



LAUNCHING OF THE DACS PRIMER ON SMI-TAMPAKAN MINES AND MINDANAO ECOLOGY



22

MARCH
2021

MONDAY, 1:30 TO 3:30 P.M.
via zoom | f LIVE

CONCEPT PAPER

Introduction

On February 14, 2017, after the long history of people's movement for the environment opposing large-scale mining operations in Tampakan, South Cotabato, the late DENR Secretary Gina Lopez canceled the Environment Compliance Certificate (ECC) of the Sagittarius Mines Inc. (SMI). The company allegedly failed to comply with the conditions and permitting requirements set by the ECC. However, on May 6, 2019, the canceled ECC was reinstated by the Office of the President.

The Tampakan project is one of the largest undeveloped copper-gold deposits in the South East Asia-Western Pacific region. The mining project had explored Tampakan area to have a 2.2-billion-ton mineral deposit, containing 12.8 million tons of copper and 15.2 million ounces of gold at a 0.3% cut-off grade.

SMI Tampakan covers four provincial boundaries, the headwaters of six (6) catchments and two (2) major river systems. The final mining area (FMA) covers 9,605 hectares of land, covering four different municipalities in Davao Del Sur (Kiblawan), Sultan Kudarat (Columbio), Sarangani (Malungon), and South Cotabato (Tampakan). Given the location that covers the mining project, it will have a severe environmental impact on major forests and rivers in the said areas (EIS Report 2011). It will also affect the Davao Gulf and Saranggani Bay through the rivers of Mal-Padada and Manteo-Buayan. The said mining project would potentially affect Buluan Lake via Marbel river, Pula Bato, and the Lawit Creek. Watersheds near these areas would also suffer on account of this large-scale mining operation. Since the mining area covers agricultural parts and affects three (3) major watersheds, the scope and impact on people can reach at least one (1) Million (Godelano, 2012). It will also affect the Ligawasan Marsh considered to be the largest wetland of the Mindanao River Basin. If these areas are destroyed due to the mining project,

significant flora and fauna varieties will face a threat of extinction. Possible displacement, conflict, and division among indigenous peoples, especially the B'laan tribes, will menace their communities. Lumads in the area might be divided between the lure to a cash-based economy with community services provided by the mining company and a struggle for their ancestral domain and self-determination, traditional subsistence, and nature-dependent way of life but deficient in government services. Due to the mining operation, the indigenous people in the area experienced violations of their human rights.

Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si* critiqued consumerism, irresponsible development, lamenting environmental degradation, and global warming. The pope calls all people of the world to take "swift and unified global action" in taking good care of our common home; this mining project necessitates our conversations, convictions, and advocacy on ecological integrity.

Along this line, the Davao Association of Catholic Schools (DACS) had produced a primer on the SMI-Tampakan Mines and Mindanao Ecology to provide a tool in understanding the value of Mindanao's environment. It emphasized the imperatives of environmental justice, leading to a definite and firm position against the SMI Gold-Copper Mining Project in Tampakan South Cotabato. This primer will serve as a tool for conversations in different forms in the virtual classrooms, groups, solidarity circles, faith-life sharing, reflections, *Pakighinabi* sessions, and others.

Objectives

1. Launch the Davao Association of Catholic Schools (DACS) Primer on SMI-Tampakan Mines discussing its issues and impacts on Mindanao ecology.
2. Reflect on the impacts of this mining project and Mindanao ecology from the lenses of the local Church in Koronadal, legal implications, and in the light of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*.



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PROGRAMME

1:30 PM Opening Prayer
National Anthem
Opening Remarks

Video Presentation

Fr. Tomas P. Avila
DACS President
Region XI Trustee, CEAP

1:45 PM Rationale

Mr. Jopriz M. Bueno
Director for Administration
Assumption College of Davao

1:50-2:20 PM Presentation and Discussion
of the DACS Primer on
SMI TAMPAKAN MINES
AND MINDANAO ECOLOGY

Atty. Romeo Cabarde
Asst. to the President for Advocacy
and Legal Affairs
Ateneo de Davao University

Ms. Carmela Marie Santos
Director, ECOTENEO
Ateneo de Davao University

MAIN REACTORS:

2:20-2:35 PM SMI-Tampakan Mines:
The Reflections and
Actions of the Church

Most Rev. Cerilo Allan Casicas, D.D.
Bishop, Diocese of Marbel

2:35-2:45 PM Legal Issues of
SMI Mining Project
in Tampakan

Atty. Dion Romano
Legal Officer
Legal Resource Center for Natural Rights

2:45-2:55 PM Laudato Si and the
Mindanao Ecology

Fr. Joel E. Tabora, S.J.
President, Ateneo de Davao University

SECTORAL RESPONSES:

2:55-3:00 PM Student

Mr. Karlo Torreon
President, SAMAHAN Central Board
Ateneo de Davao University

3:00-3:05 PM Faculty

Diocese of Mati

3:05-3:10 PM Administrator

Diocese of Tagum

3:05 PM OPEN FORUM
3:25 PM Closing Remarks

Sr. Elvira D. Soleminio, m.a.
President, Assumption College of Davao

3:00 PM Closing Prayer

Video Presentation

Facilitator: **Mr. Adonis C. Santiago, LPT**
Student Activity Coordinator, SHS Unit
Assumption College of Davao