



H.E. Ban Ki-moon  
Secretary-General of the United Nations

C.C.: H.E. John W. Ashe, President of the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly;  
ASG Amina J. Mohammed, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Post-2015 Development Planning;

Mr. Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations, Co-Chair of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals;

Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations, Co-Chair of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals;

Ms. Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

7 July 2014

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

We, the Mining Working Group at the UN, gratefully acknowledge your response (dated 20 May) to our letter to you of 6 May 2014. We thank you for your attention to our concerns and for your shared belief in the importance of upholding human rights through the post-2015 development agenda. As you suggested, we have continued to engage with the Open Working Group process and undertaken a significant level of advocacy work with the OWG governments, presenting oral statements and disseminating written advocacy positions. At this critical stage of the OWG process, preceding its thirteenth and final meeting, we are compelled to write to you again, to respectfully inform you of our serious concern regarding the lack of explicit reference to the international human rights framework in the current text for negotiation.

The Mining Working Group has focused our most recent advocacy on the right to water and sanitation, given the global implications and the hard-fought UN recognition and elaboration of this right. We are particularly dismayed to find that the 30 June iteration of the OWG Zero Draft **includes no mention of the human right to water and sanitation**. As witnesses to the rampant human rights violations and environmental destruction caused by extractive industries worldwide, the Mining Working Group calls for the immediate inclusion of a target under proposed goal 6 that explicitly mentions the need to guarantee the human right to water and sanitation. This echoes the previous [letter](#) to you from more than 300 global civil society organizations for the urgent need to protect and promote the human right to water and sanitation in the SDGs. This letter remains active on the World We Want 2015 website and can be accessed [here](#).

This call is in line with the consistent and united advocacy of civil society, throughout the OWG process and the broader post-2015 discussion, for a sustainable development agenda anchored in human rights norms and the international framework. In recent OWG meetings, some States including the co-chairs have been promoting the idea of “mainstreaming” human rights into the

SDGs. As it currently stands, the chapeau pledges that the agenda will simply “be guided” by human rights principles – a weak commitment when what is required is an agenda that is rooted in human rights obligations. The current targets and indicators do not fully reflect the standards of human rights and are not explicitly linked to existing obligations.

**The OWG approach to mainstreaming human rights has amounted to making them invisible.**

The call for human rights to be central to the new agenda cannot be satisfied by language that is left open to interpretation. In addition to the various Major Group interventions to this effect, this plea has been made to the Open Working Group by so many people and groups around the world in the consultations. For human rights to truly be integrated throughout the agenda, the relevant norms and ties to the human rights framework must be explicitly acknowledged in name and structure. This is a key step to strengthen coherence, deliver results, and ensure impact at the national level – key priorities of UN efforts to mainstream human rights in all areas.

We encourage you, Excellency, in your role as leader of this international body founded on the promotion and defense of human rights, to insist on a human rights-based approach in the SDG process. **In particular, we implore you to encourage that the Open Working Group report includes an explicit reference to the need to guarantee the human right to water and sanitation.** If the United Nations does not stand up for human rights, who will?

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of our highest consideration.

Signed:

Congregation of the Mission, Joseph Foley  
Council of Canadian’s Blue Planet Project, Meera Karunanathan  
Dominican Leadership Conference, Margaret Mayce  
Edmund Rice International, Kevin Cawley  
Feminist Task Force, Rosa Lizarde  
Franciscans International, Amanda Lyons  
General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, Rev. Kathleen Stone  
International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Elsa Muttathu  
Loretto Community, Sally Dunne  
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), Daniel LeBlanc  
Passionists International, Francisco J. Murray  
Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, Celine Paramundayil  
Sisters of Mercy, Mercy International Association at the UN, Áine O’Connor  
Temple of Understanding, Grove Harris  
VIVAT International, Felix Jones & Zelia Cordeiro

Contact person: Sr. Áine O’Connor, RSM at [mgc@mercyinternational.ie](mailto:mgc@mercyinternational.ie)  
Sisters of Mercy  
777 UN Plaza, 6H  
NY, NY, 10017