



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE MEETING
"A DAY OF REFLECTION - UNITED WITH GOD, WE HEAR A CRY"
[ROME, 17-19 JULY 2015]**

*To the Venerable Brother
Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson
President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace*

Dear Cardinal,

I am pleased to send my greeting and my encouragement to those attending the meeting of representatives of communities affected by mining activities, organized by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in cooperation with the Latin American *Iglesias y Minería* network on the theme: "*United with God, we hear a cry*".

You come from different situations and in various ways you experience the repercussions of mining activities, whether they are conducted by large industrial companies, small enterprises or informal operators. You have chosen to gather in Rome on this day of reflection that recalls a passage from the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelií Gaudium* (cf. nn. 187-190), to echo the cry of the many people, families and communities who suffer directly and indirectly as a result of the consequences, too often negative, of mining activities. A cry for the lands lost; a cry for the extraction of riches from the soil which paradoxically has not produced wealth for the local populations, who remain poor; a cry of pain in reaction to violence, threats and corruption; a cry of indignation and for help for the violations of human rights, blatantly or discreetly trampled with regard to the health of populations, working conditions, and at times the slavery and human trafficking which feed the tragic phenomenon of prostitution; a cry of sadness and impotence for the pollution of the water, air and land; a cry of incomprehension for the lack of inclusive and supportive processes from civil, local and national authorities, which have the fundamental duty to

promote the common good.

Minerals and, in general, the riches of the earth, of the soil and subsoil, constitute a precious gift of God, which humanity has used for thousands of years (cf. Job 28:1-10). Indeed, minerals are fundamental to many sectors of human life and activity. In the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* I wished to make an urgent appeal for collaboration in the care of our *common home*, countering the dramatic consequences of environmental degradation in the life of the poorest and the excluded, and advancing toward integral, inclusive and sustainable development (cf. n. 13). The entire mining sector is decisively called to effect a radical paradigm shift to improve the situation in many countries. To this change a contribution can be made by the governments of the home countries of multinational companies and of those in which they operate, by businesses and investors, by the local authorities who oversee mining operations, by workers and their representatives, by international supply chains with their various intermediaries and those who operate in the markets of these materials, and by the consumers of goods for whose production the minerals are required. All these people are called upon to adopt conduct inspired by the fact that we constitute *a single human family*, “that everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others” (*ibid.*, n. 70).

I encourage the communities represented in this meeting to reflect on how they can interact constructively with all the other actors involved, in a sincere and respectful dialogue. I hope that this occasion may contribute to a greater awareness of and responsibility towards these themes: it is from human dignity that the necessary culture may be created so as to face the current crisis. I pray to the Lord that your work in these days may be fruitful, and that these fruits may be shared with all those in need. I ask you, please, to pray for me, and with affection I bless you, your communities and your families”.

From the Vatican, 17 July 2015

Francis