



Committee on International Justice and Peace

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3160

WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG/JPHD • FAX 202-541-3339

June 22, 2009

Mons. Pedro Barreto Jimeno, SJ
Archbishop of Huancayo
President, Social Action Commission (CEAS)
Peruvian Bishops' Conference

Dear Archbishop Barreto:

Thank you for your letter of June 8, 2009, and for the copy of the May 5, 2009 statement of the bishops of the Amazonian region of Peru. As Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I write to express the solidarity of our Conference with the Bishops' Conference of Peru (CEP) at this challenging time.

In light of the serious events and tensions that have even led to a tragic loss of lives, a situation of deep concern for both your entire Conference and in a particular way for the bishops and communities of the Peruvian Amazon region, we join you in expressing hope for a peaceful and just resolution to this tense and difficult situation. We also affirm the work of the Church in offering humanitarian assistance to victims and their families and working to create opportunities to renew dialogue for a nonviolent and just resolution of the conflict.

In 2007, the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean expressed increased concern regarding some practices of extractive industries in the region when they stated:

Today the natural wealth of Latin America and the Caribbean is being subjected to an irrational exploitation that is leaving ruin and even death in its wake, throughout our region. ... The devastation of our forests and biodiversity through a selfish predatory attitude, involves the moral responsibility of those who promote it because they are jeopardizing the life of millions of people, and particularly the milieu of peasants and indigenous, who are pushed out toward hillside lands and into large cities where they live overcrowded in the encircling rings of poverty.

(Fifth Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean, Concluding Document, 2007, no. 473.)

As our shared faith tradition teaches: "The human being is the author, center and goal of all economic and social life. The decisive point of the social question is that goods created by God for everyone should in fact reach everyone in accordance with justice and with the help of charity." (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, # 2459) Integral human development is a right that flows from the dignity of each person who must be the protagonist in his or her own development. Changes in Peruvian regulations that impact the environment, the management of natural resources and the right of indigenous and local communities to be consulted on land use took place following the ratification of the U.S.-Peru Free Trade Agreement are of deep concern to the very people who should share in the benefits of a proper development of natural resources.

Letter to Mons. Pedro Barreto Jimeno, SJ
June 22, 2009
Page 2

In a spirit of solidarity I echo the statement of the Bishops of the Amazonian Region of Peru who have called for “a willingness to dialogue and seek fair, peaceful solutions” in the areas impacted by increased oil and gas exploration and related concerns. It is appropriate that they reiterated the call of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean to “pursue an alternative development model, one that is comprehensive and communal, based on an ethics that includes responsibility for an authentic natural and human ecology, which is based on the gospel of justice, solidarity, and the universal destination of goods....” (Fifth Conference, Concluding Document, 2007, no. 474c.)

I understand that this remains a challenging time for the Church in Peru, but it is encouraging that the Peruvian Bishop's Conference agreed on June 9 to participate in a task force to help facilitate dialogue between government institutions and the peoples of the Amazonian region of Peru. I will pray for your efforts to peacefully resolve the conflict in ways that uphold basic human rights and will bring this situation to the attention of State Department officials in our own nation.

In prayerful solidarity, I remain,

Fraternally yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Howard J. Hubbard
Bishop of Albany
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace

CC:

Bishop José Luis Astigarraga, C.P. Vicariate of Yurimaguas
Bishop Santiago García de la Rasilla, S.J. - Vicariate of Jaén
Bishop Gaetano Galbusera, S.D.B. - Vicariate of Pucallpa
Bishop Juan Tomás Oliver, O.F.M. Vicariate of Requena
Bishop Julián García, O.S.A. - Vicariate of Iquitos
Bishop Alberto Campos, O.F.M. Vicariate of San José de Amazonas
Bishop Gerardo Zerdin, O.F.M. - Vicariate of San Ramón
Bishop Francisco González, O.P. - Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado
Bishop Rafael Alfonso Escudero López-Brea - Territorial Prelature of Moyobamba