

Children & Youth Major Group

Thank you Chair, Distinguished delegates, and fellow colleagues.

When my father married my mother, he gave her a gold ring as a sign of love. My father did not know that **20 tons** of mining waste were produced to make that **one** ring or that one life is lost and **12** serious injuries result from each ton of gold mined. Would my mother have wanted the ring, knowing these costs? Can this gold ring symbolize **love** when its production threatens lives, devastates communities, and transforms landscapes into toxic waste dumps?

In the current mining industry human rights are being violated. **Each day**, many children around the world are obligated to labor in mines. These children have the **right** to a healthy childhood, so we call for the eradication of **all** forms of child labor in mining.

In addition, we believe that communities have the **right** to determine their own fate. I wouldn't like to wake up one day, to discover **mining construction** has begun in my backyard. Please, imagine yourself in such a situation.

[pause]

It only seems right to require free, prior and informed consent by affected peoples.

In the current mining industry, **essential** ecosystems are being destroyed beyond repair.

I am referring to the last natural jewels of the world: the tropical forests, wetlands, and high moorlands that **Humans depend upon**. We need the preservation of these environmentally sensitive areas; These treasures are the **real** wealth of the world and they are being robbed from us. At what cost? Without them, youth will have **no** future.

So, was the ring really worth it?

Before us, we have an opportunity to provide a future for youth and all peoples of the world that is not only sustainable, but equitable and just. We can no longer abide by business-as-usual and watery, ineffective policy statements.

Your actions not only affect the document you are working on - They affect the lives of **real** people, whose realities today *are not just*. Will you allow this to continue? As world leaders, we can decide to stop injustice and inequality in mining. We can make the choice **today** - for the sake of the earth, the youth, and for **ALL** of us here.

Thank you.

by: Natalia Fajardo
Sustain Us