TECNOLOGÍA LIBRE DE CONFLICTO

Un proyecto de:
ALBOAN
ONGD promovida por los Jesuitas

File 01

Defining CONFLICT MINERALS

We must begin to address the issue of conflict minerals by defining what they are. The first and simplest definition we can give is that conflict minerals are those linked to a conflict or human rights abuses and violations.

There was a shift in geopolitics following World War II and the fall of the Berlin wall and the Eastern bloc, with the access and control of natural resources emerging as a major cause of conflict.

According to "From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment" (UNDP, 2009), since 1990 at least eighteen violent conflicts have been fuelled by the exploitation of natural resources, with at least 40% of all intrastate conflicts linked to this same cause.

Furthermore, the presence of these resources increases the chances that these conflicts reoccur by 50%.

The type of relationship between the resource and the conflict or abuse can vary. On the one hand, conflicts can be generated by access to and control of minerals. But they can also have other causes; the presence of minerals in the area (or the control of their mining and sale) may prolong conflicts or increase their intensity, as the profits are channelled into funding the conflict and the armed groups involved. That is, a mineral does not need to have been mined or sold by those responsible for the conflict in order to be considered a conflict mineral: it simply needs to have ties at some point to a conflict's funding, escalation or the abuse of human rights.

However, we see that there are several approaches from which to address the subject when it comes to identifying these minerals and areas of conflict. The first approach is limited, both in the number of minerals and the geographical area where they are sourced. This approach focuses on section 1502 of the United States' "Dodd–Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act". According to this approach, there are four minerals that are recognised as conflict minerals: tantalum, tungsten or wolframite, tin and gold (known by its acronym 3T+G)

There is, however, a part of the international community and particularly the civil population that considers this approach somewhat limited, since the United Nations itself has issued several responses (in the form of mandates, sanctions and panels of experts) in conflicts proved to be related to natural resources.

This has led civil society to propose a broader approach, which considers the need to control the traceability[1] of all raw materials and their suppliers, pushing for monitoring with a risk-based approach rather than one that focuses only on certain minerals and raw materials, thus taking into account any mineral or raw material that is mined from a conflict zone or one with a high risk of conflict.

The OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) also favours this risk-based Due Diligence[2] approach and has included supplements for 3T+G.

[1] Traceability is an exercise in transparency through which we can learn the origin and the path that the mineral ore or raw materials take from mining to the final product.

[2] We refer to the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas guide and its supplements related to tin, tantalum,

Proposed activity

Main uses of minerals and chemical elements. Periodic table.

Objective: To learn about the minerals and chemical elements in our daily lives.

Materials: Periodic table, PDF with the main uses of each of the four minerals: *http://bit.ly/edukalboan-minerales*

Development:

1. Divide the class into groups of four.

2. Split the periodic table into as many parts as there are groups. Each group is assigned a number of chemical elements. The chemical elements assigned to each group must contain at least one “conflict mineral”.

3. Each group will have 15 minutes to search the internet for all products and end uses that can be obtained from the chemical elements they have been assigned.

4. The group is given 5 minutes to draw, cut out or find a way to represent these products and uses. Each group can use a blank sheet of paper for each of the chemical elements and fill it with the relevant information (products and end uses) about the element in question.

5. Once the groups finish putting the information on the sheets, the class will create a periodic table in which each sheet is an element.

6. As there will be more than one sheet for the “conflict materials”, the students will combine the contributions from the different groups into one sheet.

Main uses of minerals and chemical elements
Periodic table

tungsten or wolframite and gold. http://www.oecd.org/daf/inv/mne/GuidanceEdition2.pdf