

# Climate Justice, Economic Justice, Human Rights: Corporate Accountability Initiative

Our burgeoning transition away from fossil fuels offers us an opportunity to learn from our previous mistakes as a global society. As we move to adopt battery power on an unprecedented scale, it is incumbent upon us to do so in an ethical and just manner. Even now we have seen the global demand for batteries give rise to resource extraction systems replete with human rights abuses, environmental degradation, and corporate malfeasance. As such, the battery/extractive sector is an optimal area for us to begin our work.

In 2021, we are launching two distinct pilot projects within this battery/extractives space designed to:

- Drive corporate accountability at the intersection of climate justice, economic justice, and human rights in the context of COVID-19 recovery
- Amplify and elevate voices of individuals facing injustice, specifically from climate-vulnerable communities
- Support the strategic campaigning and narrative development of JCCG partner organizations
- Expose and push back on the corporate capture of governance mechanisms

## **Pilot Project 1: Gender responsivity in cobalt mining governance; Democratic Republic of Congo**

Cobalt is a key raw material in the production of lithium-ion battery cathodes. More than half of the world's cobalt reserves are in DRC, and due to explosive EV demand, the demand for raw cobalt could quadruple by 2030.

Despite the potential this sector holds for contributing to fight extreme poverty in the country, poor governance and exploitative working conditions, particularly in the artisanal mining sector, have raised important human rights and inequality concerns about whether this potential can be realized. Risks include: child labor; exposure to toxic chemicals and dust; and insufficient occupational health and safety conditions.

This project will focus on supporting the gender-responsive formalization of DRC's artisanal cobalt sector. We will do this by increasing the capacities of women and men engaged in artisanal cobalt mining to comply with the new mining Code while ensuring women's rights are protected in the overall formalization effort. This will include strengthening the influencing capacities of artisanal cooperatives, as well as improving their abilities to comply with environmental and occupational health and safety requirements.

## **Pilot Project 2: Supporting communities to stop deep sea mining; Pacific Islands**

After being dismissed for decades as a hypothetical boondoggle, the threat of widespread deep sea mining has recently returned to menace our planet. The growing global demand for battery cathode elements, most notably manganese and nickel, has led several corporations to begin paving the way for the exploitation of the seabed. It is the overwhelming view among JCCG partner groups that the threats posed by deep sea mining to island communities, marine ecology, and our planet at large far outweigh the technology's potential benefits. The Pacific Island groups active on this issue are acutely conscious of the importance of a healthy ocean for employment, food security and ancient cultural and spiritual values. DSM's inescapably destructive nature is a direct contradiction to the region's history of sustainable marine management and traditional custodial practices. Pacific communities have overwhelmingly greeted the concept of DSM as a cultural affront.

This project will support two distinct Pacific Island groups active in opposing deep sea mining and the corporate entities behind it. The increasing capture of international regulatory authority by mining conglomerates makes it imperative to empower and elevate voices from climate-vulnerable communities in the Pacific Islands. Our work here aims to support the outreach efforts of local communities, strengthen networks between local anti-DSM campaigning groups, and influence national policy in key Pacific Island states.