

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **RESPONSIBLE JEWELLERY COUNCIL AND SOLIDARIDAD ANNOUNCE COLLABORATION BASED ON SOLIDARIDAD'S PILOT PROJECT FOR BETTER PRACTICES AT INDUSTRIAL GOLD MINES**

LONDON – The Responsible Jewellery Council and non-profit organization Solidaridad have announced that they will collaborate on activities that support their shared goal of ensuring better, more transparent and accountable practices throughout the gold supply chain. This includes joining forces to encourage broader participation in RJC by companies in the Global South. A key focus will be Solidaridad's new pilot project that uses RJC's Code of Practices and Chain-of-Custody standard as tools for improving practices at industrial gold mines. In addition, the collaboration aims to develop case studies, stakeholder presentations and evaluations that can strengthen uptake and impact of the RJC standards.

Solidaridad, an international non-profit organisation with a focus on sustainable trade, has developed a pilot project to test an innovative approach for decreasing the risks and increasing the benefits of industrial gold mining for people and the environment. In keeping with its approach in other commodity programmes, Solidaridad will ask mining companies to meet internationally-recognized standards for responsible social and environmental practices and verify those practices through independent audits. Solidaridad has selected the Responsible Jewellery Council Code of Practices as the standard in the project. This was based on the outcome of a [2010 comparison study](#) of standards used by the mining industry in which RJC ranked the highest.

Solidaridad will provide guidance to the companies on setting targets related to implementation of the RJC standards and broader development goals, and on identifying the resources needed to reach those targets. Training and capacity-building will include topics such as human rights, community engagement, conflict resolution and environmental management. In particular, Solidaridad will work to support the companies' engagement in meaningful community development. This may include, for example, supporting economically disadvantaged artisanal and small-scale miners in nearby communities to build fairer, safer livelihoods through training and technology transfer.

To encourage mining companies to commit to meeting the RJC Code of Practices, Solidaridad will partner with leading branded jewellery companies that want to ensure that their gold is sourced responsibly. Together, they will pilot test traceable supply chains from participating mines to the market using RJC's Chain-of-Custody standard. In the two-year pilot phase, Solidaridad will work with up to four European jewellery brands and three mining companies.

The lessons learned from this pilot will be useful to other members of the jewellery supply chain and RJC. RJC and Solidaridad will work together to share the outcomes of the project and use the lessons learned to strengthen the RJC system. A representative of Solidaridad currently serves on RJC's Standards Committee, which in 2012 will commence a review of the Code of Practices drawing on feedback and implementation experience.

Minera Yanaquihua, a Peruvian-owned company, became the first company to join the project. Headquartered in Lima, the company operates an underground gold mine in the Arequipa region of Peru and employs 260 employees. Over 1,000 artisanal miners live on and near the company's concession and may benefit from participation in the project. Minera Yanaquihua ("Yah-nah-KEE-wah") joined RJC in May 2012, thus committing to implement the RJC Code of Practices at its site. Solidaridad expects to announce new project participants soon, based on ongoing discussions with interested companies.

Fiona Solomon, RJC Director – Standards Development, says, "RJC is pleased to collaborate with Solidaridad on our shared goals of advancing responsible practices in the gold supply chain. Solidaridad has been engaging with RJC in its standards development programs for several years and has made important contributions in the areas of responsible sourcing and mining standards. The pilot project will take RJC's standards to the small to medium scale industrial gold mining sector, and help grow new approaches to responsible sourcing with these enterprises. The jewellery supply chain as a whole benefits from proactive multi-stakeholder efforts such as these and we look forward to working alongside all involved."

Jennifer Horning, International Coordinator for Solidaridad's Gold Programme, says, "Solidaridad believes that the RJC system, including the Code of Practices and Chain-of-Custody Standard, offers strong potential as an effective tool for safeguarding communities and the environment and for encouraging meaningful development in regions that host industrial mining companies. We are excited about our new pilot project and look forward to working together with RJC and the companies that take part, including front-runner Minera Yanaquihua, to put the system to work and share the lessons learned with others."

"Doing things right is a matter of principle for Minera Yanaquihua. We expect that our partnership with Solidaridad based on the RJC Code of Practices will help us to ensure that we operate in a way which is responsible and acceptable to all stakeholders. This will allow us to certify the social and environmental responsibility of our company and its operations. Minera Yanaquihua will be pleased to share its experiences with other companies interested in pursuing the same goals," says Antonio Samaniego, General Manager of Minera Yanaquihua.

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#### **About Solidaridad**

Solidaridad has built a reputation as a catalyst for sustainable innovation in commodity supply chains with the goal of improving livelihoods for the most vulnerable stakeholders in the chains. For over 20 years Solidaridad has supported producers, such as farmers and miners, to improve the social and environmental practices in 16 commodities, including coffee, cocoa, cotton, sugar, palm oil and gold. Solidaridad is an international network organisation with nine offices worldwide. Solidaridad's Gold Programme includes work in both the artisanal and small-scale (ASM) sector and the industrial sector. In the ASM sector, Solidaridad provides assistance to disadvantaged artisanal and small-scale mining communities in Latin America and Africa using the Fairtrade and Fairmined Standard for gold. At the other end of the supply chain, Solidaridad works with European brands to purchase responsibly-sourced products from these communities, or from industrial mines participating in the pilot project. By connecting producers with European buyers, Solidaridad develops the long-term direct trading relationships that are needed for producers to lift themselves out of poverty. For more information, visit [www.solidaridadnetwork.org](http://www.solidaridadnetwork.org).

#### **About RJC**

The Responsible Jewellery Council is an international not-for-profit organisation bringing together more than 370 member companies. RJC and its Members are committed to promoting responsible ethical, human rights, social and environmental practices in a transparent and accountable manner throughout the jewellery industry from mine to retail. This commitment aims to reinforce consumer and stakeholder confidence in diamond, gold and platinum metals jewellery products. The RJC has developed the RJC Member Certification system which applies to all Members' businesses that contribute to the diamond, gold and platinum metals jewellery supply chain. All Certified Members of the RJC are audited by accredited, third party auditors to verify their conformance with the RJC's Code of Practices. A voluntary Chain-of-Custody Standard has also been developed for gold and platinum group metals. The RJC is a [Full Member of the ISEAL Alliance](#) – the global association for sustainability standards. For more information on RJC Members, Certification, and Standards please visit [www.responsiblejewellery.com](http://www.responsiblejewellery.com)