

# Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability

Amnesty International Canada

Africa-Canada Forum

Asia Pacific Working Group

Americas Policy Group

Canadian Council for International  
Co-operation

Canadian Labour Congress

Canada Tibet Committee

CAW-Canada

Development and Peace

Entraide Missionnaire

Friends of the Earth (Canada)

GlobalAware Canada

Halifax Initiative Coalition

International Criminal Defence  
Attorneys Association  
(Advisory Member)

Inter Pares

KAIROS - Canadian Ecumenical Justice  
Initiatives

MiningWatch Canada

North South Institute

Steelworkers Humanity Fund

United Church of Canada

Hon. Stockwell Day  
Minister of International Trade

Hon. Lawrence Cannon  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hon. Lisa Raitt  
Minister of Natural Resources

Hon. Beverley Oda  
Minister of International Cooperation

November 3, 2009

Re: Withdrawal of civil servants from corporate accountability  
conference

Dear Ministers Day, Cannon, Raitt and Oda:

On October 29, civil servants from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Natural Resources Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency suddenly withdrew their participation from a conference jointly organized by the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability (CNCA) and the Mining Association of Canada (MAC), which is taking place today. These civil servants withdrew not only as speakers on each of the conference's panels, but also as registered participants.

The purpose of the conference, which is titled, *Up to the Challenge: a Multi-Stakeholder Conference on Corporate Accountability in Canada's Extractive Industries Operating Abroad*, is to facilitate dialogue between government, civil society and industry representatives on important issues of corporate accountability in the extractive sector. The organizers seek to further the fruitful multi-stakeholder exchange that took place during the government-led National Roundtables on CSR and the Extractive Industry in Developing Countries.

Planning for the conference began in January of this year. The Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability has been in continuous communication with civil servants about the event, who expressed interest in participating, since February.

We are deeply disappointed that the Government of Canada has withdrawn from the conference.

An important policy debate is underway in Canada, and other countries around the world, on the issue of corporate accountability in the overseas operations of Canadian extractive companies. In recent years, multi-stakeholder dialogue has led to constructive outcomes regarding what has been a highly divisive issue. It is most regrettable that the Canadian government has chosen not to participate in furthering this dialogue.

The sudden, simultaneous withdrawal of conference speakers from the civil service, just days before the conference, indicates that a decision was made at the highest levels of your departments. We are writing to request an explanation from you regarding this decision.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Thomson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ian Thomson  
Chair  
Steering Committee  
Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability