



The Maritime Conference
The United Church of Canada
L'Eglise Unie du Canada

Maritime Conference Office
21 Wright Street, Sackville, NB E4L 4P8
Tel. (506)536-1334 • Fax (506) 536-2900 • Email: info@marconf.ca

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Dear Pension Board Members,

We are writing you on behalf of the Church in Action Committee of Maritime Conference to request that the Pension Board ensure that management engagement with Goldcorp through SHARE makes a difference at this critical moment with the closure of the mine.

The Church in Action Committee continue to believe that divestment would have been the more effective action, having seen no evidence that management engagement has made a positive difference in the lives of indigenous communities around the mine and because we are aware of the many devastating long term impacts. However, we recognize that the Pension Board is committed to management engagement. Therefore, we call on the Pension Board to ensure that management engagement makes a difference for the communities affected by the Marlin Mine.

- **We ask that you support the claims by FREDEMI**, the group that has courageously and at great cost represented the concerns of the communities, and are supported by the former mine workers.
- **We ask that you require independent verification of damages claimed**, since government ministries have neither the technical expertise nor the funds to carry out a proper assessment.
- **We ask that you report back to the Maritime Conference Church in Action Committee on what measures Goldcorp has agreed to and how SHARE will monitor Goldcorp's actions now and in the post-closure period**, since in the past Goldcorp has not fulfilled many of its commitments.

Although FREDEMI recognizes that the most grievous damages cannot be repaired, it does seek a just and dignified closing of the mine. It insists that some damages be recognized

and appropriately dealt with. The damages are specified in a May 2018 letter to the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and include:

- **The cost of constructing new homes in nine communities close to the mine site.**
This has been requested for many years. It is unacceptable to have Goldcorp state that the problem is due to poor construction.
- **Treatment of skin diseases of children**
- **The repair of damaged bridges and impassable roads**
- **Dried-up water sources in six communities**, leaving 5000 people without water.

Background At the recent meetings of the Church in Action Committee and the Maritime Conference Annual Meeting, we heard moving testimony from Sister Maudilia Lopez Cardona who has worked for the past 21 years with the Parish of San Miguel Ixtahuacan where Goldcorp's Marlin Mine is located. Sister Maudilia is a Maya Mam indigenous leader with a strong commitment to both Mayan and Christian spirituality and the well-being of her community, especially women and children. She constantly reminded us that the work of followers of Jesus is to seek abundant life for all, rather than enabling the security of some through the suffering and death of others.

Amnesty International invited Sister Maudilia to speak in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. Co-sponsors included the United for Mining Justice Network, KAIROS, the Maritime Conference Church in Action Committee, the Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network, the Nobel Women's Peace Initiative. We were glad to hear that Sister Maudilia was received well at the General Council Office, but disappointed to hear that no one representing the United Church Pension Plan was able to attend the meeting she had with SHARE.

Maudilia shared the devastating impacts of Goldcorp's Marlin Mine. It was heartbreaking to listen to the social, cultural and environmental impacts on the community of San Miguel Ixtahuacan. Impacts that, as she said, "all the profits made by Goldcorp would not repair because these are long-term impacts that have broken our Maya May community." She described the breakdown in trust and cohesiveness among community members in a community that was previously united collectively in its Maya Mam identity. Maudilia spoke of the separation of families who were forced to move from the communities they had lived in since time immemorial. She described community conflicts and violence which have

profoundly impacted families, when workers and those in opposition to the mine are in the same family. She provided statistics regarding the massive influx of alcohol establishments and the related growth in the sex trade, which has in turn contributed to alcoholism and a huge upsurge of HIV/AIDS in a community where HIV/AIDS did not exist before. This she said was in part due to the influx of construction workers, mine workers and truck drivers. She told us of the great increase in domestic violence, in divorce and family abandonment.

She shared with us that there continues to be contamination of waters downstream from the mine. She referred to the corruption of local community leaders who used the funds Goldcorp gave local community councils (COCODES) to provide for free water installation for their friends while charging other community members for installation, thus leaving out the poorest, the elderly and those opposed to the mine's presence.

She spoke of families whose homes were damaged to the point of being unlivable or unsafe, adding that it was insulting and culturally offensive to suggest that these homes were badly built when adobe home construction has been going on for centuries. Structural damages only appeared in communities living near where Goldcorp was blasting as part of their mining efforts.

She identified Goldcorp's lack of transparency with the community, evidenced recently by the 2017 Business and Human Rights report, commissioned by Goldcorp. Maudilia only became aware of the report on this trip, as it never been translated into Spanish. When it was translated for her, she was disturbed and angered by the omissions, errors and distortions of the truth in a report which solely relied on information from Goldcorp staff.

In 2013 a joint Mining the Connections/KAIROS study tour to San Miguel Ixtahuacan brought up many of these negative impacts with the President of Goldcorp Guatemala. It was deeply disturbing to hear his response that these were "negative externalities" which are normal in mining projects, and should be solved by the church.

We remind the Pension Board that, since 2009, the Mining the Connections Working Group of Maritime Conference has been communicating to the Pension Board these impacts. We have emphasized that a major underlying cause of the devastation of this indigenous community has

been Goldcorp's determination to develop the mine without assuring that the communities had given free, prior and informed consent. Nor did Goldcorp follow the consultation process laid out in ILO Clause #169 which requires that formal consultations be undertaken by the Guatemalan government before developing the mine operation.

It is disturbing to see that, despite more than a decade of management engagement by SHARE, Goldcorp continues to be determined to open a mine in Chile where an indigenous community has clearly said no and their decision has been upheld by the court. We also remind the Pension Board that many groups communicated concerns about the lack of consultation to SHARE as early as 2007, issues that never became priority issues in management engagement with Goldcorp.

The Pension Board argues that staying at the table in SHARE's management engagement with Goldcorp has made a positive difference in the community. As Maudilia's testimony indicates, SHARE's engagement with Goldcorp behind closed doors has not positively impacted the profoundly disturbing situation in San Miguel Ixtahuacan. That was simply not possible, in good part because of the imposition of a mine on an indigenous community without its consent and because of the inevitable negative impacts brought by this development model.

The Pension Board claims that management engagement has resulted in transparency. Yet community members were completely unaware of the existence of the Business and Human Rights report completed in the spring of 2017, because it was never published in Spanish or shared locally. During her visit, hosts translated the report and she found omissions, errors and distortions of the truth.

We await your response to our letter and specifically to our request that the Pension Board and SHARE support FREDEMI's demands and that we receive a report back on Goldcorp's response and how this will be monitored in the closure and post-closure periods.

Faithfully,

Letter submitted as requested on behalf of

Church in Action Committee, Maritime Conference of The United Church of Canada,

Authors Krista Anderson, Emma Seamone and Kathryn Anderson