have been killed. Most of them are known leaders or members of organizations affiliated with Gabriela, Gabriela Women's Partylist and other progressive people's organizations. Most of the children are killed during massacre of families and communities in the course of militarization. Adding to this appalling data are cases of enforced disappearances. 27 women and 10 children

are victims of enforced disappearance since 2001. Perpetrators are none other than members of the state's police, military forces and para-military groups. In the Cordillera, the political assassination of Pepe Manegdeg, Albert Terredano, Rafael Bangit and Alyce Omengan Claver have left three widows and a widower and orphaned 11 children.

Since 2001 a total of nearly 700 persons have been reported as being killed. All of the victims share much in common. They were human rights advocates, members of progressive organizations, and vocal critics against militarization, logging, mining and other projects deemed by the locals as being destructive to the environment or as threats to their livelihoods. Also targeted have been members of the clergy, students, lawyers and journalists who have raised their voices against the repression.

SOME NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD (MINING/GENDER)

Bangladesh

Successful people's struggle at Phulbari in Dinajpur district against open-pit coal mining project

Asia Energy, a UK-based company, entered into a contract in early 2006 with the Bangladesh government to mine coal in Phulbari in a scheme called the Phulbari Coal Project. The project threatened to displace lakhs of people from over 100 villages mostly from the indigenous communities of the Santal, Munda and Mahali tribes and result in the destruction of acres of fertile agricultural land and forests.

The locals were against open-pit mining and began their protests organized under the banner of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Natural Resources, and Ports, a platform of different rights groups and leftist parties. Thousands of people of Phulbari, including women and adivasis, fought together against the proposed project, which

culminated in the demonstrations of the last week of August. On August 26, 2006 at least six people were killed and about 300 injured as police and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) opened fire on demonstrators advancing towards the office of Asia Energy PLC in Dinajpur. Eyewitnesses put the number of demonstrators as more than 30,000. Farmers and indigenous people, including women, armed with bows and arrows and sticks, joined the protest apprehending massive evictions and loss of farmland planned for the implementation of the project.

Faced with ensuing mass protests and four days of general strike the government of Bangladesh and protestors reached a "memorandum of understanding" ending the open pit-mining scheme on August 31, 2006. The cancellation of the project led to joyous celebrations and is a testimony of what the united strength of people can achieve.

Guatemala

Security forces burn peasant settlements for Canadian nickel firm

On January 8, 2007 some 600 Guatemalan national police and army troops occupied two Kekchi Maya indigenous communities at El Estor, Izabal department. Their orders were to evict the 308 families that made up the settlements of La Union and La Pista. The following morning, 175 more Kekchi families were forcibly expelled from the nearby communities of La Revolucion and La Paz. A Kekchi community at Lote 8 in the neighboring department of Alta Verapaz was also evicted. The evictions were carried out on behalf of the Guatemala Nickel Co. (CGN), a subsidiary of the Vancouver-based Skye Resources Nickel Mining Co., which holds a disputed title to the lands. Police troops sacked and torched the houses as the residents fled their homes. The communities had called for a non-violent solution to the question of land claims and asked for a meeting, which the company representatives did not attend. Torching and evictions continued in January and the police removed residents who had returned to their dwellings.

The dispute goes back to the 1960s, when the Canadian mining giant INCO started to buy or force out local campesinos. At the time, human rights violations were widespread. In 1999, the U.N. Truth Commission for Guatemala found INCO directly responsible for killings and other rights abuses. INCO conducted pit-mining operations from 1979-81 after which the lands lay vacant and unproductive. In 2004 Skye purchased the mining leases and announced plans to resume operations. In September 2006, hundreds of landless Kekchi families moved back to El Estor to reclaim their territories where their ancestors had lived for hundreds of years before the arrival of any mining company. Since then evictions have started and community

leaders have been threatened. Rights Action, a Connecticut-based group that supports Kekchi land reclamation efforts, called the actions illegal and alleged iniquity in the country's legal system. It has demanded that the Canadian government call a moratorium on mining in the country immediately.

Nigeria

Project for promoting women's participation in trade union activities (from a briefing document issued in January 2007)

The project was aimed at enhancing the capacity of trade unions in Nigeria to address the concerns of women workers and to improve their working conditions in order to reduce discrimination against women in the workplace as well as in wider society. Activities included a series of training workshops designed to equip the participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to mainstream gender equity, provide opportunities to develop strategies to ensure the systematic integration of gender issues and concerns into collective bargaining agenda and provided the opportunity to publicize the NLC Gender Equity Policy and lobby for its implementation. The project objectives were achieved through a successful partnership with TUC Aid (UK), the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC), Ministries of Women Affairs, Labor and Productivity and the relevant NGOs.

As a result of project activities and the emphasis on the need for unions to take steps to ensure the integration of gender issues, some changes have been recorded.

- Some unions - (The National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives (NANNM), National Union of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions Employees (NUBIFIE), Nigeria Union of Local Government

Employees (NULGE) - have appointed gender officers.

- Some have taken steps to create women's committees .The National Executive Council (NEC) of the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) approved the setting up of women committees at state level of the Union.
- Reviews of union constitutions have taken place, paving the way for women trade unionists to play a more effective role in decision-making structures and processes. One example is of NUPENG, which reviewed its constitution to recognize the Chairperson of the National Women Committee of the Union as an ex-officio National Executive Council (NEC) member.
- Women emerged as leaders of their unions during some union Delegates' Conferences held during the period, signifying an increase in the number of women in the leadership of affiliates.
- A draft policy on sexual harassment has been formulated and submitted to the Gender Unit of the NLC for further work on it before presentation to the 9th Congress of the NLC.
- A number of NLC affiliates are likely to sponsor motions based on the recommendations from the project at the 9th Delegates Conference in 2007.
- Work is in progress for adoption of the Bill on violence against women in parliament, for ratification of ILO Convention 183 and for domestication of the CEDAW.

The project has been successful in enhancing the capacity of trade unions to reflect the concerns of women workers and improve working conditions through a well-designed program of training and education

activities and campaigning and networking. The long-term sustainability of the impact of the project will critically depend on the commitment of the NLC and its affiliates to the project goal - elimination of discrimination against women in the workplace and in wider society and on the availability of resources.

South Africa

Women stand firm against mine

On January 24, 2007 at Mokopane, South African police were accused of beating up and arresting about 50 women, some of them elderly, when they stood in the way of Anglo Platinum bulldozers that rolled onto their grazing land on Wednesday. The women from the Mohlohlo community in Mapela near Mokopane were trying to prevent the bulldozers from clearing the land to make way for more platinum mining fields. Fifteen of the women had to be treated at Mokopane Hospital.

The Mohlohlo community comprises about 10,000 people and owns the 8,000 ha area of land that Anglo already is mining for platinum. The company bought the mining rights to the land from the old LebowaKgomo homeland government. But Richard Spoor, lawyer and human rights activist is representing a number of communities who have accused the mining conglomerate of encroaching on tribal land in Limpopo and dumping over 25 million tons of waste. Spoor said the company already had converted half of the community's land into open mining fields. He claimed, too, that local traditional leaders had been arrested for protesting against the demolition of their homes and relocation of the community. Anglo intends relocating the community to a new village in Armoede, which Spoor calls "an unsustainable slum".

PROFILES IN COURAGE

[This section profiles women from around the world who are fighting against exploitation either by governments or private enterprises. Their bitter struggles against powerful forces and hardships faced are a source of inspiration to women across the globe telling them that they are not alone in the struggle for their rights.]

Nookalamma leads the campaign against bauxite mining in Andhra Pradesh, India

Galikonda and Raktakonda located in Araku and Ananthagiri mandals are home to tribal people who have lived on the land for hundreds of years. Today, in complete violation of their constitutional rights private companies like Jindal South West Ltd with support from the government are attempting to extract bauxite from these regions. **Korra Nookalamma**, a women tribal leader has been spearheading the anti mining campaign. She says that while they now have income from coffee plantations mining would end this and they were opposed to this kind of development that would leave them without land or livelihood. Through rallies, campaigns and petitions she along with other tribal people has approached the government, various

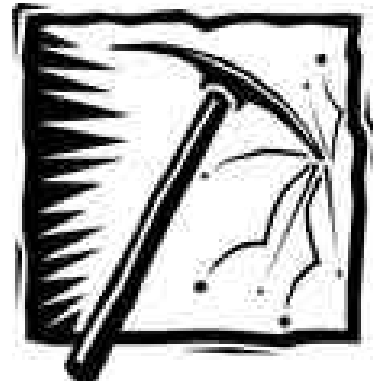


officials and the Human Rights Commission in their struggle to retain their lands. The fight is by no means an easy one. Constantly on the alert they have had to prevent trucks of the company from entering the area to collect bauxite samples. Nookalamma is a leader determined to carry on her struggle against these forces that are constantly threatening her home and land.

Tula Parghoi and her brave stand against the mining giant Vedanta

Another brave women Tula Parghoi from Singhbhaoli village, Orissa is fighting against the might of the Vedanta group. Sterlite (Vedanta group) is unlawfully going ahead with construction of a bauxite refinery in the tribal block where Tula lives. Protests by the tribal people against the construction of a perimeter wall resulted in the company

brutally demolishing their huts. The tribal people were forced to flee the region. Only Tula along with her husband and three children refused to leave. Today this one woman holds out refusing to leave the land and her home in spite of repeated threats from the company.



WOMEN LEADERS IN THE CORPORATE SECTOR

[This section profiles women who have made it to the top in the largely male dominated corporate sectors. While this is an indication of the empowerment of women across the globe, at the same time it presents an opportunity for us and other groups to try and enlist their support by bringing to their notice the violations that the companies they head are guilty of.]

Cynthia Carroll will be the first woman and outsider to become chief executive of Anglo American in its 89-year history. She started her career as a geologist at Amoco, now part of BP, and joined Montreal-based Alcan in 1988. Alcan is the world's second-biggest aluminum producer, behind Alcoa. An American citizen, Carroll is a director of Sara Lee Corporation, a director of the American Aluminum Association and a director of the International Aluminum Institute. Carroll, 49, will join the Anglo board in mid-January 2007 and take over as CEO from March 1, 2007.

Linda Zarda Cook, an American CEO of Shell Gas and Power is the first of very few female leaders in the male dominated oil industries. A Shawnee native and a graduate in petroleum engineering she began her career in 1980 as a Shell reservoir engineer in the United States. Cook has led the Gas and Power division since January 2000. Recognized as one of the world's leading female entrepreneurs in the recent years she was named the 11th most powerful businesswoman in the world by Fortune magazine in October 2002.

IMPACT OF GOLD MINING ON WOMEN IN THE HUGAWNG VALLEY

Introduction: Kachin Development Networking Group (KDNG) is a network of Kachin civil society groups and development organizations inside Kachin state and overseas. This report by KDNG focuses mainly on the social impacts of gold mining operations and reveals the untold story of how Burma's ruling military junta and the self-serving expansion of the gold mining industry have devastated communities and ravaged forests and waterways in the biodiversity rich Hugawng Valley located in Kachin in northern Burma. Conducted over the two year period 2004-06 it includes interviews with different parties involved in the gold mining business-mine owners, mine workers, staff of mining companies, traders in mining area, villagers and other affected like sex workers and drug users.

Gold mining nexus in Hugawng valley: Traditionally gold mining in the valley was carried out as a small-scale local activity shared equally by all. All this changed with a ceasefire between the military junta and

rebel groups in 1994, which turned this local livelihood into a business venture also expanding the area under mining operations. These were run by private companies backed by Chinese and local investors and in some cases by high-ranking military officers who had obtained them under concessions. Today all mining can be done only with the approval of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). Mining companies pay money to the Ministry of Mines to obtain concessions to mine in blocks of land, need to remit a percentage of their profits and in addition pay protection money; all of which ensures the military regime a streamlined revenue system. In Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) administrative areas companies have to remit a part of their profits to KIO.

For the local community the implications are a loss of livelihood for independent small-scale miners who are reduced to laborers for companies and "subcontracting gold mine owners" resulting in influx of migrant labor. Worse still the sale of important

commodities like fuel and meat is now being controlled by the companies under licenses obtained from the regime forcing the people to pay a high price for them. Fishing is also now done by auction or licensing system.

At all times the SPDC has absolute authority to shut down operations or impose bans. However, these are used only as powerful tools to consolidate their hold over the mining operations and ensure that revenues are not being skimmed off at a local level.

Social impacts of gold mining expansion on women and youth: Mining “boom towns” have altered the social structure and resulted in the mushrooming of a number of illegal activities. Weak mining laws, no formal requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment or enforcement of reclamation of mining land have resulted in severe impacts on the environment, people’s health and social structure. Far from alleviating these impacts local SPDC authorities collect fees from drug trafficking, opium dens and brothels. The shift from a largely agriculture-based economy, together with inflated prices, has also widened the gap between the rich and the poor.

Drugs: Opium cultivation initially was done by families and used for medicinal purposes. Post 1948 it turned into a commercial industry and opium became recourse for manual laborers to endure hard work. It was in 1960s that heroin was developed from opium and made freely available in Kachin state.

Today the drug business flourishes with the victims being a large number of young people in the age group of 13-35 years and from both sexes who come to the region in search of work. Depression, lack of opportunity, lack of education and difficult working conditions has been contributing factors and whatever meager incomes earned is spent on drug purchase. Employers themselves provide a miner with opium, which at first provides strength making them work faster but soon destroys their health.

Addiction is difficult to cure and there is no treatment available even if one chooses to go for detoxification. Mental disorders, overdosing, accidents and death are all results of addiction. To satisfy their craving the addicted resort to crime and sharing of needles has increased the incidence of HIV. 95% of AIDS infection in Kachin is caused by intravenous injections of drugs. The drug business is also a source of income for the poor or physically weak who are unable to find any other work.

The government on the one hand confiscates drugs and sells the same also extorting money for release of those in possession of drugs. On the other hand they conduct token anti drug campaigns where by simply paying bribes poppy plantation owners can prevent their crop from being destroyed.

Sex industry: Separation from their families and a feeling of hopelessness has resulted in an expanding sex industry. Because of the low wages women in order to provide for their families enter into this profession. Poverty and inability to obtain an education are other factors that lure young women here in the hope of getting employment but in turn push them into the sex trade. Victims of rape by the army ashamed to return to their homes come here to survive. In very few cases do women come to these mining towns with the intention of being engaged in the sex trade; circumstances and the difficulties they face in life forces them into it. Women in brothels and massage parlors are severely exploited and subjected to violence with no means of escape. Sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS are rampant and fuelled by the sex industry. There are no health facilities or testing centers where HIV can be detected and treated. Here too the SPDC patronize and profit from the brothels being involved in selling of women.

Gambling: Inflated price have made workers entirely dependent on their employers for their daily needs thus reinforcing an exploitative relationship. A sense of

desperation fuels gaming and betting; either to feed the drug habit or the urge to leave the gold mining area by quickly making money. Entire wages are spent on buying lotteries or gambling in the hope of getting rich. Women and young girls who hang around

these dens in the hope of selling tickets are further exposed to the risk of sexual harassment. While gambling is officially illegal, local SPDC authorities profit by operating a gambling license system in the mining areas.

OECD GUIDELINES FOR MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS

The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, hereafter referred to as the Guidelines, were drawn up in the 1970s, a decade during which the activities of corporations became a topic of discussion among international organizations. The sometimes negative impact of corporations on developing countries was given increased attention and harmful activities of companies to countries where they were established met growing opposition. Originally, the Guidelines only applied to companies operating within the OECD countries. However, the latest review of the Guidelines, conducted in 2000, widened their scope to include companies operating in or from OECD member states. The basic premise of the guidelines is that principles agreed internationally can help prevent conflict and to build an atmosphere of confidence between multinational enterprises and the societies in which they operate. The Guidelines are not a substitute for, nor do they override, applicable law but should take into account the established policies in the countries in which they operate. Also observance of the Guidelines by enterprises is voluntary and not legally enforceable.

The different chapters covered include information disclosure by enterprises,

combating bribery, protection of consumer interests, science and technology, competition and taxation. The chapter on employment and industrial relations is fairly detailed and includes elimination of child labor and forced labor and elimination of discriminative policies on the basis of race, color, sex or political opinion. A recommendation on human rights has also been introduced. Environment figures prominently in the Guidelines and the chapter encourages multinational enterprises to raise their environmental standards through improved environmental management and better contingency planning for environmental impacts. They should conduct their activities in a manner contributing to the wider goal of sustainable development.

National Contact Points (NCPs): The role of NCPs is to further the effectiveness of the Guidelines. Adhering countries have to set up NCPs for undertaking promotional activities, handling inquiries and for discussions with the parties concerned on all matters covered by the Guidelines so that they can contribute to the solution of problems, which may arise. They are required to make the Guidelines better known and available.

TRIPARTITE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES CONCERNING MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES AND SOCIAL POLICY

In the 1960s and 1970s, the activities of multinational enterprises (MNEs) provoked intense discussions that resulted in efforts to draw up international instruments for regulating their conduct and defining the

terms of their relations with host countries, mostly in the developing world. Labor-related and social policy issues were among those concerns to which the activities of MNEs gave rise. The International Labor

Organizations (ILOs) search for international guidelines resulted, in 1977, in the adoption by the ILO Governing Body, of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration).

The principles under the MNE Declaration offer guidelines to MNEs, governments, and employers' and workers' organizations to address issues of work relations, including: employment promotion, employment security, vocational training and guidance strategies, consultation between all parties as to matters of mutual concern, industrial dispute settlement, and grievances. It focuses on employment and work conditions and provides detailed provisions in these areas, rather than very broad principles across a variety of subjects. The Declaration is a set of voluntary principles implemented within the ILO member states.

The text of the MNE Declaration is regularly updated to include references to new instruments, adopted by the International Labor Conference and the Governing Body, that are of relevance to the issues it covers. During the last update of the MNE Declaration, which was approved in March 2006, the list of ILO Conventions that member States are invited to ratify was extended to all the fundamental Conventions. Furthermore, a specific recommendation was added to encourage enterprises, both multinational and national, to take immediate and effective measures

within their own competence to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor, as a matter of urgency.

Interpretation procedure: The purpose of this procedure is to interpret the provisions of the Declaration when needed to resolve a disagreement on their meaning, arising from an actual situation, between parties to whom the Declaration is commended. The importance of the Procedure lies in its availability to contribute to the harmonious development of labor relations, either by its use or by its availability, the latter of which may encourage disputants to confront their difficulties and gain perspectives capable of mutual accommodation.

When received, requests for interpretation of provisions of the MNE Declaration follow an established process involving a number of steps. A request for interpretation must also meet certain criteria to be considered receivable, that is, able to be accepted as a procedural matter for subsequent review on the merits of the questions raised.

In 1993, the Governing Body established the Subcommittee on Multinational Enterprises within the framework of the Committee on Legal Issues and International Labor Standards. The mandate of the Subcommittee was to conduct surveys on the effect given to MNE Declaration and consider requests for interpretations of procedures in MNE Declaration.

WOMEN, HIV/AIDS AND THE WORLD OF WORK

The ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work

The Code of Practice is the framework for action related to the workplace and provides practical guidance for taking action at the workplace. It is complemented by an education and training manual with one module particularly covering gender issues.

It contains key principles for policy development and practical guidelines for programs at enterprise, community and national levels. The main areas it covers are:

- ❑ Prevention of HIV.
- ❑ Management and mitigation of the impact of AIDS on the world of work.

- ❑ Care and support of workers infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.
- ❑ Elimination of stigma and discrimination on the basis of real or perceived HIV status.

HIV/AIDS affects women and men differently in terms of vulnerability and impact. There are biological factors, which make women more vulnerable to infection than men, and structural inequalities in the status of women that make it harder for them to take measures to prevent infection, and also intensify the impact of AIDS on them. The ILO code stresses that each part of a comprehensive workplace program on HIV/AIDS covering prevention, care and the protection of rights needs to be gender sensitive. One of its key principles is gender equality states that,

“The gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS should be recognized. Women are more likely to become infected and are more often adversely affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic than men due to

biological, socio-cultural and economic reasons. The greater the gender discrimination in societies and the lower the position of women, the more negatively they are affected by HIV. Therefore, more equal gender relations and the empowerment of women are vital to successfully prevent the spread of HIV infection and enable women to cope with HIV/AIDS.”

The code specifies that awareness programs should give special emphasis to the vulnerability of women to HIV and prevention strategies that reduce the vulnerability. Women at work should be able to understand their rights, both within the work place and outside it, and empower them to protect themselves. The code also lays down that counseling provided should be adapted to the different needs and circumstances of women and employee assistance programs should recognize that women normally undertake the major part of caring for those with AIDS-related illnesses.



EVENTS

Commission on the status of women: 51st Session

26 February to 9 March 2007

The fifty-first session of the **Commission on the Status of Women** will take place from 26 February to 9 March 2007.

In accordance with its multi-year program of work for 2007-2009, the Commission will consider **“The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child”** as its priority theme.

For details see <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/51sess.htm>

ARCHIVES

“Solidarity forever”: A brief history of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA)

In the history of American labor, the UMWA has occupied a position of unquestioned leadership. It led the struggle to establish collective bargaining in American industrial life in the 20th century. For over 100 years its principles and policies, strength and unity, and outstanding leaders have been an inspiration to generations of working families.

The UMWA was founded in Columbus, Ohio in 1890 by the merger of Knights of Labor Trade Assembly No. 135 and the National Progressive Union of Miners and Mine Laborers. The constitution adopted by the delegates to the first UMWA convention barred discrimination based on race, religion or national origin. The delegates pledged, "to use all honorable means to maintain peace between ourselves and employers; adjusting all differences, as far as possible, by arbitration and conciliation, that strikes may become unnecessary."

Throughout its history, the UMWA has provided leadership to the American labor movement. UMWA history is full of legendary and often tragic names. The Molly Maguires; the Lattimer Massacre and the Ludlow Massacre, Matewan and the Battle of Blair Mountain; Paint Creek, Cabin Creek and Buffalo Creek; and Bloody Harlan are some of many legendary stories that have been handed down in the oral history of mining families.

Despite the threat of physical harm and economic ruin, miners have constantly struggled against great odds to achieve their goals: the eight-hour day in 1898, collective



bargaining rights in 1933, health and retirement benefits in 1946. The UMWA has also been a leader in the field of worker health and safety. Because of the dust created in coalmines, the UMWA was forced to become an expert in occupational lung diseases such as silicosis and pneumoconiosis. In 1969, the UMWA convinced Congress to enact the landmark Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act. The law changed a number of mining practices to protect miner's safety and provided compensation for miners suffering from black lung disease. Perhaps most important, it was the first time that Congress mandated the elimination of a man-made occupational disease.

For over 100 years the members of the UMWA have dedicated themselves to workers' rights all over the world. The union's struggles and victories illustrate the organization's sense of "family" and equality. One union song contends: "There's nothing like union to me, / It's a home of the happy and free, / It's a heaven of rest for the miners / How beautiful union must be" (Corbin 164). The UMWA does strive to make workers "happy and free," and with the power of the union's human will and spirit there will be "solidarity forever."

*Ludlow massacre- April 14, 1914
20 people including women and children were killed when police and hired guns broke up a tent colony formed by families of miners who had been evicted from company owned housing.*