

Open letter to AngloGold-Ashanti management

Johannesburg, South Africa 2016-02-18

Colombia is immersed in one of the longest ongoing internal armed conflicts in the world. All actors in the conflict, including the state and government armed forces, have been implicated in serious and systematic human rights violations, war crimes and even crimes against humanity. Access to land and the control over the exploitation of its resources are root causes of the Colombian conflict, and over 6 million persons have been forcibly displaced in the last three decades.

The current peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP, the country's largest guerilla-group, brings about an historic opportunity to bring an end to the fighting. However, the peace accords will not in themselves be enough to build a lasting peace in Colombia. The effective restitution of the rights of the millions of victims of the armed conflict is essential to peace, as is the guarantee of the rights of indigenous, afro-Colombian and small scale farmers' communities to access to land and to preserve their way of life.

The fact that many of the regions of Colombia that are most severely affected by the armed conflict and by forced displacement are also where large-scale mining projects are being licensed, planned and carried out, therefore constitutes a potential threat to the peace-process. It is also particularly worrying that many of these projects directly or indirectly affect land collectively owned by ethnic minority-communities and/or small-scale farmers.

All business in Colombia and mining in particular need to seriously consider not only how they themselves may be affected by the environment in which they operate, but also how they affect the armed conflict and ongoing peace efforts, even unconsciously or involuntarily, through their business operations, practices and partners. It is also essential that they are transparent and that they provide relevant information about their operations, their practices and their partners, and that they actively engage with both communities and the wider civil society.

We therefore urge AngloGold-Ashanti to:

- a. Provide information regarding amounts, time-periods and the essential content and/or disclose the actual texts of the contracts/agreements it itself or any of its subsidiaries has

previously had and currently has with any armed actor in Colombia, in particular its contracts with the armed forces of Colombia.

- b. Provide detailed information about all its mining projects in Colombia, including the extension for the project-areas as well as any other areas potentially affected by the project and any transactions of its titles or licenses (date and seller/buyer), with reference to its geographic location (name of municipality, coordinates), in particular with regard to the Colosa-project.
- c. Provide its corporate responsibility plans and programmes for each and every project it is involved with in Colombia.
- d. Provide its general guidelines/instructions and methodology for performing environmental and any other impact assessments in Colombia, in particular social and economic impact assessments, as well as the actual assessments made and the measures adopted.
- e. Provide its guidelines/instructions and methodology for performing an Enhanced Due Diligence in Colombia, in accordance with the UN guiding principles on business and human rights, as well as the actual assessments made and the measures adopted.
- f. Make a public statement about its human rights and conflict sensitivity policies, practices and any specific measures in Colombia, during the exploration undertaking by the company in the country during the years 2000 to 2006.
- g. Commit and adhere to internationally recognized minimum standards and best practices with regards to human rights and business in complex environments, such as the UN guiding principles, the UN Global Compact, EITI, OECD and World Bank guiding principles, etc.
- h. Commit to actively contribute to progressively advancing these minimum standards and best practices, both in the general international framework and in its own policies and practices, through mechanisms of periodic independent scrutiny.
- i. Refrain from entering into partnerships and contractual relations with actors implicated in human rights abuses, including the Colombian armed forces, and to suspend implementation of any agreements with the actors implicated, until independent

investigations have concluded and absolved said actors of any responsibility for such abuses.

- j. Recognize and respect popular consultation (*consultas populares*) and the right of local communities to free, prior and informed consent, continuously during the whole life-time of a project, and independently of or in addition to the legal requirements of the host country.
- k. Instruct the management of AngloGold-Ashanti Colombia to engage actively with the broader Colombian society and to cooperate in the joint development of dialogue-mechanisms with communities and civil society.

Tierra Digna (*Dignified Earth*) is an NGO that works with indigenous, afro-Colombian and small scale farmers' communities in some of the most conflict affected regions of Colombia. www.tierradigna.org Contact: Johana Rocha jrocha@tierradigna.org

Plataforma Colombiana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo is a colombian platform for human rights, democracy and development that comprises 100 civil society organizations. www.plataformacol.org Contact: Alejandro Pulido alejopulido@gmail.com

These organizations are supported by **Church of Sweden** www.svenskakyrkan.se and other members on the **ACT Alliance** www.actalliance.org in Colombia. Contact: Erik Norman foroactcolombia@gmail.com