



**LEGAL RIGHTS AND NATURAL RESOURCES CENTER, INC. -
KASAMA SA KALIKASAN/FRIENDS OF THE EARTH—Philippines**



NATIONAL OFFICE: 24-A Malingap St., Teachers Village, 1101 Quezon City
Philippines; telefax: +63 02 920-7172; +63 02 441-0858;

MINDANAO OFFICE: 2F Bank of Cabadbaran Building, Dolores corner Tiano
Streets, 9000 Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines; telefax: +63 88 8519288

www.lrcksk.org; lrcksk@lrcksk.org

ECC issuance is once again Profit for the Privileged Few over General Welfare

The issuance of Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) to Sagittarius Mines Incorporated (SMI-Xstrata) for the Tampakan Copper-Gold Project, albeit not surprising, is but further proof of Government's bias towards corporate and business interests, and against the welfare of its people and peoples, whom it is duty-bound to serve. The Administration appears to have succumbed to pressures of profit, choosing and prioritizing this, over general welfare, food security, public health, environmental preservation, local autonomy, national sovereignty, and its indigenous population's fundamental right to a life of dignity.

The ECC, however, is just but one among many requirements of Philippine law that a person is required to comply with when interested to extract finite mineral resources and to process these for commerce.

Philippine statute, specifically, the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997, requires the consent – free, prior and informed – of indigenous peoples communities, before any development project may be permitted or allowed to proceed. A B'laan tribe, whose ancestral domains cover the area applied for by SMI, has already declared a "*pangayao*" or war, as one strong expression of opposition and non-consent to the proposed Tampakan Copper Gold Project.

Another Philippine statute, the Local Government Code of 1991, requires approval of all concerned local government units, before implementation of a project that would cause pollution, depletion of non-renewable resources, loss of crop land or forest cover, among other activities destructive of nature. The Provincial Government of South Cotabato has an existing local law prohibiting open pit mining method, which is the method of extraction of choice of current mining permit holder SMI.

Executive Order No. 79 proposes to institutionalize and implement reforms in the mining sector, and includes an order suspending processing of some, but not all, permit applications, and a review of existing permits. If this Government were sincere with its policy of reform, it would not allow mining over areas where the blood of its citizens have already been spilled – including those of its innocent children.

Last October 2012, B'laan Juvy Cacion and her two minor children, John and Jordan, were reportedly killed in their home, by 'strafing' of around 15 members of the Philippine military. They are wife and minor sons of Daguil Cacion, B'laan warrior, who opposes mining operations in their ancestral domain, and is being pursued by no less than the Philippine Armed Forces.

If this Government were sincere with its reform policy, it would not allow extraction of finite natural resources that would benefit a mere few. Lip service and un-true policies do not suffice and do not protect the people's welfare. Enact a socially just, and pro-people legislation! Enact a law that echoes an alternative minerals management framework emanating from We, the People; a law, which does not perpetuate the usual, business-as-usual, unjust paradigm of the privileged few.

