



Natural Resource Extraction: Blessing or curse? Insights from the Democratic Republic of Congo

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Steve Hilbert – Foreign Policy Advisor, Africa and Global Development,
Office of International Justice and Peace, United States Conference of
Catholic Bishops

Rees Warne – Strategic Issues Advisor, Extractives Industries,
Catholic Relief Services



Why is Natural Resources Extraction part of Catholics Confront Global Poverty?

When poorly managed, extractive industries can bring social conflict, feed corruption, displace people from their homes and lands, pollute rivers and seas, destroy people's health, and cause irreversible biodiversity loss.

Extractive industries are also linked to global poverty issues such as conflict and peace and economic justice.



Extractive Industries and People living in Poverty

What are extractive industries? Oil, gas, mining, logging

- We are closely linked to people around the world through our use of natural resources
 - Gasoline that gets us to work or school
 - Metals used in our cell phones and other electronics
 - Gold and gemstones (“blood diamonds”)
 - Wood in our furniture and homes
- Economic, social, and environmental impacts on the poor



Why is this issue important now?

- Extraction of natural resources have the potential to fuel development. **Instead, they too often fuel poverty and conflict.**
- Global economic situation - commodity boom and bust.
- We have the opportunity to do something about this now.

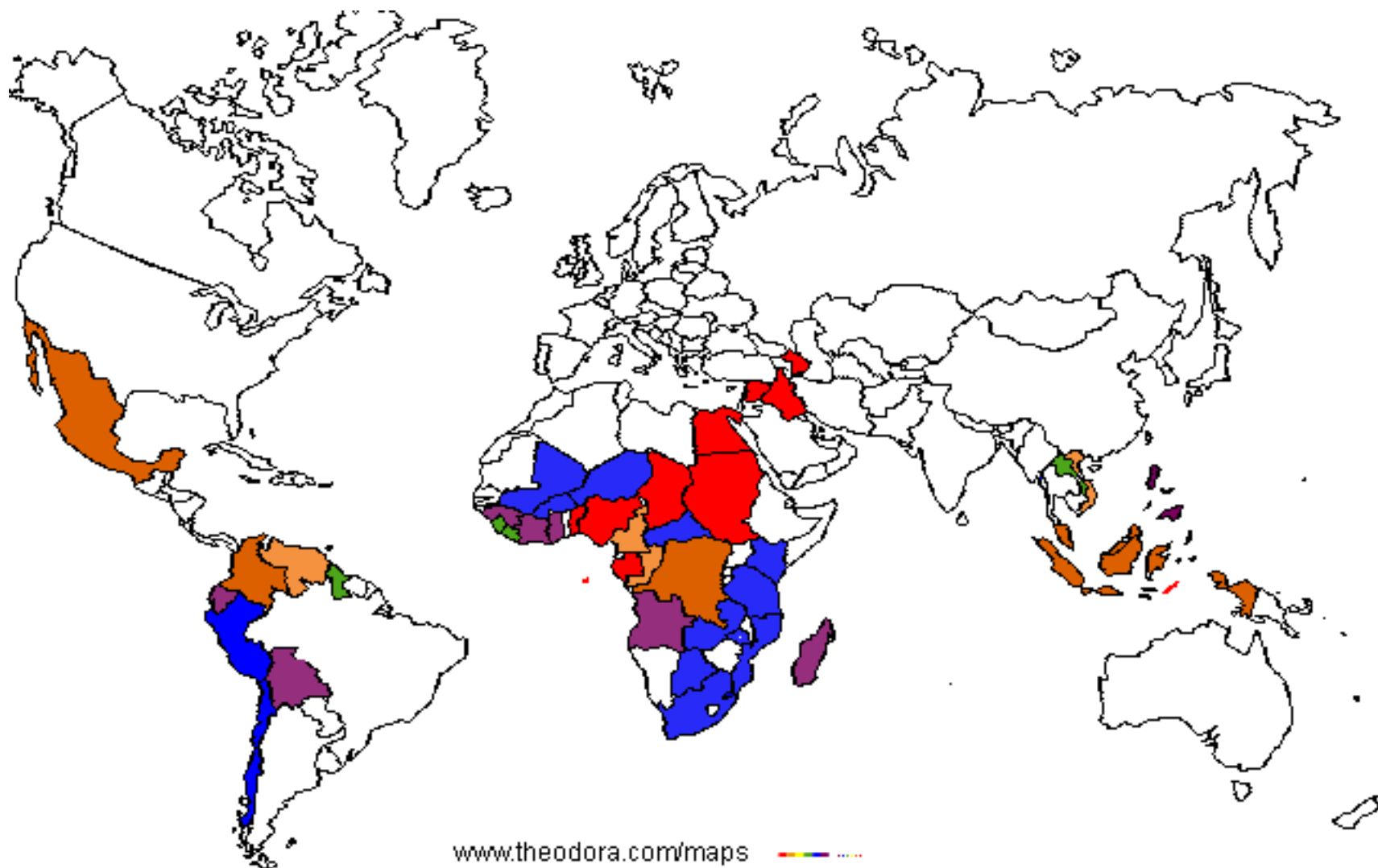


Why is Natural Resource Development of concern to the Church?

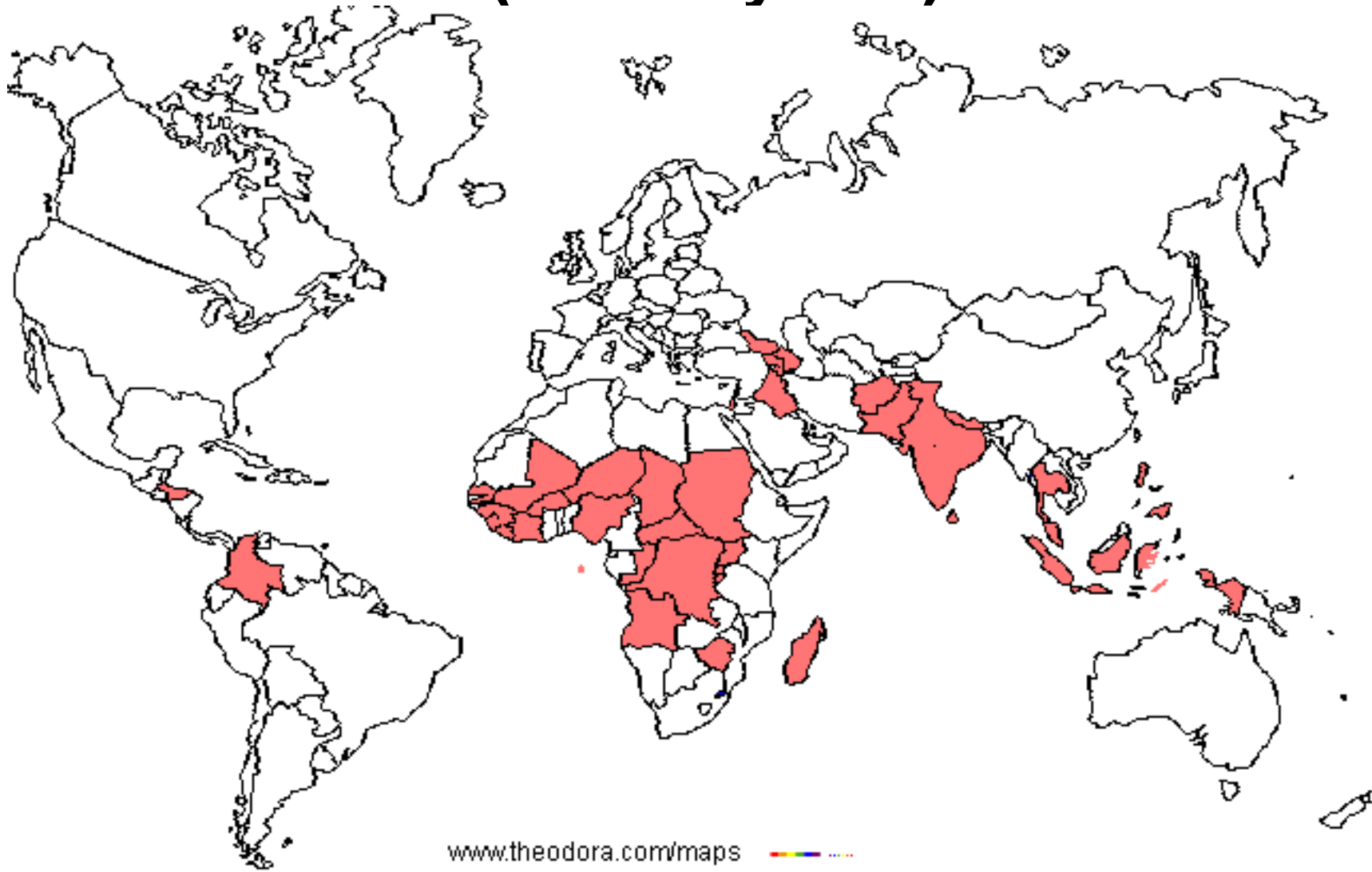
US Conference of Catholic Bishops: [*A Call to Solidarity with Africa*](#) (2001)

- Wealth in natural resources—which should be such a rich source of blessings—has sometimes become a source of tremendous suffering.
- [Foreign corporations] reap large profits from diamonds and oil while too often demonstrating little concern for the negative impact their activities may have on peace, stability, human rights, and the environment.

Resource-Rich Countries where CRS Works



Conflicts in Countries where CRS Works (last 10 years)





Pope Benedict XVI (Angola: March, 2009)

Social and economic development in Africa bring into partnership national leadership together with regional initiatives and international resolve.

There are a growing number of effective initiatives which merit support. Among them are ... the “Kimberley Process”, the “Publish What You Pay Coalition” and the “Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.”

Their common goal is to promote transparency, honest business practice and good governance.



What is the Church's mission?

To protect the lives and dignity of poor people and to assure that the potential benefits of natural resource extraction are realized.



What are CRS and USCCB doing about it?

- CRS supports work in developing countries that addresses the impact of extractive industries.
- In the U.S., USCCB and CRS work together to promote
 - Education
 - Advocacy



A closer look: Conflict Minerals in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

- Ongoing conflict: more than 5 million people have died since 1996
- Much of that violence is centered on - and funded by - control of valuable minerals
- Severe impact on the environment, labor, and human rights
- Rwanda is a primary exporter of minerals



Responding to the Emergency: CRS' work in the Eastern Congo

- Emergency health and nutrition (+ community health and HIV programs)
- Education for displaced children
- Reconciliation and conflict resolution
- Support for victims of sexual violence
- Agriculture and livelihoods



- Congo Conflict Minerals Act
- Extractive Industries Transparency Disclosure Act



Congo Conflict Minerals Act

Senate: S. 891, introduced by Senators Sam Brownback (KS), Dick Durbin (IL), and Russ Feingold (WI)

House: Rep. Jim McDermott (WA) is drafting legislation

What the bill would do:

- Companies that sell products containing tin, tungsten or tantalum (coltan) must research their supply chain and report the mines or countries of origin to the SEC
- Requires reports on links between mining and human rights
- Suggests that the US should increase aid to the region

Why: Seeks to reduce the profitability of illicit mining



Extractives Revenue Transparency Disclosure Act

What the bill would do: Draft legislation would require all extractive industry companies that list on the New York Stock Exchange to report annually what they pay to the government of the countries where they operate.

Why: When people know how much money their government should have, they can work for better management of those funds.

Senate: to be introduced by Sen. Schumer (NY) or Sen. Lugar (IN)

House: To be introduced by Rep. Barney Frank (MA)

Now seeking Co-Sponsors in the House and Senate



What Can We Do As Consumers?

Make thoughtful purchasing choices

- Reduce, donate, and recycle
- Purchasing jewelry? Select diamonds that are certified “conflict free” and jewelry made of “clean” gold, silver and precious stones that were mined with respect for the environment and for human rights
- Pumping gas? Think about who is affected by oil extraction and refining and reduce your use
- Tell corporations that you care about the impacts of the products they make and sell



What Can We Do As Advocates?

Call your Senators and urge them to support passage of S. 891, the *Congo Conflict Minerals Act of 2009*.

Visit <http://actioncenter.crs.org> now.



What else can we do to improve the impacts of Extractive Industries?

- **Join** Catholics Confront Global Poverty: www.crs.org/ccgp and encourage others to join as well. Be one in a million.
- **Advocate.** Urge your members of Congress to support transparency and peace efforts. Visit <http://actioncenter.crs.org> for new action alerts.
- **Educate** yourself and others about natural resource extraction: to watch a video overview, read materials and resources and share ideas with others for how to promote CCGP to your audience visit www.crs.org/globalpoverty or www.usccb.org/globalpoverty



**Let's work together to make
Extractive Industries and their
products transparent and just!**



Please join the next CCGP webcast on
August 25, 2-3 PM EST

CCGP and Fair Trade:

*Plan for Fair Trade Month in October and
share your strategies for spreading a fair
trade attitude in your community.*