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## **Friends of the Earth calls on Canada's Auditor General to investigate corruption by a Canadian mining company in Ecuador**

(Ottawa, June 14, 2006) On the eve of a federal government-led initiative to debate regulating the activities of Canadian mining companies abroad\*, Friends of the Earth has formally petitioned the Auditor General to investigate a junior mining company's activities in Ecuador's endangered Cloud Forest.

"The Canadian government provides massive financial and diplomatic support to its mining companies, and Ascendant Copper's activities (ACX) offer a clear example of how these companies are being allowed to "fly the Canadian flag" abroad with blatant disregard for Canadian values of peace, democracy and corporate accountability," says Beatrice Olivastri, CEO Friends of the Earth Canada. "The voluntary codes of conduct used to regulate mining companies are clearly not working and FOE urges the Harper government to use the opportunity provided by the roundtable process to put into practice the accountability pledge it so often refers to."

The petition submits testimony in the form of a documentary film on community unrest incited by Ascendant Copper tactics to undermine the communities' expressed wish to protect the Intag Cloud Forest from mining exploitation, which can be viewed at [www.ascendantalert.ca](http://www.ascendantalert.ca). It calls on federal Ministers to detail Canada's provision of financial, diplomatic and policy support for the activities of Canadian incorporated mining entities that operate abroad and requests additional reports on the enforcement of corresponding laws and accountability on various codes of practice.

"In a situation where even the Ecuadorian Minister of Energy and Mines is writing to Ascendant stating that it is concerned with the escalation of conflict in the Intag and abdicating the government's responsibility for the social problems caused by the company's activities, where are the affected communities to turn?" asks Andrée Germain, International Campaigner for Friends of the Earth. "When you listen to the Minister of Foreign Affairs talk about Canada's respect for democracy, human rights, the rule of law, indigenous issues, civil society participation and corporate social responsibility, you have to wonder if he's even aware of the role his government is playing in facilitating the advancement of mining in the Intag Cloud Forest."

"The proposed Junin mine is an expensive White Elephant that is completely at odds with what we hear about Canadian values," says Carlos Zorrilla, President of Decoin. "We are shocked and dismayed by Ascendant Copper's underhanded tactics that ride roughshod over democratic processes, generating deep social conflicts in our area. Is this the kind of company that represents Canada today?"

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*\*The first of the Canadian government's national roundtables on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the extractives sector takes place in Vancouver on June 14-15. It brings Canadian and international experts together to participate in discussions on international human rights and environmental standards and benchmarks while operating abroad.*