

ACTION 2. Peace Dividend + Election Watch 2011

(email to foreign companies operating in the DR Congo)

Dear [AUTO INSERT RECIPIENT NAME],

As a socially responsible company operating in the DR Congo, you already give back and support the local communities where you operate.

I am writing to ask you to do more.

I am writing to ask you to: 1) help build a stable peace in the east and 2) help ensure the November presidential elections are free and fair.

Stable Peace Requires a Peace Dividend. As you know, formal agreements brought peace to most of the country, but the east has never been stable or free from conflict. Over the past 12 months or so, there has been a visible increase in violent attacks by various rebel groups, armed Mai Mai, and out of control Congolese soldiers. If the eastern provinces explode, the whole country explodes. Congolese of the eastern region need security and a personal, tangible benefit from peace – a 'Peace Dividend'. This means, in part, being able to make a living, and the peaceful return home of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Election Monitoring to Ensure Free and Fair Elections. Free and fair elections will not guarantee peace, stability and rule of law. But if the November presidential elections are not internationally acclaimed as free and fair, there is a very real risk that the current conflict will explode out of control in all parts of the country.

What does this have to do with you? Many foreign companies have already withdrawn from the DR Congo due to corruption or to protect their corporation reputation. If the conflict spreads, if rule of law deteriorates, if international scrutiny on foreign investors intensifies, you may also feel the pressure to walk away from your investment.

We want you to stay on in the DR Congo and to continue to enrich the people and the economy.

I urge your company to take two actions. Two politically neutral actions.

1. Donate to livelihood training, microfinance and/or refugee resettlement projects in the eastern region. THIS is the peace dividend that is needed for peace and stability. (Reputable NGOs doing this kind of work include: Norwegian Refugee Council, CARE USA, Heal Africa, Hope International, World Relief, UMCOR, Women for Women International, Search for Common Ground)

2. Donate \$25,000 to the Carter Center for an Election Observation Mission. This is a one-time request to help ensure the November presidential elections are internationally recognized as free and fair. How much is your business in the DR Congo worth? The Carter Center is the most respected independent non-governmental voice in international election monitoring.

(I have no personal affiliation of any kind with the organizations mentioned above.)

By taking these two actions, you CAN help foster stable peace, democracy and rule of law in the DR Congo. Your donations WILL make a difference.

You already support the local communities where you operate. I am asking you to do more. Now.

With respect,

Name:

Country: