**Concept Note JPIC & Mining Seminar**

# Context

The impacts of mining have become compelling issues for many of our congregations and each time more present and urgent reality on our JPIC work. Over the last ten years, JPIC promoters of many religious congregations have become increasingly involved in issues related to environmental justice, and more specifically to extractive industries (mining).

The reality of mining generates very few benefits for the country where extraction takes place. Likewise, most of the goods, inputs and specialized services required for extractive industries to operate rarely come from domestic enterprises. Instead, we see that abundance of natural resources is characterized by exporting primary commodity economies - especially if the commodities in question are minerals or oil - which tends to distort the structure of the economy and the allocation of factors of production. Income is redistributed regressively and wealth is concentrated only a few hands, particularly transnational corporations.

In addition, the communities where these extractive activities occur have always suffered the effects of a series of social and environmental problems arising from this type of exploitation of resources and forced displacements. It generates a mineral dependence that ends up hiding other economies activities and possibilities.

Finally, large-scale mining causes enormous environmental impacts, which are detrimental not only in the exploration and exploitation phases, when gigantic craters are excavated on Mother Earth, affecting groundwater tables or when toxic chemicals are used to process extracted minerals, but also when the tailings material are piled or deposited in large dams.

Alongside this scenario, the world faces accelerated changes, increased insecurity and vulnerability, financialization of the economy and greater uncertainty brought on by the rise of the far-right in many parts of the world, growing corruption, weak governance and climate change.

# Backgroud

In 2012, the JPIC of the Franciscan Family was finding ways to answer requests coming from their JPIC people working at the grassroots about the negative effects of mining around the world. At the Rio + 20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Brazil in 2012 (and the parallel Peoples’ Summit), 60 representatives of the Franciscan Family, from different countries, met to reflect on pertinent issues and to choose strategies for its work. The group chose to work on three proposals, one of which was mining.

The work started in collaboration with Franciscans International, especially regarding work on the Universal Periodic Review, which offers an opportunity to raise Human Rights related questions that arise in the context of mining and trafficking; their work on sustainability and poverty; and work on support of the adoption of an international

legally bidding human rights treaty on transnational corporations (TNCs) and other business enterprises (OBEs).

Most problems encountered are due to the mining companies human rights violations. Other times they have to do with poor regulation, oversight and corruption on the part of national governments and local leaders. But wherever they come from, these problems are creating grave economic, social and environmental difficulties.

At the same time members of the Integrity of Creation Working Group (ICWG) of the JPIC Commission of the International Union of Superior Generals (USG and UISG) in Rome conducted a Survey on the *"Impacts of Mining: Establishing Relationships between Advocates, Persons at the Grassroots, Policy Makers and Mining Companies"*, from January 15 to March 11, 2013. The survey was sent to congregations and to other organizations associated with them. With the support of the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace it was also sent to their contacts. The objectives were to understand the current context in mining, identify the best practices, to support and strengthen relationships between advocates, persons at the grassroots working on mining issues and affected communities and propose lines of action and recommendations to create an international network.

On January 2015 a research team from ESADE Institute for Social Innovation1 presented a more comprehensive “analyses of the results of the survey and recommendations for the design of a network”. A total of 250 respondents from all over the world responded to the Mining Survey, from which 70% belong to a congregation. Out of the 250 respondent 34 are “directly serving the affected community at the grassroots (those affected by the harmful effects of mining at the local” and 78 are involved in “*advocacy (someone who belongs to a group that works against the harmful effects of mining on behalf of those affected by the mining industries)”*.

# JPIC & Mining Project

As the mining issue became more demanding, the need for a person to help coordinate these activities became increasingly evident. At its October 2014 meeting the Integrity of Creation Working Group asked that the OFM Franciscans try to find a person to take on this task. Following a search and conversations with those involved, it was decided to hire Rodrigo Péret, an OFM friar from Brazil. The decision was based on his knowledge of land and mining issues, his considerable links with the grassroots, and his capacity to foster contacts on the international scene. He has been hired for two years, on a project called “*JPIC & Mining”*. His work was be supervised by a team composed of three people, one each from the JPIC promoters of Rome, Romans VI and Franciscans International.

*JPIC and Mining Project* was to collect and provide information, analyze data (especially from the Mining Survey sent out in 2013) and suggest directions to the JPIC promoters in Rome and to those in the Franciscan Family who are working on the mining issue. Rodrigo’s work in collaboration with Franciscans International was to maintain contact

1 Escuela Superior de Administración y Dirección de Empresas – Barcelona. The ESADE Institute for Social Innovation's mission is to **develop personal and organisational skills** within the business community and nonprofit organisations in order to strengthen their activities and their contribution to a more just and sustainable world. .

with JPIC promoters and Franciscans throughout the world who are working on the mining issue, helping to create appropriate networks of cooperation and serving as liaison with some key grassroots groups, which will be very helpful in relation to our advocacy efforts.

Taking into consideration the conclusions and recommendations of the *Analysis of the Survey* “*The Impacts of Mining” and Proposal of a Network*

**Regarding the collection and analysis of additional information**

* Conduct a benchmark study of existing networks in the field of mining. Conduct specific stakeholder analysis, particularly for affected communities, grassroots organizations, public sector at different levels (local, sub-national and national) and mining companies (local vs. international firms). Identify urgent local needs and specific competitive advantage of the communities by region. Conduct in-depth interviews with experts in the field of mining to identify best practices around the world and key success factors.

**Regarding the creation of the network strategy**

* Further analysis will need to be conducted to determine the specific objectives of the network, as well as the services offered and the rules and protocols for the operationalization of the network, including organization and communication standards. This process needs to be conducted in a collaborative manner.

the *JPIC & Mining Project* recognized the urgent need to get to know the issues and struggles related to mining, the various organizations and networks that deal with this issue, in close connection with the grassroots, in various parts of the world, and to seek ways of interaction, as a way to really be able to answer the needs of the JPIC promoters and the affected communities they assist.

During this process, in June 2015, *JPIC & Mining Project* had an impulse that came from Pope Francis’ Encyclical Laudato Si, for a better understanding of how we need to address and answer mining challenges. The Encyclical proposes to think and act on an Integral Ecology perspective, since *“we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental”2, “a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor”3*. Therefore, the goal of the *JPIC & Mining Project* became clearer. On an Integral Ecology approach to mining extractive activities impacts in our Common House, it is very important to listen to the stories of those affected by extractive projects.

As a result of the contacts with affected communities, groups and networks involved in the mining struggles, the *Project* has evolved to seek ways to engage JPIC promoters into groups and networks and to provide a service to the existing struggles and their articulations throughout the world.

The *JPIC & Mining Project* realized that, at the international level are different readings and analysis of the mining reality. Different ways of seeing and reflecting about mining issues, its environmental impacts, human rights violations and concrete alternative

2 LS 139

3 LS 49

practices. There are innumerous forms of organization, struggles and resistances and a growing need for sharing, to face the advance of mining in the territories, as well as an urgent need of experiences exchange among affected communities, populations and mining workers, resistance movements and organizations.

In view of this the *JPIC and Mining Project* assumed as task, together with other international networks that deal with mining issues from the reality and perspective of the affected, to create a global platform among these networks. For this, since August 2016, an agenda of communication and information exchange was established through the Internet, via monthly Skype meetings, with participation of networks from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe. The result was the articulation, planning and realization on November 2018 a *“Thematic Social Forum (TSF) on Mining and Extractivist Economy”*, in Johannesburg, South Africa.

# Proposal

Considering the TSF acted as a vital space to fill the absence of a common platform necessary for generating a global movement. Now, as a result of the TSF, we from different religious congregations and faith-based communities, have a common civil society platform for our JPIC work and interaction with social movements of resistance and networks, in the different regions of the world we are acting in relation to mining.

Considering that in a more specific Church context we are living the formation of networks, where territoriality and socio-environmental issues are assuming a fundamental dimension for the ecclesial and missionary experience. REPAM (Pan- Amazonian Ecclesial Network) is a very important milestone in the Latin American Church's path, and has had subsequent resonances, so much so that today there is an Ecclesial Network in the Congo River basin in Africa (REBAC, for its acronym in French), another in the Mesoamerican biological corridor (REMAM, Mesoamerican Ecclesial Network), in the Guaraní Aquifer (REICOSUR, Southern Cone Integral Ecology Network). In an ecumenical and interreligious perspective, Churches and Mining Network, which is an ecumenical space, made up of Christian communities, pastoral teams, religious congregations, theological reflection groups, laity, laity, bishops and pastors who seek to respond to the challenges of impacts and violations of socio-environmental rights caused by mining activities in the territories where we live and work.

The JPIC & Mining Seminar to be held from 25 to 27 September, 2019, in Rome:

1. Analyze and understand mining reality and different struggles, resistances and alternatives so as to identify areas of mutual interest, concern and collaboration.
2. Reflect the mining issue from a Laudato Si and Eco-theology perspective.
3. Strengthen JPIC work on mining taking into consideration the alliances and networks of local struggles, linking at regional, national and international levels.

This seminar is in a preparatory process where methodology and logistics will be decided on a dialogic and inclusive way. The objective is strengthening JPIC along with the struggles and not just become an isolated event.