

PHM Working Group: Defending people's health and our environment from extractive industries

Statement to the 4th Assembly of the People's Health Movement

We are a group of PHM activists and grassroots organizations representing communities from Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, El Salvador, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Sierra Leone, South Africa, United States, and Zimbabwe. We met each other at the PHA3, and shared experiences and strategies to defend and protect people's health and the health of our environment from the exploitative, destructive practices of the extractive industries such as mining, gas, oil, forestry, agribusiness, hydro-electric projects and aquaculture in our countries.

We are mindful of the declaration from the 2nd People's Health Assembly in Cuenca, Ecuador that calls upon PHM activists to protect the right to health in the context of environmental degradation and to support action to end imperialist control of the earth's natural resources and create and maintain a healthy environment for all. Natural resources essential to health ARE global commons. We recognize the devastating damage posed by extraction to health and the environment, based on both our own experience and the precautionary principle.

Since the 2nd People's Health Assembly, the power of Transnational Corporations has grown. At the same time, the sovereignty of our governments has eroded and they have increasingly conceded people's health in the interest of profit. Our communities experience growing displacement, the loss of social services, land, water and livelihood, heightened militarization, violence and repression, and increased incidence of communicable diseases and health problems resulting from exposure to toxics -- all of these linked to a global extractivist project driven by global financial capital promoting an unsustainable and inequitable development model that threatens people's health and the health of the planet. We recognise the gendered differentials in the consequences of extractivism, with women bearing more of the costs of environmental and social destruction, and enjoying few of the changes that are considered to be benefits.

We have come together as a People's Health Movement Working Group on Extractives and Health to support each other's struggles, and to share strategies and experiences. Our aims as a global PHM Working Group include:

- Condemning the criminalisation, repression and extra-judicial killing of activists in this struggle;
- Promoting communitarian alternatives and indigenous/ ancestral technologies;
- Building energy, food and technological sovereignties of all peoples;
- Strengthening links between land rights, environmental rights, and human rights movements.
- Supporting models of work and labour that do not require people to expose themselves and their communities to environmental and social degradation.

Guided by these principles in our collective undertaking:

We call on our fellow activists within PHM to join us in this initiative, to support and engage with local struggles against extractive industries, and to create bridges to connect the

movements fighting for the right to health with the movements defending people's lands, water, livelihoods and rights against aggressive extractive projects. We call on our fellow activists to work with us to develop a global campaign against the impact of extractivist industries on health.

We demand that governments be accountable to people -- not transnational corporations. We demand that governments guarantee rights relating to health and the environment through enforceable laws and regulations. We demand that governments protect those who struggle to defend their rights against extractive corporations and end the impunity with which extractive corporations threaten, harm and kill health and environmental activists.

We demand that governments, International Financial Institutions and the WHO cease to be accomplices to Transnational Corporations and imperialism. While we work to bring about an end to extractivism, we demand that the social, environmental, and health costs both now and for future generations must be assumed by Transnational Corporations. The costs should not be the burden of the poor, the marginalized, afro-descendents, women, and indigenous peoples.

To the assembled activists at the PHA4, we call upon PHM to include the issue of extractive industries as a global priority. To accomplish this we request that our Working Group be represented in the global governance of PHM.

Specifically we request:

- Administrative support so that communication across our campaigns is facilitated, so that we can share developments, strategies, tactics as well as solidarity and resistance in our common struggles across the world
- Financial support so we can organize regional gatherings where activists can share experiences in the defence of people's health, land and water against extractive industries.
- Translation support from PHM Global to translate major PHM extractive industries documents and prepare short summaries of others into English, Spanish, French for the greater sharing of our knowledge

We reaffirm that health is the product of social and environmental justice. We believe that a campaign for health for all is a campaign against the global extractivist project. Join us in our struggle!