

Third session of the General Assembly
Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
Co-chair meeting
May 24, 2013
Water and Sanitation

Intervention by the Mining Working Group at the UN

The Mining Working Group at the UN is made up of NGOs with constituencies in a total of 27 mining countries. The experiences we are collecting from our members working at the local and national levels regarding harmful extractive development models and their impact on water have been largely absent from the current discussion. We are especially concerned with practices including mountain top removal, strip mining, surface mining, and hydraulic fracturing.

The Rio+20 outcome document noted the linkage between water overconsumption, waste and contamination and other areas such as agriculture, land degradation, and public health. But States were dangerously uncritical of mining in the Future We Want and made no mention of the impact or connection of this industry to water. In addressing water issues, the SDGs must respond to the current reality of industrial overconsumption and contamination that too often accompanies mining and other extractive activities.

The SDGs must also ensure a voice for affected local communities, often marginalized and impoverished. We appreciate that the Issue Brief neatly addressed this issue, drawing from the Thematic Consultations: *“People must be able to participate in decisions on water and sanitation that affect their lives.”* Decisions regarding extraction of non-renewable resources must be understood as decisions on water in this context. We would like to put the challenge on the table for indicators to measure and promote meaningful public participation in accordance with international human rights law.

In addition to measurable indicators related to public participation in decisions affecting water resources to which people are tied, the SDGs should include:

- A target of zero extractive activity in zones where irreparable damage to watershed is possible;
- A target related to data collection that fosters the technical and transparent analysis of the cumulative impact of extractive activities on vital water resources and their dependent ecosystems;
- Indicators tied to the restoration of current and former mining sites, including public and land health through water recovery.

And, finally, to strengthen the human rights framework, SDGs should require the:

- Consistent and detailed reporting by States to relevant human rights treaty bodies, and the universal periodic review on indicators relevant to the right to water.

Contact focal point: Franciscans International
newyork@fiop.org