



Dear ECCR members, partners and friends

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Corporate engagement and advocacy

Canadian tar sands: co-signatories invited for joint letters in preparation for BP and Shell

In 2008 ECCR presented a statement of investor concern at BP's AGM regarding its involvement in the Canadian tar sands sector and subsequently met with the company. Tar sands' climate change and associate risks are highlighted in a report from [PLATFORM](#) and Greenpeace, [BP and Shell: rising risks in tar sands investment](#). PLATFORM and [Innovest](#) are now co-ordinating preparation of letters for joint signature by institutional investors and civil society organisations raising concerns with both BP and Shell. ECCR will circulate the letter inviting co-signature to all full corporate members and donor-partners. Corporate associate members wishing to see the letter – ideally with a view to co-signing - are invited to inform [Miles Litvinoff](#) (tel. 020 8965 9682) in the next few weeks

Sierra Club drops Shell shareholder resolution – new Companies Act deadline

ECCR has been informed by the Sierra Club that, largely for reasons of resources, it does not intend to go ahead this year in bringing a shareholder resolution to the AGM of Royal Dutch Shell (19 May) focusing on company operations in Alaska's Beaufort and Chukchi seas. Sierra have written to ECCR: 'We appreciate your support on this issue and hope that we can continue to work together at some point in the future. You have been extremely helpful and we regret that we cannot continue at this time.'

Under the provisions of the Companies Act 2006, the company concerned is not obliged to meet the costs of circulating an AGM resolution unless this is received before the end of the financial year preceding the AGM. Shell's financial year ended on 31 December.

BHP Billiton reply on mining threats to people and environment inadequate - CAFOD

CAFOD's October 2008 report *Kept in the Dark* highlighted concerns about BHP Billiton's Hallmark project in the Philippines, including flawed community consent, bribery by BHP's joint venture partner, lack of transparency and potential dangers to the environment. BHP Billiton says it has conducted an audit of the consent process and found no problems but has been unwilling to share findings with CAFOD. CAFOD is calling on BHP Billiton to make its investigation findings public. Read CAFOD's [Kept in the Dark](#) report and executive summary. Read the [correspondence](#) between CAFOD and BHP Billiton.

UK Parliament Joint Committee on Human Rights call for evidence on business and human rights

The Joint Committee on Human Rights is inquiring into how businesses can affect human rights both positively and negatively, how business activities engage the relative responsibilities of the UK government and individual businesses, and whether the existing UK regulatory, legal and voluntary framework provides adequate guidance and clarity to business and adequate protection to individual rights. The committee has called for written evidence and views on other matters relevant to business and human rights for consideration, by 1 May. For further details see [Joint Committee on Human Rights](#). ECCR and Working Group on Mining in the Philippines partners plan to submit evidence.

ActionAid seeks support for the Kondh in Orissa against Vedanta Resources

ActionAid has asked ECCR to alert members and partners to its campaign in support of the Kondh people of the Niyamgiri hills in Orissa, India. The Kondh's ancestral lands and livelihoods are threatened by an open-pit bauxite (aluminium ore) mine planned by UK-registered Vedanta Resources Plc. Vedanta is about to start developing the mine, which according to reports is likely to result in severe deforestation, threaten key water sources and destroy local ecosystems. ActionAid is asking concerned people to write to the Indian High Commissioner. For further details see [Vedanta: take action now!](#) or contact [Lotty Reynolds](#) (020 7561 7558).

Responsible investment

Triodos Bank launches major new microfinance fund

ECCR corporate member [Triodos Bank](#) has announced the launch of the Triodos Microfinance Fund, which aims to increase access to financial services for the working poor in developing countries. The fund is expected to grow from EUR 22 million to EUR 100 million by the end of the year as new investors participate. Triodos has been a pioneering provider of capital to the microfinance sector since 1994, and its new microfinance fund finances well over 100 microfinance institutions across 38 developing countries. The fund is open for institutional investors across Europe and a launch to

individual investors is planned shortly. Participants include ECCR corporate members CCLA and Cazenove Capital Management. Contacts: UK - [Alex Connor](#) (020 7138 3215); Netherlands - [Gera van Wijk](#) (+31 30 693 65 90).

EIRIS: companies in emerging markets catching up on environmental, social and governance issues

Some emerging market companies now match the performance of their peers in developed countries on environmental issues, but many more lag behind on human rights, according to a new report published by Sustainable Investment Research Analyst Network ([SIRAN](#)), a working group of the (US) Social Investment Forum in partnership with ECCR donor-partner [EIRIS](#). Countries assessed in the study include Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Israel, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Russia and South Africa. [A Review of ESG Practices in Large Emerging Market Companies](#).

Events

ECCR and partners hold successful conference in Ireland

A capacity audience of 80 delegates from a broad spectrum of Irish church-based and secular organisations gathered in Dublin on 5 March 2009 for the conference on [Companies, Communities and Religious Investors](#). ECCR jointly organised the event with Trócaire, Irish Inter-Church Centre, Religious Society of Friends in Ireland, Missionary Oblates, Missionary Society of St Columban, Christian Aid Ireland and 3iG. Speakers included representatives of the RC Church in Nigeria, the Inter-Church Committee on Social Issues, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, EIRIS, Oikocredit and L&P Financial Trustees. A conference report will be available shortly.

ECCR workshop at the Ecumenical World Development Consultation, 19 March, Hoddesdon

How can we work together to make change happen? ECCR will lead a workshop on 'Working together to promote corporate and investor responsibility', on Thursday 19 March, from 5.15-6.45 pm, at [Partnership for Development: the Ecumenical World Development Consultation](#) 2009, High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts. Further details of the three-day event (18-20 March) are available from [Flo Da Gama](#) (020 7523 2180)

ECCR can provide a speaker for regional or local church meetings and events, and for colleges and schools. Please contact [Helen Boothroyd](#) (tel. 01325 580028).

Focus on Burma at Brentwood RC Diocese Commission for Justice & Social Responsibility conference, 21 March

All are warmly invited to this conference, which combines a report on work during 2008 with a talk by James Mawdsley, a tireless campaigner for human rights and democracy in Burma who was imprisoned by the regime. Bishop Thomas McMahon will open the conference, which runs from 10.30 am to 1 pm. Further details from the [Diocese of Brentwood](#) or from [CJSR](#) (01277 265290)..

Put People First: ecumenical service and march, 28 March, London

On Saturday 28 March thousands of people will march through London as part of a global campaign to challenge the G20 leaders to deliver decent jobs and public services for all, an end to global poverty and inequality and a green economy, when they meet in London on 2 April 2009. All are also warmly invited to an ecumenical service at Central Hall Westminster at 11.00 am (music and worship from 10.30 am) before joining the march in Parliament Square en route for Hyde Park. Participants in the service include Joel Edwards (Micah Challenge), Richard Chartres (Bishop of London), Father Joe

Komakoma (Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference, Zambia) and Christine Allen (Progressio). Among the many civil society organisations supporting the 'Jobs, Justice, Climate' platform are ECCR, CAFOD, Christian Aid and Traidcraft. www.putpeoplefirst.org.uk

How would religion regulate financial markets? JustShare debate, 31 March, London

What do Judaism, Islam and Christianity have to say about money and markets? What sorts of regulation would their teachings suggest and why? Join the Rt Rev. Peter Selby, former Bishop of Worcester and Deputy Chair of the Church of England's Ethical Investment Advisory Group, Mr Tarek El Diwany, partner at Islamic finance consultancy Zest Advisory, and Zaki Cooper, previously adviser to Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sachs and currently Director of Business for New Europe, for this topical inter-faith debate organised by [JustShare](#). Chair: Claire Foster, Director of the Ethical Dimension and of the St Paul's Institute. Tuesday 31 March, 1.05 pm, St Mary-le-Bow Church, Cheapside, London EC2V 6AU. All are welcome. Further details from [Rachel Lindley](#) (07732 014181).

National Ethical Investment Week – new dates (November 2009)

National Ethical Investment Week has been rescheduled to take place from 8 to 14 November. ECCR is working with UKSIF the sustainable investment and finance association on a guide to help churches get involved through worship, displays and newsletter articles. For further details please visit www.neiw.org or contact [Helen Boothroyd](#) (tel. 01325 580028).

ECCR news

The *Bench Marks*: members invited to contribute to review

Many ECCR members and partners will be familiar with the [Principles for Global Corporate Responsibility: Bench Marks for Measuring Business Performance](#), whose 2003 edition resulted from a collaboration between ECCR, ICCR (US), Kairos (Canada) and many others. The [Bench Marks Foundation](#) (South Africa) is planning a review of the document with a view to updating and revising it. ECCR members who would like to contribute to the process are invited to contact [Suzanne Ismail](#) (020 7663 1055).

ECCR welcomes new Board members

ECCR is very pleased to welcome three new members to its Board, elected at its February Board meeting. Ian Halstead represents Dublin-based corporate associate member L&P Financial Trustees. Rev. Angela Overton-Benge represents corporate full member the Industrial Mission Association and works with ISR (churches council for industry and social responsibility) in Swindon. Rev. David de Verny, an individual associate member, is Chaplain at the University of Hull, was formerly Ecumenical Chaplain with New Arrival Communities in Lincolnshire, and spoke at ECCR's 2008 debate [Migrant Workers: Rights and Responsibilities](#).

In this month's ECCR *Bulletin*

The March issue of ECCR's [Bulletin](#) – available quarterly to members and partners - features articles on mining in the Philippines, Coca Cola in India, the need for a UK Commission on business and human rights, and a report on the Churches Together conference on the Economic Crisis. [Request a copy](#).

With all good wishes.

The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility
PO Box 500, Oxford OX1 1ZL, UK
www.eccr.org.uk
e. info@eccr.org.uk
t. +44 (0)1865 245349

ECCR is a company limited by guarantee in England & Wales (No. 2764183) and a Body in Association with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

Miles Litvinoff, Co-ordinator
e. miles.litvinoff@eccr.org.uk
t. +44 (0)20 8965 9682
m. +44 (0)7984 720103

ECCR's monthly e-newsletter reaches more than 300 people and is circulated midway through every month except August. Members and partners are welcome to submit brief news items for inclusion. Please send to [Miles Litvinoff](#).

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