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AMERICA/ECUADOR - "We can live without gold, never without water" Bishops' reflection on the exploitation of natural resources

Quito (Agenzia Fides) - Through a document entitled "Let us take care fof our planet," the Bishops of Ecuador stressed that this issue constitutes a "major challenge" both for the government and for mining and oil companies, because the extraction resources should be made "without adversely affecting human life and nature." The Bishops explained that this is not to say "a definite and uncritical yes or no to mining and oil extraction, but to try to extensively understand and in detail about the benefits and harms, and then make intelligent, appropriate and courageous decisions ".

The Bishops' document, the final document of the Episcopal Assembly (see Fides 17/04/2012), appears a few months after Ecuador began the exploitation of mineral resources on an industrial scale, the same issue that Bishops call "delicate, complex and controversial. "

In this document, the Bishops of Ecuador invite reflection on the care of health and human life. "We can live without gold, never without water," the document said. They also communicate that they will continue to accompany the brothers and sisters affected by social problems and the dangers derived from oil and mining extraction, through the formation of "environmental awareness".

The document stresses that the artisanal mining extraction has always been held near rivers and lagoons, near the homes of people with high levels of poverty and marginalization. However, "they have not always improved their living conditions. In contrast, most of the population tends to worsen its social, moral and economic development. "

"Social conflicts are numerous and more serious every day," the Bishops said, and are due to organized crime, the promulgation of laws without any prior or legislative consultation, in the absence of environmental protection, or without a free consultation. The text was signed by His Exc. Mgr. Antonio Arregui, President of the Episcopal Conference, and by his Exc. Mgr. Angel Sanchez Loaiza, Secretary of the Episcopal Conference of Ecuador. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 24/4/2012)

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