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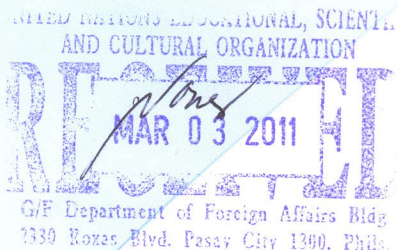
Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

The Director-General



Honorable Dr Alberto G. Romulo
Secretary of Foreign Affairs
Chairman of the National Commission of
the Philippines for UNESCO
G/F Department of Foreign Affairs Bldg.
2330 Roxas Boulevard
Pasay City, Manila
Philippines

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18 FEB 2011

Dear Secretary,

Over the last few days, I have received over 4000 e-mails from environmental and indigenous groups voicing concerns over mining activities in the Palawan Biosphere Reserve, which is located in your country. As you know, the Palawan Biosphere Reserve was included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 1990. A sample e-mail is attached to this letter for your information.

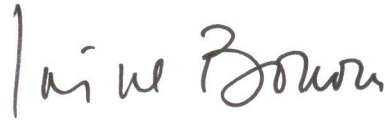
In this context, I wish to invite you kindly to provide a comprehensive report to UNESCO on the mining situation in the Palawan Biosphere Reserve, and to inform me on whether current and future mining activities would have adverse impacts on the core zones of the biosphere reserve. While mining may occur in buffer and transition zones of biosphere reserves, it is on the condition that it respects environmental safeguards and the regulations governing biosphere reserves, as well as the interests and well-being of local and indigenous communities.

We would appreciate it if the Philippines authorities could monitor the situation closely. Ideally, an open meeting with different stakeholders could be organized so that a constructive dialogue could be initiated among the various parties concerned, most particularly as regards environmental conservation, sustainable development and local and indigenous issues. Should the Philippines authorities so wish, a UNESCO mission could be fielded to Palawan at an appropriate time to participate in and contribute to such a process.

.../...

I look forward to hearing from you shortly on this issue and take this opportunity to thank you for your co-operation in implementing biosphere reserve activities in the Philippines.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Irina Bokova'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'I' being particularly large and stylized.

Irina Bokova