

# *Petition concerning Corporate Accountability of Canadian Companies Overseas*

## **PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED**

We, the undersigned citizens or residents of Canada draw attention of the House to the following:

THAT the Canadian extractive industry, including mining, oil and gas companies, have been implicated in well-documented cases of human rights violations and environmental disasters abroad. Allegations of toxic dumping, the destruction of protected areas, forced displacement of indigenous peoples, collaboration with repressive regimes, and threats and intimidation of local communities, have been associated with the activities of specific Canadian companies.

THAT the Government offers both political assistance (for example, through its embassies and trade commissioners) and financial support (for example, through Export Development Canada, the Canadian Pension Plan, tax breaks) to Canadian extractive companies that operate abroad;

THAT when Canadian corporations go abroad, there are no effective accountability mechanisms in Canada to ensure that they abide by international human rights law and environmental standards;

THAT the Government of Canada is legally obligated as a signatory to international human rights, environmental and labour treaties to respect, protect and fulfill these rights. The government has a responsibility to ensure that actions of Canadian government and non-state actors, including Canadian companies, do not undermine human rights in other countries.

THAT the current voluntary approach to corporate accountability has failed in practice, and relies on the willingness of companies to comply with human rights and environmental standards;

THAT a report on Canadian mining operations overseas issued in June, 2005 by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade recommended that, "more must be done to ensure that Canadian companies conduct their activities in a socially and environmentally responsible manner and in conformity with international human rights standards."

THEREFORE, your petitioners call upon Parliament to require Canadian companies operating internationally to meet clearly defined corporate accountability standards, including existing international human rights and environmental standards, as a precondition for both public financial and political assistance that they receive through such public entities as Canadian Embassies, Export Development Canada and the World Bank Group. To ensure that these standards are met, we also request that Parliament develop effective monitoring, verification and compliance mechanisms to ensure that Canadian companies operating internationally meet these clearly defined standards. We further call upon Parliament to develop legislation to hold Canadian companies and their directors accountable in Canada when found complicit in human rights abuses and environmental destruction abroad and to offer victims of such violations a forum where their grievances can be addressed.

<b>Signature</b>	<b>Address (full home address or city and province)</b>

When complete, return to Andrea Botto, c/o Halifax Initiative, 153 Chapel Street, Ottawa, ON K1N 1H5

