



## **Press Release**

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### **Under-Mining Agriculture: Global Food and Public Health Threatened by the Extractives Sector**

The world's food production and millions of small farmers and communities are under increasing threat from the rapid expansion of mining, says a new report released today.

*UnderMining Agriculture: How the Extractive Industries Threaten our Food Systems*, produced by The Gaia Foundation and global allies, exposes the hidden costs of mining on food, water, land, air and climate, showing how each is increasingly affected by toxins as the global land and water grab intensifies.

Case studies from around the world, particularly Africa, illustrate how mining is destroying the conditions essential for healthy and productive agriculture as communities testify to experiencing livestock deaths, soil pollution, acidic water supplies, desertification of agricultural lands, and being forcibly displaced. Promises of job creation and economic growth have been shown to be exaggerated, short-lived and only benefiting the few, whilst the lasting impact on the communities and ecosystems they depend upon are yet to be fully analysed and exposed.

Fassil Gebeyehu, Coordinator, African Biodiversity Network, Kenya commented: "Across Africa, communities are facing the two-pronged threat of the extractives industries and the industrial agriculture lobby. Hundreds of thousands of people are being exploited, their land and water polluted and their livelihoods lost, all for the profits of a few. This report helps us to see the mounting pressure facing farming communities – the very people we depend on for our food. We must all stand in solidarity with the Food Sovereignty movement, against the extractives sector."

"In recent years The Gaia Foundation and our partners have been forced to turn our attention to mining because the extractives industries are encroaching on the land and livelihoods of most of the communities with whom we work. In our experience, rather than contributing to "national interests", the rapid and chaotic increase in extraction is now literally under-mining the fundamental needs of life: Healthy ecosystems, water systems and food systems. Protecting the conditions for life is a priority." Said Liz Hosken, Founding Director of The Gaia Foundation.

The *UnderMining Agriculture* report shows how at every stage of mining - from prospecting and operations right through to closure – impacts are being felt. Furthermore, the extraction of minerals, metals or fossil fuels, pollutes areas far wider than the actual mining site, continuing years after its closure.

Nnimmo Bassey, former Head of Friends of the Earth Africa, and now Director of HOMEF, commented: “This is a timely report and a critical message – What will people drink when their water is contaminated? How will people live when their air is polluted, their trees are gone, and their farmland is but a poisoned wasteland? As people around the world stand together to say Yes to Life, No to Mining, this report is an important wake up call for us all.”

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **For press enquiries**

Please contact Rowan Phillimore on [rowan@gaianet.org](mailto:rowan@gaianet.org) or +54 9 113 669 3981 (Argentina). Alternatively you can call Hannibal Rhoades in London on +44 207 428 0054.

The full report, infographic and summary are available at [www.gaiafoundation.org/underminingagriculture](http://www.gaiafoundation.org/underminingagriculture)

Copies can also be emailed directly upon request ([rowan@gaianet.org](mailto:rowan@gaianet.org))

A printed 4-page summary report featuring a large infographic pull out poster is available by contacting The Gaia Foundation on +44 207 428 0055 or emailing [info@gaianet.org](mailto:info@gaianet.org) to request copies. Copies can be sent within the UK. Copies sent overseas will be asked for a donation to cover postage.

High res versions are available. Images featured in the report are also available upon request.

### **Interviews**

Interviews are available with the reports lead authors at The Gaia Foundation and with contributing partners and those featured in global case studies.

For those in the UK, Mariana Gomez of Colombia, is currently in the UK. She has been part of a large scale resistance effort against gold mining in the town of Tolima. Her account is featured in an [exchange of letters here](#), and in a case study featured in the report.

Many of those who feature in the report are travelling from Ethiopia, South Africa, Ghana, Kenya and the UK to gather in Uganda from Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September to discuss regional efforts to resist the extractives sector. Please contact Rowan to find out more or arrange interviews.

### **Behind the report**

UnderMining Agriculture was produced by The Gaia Foundation, a UK based NGO with 30 years experience working with partners and communities around the world. More information at [www.gaiafoundation.org](http://www.gaiafoundation.org)

Collaborating partners include CIKOD from Ghana, Mupo from South Africa, NAPE from Uganda, the African Biodiversity Network based in Kenya, and MELCA Ethiopia.

Additional support in producing this report have come from MiningWatch Canada, HOMEF Nigeria and Via Campesina Zimbabwe.

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UnderMining Agriculture follows a series of reports and films from The Gaia Foundation and Global partners:

[\*Opening Pandora's Box\*](#) – *The New Wave of Landgrabbing & the Devastating Impact on Earth* (2012) highlighted the converging factors, including the 2008 economic collapse, that led to a dramatic increase in the reach and destruction caused by the extractive sector. The global collapse prompted greater investment in tangible 'resources', and as easier to reach deposits become exhausted, the extractives sector turned its efforts to ever more pristine and fragile ecosystems; homes and habitats to so many. With these remaining deposits more dispersed and inaccessible, increasingly destructive and toxic mining technologies are being deployed in these areas. An increase in the scale, ambition and impact of mining can be seen in cases of mountain top removal, vast open cast mining, tar sands, and fracking.

[\*Short Circuit\*](#) – *The Lifecycle of our Gadgets and the True Cost to Earth* (2013) zoomed in on the lifecycle of gadgets such as Smartphone's and laptops. It looked at the birthing process, the extraction required for the production of these goods, and the different stages of manufacture, short-term design, and the waste that is generated. These same themes were picked-up by our fast-paced animation and campaign, [\*Wake-Up Call\*](#), which was recently shortlisted for the Innsbruck Nature Film Festival.

[\*Sacred Voices\*](#) - This short film brings together Custodians of sacred natural sites from across Africa, each speaking out against the impacts of mining. The film shares a collective statement which the Custodians make to share with the rest of the world; a plea to stop destroying their land.