



March 29th - April 1st 2012

Infertility due to mining and hydroelectric dams in West Africa

Background

1. Since 2002, the chemicals used in gold mining in Mali, including cyanide, have been found in the water in neighbouring Senegal. The rainy season promotes the transport of toxic waste in the groundwater and the surrounding creeks. The only water sources are now polluted. The treatment of polluted water from the mining process is supposed to follow strict international, recognized standards but chemical levels have, at times, been double the acceptable levels.
2. The South African financial press has confirmed the chemicals needed for gold mining have contaminated not only "the local water" in Senegal but also the Senegal River flowing from Mali through to Mauritania.
3. Additionally, concerns are growing with respect to world supplies of fresh water; the extraction processes are voracious in water demand. In 2002, according to AngloGold, the project has pumped more than 5.6 million m³ of water, 177 litres per second, to meet the needs of the mine.
4. The results of these chemicals, such as cyanide and arsenic, have created an urgent situation in the increasing number of miscarriages to the extent that there is fear for the future of the community. Since the Malian government is a minority shareholder of the project, it appears indifferent to the problem.

Resolution

Therefore the Global Greens will:

1. Prepare a petition bringing global attention to the misuse of fresh water, and the lack of proper protection and treatment of polluted waste waters;
2. Denounce foreign enterprises in West Africa which are exploiting non-renewable mineral resources and fail to either meet good governance practices, or minimum environmental standards;
3. Ensure that international development projects do not force the migration of established populations along the rivers in order to build hydropower dams that serve only the industries related to mining;
4. Work to preserve potable water for Malians, Mauritians, Senegalese and other countries of West Africa or the South-Sahelian, which is being diverted for mining and hydroelectric projects;
5. Demand that international development aid programs stop financing dams and hydro-electricity power plants until satisfactory agreements have been made with local population to supply potable water and compensation for land use.