

Publish What You Pay Media Advisory

PWYP International Conference: transparency campaigners from fifty nations come to Montreal to push forward transparency in the extractive industries

Montreal, 12 November 2009: From November 16-18, 2009, Publish What You Pay, the global campaign for transparency and accountability in the oil, gas and mining industries, will hold its International Conference in Montreal, Canada.

The 150 delegates from more than 50 countries around the world will come together to consider progress towards ensuring that citizens of resource-rich countries are able to benefit from their country's natural resources.

The first day of the conference will put Canada's extractive industries under the spotlight with government, the private sector and civil society sharing experiences in promoting transparency in the extractive sector.

Canada was chosen as the location for this conference because it is home to some of the world's largest mining companies: in 2008 over 75% of the world's exploration and mining companies were headquartered in Canada – these companies operate in over 100 countries around the world.

The conference will also offer an opportunity for civil society organizations from many countries where Canadian companies are active to examine the Canadian government's new strategy for corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the extractive industries.

Oil, gas and mining revenues are critically important for people in more than 60 developing and transition countries, which are also paradoxically home to two-thirds of the world's poorest people. Despite receiving billions of dollars per year from extractive companies, these countries rank among the lowest in the world for poverty, low economic growth, authoritarian governance, conflict and political instability, suffering from what has come to be known as the 'resource curse.' Opaque and unaccountable management of natural resources leads to corruption and mismanagement of what should be a source of economic prosperity and development for the people of these countries.

The PWYP Conference will examine the role of transparency in turning these natural resources into a blessing rather than a curse. Participants will highlight the need for transparency in all aspects of the extractive industries from how companies get access to resources, the licenses and contracts which determine who benefits from the exploitation of the resources, and how the revenues generated translate into development outcomes for the citizens of resource-rich countries.

Participants will look critically at transparency initiatives such as the voluntary Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative and new laws on the table such as the recently introduced US Energy Security through Transparency Act of 2009 which would require energy and mining companies listed on the New York Stock Exchange to reveal how much they pay to foreign countries and the U.S. government for oil, gas, and other minerals.

Participants will include oil and mining industry executives, government officials and academics, as well as the multitude of human rights, environmental, anti-corruption, access to information, and faith-based groups which make up the global Publish What You Pay campaign for transparency in the extractive industries.

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Press briefing

A press briefing will be held at the Hyatt Regency Montreal on Monday 16 November 2009 at 8.30am. For further information go to: <http://www.publishwhatyoupay.org/MontrealConference>

Accreditation or interviews

For accreditation or to arrange an interview please go to: <http://www.publishwhatyoupay.org/MontrealConference> or contact the PWYP Press Team:

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About Publish What You Pay (PWYP)

Publish What You Pay (PWYP) is a global civil society coalition with over 300 member groups which work together for greater transparency and accountability in the oil, gas and mining industries.
www.publishwhatyoupay.org