



Climate Change Network for Community-based Initiatives

3rd Floor Rm 2, CDRC Building, 72-A Times St.

West Triangle, Quezon City

Tel. #: 9241971; email address: ccnci.inc@gmail.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

We, in the Climate Change Network for Community-based Initiatives, are hoping that President Duterte translates his tough words against the plunderers of the environment in his SONA into tough actions. In his one year in office, we have been used to hearing the President issuing stern warnings to big local and foreign mining companies that are responsible not only for the destruction of the environment but also for the displacement of poor peasant and indigenous communities and the killings of environment and land activists. What we want to see now from him are concrete actions.

It is one thing to blame “*mining operators and contractors for the destruction of watersheds, forests, and aquatic resources*”; it is another to let powerful mining interests get in the way of the confirmation of Gina Lopez as DENR secretary and Duterte’s appointment of General Frank Cimatú who does not have a single track record on addressing environmental issues and even has a record of defending environmental plunderers and engaging in corruption. To use the familiar cliché, Duterte’s actions speak louder than his words.

If he wants to stop, once and for all, the continued plunder of the country’s resources by big mining corporations, local and transnational, he should heed the people’s clamor to scrap the Mining Act of 1995 that liberalized the mining industry causing it to become export-oriented and import dependent, which is inimical to a genuine and substantial national development.

He should push for the passage of House Bill 2715 or the People’s Mining Bill for the complete transformation of the country’s mining policy. The bill provides a program that aims to achieve national industrialization where national development is prioritized over transnational corporations’ interests.

The People’s Mining Bill can answer President Duterte’s vision for a “*responsible, regulated and sustainable development where the protection of the environment must be made ahead of mining and all other activities that adversely affect one way or another*” since it will put into effect firm environmental regulations including the mandatory clean up and rehabilitation of mining-affected ecosystem and communities. Moreover, environmental protection and human rights are a paramount consideration in giving permits to any mining application.

We are pleased to hear that the President has fully realized that the threat of climate change is real especially in food production as manifested by the long dry spell and drought occurring not only in Mindanao but in the entire country.

We do hope that his administration’s policies and strategies on the impact of climate change will seriously address the causes of the people’s vulnerabilities such as poverty, social inequities, landlessness, and lack of social services, among others. Also, in our integration with climate change-vulnerable communities, we have seen the necessity of involving the affected communities in the development of appropriate strategies, plans, and measures to address the impact of climate change.

Reference:

Belna Cabasan
Executive Director
CCNCI

Contact Number: 099993370538