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INVESTORS SPEAK OUT AGAINST FUELING OF CONGO WAR BY CONFLICT MINERALS

Investors call for companies to be responsible with mineral sourcing

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 11 -- This week a group of investors, including faith-based and global institutional investors with assets close to \$200 billion, released a statement calling on companies to be more proactive in ensuring the minerals in their electronics components are not fueling the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which has claimed more than 5 million lives.

“We are asking companies to leverage their economic power to bring about positive change in the Congo,” said Patricia Jurewicz, Director of the Responsible Sourcing Network, a project of As You Sow. “Although brands are several tiers away from where the abuse is happening, these minerals do find their way into consumer products and brands have a responsibility to make sure their products are not inadvertently financing the systemic rape and murder of innocent civilians.”

The 59 signatories are asking companies to take the following actions:

- Make public statements and explain what the companies are doing to address the issue;
- Develop procedures to ensure conflict minerals do not enter their supply chains;
- Work with suppliers to make sure their policies are being adhered to;
- Work with stakeholders to support diplomatic, political and economic strategies to end the conflict.

Lauren Compere, Senior Vice President and Director of Shareholder Advocacy at Boston Common Asset Management noted that there is a risk for shareholders who are invested in companies, especially consumer-oriented ones that do not have a good handle on mapping their entire supply chain. “Over the last few years, we have seen supply chain traceability move from a ‘nice to know’ to a necessity as more companies become aware of their exposure to egregious human rights violations taking place at the bottom of their supply chain. A perfect example of this is the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme, an international verification system supported by the United Nations to halt the export of ‘blood diamonds’ from Central Africa.”

The DRC is one of the most mineral-rich countries in the world, with sizeable deposits of gold, tantalum, tin and tungsten. The majority of the minerals are smuggled to neighboring countries where they are sold to smelters, and ultimately find their way into products such as cell phones, laptops, and video games, as well as components for automobiles, airplane engines, and medical devices. While the curtailment of the conflict

mineral trade alone will not put an end to the conflict, it can play a vital role in a larger, comprehensive strategy for terminating this 12-year-old civil war.

“It is critical that companies responsibly source minerals from regions where conflict will not threaten their supply chain access,” said Aditi Mohapatra of Calvert Asset Management Company, Inc., a sustainable and responsible investment firm with over \$14 billion in assets under management. “Further, these companies must publicly condemn conflict mineral use and work with their suppliers to ensure that sourcing policies are being adhered to. This type of long-term planning is at the heart of responsible investing, and investors are eager to see companies show this type of foresight.”

To read the full statement and a list of signatories, click [here](#)

About As You Sow

As You Sow is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting corporate social responsibility and shareholder advocacy. www.asyousow.org

About Boston Common Asset Management

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