

Pope Francis calls for mining respectful of Indigenous rights and culture



Vatican City, May 4 (RHC)-- Pope Francis has admonished mining companies for their short-sightedness, greed, and inexhaustible exploitation of the Earth's treasures and of Indigenous people.

The Pontiff spoke during a two-day conference entitled Mining for the Common Good. The conference, sponsored by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, was attended by Indigenous leaders; religious, social justice and development organizations; and, most notably, mining company representatives from across Latin America, Canada, Africa, and Asia.

Rather than working to support Earth's sustainability, intrusive companies force Indigenous communities "to abandon their homelands to make room for mining projects which are undertaken without regard for the degradation of nature and culture."

Pope Francis said: "They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed. I urge everyone to respect the fundamental human rights and voice of the persons in these beautiful yet fragile communities."

Francis encouraged leaders in the mining industry to assist "the integral human development of each and every person" and these projects "should be at the service of the human person and not vice versa."

"We need to act together to heal and rebuild our common home," the Pope said. "All of us are called to cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents."

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