

Chicago Joining Hands and the Session of Morton Grove Community Church, in solidarity with REseau de LUTte contre la FAim (RELUFA) – the Network for the Fight Against Hunger, its Joining Hands partner in Cameroon, acted to request the Presbytery of Chicago to overture the 218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in a common call for global regulation as an effective solution against the corruption aggravated by current trends of the extractive industries sector.

## **The Presbytery of Chicago overtures the 218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2008) to**

### **Recommendation**

1. become signatory to the Publish What You Pay Campaign<sup>1</sup> (PWYP); and
2. direct the Stated Clerk and Moderator to endorse in writing the PWYP campaign appeal<sup>2</sup>; and
3. call synods, presbyteries and congregations to advocate for the mandatory disclosure of net taxes, fees, royalties, and other payments made by extractive industry companies, both multinational and state owned enterprises, to all national governments on a disaggregated and country-by-country basis; and
4. join the world-wide effort to curb the current threats posed by the destructive practices of the extractive industries

### **Rationale**

1 Central Africa is a global reserve of resources with its enormous assets in oil and other  
2 minerals and the wealth of its tropical rainforest.

3 If revenues of this lucrative sector were effectively and transparently disclosed by the  
4 extractive industry companies (mining, gas, oil) and well managed by the national  
5 governments, it could serve as a basis for growth and poverty reduction.

6 The state and other institutions that manage these resources are often, in practice,  
7 unaccountable to the parliaments and ordinary citizens of their countries.<sup>3</sup>

8 This lack of accountability facilitates embezzlement, corruption and revenue  
9 misappropriation.<sup>4</sup>

10 There is a subsequent breakdown of democratic processes and aggravation of civil  
11 strife.

12 As a result of all of the above, Central Africa has seen a lowering of living standards and  
13 increased poverty in spite of its assets.<sup>5</sup>

14 In the example of the Chad Cameroon Oil and Pipeline Project<sup>6</sup>, not even the World  
15 Bank has been able to hold the Chad government to the signed agreement for utilization  
16 of revenues for poverty reduction programs and for its future generation's fund.<sup>7</sup>  
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18 The new compromise between the World Bank and Chad sparks fears that the cash will  
19 be spent by the Chad government on guns and not development projects as initially  
20 intended.<sup>8</sup>

21 Non-governmental organizations identified mandatory, comprehensive and global  
22 measures at transparency as a necessary response to the mismanagement of billions of  
23 dollars' worth of oil, gas and mining revenues paid to many developing country  
24 governments, and launched the Publish What You Pay (PWYP)<sup>9</sup> appeal.

25 PWYP seeks to establish an international framework requiring transnational extraction  
26 companies to publish net taxes, fees, royalties, and other payments made.<sup>10</sup>

27 PWYP focuses on countries where natural resources provide a major proportion of state  
28 income, where corruption associated with state income is of concern, and where  
29 companies are not fully transparent about their payments to national governments.

30 The leadership of our Cameroonian partners, the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon  
31 (PCC), the Eglise Presbytérienne Camerounaise (EPC) and the Network for the Fight  
32 Against Hunger (RELUFA) developed a declaration on current trends in the region's  
33 Extractive Industries, which was presented at the 2004 General Council of the World  
34 Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) in Accra.<sup>11</sup>

35 Building on earlier declarations from WARC's General Council in Debrecen, our  
36 partners invited the Alliance and its individual denominations to take a series of actions,  
37 among others:

38 *"To endorse the 'Publish What you Pay' public advocacy campaign [...] for transparency and fairness in extractive industries. . . ."*  
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40 Since the elaboration of this declaration, the Publish What You Pay Campaign has  
41 expanded to Central Africa.<sup>12</sup>

42 Transparency potentiates sustainable development in poor but resource-rich countries.

43 This transparency would give civil society the opportunity to monitor government  
44 revenues effectively.

45 The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has historically responded to the biblical call for  
46 justice on behalf of the poor and the oppressed. Addressing merchants who value profit  
47 over honesty and justice the biblical witness in Leviticus 19:36 says, "You shall have  
48 honest balances, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the Lord  
49 your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt." <sup>13</sup>

50 The PCUSA Confession of 1967 states: "(E)nsaving poverty" is "an intolerable violation  
51 of God's good creation. . . . The church cannot condone poverty, whether it is the  
52 product of unjust social structure, exploitation of the defenseless, lack of natural

53 resources, absence of technological understanding, or rapid expansion of  
54 populations.”<sup>14</sup> “For Presbyterians, the task of ending global poverty is a matter of  
55 confessional status that requires action.”<sup>15</sup>

56 For all Christians, “Economic policies and systems must be evaluated by how they  
57 affect the dignity of all individuals in communal solidarity, particularly, ‘the least, the lost,  
58 and the left-out.’”<sup>16</sup>

59 In light of this, the PCUSA has said,

60 “Economic policies and systems must be evaluated socially and ecologically on the  
61 basis of their benefits and harms to the well-being of all in our interdependent  
62 relationships.”<sup>17</sup>

63 Through the adoption of the Africa Resolution by the 215th General Assembly (2003),  
64 the PCUSA affirmed the need for ecumenical efforts that further human rights in Africa;  
65 that increase transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility; and that prevent  
66 natural resources to be used to fund conflicts around Africa and the world.<sup>18</sup>

67 The Presbytery of Chicago and the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area have a formal  
68 relationship with RELUFA through the Joining Hands Against Hunger Program, a  
69 partnership involving many congregations in each Presbytery.<sup>19</sup>

70 Several congregations in these Presbyteries also maintain ecclesiastic relationships  
71 with our Cameroonian church partners, the PCC and EPC.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.publishwhatyoupay.org/english/>

<sup>2</sup> The written endorsements can be sent by e-mail to the PWYP Coordinator at [coordinator@publishwhatyoupay.org](mailto:coordinator@publishwhatyoupay.org). Together with the written confirmation of the PCUSA's endorsement of the PWYP's appeal document, PWYP requests full contact information: e-mail, telephone, fax, mailing address, website etc. The Joining Hands Against Hunger (JHAH) coordinators of the Presbytery of Chicago and of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area could serve as contact persons to whom all communications from PWYP should be sent for any future advocacy activities.

<sup>3</sup> Revenues from resource extraction are disclosed neither by the governments nor the companies involved.

<sup>4</sup> Recent extractive resource governance problems have been cited in Algeria, Angola, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Nigeria, and Sudan.

<sup>5</sup> Presented by stakeholders as an opportunity for poverty alleviation, statistics actually reveal the inverse association between the export of natural resources and development. The direct link with the exploitation of the region's natural resources has been well established, and is now widely recognized by the international community.

<sup>6</sup> Developed by an international consortium made up of Exxon, Chevron and Petronas, the Chad Cameroon Oil and Pipeline Project is the largest private investment in Africa with a total cost of US \$3.7 billion. The World Bank backing for the project, in the form of a restricted loan and of a "political risk assurance", was touted as a model for making African natural resources work for the African people by providing guidelines and restrictions on how the oil money could be spent.

<sup>7</sup> The project has been troubled from the start when the first \$3 million (US dollars) of oil proceeds were spent on guns in 2003. In April 2006 the World Bank ended a six month spat by agreeing to a compromise deal that would allow the government of Chad to access 30 percent of oil revenues, compared to the previous limit of 10 percent, on condition that the remaining 70 percent go on priority poverty programs. The Future Generations Fund, a special account to guard 10 percent of oil income for future development projects, has been scrapped, too.

<sup>8</sup> Chad, an arid desert country in north-central Africa, is the fifth poorest nation in the world, according to the UN. It has chronic development problems and has been fractured by civil war for most of the 46 years since its independence from France. As recent as April 2006 the Chad government thwarted a coup attempt and fought off a rebel attack on the capital N'djamena.

<sup>9</sup> On 13 June 2002 Save the Children, Global Witness, Catholic Association AFOD, Oxfam, Transparency International UK and the Open Society Institute launched the Publish What You Pay (PWYP) appeal to achieve transparency in the countries that most need it. This campaign has since expanded in a worldwide coalition of over 280 ecumenical and secular organizations.

<sup>10</sup> The disclosure of these data will allow civil society to more accurately assess the amount of money misappropriated, and to lobby for full transparency in local government spending.

<sup>11</sup> The declaration accumulated into the following call for action:

*"We, Cameroonian member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, brought together by the Network for the Fight Against Hunger in Cameroon (RELUFCA) to discern our role in the face of rising economic injustice and increasing ecological destruction in Cameroon and other countries in Central Africa, refuse to remain deaf to*

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*the appeals and cries of our people. Convinced that joint strategies within the larger global Christian community are needed to curb economic injustice and environmental degradation in our region, we invite all our sister churches in Cameroon, in Central Africa and throughout the world to join efforts to curb the current threats posed by the destructive practices of the extractive industries.” (p.2).*

<sup>12</sup> RELUFA was one of the non-governmental organizations that launched the Cameroonian branch in December 2005. The National Council of Churches in Cameroon, CEPCA, is also a signatory of the campaign.

<sup>13</sup> The witness of scripture calling for equity and justice is vast.

Addressing merchants who value profit over honesty and justice the biblical witness says:

- . . . "When will the new moon be over  
so that we may sell grain;  
and the sabbath,  
so that we may offer wheat for sale?  
We will make the ephah small and the shekel great,  
and practice deceit with false balances – Amos 8:5

Amos' clarion witness to justice rings clearly:

- But let justice roll down like waters,  
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. – Amos 5:24

The prophet Isaiah is a particularly profound witness to economic accountability.

- Ah, sinful nation,  
people laden with iniquity,  
offspring who do evil,  
children who deal corruptly,  
who have forsaken the Lord,  
who have despised the Holy One of Israel,  
who are utterly estranged! – Isaiah 1:4
- . . . learn to do good;  
seek justice,  
rescue the oppressed,  
defend the orphan,  
plead for the widow. – Isaiah 1:17
- "Why do we fast, but you do not see?  
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?"  
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,  
and oppress all your workers. . . .  
Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the thongs of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke? – Isaiah 58:3, 6

And it is Isaiah who witnesses to the repentant Judah:

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- Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;  
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,  
the restorer of streets to live in. – Isaiah 58:12

<sup>14</sup> *Book of Confessions*, 9.46.

<sup>15</sup> Hope for a Global Future Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development, GA Minutes 1996: 524-587.

<sup>16</sup> Roman Catholic Bishops Pastoral Message (1986), *Economic Justice for All*.

<sup>17</sup> Hope for a Global Future Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development, GA Minutes 1996: 524-587.

<sup>18</sup> Resolution on Africa, recommendations 6.a, 6b, 6f and 7.e.

<sup>19</sup> JHAH is an initiative of the Presbyterian Hunger Program.