



Resource Development (Phils.) Inc.

NEWS RELEASE

Zambo Sur Mayor, Indigenous Subanens Renew Support for TVIRD Operations in Bayog Municipality

Highlight forthcoming economic and social benefits for their communities



‘They cannot return.’ (2013 file photo) Subanen leaders Timuays Casiano Edal and Lucenio Manda (left and right, respectively) both from Bayog, Zamboanga del Sur, and Isis Guilingan of Sindangan, Zamboanga del Norte show their solidarity and irrefutably express their strong opposition to reports that illegal miners from Balabag will operate again in TVIRD’s 4,779-hectare MPSA area.

Bayog, Zamboanga del Sur / August 2016 – In a July 19 letter addressed to the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Bayog Municipal Mayor Leonardo L. Babasa, Jr. cited that since its entry in Sitio Balabag, TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc. (TVIRD) has “taken meaningful strides in supporting the unification of the indigenous (Subanen) people in Bayog as well as fostered the development of both tribal and non-tribal constituents.”

Mayor Babasa likewise indicated that TVIRD is a holder of an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) and Declaration of Mining Project Feasibility (DMPF) for its Balabag Project – both of which were obtained from the DENR.

Earlier, the company obtained all the necessary social licenses to operate from the Provincial Government of Zamboanga del Sur, the Municipal Board (Sangguniang Bayan) as well as all 26 barangays in the municipality that have benefitted from TVIRD's early social development and environment programs prior to its operations.

A shining recommendation

“Although TVIRD has not yet been operational, it has contributed significantly to various livelihood programs, projects and activities in various barangays of this Municipality,” wrote Mayor Babasa. He also cited environmental development through tree planting, crime prevention, farm-to-market roads and unconditional support to LGU operations among the company's contributions.

He likewise mentioned the company's “integrated rice-duck farming system,” which is part of a public-private partnership program with the Provincial Government.

“On the above premise, it is our collegiate recommendation with trust and confidence that TVIRD could perform such activities within mining laws and regulations – responsible mining, so to speak,” he concluded.

Subanens of Bayog

In a strong demonstration of solidarity, the unified indigenous Subanens in Bayog, Zamboanga del Sur Province – rightful claimants of the ancestral domain covering Balabag Hill – also renewed their support for TVIRD's Balabag Gold and Silver Project.

Through a resolution jointly signed by Timuays (Chieftains) Casiano L. Edal and Lucenio M. Manda along with 33 other chiefs last August 03, the tribe expressly urged “the agencies of the government concerned on mining operation to facilitate the immediate commencement of TVIRD's mining operation in Sitio Balabag, Barangay Depore in the Municipality of Bayog.”

The two chiefs represent the collective Subanen tribe in Bayog, including the company's Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) area covering 4,779 hectares in Sitio Balabag.

In their resolution, they also cited enormous opportunities for progress that the company's upcoming operations will bring and the urgency with which they endorse the project to begin, "in order to bring forth social and economic development to communities especially to the Subanen Tribe."

A journey to self-determination

Exactly two year ago this month, the Subanens culminated two months of exhaustive public consultation supervised by the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP) and entered into a memorandum of agreement with TVIRD, granting the company its free, prior and informed consent to operate its project in the same municipality.

This development paved the way for the NCIP En Banc committee to issue a Certificate of Precondition to TVIRD – which evidences the tribe's consent to the company's operations, as prescribed by the law.

The welfare of the Subanen tribe

Sitio Balabag has been the center of disaccord between the illegal miners and the tribal leaders who support TVIRD. Nearly four years after the dismantling of illegal mining operations in the area – an initiative spearheaded by Provincial Governor Antonio Cerilles – the tribe now has clear reason to hope for the remediation of prior environmental destruction from exploitive artisanal mining and a transparent roadmap for mutual development with TVIRD.

"We will oppose the illegal miners' plan. We will not allow their return. We have no reason to allow them to set foot again in our homeland since their illegal mining activities will only bring back destruction not only to the environment but also to our tribe," said Timuay Edal who is also a Balian (Subanen priest).

"We exercise(d) our right to keep illegal mining from returning to our town," said Timuay Manda, who is also a Sangguniang Bayan (SB) Member of the municipality.

Reciprocity

Timuay Manda maintains a dual responsibility as Bayog Municipal Councilor as well as a leader trusted with the future of the tribe. He believes that the country's present legislation, the Mining Act, is a catalyst for development through responsible mining.

"The Local Government Code, the Mining Act of 1995 and the IPRA Law – all these are harmonized towards long-term development. We are confident that the law can usher-in tangible developments that other municipalities can see," he said.

Given its mineral-rich environment, the Subanens of Bayog are likewise confident that mining will enhance economic activity in the town while royalties are direct benefits that they can invest in the tribe's future.

Similarly, they look forward to prosperity experienced by the town of Siocon in Zamboanga del Norte as they witnessed its rise from a fourth-class municipality to first-class status – owing to TVIRD's operations in the area.

Press photos:



- 1 **The right to self determination.** Subanen Timuays Lucenio Manda and Casiano Edal (4th and 5th from Left, respectively) both from Bayog, Zamboanga del Sur, recognized ancestral domain representatives, signed an agreement supporting TVIRD's gold and silver project in the municipality. The MOA signing in 2014 was witnessed by Regional Director of NCIP-9, Timuay Woy Lim Wong, and co-signed by TVIRD Board Member Michael Regino and President Atty. Eugene Mateo (2nd and 3rd from Left, respectively).



- 2 **Hail to the chiefs.** *The MOA is witnessed by tribal chiefs representing the collective Subanen leadership in the municipality of Bayog.*



- 3 **Gone are the days when illegal small scale miners destroyed Balabag's natural environment and enslaved the tribes in their own homeland.**



- 4 A scene to behold:** Bayog, a third class municipality, looks to a new beginning when TVIRD soon operates in the area.

About TVI Philippines

TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc. ("TVIRD"), is the local affiliate of TVI Pacific Inc. (TSX: TVI), a publicly-listed Canadian mining company focused on the exploration, development and production of precious and base metals from district-scale, large-system, high-margin projects located in the Philippines. Concurrent ownership of ventures is shared with partner company, Philippine Resource Holdings Inc.

TVIRD is 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 its host communities.

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