

**STATEMENT OF THE PACIFIC REGION
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN AND MINING NETWORK MEETING
MADANG, PAPUA NEW GUINEA
24-26 October 2007**

We are women of the Asia Pacific region from Australia, Fiji, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Timor Leste. We are mothers, women leaders, community members, landowners, Indigenous peoples, non-government organisation representatives, Human Rights lawyers and agency representatives, and mine workers.

For three days we have shared our personal experiences, our learning and our wisdom. We agree that at all stages of mining from exploration to operation and closure, there are many negative impacts of mining on women which must stop if we women are to assist our communities to develop in constructive and sustainable ways.

In particular, we have learned that many of us face the same issues and are outraged that:

- most major rivers in Papua New Guinea are polluted by mining and that the only major river system untouched by mining in PNG, the Sepik, is at risk from proposed mining;
- the Freeport, Ok Tedi, Porgera and Tolukuma mines all dispose of mine tailings (waste) directly into rivers, resulting in over 540,000 tonnes of toxic waste being dumped into these rivers each day;
- as women who must support our families, the impacts of mining include economic impacts that affect our ability to pursue sustainable livelihoods using farms, gardens and waterways;
- despite global recognition of the value of scarce clean water sources, water is often used at the expense of community needs;
- water as a safe, clean and reliable source for communities is compromised in many ways by mining – including by contamination of catchment areas and groundwater often through irresponsible mine waste disposal practices, and by changes to natural river and groundwater flow systems;
- women mine workers in some of our home countries face discrimination, poor working conditions, low wages and unequal pay for equal work; and
- customary land rights of tribal and indigenous peoples are often disregarded and disrespected, with corrupt practices at both state and corporate levels undermining our traditional systems.

We refer to:

- the Declaration of the Mining Affected Women's Foundation, Madang, PNG, October 2007;
- the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 September 2007, which provides that the free and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples shall be obtained "prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of their mineral, water or other resources".
- the statement published during the APEC Mining Ministerial by civil society representatives, Indigenous people and their organisations, Perth, Australia, February 2007;
- the commitment made by the PNG Minister for Mining during the 2007 APEC mining ministerial that there would be no new mines in Papua New Guinea using riverine tailings disposal; and
- the Statement of the International Mining Workshop in Bali, Indonesia, May 2002.

We support the initiatives of our Indonesian and Papua New Guinean sisters in their call to stop new or proposed mine projects in their countries.

We call for:

- protection of waterways and an immediate ban on destructive mine practices including the dumping of mine waste into waterways, open-pit mining, block-carving, and cyanide heap-leaching;

- mining companies to disclose where and how they are disposing waste in all mines and declare a commitment not to dispose into waterways;
- the provision of clean, safe and secure water supplies for those communities already affected by mining;
- an independent investigation into the mine waste disposal impacts on waterways in Western Australia;
- immediate clean up and rehabilitation of abandoned mine sites;
- respect for the right of Indigenous peoples and local and affected communities to give or withhold their free, prior and informed consent to mining operations, and especially the right of women to participate in decision making;
- the revenue from the use of our resources should be used to benefit the people and must be transparently reported;
- safe and humane working conditions with living wages, respect for workers' rights and equality for women workers consistent with international labour laws and standards;
- greater control by home states (such as Australia, the United States, and Canada) of mining companies from these countries when operating abroad, with requirements for compliance with international human rights standards and international best environmental practices no matter where they operate;
- all states and mining companies to respect, promote and protect human rights consistent with international law and national human rights systems; and
- all states to review mining and mine related legislation that have an adverse effect on the people so as to protect the rights and interests of local communities and Indigenous peoples.

Signed:

Hennick Hanskar	Ambunti Council of Women, Papua New Guinea
Martha Kiapgugu	Feni Island, Papua New Guinea
Elizabeth Matit	Fly River Women, Papua New Guinea
Jacklyn Membup	Petztorne Women's Association, Papua New Guinea
Mellie Umange	Porgera District Women's Association, Papua New Guinea
Catherine Mal	Women and Development, Madang, Papua New Guinea
Tapora Isorua	(individual)
Pauline Fagu'u	Mekeo Environment and Conservation Foundation, PNG
Moira Dasipio	Chief, Isabel Province, Solomon Islands
Damris Rugu	Guadalcanal Province, Solomon Islands
Joylyn Oli	Malaita Province, Solomon Islands
Jemimah John	Guadalcanal Province, Solomon Islands
Mere Peters	Vatukoula, Fiji
Losana Sadreu	Vatukoula, Fiji
Taraivini Navuso	Fiji Mine Workers Union, Fiji
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Aurelia Rodrigues	Haburas Foundation, East Timor
Ines Martins	La'o Hamutuk, East Timor
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Patricia Kopusar	Perth, Western Australia
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