



Resource Development (Phils.) Inc.

NEWS RELEASE

Subanen Chiefs Unite for Responsible Mining, One Ancestral Land



The Subanen “Buklog” ritual. (In photo): Women of the Subanen tribe conduct the ritual of Buklog every seven years as thanksgiving, cleansing and supplication for a good harvest and blessings. Since it began its mining operations in 1995, TVIRD has endeavored to protect and preserve the Subanen culture via sustainable development projects hinged on education, livelihood, health and infrastructure.

Zamboanga City / February 2013 - Timuays (chieftains) of the Subanens of Bayog, Zamboanga del Sur, Casiano Edal and Lucenio Manda are now the chosen representatives of the entire indigenous community as the result of Subanen unification here. The two leaders also recently expressed their support to responsible mining in their ancestral domain, which is endowed with minerals but is still reeling from the environmental damage wrought by decades of illegal mining. Upon the invitation of both groups,

representatives of TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc. (TVIRD) were also present during the meeting in Zamboanga City to assess the necessary support needed.

They showed their solidarity to the *Pikumpungan Subanen Lupa Pusaka (PSLP)* - an organization of Subanen tribe officials covering six municipalities in the province of Zamboanga headed by Datu Dalepusan Isis Guilingan - in its request to the Department of Environment Natural Resources to speed-up the issuance of an Environment Compliance Certificate (ECC) so TVIRD can commence its environmental rehabilitation, paving the way for its mineral processing operations here. The PSLP represents the only other group of Subanens in the area surrounding the gold-rich Balabag hill.

Repairing damages caused by illegal mining

“In my capacity as the Barangay Chairman of Conacon, we likewise made a barangay resolution asking the DENR for the same thing,” said Manda. Edal on the other hand, is anticipating the commencement of the company’s environmental clean-up in the area, just like it did in its Canatuan mine site.

Before ramping-up its operations in 2004, TVIRD’s first order of business was to conduct the extensive environmental clean-up and the rehabilitation of geohazard areas and damage to Mt. Canatuan – prior damage that was caused by small scale illegal miners who also exploited the indigenous communities. Similarly, the company is set to conduct the same clean-up and rehabilitation in Balabag, town of Bayog, which has also experienced decades of illegal mining.

“As of this moment, it is getting more dangerous because the place is full of holes,” said Edal. “It’s posing grave danger especially to our children now that our livestock and domestic animals have begun to disappear,” he added.

Edal is referring to Balabag hill where hundreds of tunnels left by the illegal miners are ominously present, posing danger to the inhabitants in the area. The place is also full of tailings ponds contaminated with the toxic chemicals mercury and cyanide.

Balabag is part of over 4,000 hectares of Mineral Processing Sharing Agreement (MPSA) area awarded by the government to TVIRD.

Edal and Manda, leaders of the now-unified *Pigsalabuk Bawang Dangen Subanen Gasal Gukom de Bayog* or Subanens of Bayog, comprises almost one-half of the town’s entire population. Their unity was forged to strengthen their claim for one ancestral domain covering twenty-one barangays of the said town.

Around 70 percent of TVIRD’s MPSA will belong to the ancestral claim of Edal’s group while part belongs to the PLSP and to an indigenous community in Kabasalan, Zamboanga Sibugay. Both groups stand to

benefit from the mining operations through royalties, employment as well as social and environmental development programs.

Added support from the community and local government

26 barangays out of the total of 28 have so far submitted their resolutions stating the similar appeal to the DENR, citing primarily environmental concerns. Meanwhile, re-elected Bayog Mayor Leonardo Babasa, Jr. expressed strong support for the Subanens.

“It (TVIRD’s mining operations) will not only generate employment, livelihood opportunities and income through royalties to our Subanen natives, but it will also increase our income through taxes and spur economy, thus improving our basic services in the process,” he said.

Babasa has been instrumental in successfully weeding-out illegal miners when the Mines and Geosciences Bureau issued and implemented the Cease and Desist Order against illegal miners in October last year. Elected Vice Mayor Celso Matias pledged that he, together with the municipal council, will likewise initiate action in support of the Subanens.

The Filipino-owned TVIRD is the local flagship company and affiliate of TVI Pacific Inc. in Canada. Since the enactment of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, it was the first local company to secure a mining license and has since operated its gold, silver, copper and zinc minerals processing operations in Canatuan, Zamboanga del Norte.

To date, TVIRD has invested some \$25 million in exploration and pre-development work in Balabag and estimates an additional \$25 million to bring it to commercial operations. The company is primed to implement the roll-out of the same successful Canatuan business model in Bayog as well as its sustainable development programs that include support to education, public health, environmental management, livelihood and infrastructure. These, pending the DENR’s issuance of its ECC and the establishment of more viable mining policies.

About TVI

TVI Resource Development (Phils) Inc., is the Philippine affiliate of TVI Pacific Inc. (TSX: TVI), a publicly-listed Canadian mining company focused on the exploration and production of precious and base metals from district scale large system, high margin projects located in the Philippines.

We are committed to exploration and mining practices that promote transparency, responsible stewardship of the environment, and the inalienable rights to life, dignity, and sustainable development of our host communities.

Connect with us: www.tviphilippines.com

For media queries:

Kaycee Crisostomo

Senior Manager - Public Affairs
TVI Resource Development (Phils) Inc.

Email: kaycee.crisostomo@tvipacific.com.ph

Phone: +63 2 728-8491 ext. 103

Mobile: +63 917 579-1528

Fax: +63 2 728-8515