



Responsible mining, human rights and sustainability

[VIRTUAL] Side Event at the V Regional Forum on Business and Human Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean 2020

Date and time: September 9th from 3.45 to 5pm (EST/Chilean time)

Important information: This event will be held through Interprefy. Participants are required to register in the V Regional Forum on Business and Human Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean 2020 at:

<https://www.vfororegional.org/registro>

Language: The event will be held in Spanish – with simultaneous English translation

Organizers: ECLAC, FIO, GIZ, RINDHCA

Background

The post-pandemic future is uncertain, but surely "business as usual" is no longer an option. A green recovery (referred to in some countries as a "green new deal") focused on energy transition is gaining increasing relevance. Low-emission transport systems and energy sources are mineral-intensive, which is why mining can play an important role in the recovery and transition to a new development style based on decarbonization and the curbing and mitigation of climate change. However, this transition must be articulated around mineral resource supply chains that are sustainable and responsible with the populations in extractive territories and that strike a balance between protecting the valuable natural environment (biodiversity, water and ecosystems), carrying out mining exploitation and the rights of local populations and communities.

To prepare for this new scenario, this event seeks to draw attention to the importance of incorporating a human rights-based approach in environmental impact assessment of mining projects. Extractive industries have historically been one of the main sources of economic development for countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Indeed, without ignoring the existing heterogeneity among countries of this region, the mining sector is and will be an important driver of growth. However, this activity has been carried out for decades without the necessary controls and safeguards leading to environmental and social negative impacts, as well as human rights violations, generating persistent and deep socioenvironmental conflicts and inequalities. In this way, it is essential to change the way mining activities are carried out in the region, so that they can become a driving force for post-COVID-19 green recovery.

The event will also be an opportunity to present the new publication "Recommendations for incorporating a human rights-based approach in environmental impact assessment of mining projects", prepared by the Ibero-American Federation of Ombudsmen (FIO) Human Rights and Business Thematic Group, with support from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), as part of the Regional Cooperation for the Sustainable Management of Mining Resources in Andean Countries Program.



The environmental impact assessment is a public policy tool whose objective is to provide information and analysis to improve decision-making in prospective terms, contributing to anticipate future impact of present decisions, improve public decisions and favour adequate accountability. In all the Ibero-American region countries there are legal frameworks to evaluate the environmental impacts of certain projects, however, these do not explicitly contemplate a human rights-based approach. This document provides a series of recommendations to adequately incorporate a human rights-based approach in environmental impact assessment of mining projects, in order to strengthen this preventive tool considering recent international and regional developments and growing socioenvironmental conflicts.

The event will also highlight the role of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and Ombuds Offices, as guarantors of the effectiveness and protection of the fundamental rights of their inhabitants, and from their institutional roles and mandates, promoting mining that respects human rights and the environment. The region has many experiences of Ombuds actions that have granted significant attention to rights, demonstrating the strengths of their participation as substantive allies in achieving a more responsible mining and, consequently, sustainable development.

Preliminary Agenda

2:45 - 2:50pm	Opening remarks and presentation of panelists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicolas Maennling, Head of Project, MinSus Program, GIZ
2:50 - 3:00pm	Formal greetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Augusto Jordán Rodas Andrade, FIO President and Human Rights Ombudsperson of Guatemala José Apolonio Tobar, RINDHCA Secretary-General and Human Rights Attorney of El Salvador Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary, ECLAC (recorded message)
3:00 - 3:20pm	The necessary incorporation of a human rights-based approach in environmental impact assessment of mining projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alicia Abanto, Deputy for the Environment, Public Services and Indigenous Peoples, Ombuds Office of Peru
3:20 - 3:40pm	Comments (5 minutes each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freddy Carrión, Ombudsperson, Ombuds Office of Ecuador Joseluis Samaniego, Director, Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division, ECLAC Joaquín Villarino, Executive President, Mining Council, Chile Rubens Born, Researcher, Fundação Grupo Esquel, Brazil
3:40 - 3:55pm	Discussion with participants
3:55 – 4:00pm	Closing remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicolas Maennling, Head of Project, MinSus Program, GIZ