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The Honorable Mary L. Schapiro and
Commissioners
Securities and Exchange Commission
100 F St. NE
Washington, DC 20549

Dear Chairman Schapiro,

In the name of the Episcopal Conference of Catholic Bishops of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (CENCO), I thank you for giving us the opportunity to meet with you on October 28, 2011 in Washington to give you a clear picture of how the struggle over conflict minerals is affecting the people in our country. We have written to you before about the terrible suffering of the people in our parishes and dioceses. We are writing to you and the Commissioners now because our brothers and sisters in the eastern Congo need to be able to live without fear and need to have better livelihood options, and we believe that your rules can do that.

Our Conference is grateful for Section 1502 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. It is a concrete expression of solidarity with the women, families and communities who have suffered at the hands of those who destroy our communities to mine our resources. Improvements in transparency of the minerals trade in the eastern Congo are happening largely because of the legislation, and your rules can assure that they continue. We are happy that other countries are interested in following the United States' example.

We are grateful that the SEC has put so much careful thought into writing the rules for Section 1502. We understand that you will be finalizing these rules very soon and we thank you for that. We hope you will consider the following requests:

- We ask you to set clear and specific dates for when company reporting will take effect. Using benchmarks or trigger points will prolong the uncertainty that is causing so much trouble and suffering. We also ask that these dates be in the near future so that the violence that is destroying so many lives will not be prolonged.
- We ask that the rules cover all companies, as you proposed.
- We ask that there be no *de minimis* requirement.
- We urge you to ensure that the key information companies provide to the SEC will be available to the public, which will allow the Congolese people to verify the information.

The Catholic Church works with those who have suffered all across the eastern Congo. The Church is present with people in mining villages as well as in the towns. We have heard that there has been some controversy over impacts of the law on the Congolese people. From our work and extensive network on the ground, we know that most people in eastern Congo depend on agriculture, not mining, for their livelihood. Many people believe that their family's poverty is linked to the violence connected to mining. As a result of the de facto embargo instituted by some companies, some people are losing the income they made from the mines, while others continue to work. We know, however, that the meager income they receive comes from difficult and often dangerous jobs that risk their health and security. We know that many children are working in these mines under the same conditions. We also know that mining employs a relatively small percentage of people in the eastern Congo. Many more people have been displaced by the violence than receive income from mining.

In the long term, people's livelihoods cannot truly improve while armed groups control the economy and people live with insecurity and violence. While some people lose income from mining in the short term, given the working conditions and the suffering caused by armed groups' control over so much of the mining sector in the east, people across the region believe there will be gains in the medium term. Thus, we firmly believe that the law and your strong rules will help improve the situation in the eastern Congo.

Your rules will have a profound moral as well as economic impact. We look forward to the opportunity to share with you in the future the improvements in the lives of our brothers and sisters in the eastern Congo that you will have helped create.

Sincerely yours,



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✶ Nicolas Djomo Lola
Bishop of Tshumbe
President, Catholic Episcopal
Conference of the Democratic
Republic of the Congo