



SARSTOON TEMASH INSTITUTE FOR INDIGENOUS MANAGEMENT

81 Main Street, Punta Gorda Town, Toledo District, Belize C.A.

Phone: 501-722-0103 . Fax: 501-722-0124

E-mail: satiim@btl.net. Website: www.satiim.org.bz

Immediate Press Release

November 9, 2011

SATIIM feels it's extremely important to respond to unfounded and baseless claims made by well-paid public servant, Mr. Andre Cho, Director of Geology and Petroleum. When a public servant comes outright and lies to the Belizean public, it does not only question the professionalism with which that officer conducts his duties on behalf of the Belizean people, but he also does a disservice and injustice to the Belizean public.

The facts are as follow:

- 1) Petroleum and Geology and Forest Department, despite numerous letters to them, have not given us any information on US Capital Energy activities currently ongoing in the Sarstoon Temash Region. We have enclosed all correspondence between SATIIM and the two government departments.
- 2) At the village leaders meeting that we held at the Parish Hall on Monday November 7th, 2011, all alcaldes and village council chairpersons stated categorically that they DO NOT know what US Capital Energy is doing in the area. Neither the Forest Department or Geology and Petroleum Department have informed them of what kind of permit has been issued to US Capital Energy. SATIIM has a two and half hour video of the discontent that leaders expressed at the meeting and is willing to submit it to the media.

SATIIM urgently requests that Mr. Andre Cho and the Geology and Petroleum Department discloses to the general public, the agreement or consent that his department and US Capital Energy has reached with the landowners of the area, since community leaders have emphatically said they have none and they have not seen Mr. Cho in their village. We assume that any agreement or consent would be in writing.

We also demand that the Forest Department discloses to the general public, all fax reports, which will show that they have indeed faxed the pertinent information to SATIIM. We received a call from the Forest Department this morning informing us that they faxed a few letters to us. The only fax we received was from Mrs. Beverly Castillo on November 1st, 2011, who informed SATIIM's Executive Director, Mr. Gregory Ch'oc, that the Deputy Prime Minister was unable to meet before November 1, 2011.

Finally, we at SATIIM urge the Forest department and the Geology and Petroleum department to act with honesty and transparency when dealing with issues concerning the Belizean people. We view their roles as fundamental to ensure fairness in the development process of this country. Any deviation from this duty will only deepen inequality, discrimination, marginalization and poverty in our Belize.