

Rights Action  
August 13, 2015

## United Church Of Canada Calls On Pension Board To Divest Its Goldcorp Inc. Shares

*"The business of divesting isn't going to have a huge economic impact, but it is going to give a very large public message, and that is what we are looking for—to raise awareness and influence."*

When will the **Canada Pension Plan (CPP)** implement human rights, environmental and health standards in its investment criteria, and stop investing in harmful, exploitative companies? Please write to the CPP - and your own pension and investment funds – and ask questions about who and what they invest in and profit from?

- **What to do?**: See below
- **Delegation to Honduras** (including communities harmed by Goldcorp Inc.): See below

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### Will Of The Church Is To Divest Of Goldcorp Shares

<http://www.gc42.ca/news/will-church-divest-goldcorp-shares>

August 11, 2015, by Kevin Cox

The United Church of Canada wants its pension board to sell its shares in Goldcorp. The motion calling for divestment was approved on Aug. 11 by the Bakeapple (Yellow) Commission, one of three decision-making bodies of General Council 42. The commission heard passionate arguments about Goldcorp's response to alleged environmental and human rights violations at its Guatemalan Marlin mine and about the merits of shareholder engagement.

The motion instructs the General Secretary "to communicate to The United Church of Canada Pension Board that the will of the church is to divest of its shares in Goldcorp and make public that divestment." The 47,000 shares held by the United Church pension board were worth about \$900,000 in Sept. 2014.

Emma Hebb of Maritime Conference, the Conference that put forward the divestment motion, said that while there are reports of Goldcorp improving its mining operations in Guatemala, the church's partners in that country say they haven't experienced that progress on the ground.

Hebb, who has visited Guatemala and spoken to people affected by Goldcorp's operations, said the local people have not given their consent to mining operations. She said there is political corruption in Guatemala, and people living near mines do not have the protection they need.

She also rejected the idea that shareholder engagement would help those living near a Goldcorp mine in Guatemala. "No matter what amount of shareholder engagement there is, the company isn't going to stop mining where it has permits to mine," Hebb said. "This [divestment] is a step we have to take for our partners."

Jean Macdonald of British Columbia Conference noted that the Goldcorp investment only makes up .09 percent of the pension board investment portfolio. "The business of divesting isn't going to have a huge economic impact, but it is going to give a very large public message, and that is what we are looking for—to raise awareness and influence."

But Ken Thomas of Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario said that the motion sends another message to Goldcorp, which has improved its record on environmental and human rights at the urging of the pension board. "I am concerned about the message we are sending when we engage somebody and they take positive steps and we say 'go to hell, we are going to divest anyway,'" he said.

Marcus Robertson, chair of the pension board, said some despicable actions at the Guatemala mine took place before Goldcorp acquired it. "I really do believe there have been some positive changes," Robertson said.

Bill Sheaves of Quinte Conference said the actions of the pension board and pressure from the United Church pushed Goldcorp to improve its operations. "If we divest, then we will have no say in the actions of Goldcorp, and therefore it will just be a gesture when we could do something positive," Sheaves said.

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#### **Tax-Deductible Donations**

To support mining harmed campesino and indigenous communities, in Honduras and Guatemala, struggling for community-controlled development, human rights and the environment, struggling against the impunity and corruption of global mining companies and their governments, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- United States: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887
- Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8
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- To donate stock, contact: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

**Delegation to Honduras, November 7-15, 2015**

**“Connecting the Dots from the Global to the Local: Understanding the Environmental, Human Rights, Poverty and Impunity Crisis in Honduras”**

Rights Action and the Mir Centre for Peace at Selkirk College invite you to join this educational seminar trip to Honduras (including a visit with communities suffering on-going health harms due to Goldcorp's 2000-2008 mining operation).

- Flyer: <http://rightsaction.org/action-content/honduras-education-seminar-trip>
- More info: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

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