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Review of the Rosia Montana Relocation and Resettlement Action Plan (RRAP)

The following information discusses RMGC's Relocation and Resettlement Plan based on my experience in the field of development-induced displacements. Also, I should add that my perspective is greatly influenced by Prof. Michael Cernea, a world-renown scholar of resettlement and first expert in this field at the World Bank. Having benefited from Prof. Cernea's guidance during my studies and research, he suggested that I should evaluate this resettlement plan:

First of all, on an ethical level, development projects that require from a community to sacrifice its native lands need a strong justification for their demand. Since it has been shown how traumatizing the process of uprooting is for people, a project involving such displacements needs first and foremost to probe its utility, to show why it is worth putting the people through such hardships.

RMGC cannot claim that its gold mining project is done for the "common good", as the building of infrastructure or other public utilities would be. It is a private-sector project done for private interests. It therefore claims that, although its primary purpose is profit, the project can also ensure the *sustainable development* of the community it will displace.

The public utility of the project has not been yet demonstrated, thus there is no circumstance for the relocation and resettlement action. The resettlement and relocation program started back in 2002, "at the request of the community", according to the RMGC declarations. Since the project is advertised as being supported by the majority of the community, it was expected that a majority of the population would chose the resettlement package at Piatra Alba, thus grasping the benefits of the projects, as RMGC claims. Contrary to this, in what concerns the community in Piatra Albă, the new Roșia Montană community in RMGC's vision, **up to this moment no one who wishes to resettle there**. This is admitted in the **Non-technical summary**: "*From the population affected by resettlement and relocation, 42% opted for the relocation package, according to RRAP provisions. The rest of 58% of the community are waiting for the EIM results*".¹ That means that the resettlement project is not considered as an opportunity by the local community, and they rather move in different other locations than be a part of the so-called community development process.

It is estimated that the number of workplaces in the project will be of approximately 1200 in the projection stage and 560 in the exploitation stage. However, at this moment there are no exact data referring to the necessary qualifications and the ability of the community to cover these qualifications. On the other hand, suppliers will be employed in the construction stage that can bring their

¹ Non-technical summary, p. 8

own workforce. The hiring policy which is being elaborated does not constitute sufficient commitment for the hiring of people from the community. If we consider the fact that there were 1288 people employed in mining in 2004² it is obvious that the RMGC project does not sustainably solve the workplace problem. Thus the public utility of the project cannot be proved.

Moreover, losing homesteads and the cultural space of a community tends to create strong alienation, family tragedy, as well as depressive nostalgia for the birthplace. The marginalization of resettled people is in close relation to losing their home. Feeling unjustly treated, people lose their self-confidence, they feel stigmatized, as they lose their social status, and they develop a refugee mentality they cannot shed for the rest of their lives. In the present case, when a part of the community does not agree and does not accept the resettlement and relocation process, speaking of managing sustainable development from the perspective of this process is unacceptable. The strong opposition to the project inside the community also stands in the way of declaring the project as a public utility one.

Once a project makes the proof that it is needed and desirable, and that it has minimized the extent of the involuntary resettlement involved³, it needs to build a resettlement plan. The social impact of the RMGC project is divided in direct impacts and indirect impacts⁴ and it is mentioned that the direct impacts, the most important ones, are detailed in the Resettlement and Relocation Action Plan. But the plan has no credibility, because the document is not included in the official EIA report. Moreover, there are several sendings to the Resettlement and Relocation Action Plan inside the EIA documentation, even though such a document is separated by the official EIA documentation. In this case a detailed analysis of the RRAP cannot be taken into consideration during the evaluation process of the EIA, made by the technical commission of the Environmental Ministry. Thus the document does not yet stand for the official relocation and resettlement action plans.

But even a quick look on the Relocation and Resettlement plan provided by RMGC was enough to show some major deficiencies.

The World Bank strongly recommends that the resettlement of people whose livelihoods are land-based, follows a land-for-land strategy. (O.P. 4.12 Para.11). In other words, the resettlement plan should ensure that the displaced persons are provided with new agricultural sites that are at least the equivalent of their old sites. (O.P. 4.12 Para 6b) Therefore rural resettlement plans should start by establishing the basic indicator: *the amount of land necessary* to re-establish those displaced on a productive basis. (Cernea, Economics of Involuntary Resettlement, 1999, a World Bank Publication)

Or, the resettlement site chosen by RMGC cannot ensure that such a measure is respected. Should all the locals from Rosia Montana choose the resettlement package, RMGC needs to ensure that all of them can continue their traditional way of living in order not to be strongly affected by the imminent change. The amount of land

² Plan for the sustainable development of the community, p. 58

³ According to the first requirement imposed by the World Bank in its resettlement policy (O.P. 4.12) that "Involuntary resettlement should be avoided where feasible, or minimized, exploring all viable alternative project designs".

⁴ 4.8 The Social and Economic Environment, Potential impact, p. 40.

that RMGC will use for the mining project is 1258 hectares, from which more than 1000 are agricultural fields. The RRAP stipulates that around 50 hectares of community owned land are available in the new village of Piatra Alba and 50 hectares of private agricultural land. There are no data for the resettlement area in Alba Iulia. The proportion is 10 to 1 thus the locals will not be able to continue to work in the agricultural field. **RRAP does not respect the O.P. 4.12 Para.11 and the O.P. 4.12 Para 6b.**

Another basic requirement of the World Bank resettlement policy is that the resettlement activities provide sufficient *investment* resources to enable the persons displaced by the project to re-establish themselves as self-sustaining producers or wage-earners *and* to share in project benefits. (O.P. 4.12 Para. 2 b). Several studies by Michael Cernea and other international scholars have shown that the restoration of livelihoods cannot be achieved by a simple compensation of lost properties. There is no sufficient compensation, as shown by studies of the last 20 years. As the practice of resettlement has proven, despite this reparation method most resettlers end-up worse off and impoverished. The compensation is structurally incapable of rebuilding the income and means of living the population had before the relocation. Even if supplementary measures are taken, the compensation will not be able to ensure the living standards advocated by the investors.

If RMGC proposes some measures above compensation, these are weak and ineffective, and their only effect is to increase the dependency of the uprooted on the Project. The fact that the locals from Piatra Alba will have a guaranteed job at the mining exploitation is not a sustainable way to treat the resettlers. All the qualifications courses proposed in the first years of the project are in fields related to the mining project; tourism and agriculture cannot be practiced in the same time with the mining project.

Since there is no financial audit of the project, the amount of the investments and profit cannot be yet estimated. This creates a lack of credibility regarding the possibility of the company to finance all the resettlement and development actions. Moreover, the responsibility of the development actions is delegated to an NGO, 100% independent of RMC. It is not stated anywhere when this Foundation will be established, and when it will become independent from RMGC. At the same time, the fact that the Foundation is responsible for the PDDC implementation and it is 100% independent from RMGC represents a denial of responsibility towards the community.

These are some general comments regarding the RRAP. A detailed analysis of the RRAP will be made after the inclusion of the document in the EIA.

We also ask the Ministry of Environment to require the inclusion of the RRAP in the EIA before taking any decision regarding the environmental permit. Since the relocation and resettlement have already started in 2002, we also require an independent study and monitoring of these actions in order to identify if the relocated and resettled are happy with their new life. Such data should have been, in our opinion, the basis for the redesigned RRAP that RMGC is now presenting.

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EDUCATION

George Washington University

Washington, DC

Study abroad program of one year, September '05 to May '06. First year of Masters in International Development. Coursework included : Development and displacement, Development Anthropology; Race and Minority Relations

Sorbonne University

Paris, France

B.A. in Social Studies, with honors, June 2005. Coursework included: social theory, statistics, macroeconomics, international development, political science
City of Paris Scholarship for academic distinction.

“Saint Sava” high school

Bucharest, Romania

Graduated with honors, June 2002

WORK EXPERIENCE

INTERLIS CONSULTANCY

London, Great Britain

Student researcher in the framework of a European research project for the French Post Office.

Conducted interviews, analyzed data and prepared a 100-page report on the usages of money and the post office by British youth. Gained significant experience researching, interviewing, and writing. Collaborated with a team of 15 student researchers with different cultural backgrounds. Summer 2005

SAINT ANTOINE PUBLIC HOSPITAL

Paris, France

Intern in the patient admissions division. Analyzed the functioning of the admissions service. Designed questionnaires and observation guides. Identified problems and recommended changes in order to improve the service. Spring 2005

UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST, Master of Anthropology

Romania

Student researcher. Conducted fieldwork and data-analysis for a development project in two Romanian villages of the Black Sea. Worked closely with an architecture firm to design a regional development plan. Summer 2004

MUSEUM OF MAGIC

Paris, France

Translator, office assistant. Translated texts from English to French. Processed data, handled customer inquiries, organized files. September 2003- May 2004

MEDIA MONITORING AGENCY

Bucharest, Romania

Media analyst. Monitored and analyzed the image of Romania in the foreign press. 2002 – present

WORLD BANK

Bucharest, Romania

Assistant, Interpreter. Assisted the production of a World Bank documentary on the HIV/AIDS in Romania; Researched, arranged meetings, acted as an interpreter. Summer 2002

ACTIVITIES ET INTERESTS

- Active volunteer involvement at the Community of EMMAUS (social reinsertion) of Pau, France , summer 2003
- Tutoring in English for French students (ages 11 to 20)
- Fieldwork in the Danube Delta – observed and assisted students from the Romanian Master of Anthropology, 2002
- Market research agent for Arthur, Clara et Cie : applied questionnaires on consumption habits

Languages: English, French, Romanian, conversational Spanish and German

Computer Skills: Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Photoshop

Interests: Travel, ballet, ski, international development, Romania.