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| Date:18th Jan, 2021  Honourable James Marape  The Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea  National Parliament Haus  **WAGANI**  Papua New Guinea    Dear Honorable Prime Minister  **Ref: SEEKING CONCURRENCE AND APPROVAL FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR,**   1. **HELATH & ENVIRONMENT AWARENESS AND** 2. **INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT AND AUDIT ON THE RIVERINE POLLUTION BY BARRICK GOLD CORPORATION PNG LIMITED** |
| Refers the above in caption.  My Hon. Prime Minister, I seek immediate concurrence and approval to fund these two important programs submitted by the Kulini Strickland Resource Holders Association Inc...   1. **Health and Environmental Risk Awareness Program**,   The Health and Environmental Risk Awareness Program to be carried out along the riverine system of Lagaip Strickland in 25 council wards, covering Enga, Hela West Sepik and Western Province. These Awareness program needed urgent funding for the Awareness to avoid Heath Risks to the general populace living along the Riverine System. The Awareness programmes are to be carried out conjointly by the Kulini Strickland Resource Holders Association Inco and Industrial Part Research Private Mobile Medical Services & Health Care Reformation Consultants.   1. **Independent Environmental and Health Risk Assessment & Audit.**   The Independent Environmental and Health Risk Audit to be carried out along the Riverine System of the Lagaip Strickland Riverine System. The Independent Environmental Assessment and Audit idea was accepted by my previo**u**s predecessors and Prime Ministers but up-to-date no Independent Environmental & Health Risk Audit Team was engaged. These Assessment Audit Reports will put the State in a better position to negotiate for Environmental Damages and River Pollution Claims by the Riverine Land Owners.  My Dear Prime Minister, we needed to carry out the above tasks as a matter of priority as “WITHOUT” solving theses legacy issues will frustrate the Riverine People and hopefully may result to Court injunction, stopping the issuant of Water Permit to Pogera Gold Mine, and impedes proceedings to reopening of the Pogera Gold Mine with whoever partner the State choses.  Therefore, I now forwared for your concurrence to proceed with the above tasks caused the State in a Better Position to Negotiate with Barrick Gold PNG Ltd or any other partners to verify the Riverine Landowners Environmental Damages and Pollution Compensation Claims.  **Back ground Of The Riverine Issues And Affected Areas**  The Riverine system affected is from Pogera River all the way to the Fly River to the Western Province of Papua New Guinea**.**  The Pogera Gold Mine produces a ton of ore-bearing rock yields only a tiny amount of gold. The remaining material is processed into tailings, a waste product made up mostly of rock, heavy metals, and trace elements of chemicals like cyanide that are used to extract the gold.  PJV produces roughly six million tons of liquid tailings every year; in 2008 the mine generated almost 9.5 tons of tailings for every ounce of gold produced.  PJV discharges its iron-rich tailings into the nearby Porgera River, staining its upper reaches a rusty red color. The Porgera River’s water ultimately flows into the Strickland River system; one of Papua New Guinea’s longest and most important.  Many locals refer to the tailings, and to stretches of the Porgera River itself, as “the red water” and regard it with considerable fear and apprehension.  The long-term environmental and health impacts of PJV’s riverine tailings disposal have  been hotly debated for many years.  Critics fear that the build-up of heavy metals downstream could have unpredictable and potentially dangerous consequences for the environment and human health. Before the mine even opened, PJV’s plans to employ riverine tailings disposal were publicly rejected by Papua New Guinea’s minister of environment and conservation as “totally unacceptable.”  But the Papua New Guinea government ultimately approved the plan in spite of those objections.  Barrick maintains that, due partly to unique characteristics of the Porgera River and its surrounding environment, there is no reason to believe the practice of riverine tailings disposal at Porgera has or will have any serious negative health or environmental impacts  In 2008 the Porgera mine produced 632,000 ounces of gold and 6.05 million tons of tailings. This is in addition to another 12.5 million tons of suspended sediments that enter the river system through the Anawe and Anjolek erodible waste dumps.  downstream from the mine. **“Is there an environmental impact?** Sure, ***you’re not going to hear us say there isn”*** acknowledged Bill Williams, Barrack’s vice-president for the environment. “ But it’s manageable and it appears to be reversible. “Critics vehemently disagree, arguing that PJV’s tailings send potentially harmful heavy metals flowing downstream in quantities that far exceed anything that would be permissible under the water quality standards of developed countries, and that the long-term negative effects of riverine tailings disposal in any given context are difficult and perhaps impossible to accurately predict.  **The Norwegian government’s pension fund excluded Barrick Operator of the Giant Pogera Gold Mine in Papua New Guinea.**  The Norwegian government’s pension fund excluded Barrick from its investment portfolio in March 2009 on the recommendation of its Council on Ethics, which found that PJV’s practice of riverine tailings disposal carried unacceptable risks of harm to human health and “long-term and irreversible environmental damage.”  The weight of industry good practice is firmly and clearly against the practice of riverine tailings disposal.  In fact, Porgera is one of only three large mines in the world run by international companies that still dispose their tailings into river systems; all three are on the island of Papua.  In July 2010, more than a dozen people went to the hospital in Paiam town suffering from chemical burns. According to the hospital’s chief doctor, they said they had been panning Barrick cites factors including the speed and high sediment load of the river, its naturally low population of aquatic life, and the absence of large communities that regularly utilize its upper reaches for water or food. Human Rights Watch interview with senior Barrick officials, Toronto, September 9, 2010; Letter from Smare, September 7, 2010.  Human Rights Watch interview with senior Barrick officials, Toronto, September 9, 2010.  The 2003 final report of the World Bank’s Extractive Industries Review stated that “no [World Bank Group]-supported mining project should use riverine tailings disposal,”  The International Finance Corporation’s Environmental, Health and Safety Guidelines for Mining state that “Riverine [for example, rivers, lakes and lagoons] tailings disposal is not considered good international industry practice.” International Finance Corporation, “Environmental, Health and Safety Guidelines for Mining,” December 10, 2007,  PNG’s larger Ok Tedi mine also employs riverine tailings disposal, as well as the Freeport mine on the Indonesian half of the island of Papua.  Barrick the operator of the Papua New Guinea Giant Pogera Gold Mine later said it was investigating whether the tailings had not been diluted properly over the course of several days owing to a lack of adequate water during a dry spell.  **The Ok Tedi Disaster**  Papua New Guinea has a painful history with riverine tailings disposal gone awry. The country’s enormous Ok Tedi copper mine also employs the practice. In 1999 that project sparked an international scandal when data revealed that tailings had overflowed river banks downstream, destroying gardens and killing large swathes of vegetation.  BHP Billiton, the company that owned and operated the mine at the time, pulled out in 1999.  Then-Managing Director and Chief Executive Paul Anderson publicly stated that the mine  Was “not compatible with our environmental values and the company should never have become involved.”  BHP Billiton has since publicly committed not to become involved in any project that employs riverine tailings disposal.  **PJV has also drawn fire for the way it measures compliance with water quality standards**.  The company asserts that levels of dissolved metals downstream from the mine are consistently within the range that Papua New Guinean law prescribes.  But the company measures this at a “compliance point” that is 165 kilometers downstream from the mine at Anawe at the junction of Tumbutu River and Strickland in Lake Kopiago Hela Province.  By this point the mine’s tailings have been considerably diluted; more than two-thirds of the river’s flow at the compliance point comes from sources untouched by PJV’s operations.  Barrick maintains that the 165 km between the tailings discharge point and the compliance point constitute a “mixing zone,” a defined area around an effluent discharge point where water quality standards do not apply. Mixing zones are standard practice in the mining industry but they generally constitute much smaller areas, sometimes measured in square meters rather than kilometers.  **The Norwegian government Council on Ethics, recommending Withdrawal of Shares with PJV, the Operator of the giant Pogera Gold Mine in Papua New Guinea.**  The Norwegian government Council on Ethics, recommending that the pension fund divest itself of Barrick stock due to the risk of severe environmental harm at Porgera, stated that, “In the council’s opinion, Porgera’s mixing zone does not constitute a mixing zone in the internationally accepted sense of the term.”  Barrick defends the size of its mixing zone as legitimate and says that the Papua New Guinea government set the compliance point, not PJV. At the same time, the company acknowledges that the current mixing zone is a “large area” and says that it may relocate the compliance point further upstream, but only if it is certain the mine will remain within acceptable water quality standards if it does so.  This report does not seek to evaluate the likely impact of PJV’s riverine tailings disposal on human health or the environment. But concerns about the practice are certainly legitimate, and Barrick has displayed a troubling lack of transparency in addressing those concerns that it should immediately remedy. Recently, the company has expressed some willingness to do just that, agreeing to make public its environmental reports to the government.  If honored, this commitment will make it more feasible for independent experts to evaluate the likely health and environmental impacts of tailings disposal at Porgera.  **The Norwegian government Council on Ethics Transparency Concerns**  In recommending that Norway’s pension fund divest itself of all Barrick stock, the fund’s Council of Ethics cited among other things a “***lack of openness and transparency in the company’s environmental reporting.”***  **In Human Rights Watch’s view, that criticism was directly on the mark.**  Until September 2010, Barrick consistently refused to make public key data that could allow for independent assessment of its claims regarding the likely impacts of riverine tailings disposal at Porgera especially its periodic environmental reports to the Papua New Guinea government. Alternative independent sources of data do not exist.   1. The Riverine Landowners have used and accessed and respective sections of the Lagaip and Strickland River Areas and its tributaries for daily sustenance and their customary way of life. These include:   Customary Sacred Areas: the entire Strickland area is a customarily sacred area for main tribes of the Duna and Hela area. It is according to the oral history of the Hela people, a Rindi Pongone, land where knit have being tied, where life began and where all the spirits of dead Hela offspring return to dwell. Accordingly, direct intrusion to the land and the river is a direct intrusion into the spiritual significance area and its geological systems.  Fishing area: The Hewa people on the banks of the Lagaip and the Yokona and Bogaye people fish from the Strickland and Lagaip River to supplement their meal.  Food, Wild pigs and wild fowl eggs were protein intakes of the people along the riverine system. Those animals drink from the Strickland and Lagaip River and after been found dead and lying near the river banks people do not want to hunt for their meats  Washing: The Strickland River and Lagaip was used for washing and as a consequence of the dumping of waste into the river system the said accessibility has been denied.  Use by Children: Children of the Hewa use the Lagaip and the Strickland for rafting purposes one of the favorite past times. This accessibility has been denied as a consequence of the dumping of tailings and waste from the mine.  Drinking: The Strickland and Lagaip during dry seasons and is used for drinking purposes and many small inlet streams close to the river system has been used for drinking purposes. That accessibility is now not available as a consequence of the disposal of tailings and waste into the Lagaip and Strickland river system.  Sir, our Zone 3 and 4 landowners also have lost similar rights to the river and land close to the river.  The purported determination by the Minister for Environment that included the Lagaip and Strickland area (Zone 2) never took into consideration the rights of the Lagaip and Strickland people of the Hela Province regarding the rights attached to the water they were going to lose as a consequence of the dumping of the tailings into the Strickland River System.  In fact the PJV in their submission to the Water Resources Board entitled ‘’Submission To The Water Resources Board on River Impact Compensation in October 1995, which submission was used for the purposes of the of the ministerial Determination, states at page 10 of the Submission that it had entered into negotiations with the Landowners of Zone 1 and have reached agreement for compensation for loss of water resources use but for the purposes of Zone 2, 3 and 4 PJV were never consulted and discuss the health issues from the Mine pollutions and likely impacts were never taken place.  AS a result of **no** proper AWAERNES by the State and PJV of the likely impacts of the river system before the Water Permit was issued resulted to so many of our riverine people have died and are encountering the same deceases without much help from the Operator of Pogera Gold Mine and state.  The grant of Permits 29/491 and 29/295C allowed PJV to dump tons of sediments and tailings wastes without resolving the outstanding environmental damages and compensation issue between PJV and now Barrick Gold with the State and the Porgera River land-owners and all the Riverine landowners.  Therefore, going forward, a proper Health and Environmental AWARENESS **must be carried out**, before Pogera Gold reopens its mine and Water Permit is issued.  128_4265.JPG  Should you require more information regarding the above please don’t hesitate to contact the undersigned  Thank you for your Concurrence and funding of the LAGAIP STRICKLAND RIVERINE AWARENESS.  Thank you very much in advice and we are looking forward to hearing from you  Yours Sincerely  ……………………………………. …………………………………  Mar. Andrew Makano Mr, Bob Siape  Chairman - Secretary  **Kulini Strickland Resource Holders Association Kulini Strickland Resource Holders Association**  ***C:\Users\Bob Siape\Pictures\bob_ID_2017\bob_5_1.png***  Treasurer Pastor Mr Gawi Mindi  **Kulini Strickland Resource Holders Association**  128_6747.JPG  .MR.DAVID ARO  HELA CAF PROVINCIAL YOUTH PRESIDENT    ……………………………………….  SUPPORTED BY SUPPORTED BY    ……………………………………..  MR. STEVEN ANDU  PRESIDENT LAKE KOPIAGO  PASTOR TOLIMAN SIAPE LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT  AREA SUPERVISOR & CPC CHAIRMAN  CC… Minister Environment & Conservation  CC…,Minister Mining  **SUPPORTED COMMUNITY LEADERS & COUNCILLORS** |
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