

> Take Action | Protect Community Rights and Resources



Over 60 percent of the world's poorest people live in countries rich in natural resources—but they rarely share in the wealth. Too often, poor communities have no say in the extraction of resources from their land and receive little information about these projects. But oil, gas, and mining projects don't have to add to poverty and powerlessness; in fact, they can help communities overcome these challenges.

More and more, poor people are asserting their right to decide if or how they want oil, gas, and mining development to take place in their community—and their right to know about the impacts and benefits of these projects.

If they are consulted in advance, communities can decide whether they want companies to begin or expand operations on their land. And if they know how much extractive companies are paying their government for their natural resources, they can ensure that a fair share of the profits go to community needs like education, health care, and jobs.

Oxfam America has a long history of supporting these community rights in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the US. In Ghana, we help communities access information about water contamination caused by mining. In Cambodia, we support a coalition of local nongovernmental organizations working to ensure that the revenues from the country's coming oil boom are shared in a transparent way. In El Salvador, we work with grassroots organizations to promote informed public debate about mining projects. And in the US, we help Native American communities protect their sacred sites from encroachment by mining.

Now, Oxfam America is calling on international oil, gas, and mining companies to show their respect for the following:

- **A community's right to know:** Companies must provide complete and timely information about how their work affects communities—environmentally, socially, and economically. They must also disclose how much they are paying governments for natural resources so that poor communities get a fair share of the profits.
- **A community's right to decide:** Companies must obtain the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of communities affected by oil, gas, and mining operations. For indigenous peoples in particular, respect for FPIC is a critical means of protecting sacred lands and cultural identity.



JEFF DEUTSCH / OXFAM AMERICA

Antonio Membreno, a farmer and rancher from Cabañas, El Salvador, attends a meeting about potential gold mining near his community. This country of roughly six million faces a critical moment: although it is smaller than the state of Massachusetts, 29 licenses for exploration have been granted by the Salvadoran government to foreign mining companies.

The time is now

Oxfam and our supporters can make a difference:

- By supporting the passage of Congressional legislation that would require oil, gas, and mining companies to make public what they pay to the countries where they operate.
- By challenging leading oil, gas, and mining companies to respect communities' right to know and right to decide.

Oxfam America

Oxfam America is an international relief and development organization that creates lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and injustice. As part of our work supporting poor communities worldwide, we are undertaking a campaign to ensure that oil, gas, and mining projects respect the rights of poor people and contribute to the long-term reduction of poverty. All we need now is your voice.



The Facts: Oil, gas, and mining companies

... have an increasing impact on the world's poorest countries.

- Three and a half billion people live in countries rich in oil, gas, and minerals.
- Twelve of the world's 25 most mineral-dependent countries, and six of the world's most oil-dependent countries, are classified by the World Bank as "highly indebted poor countries."
- Fossil fuels, much of which are extracted in developing countries, will continue to provide 77 percent of global energy by 2030, even if governments pursue aggressive measures to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- In Africa, about three-quarters of the continent's trade relates to the natural resource sector. In 2003, US investment in African oil exceeded \$10 billion per year—some two-thirds to three-quarters of all its total annual investment in the continent.

... must respect local people's right to know how extractives projects affect their community.

- More often than not, extractive industry contracts and revenues are kept secret. This lack of accountability facilitates embezzlement, corruption, and revenue misappropriation, and has contributed to the industry's failure to alleviate poverty in countries where it does business.
- In Angola, more than \$4 billion in state oil revenues disappeared from government coffers between 1997 and 2002, an amount roughly equal to the entire sum the government spent on social programs in the same period.
- Although gold is its top export, Mali remains one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world—ranking 174th out of 177 countries in the 2005 UN Development Program's Human Development Index.

... should involve communities in the decision-making process.

- The concept of FPIC, which gives communities a meaningful role in decision-making about a project that would affect them, is rooted in international human rights law, such as the International Labor Organization's Convention 169. It is also recognized by several national governments.
- Community consent is increasingly a bottom-line issue for companies. During a two-week period of protests against the expansion of Newmont's Yanacocha Mine in northern Peru, the company's stock price fell 7 percent, a loss of more than \$1 billion in shareholder value.

What can you do?

As a consumer, your voice matters to companies. As a global citizen, you can speak out in solidarity with people whose lives are affected. Add your voice to the effort and join Oxfam as we challenge international oil, gas, and mining companies to respect a community's right to know and right to decide. To learn more, visit www.oxfamamerica.org/rights-resources.

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Godfried Ofori, a member of the Concerned Citizens Association of Prestea, Ghana, looks out over an open pit at the Bogoso/Prestea mine.

Working together to end poverty and injustice

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