



Steve Jobs  
 Apple  
 1 Infinite Loop  
 Cupertino, CA 95014

February 18, 2009

Dear Mr. Jobs:

We are writing to express concern about the possible presence of conflict minerals from eastern Democratic Republic of Congo in Apple’s electronic products. We represent a growing coalition of organizations and community leaders urging electronics companies such as Apple to adopt and support a multi-sector, independently verifiable system to trace the supply chains of key minerals in electronic products and assure consumers that the products they purchase are ‘conflict free.’

As you may well know, the conflict in eastern Congo—the deadliest in the world since World War II—is being fueled by a multi-million dollar trade in minerals that end up in a wide variety of electronic products. Over five million people have died as a result of the war, the United Nations estimates that 200,000 women have been raped over the past decade, and the violence has escalated rapidly with new attacks over the past four months. Several armed groups, including the National Congress for the Defense of the People, or CNDP, the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda, or FDLR, and renegade units of the Congolese army have benefited by controlling mining areas or illegally taxing the minerals. The minerals are then trafficked through neighboring countries such as Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi, and are then bought by multinational trading and smelting companies. The conflict has led to forced labor in mines in eastern Congo, including by children, and extensive environmental damage. The armed groups and criminal networks primarily responsible for eastern Congo’s violence generate over \$100 million each year by trading in four main minerals: tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold.

The lucrative illegal mineral trade allows the armed groups to be largely self-financing as they continue horrific abuses against civilians. Indeed, some of the worst abuses by these armed groups have occurred as a result of competition for control of mining areas. The link between these armed groups and the illicit mineral trade has been extensively documented, most recently by a UN Group of Experts report released in December 2008. The Group of Experts report provides ample evidence that corporations based in Europe and Asia – including smelters, marketing companies, and processors that sell to major component manufacturers and electronics companies – are knowingly purchasing ore directly from or originating in rebel-held areas. For example, the report specifically implicated the Thailand Smelting and Refining Company in the purchase of minerals linked to the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda, or FDLR, a militia led by individuals responsible for the 1994 Rwanda genocide. Other

multinational companies may also be purchasing minerals that benefit the other main armed groups, the CNDP and autonomous units of the Congolese Army.

The UN concluded by recommending due diligence in the international minerals supply chain as an effective strategy to cut off support to Congolese rebels. The consumer electronics industry as a whole remains the largest end-user of the conflict tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold that come out of Congo's war zone and therefore holds a unique position of influence. Over 50 percent of the world's tin is used as solder, the overwhelming majority of which goes into electronic products, 60 percent of global tantalum is used in electronic products in capacitors, and tungsten and gold are growing sources of revenue for armed groups in Congo that also have uses in electronics components.

**We believe Apple can play a significant part in combating the trade in conflict minerals in eastern Congo by publicly disclosing its supply chains for components containing tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold, and by working with our organizations and others in the industry to develop a robust, international mechanism to verify the origin of these minerals. While studies such as the Electronics Industry Citizenship Coalition's June 2008 report "Social and Environmental Responsibility in Metals Supply to the Electronic Industry," and statements of declaration by Apple's suppliers that they are not buying from illegal mines in Congo are a beginning, they do not serve as proof that our consumer electronics are free of conflict minerals. Building on these previous efforts, an independently verifiable tracing mechanism and supply chain disclosure would represent important actions to contribute to ending the violence, labor abuses, and environmental degradation in eastern Congo.**

Building on the work of the Make IT Fair campaign and Global Witness, our organizations represent a broad international constituency whose members are increasingly concerned about the worsening crisis in eastern Congo and about their potential connection to the situation as electronics consumers. This connection is also increasingly on the radar of a number of investors, celebrities, activists, Congressional legislators, and the U.S. government. Many of these individuals and organizations have expressed support for efforts to make the electronics industry a major part of a comprehensive strategy to end the conflict. We plan to educate the public about this issue, and as we move forward in our public engagement, we hope to be able to hold up Apple as an example of constructive industry involvement.

As initial steps toward a comprehensive effort to address the potential presence of conflict minerals in Apple's electronics products, we ask that the company take the following actions:

- 1.) Indicating by written response that we can share with activists that Apple will no longer do business with companies in the minerals supply chain until they can certify (subject to independent verification) that they are no longer purchasing raw materials that benefit militant groups in Congo. Particular care should be paid to companies for which credible evidence has been published linking them to armed groups, such as the Thailand Smelting and Refining Company. We are not asking for a ban on minerals from the Congo, as this would hurt artisanal miners in the country, but rather to establish a trade in minerals that is verifiably conflict-free.
- 2.) Provide a detailed accounting of all the firms from which Apple's suppliers purchased their tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold during fiscal year 2008, including the mines of origin of the minerals and the mechanisms for verifying these origins;
- 3.) Share with us any steps the company has taken to date to ensure with independent verification that your products are conflict free;
- 4.) Appoint representatives to meet with our coalition to discuss how we can move this important effort forward.

We look forward to working closely with Apple to effectively address the role of conflict minerals in perpetuating the Congo crisis. In the coming weeks and months, we would be happy to provide additional information regarding the situation in eastern Congo, the nature of illegal mineral exploitation, and strategies for implementing a tracing mechanism.

Given the considerable Congressional and grassroots interest in this issue, we would appreciate your response no later than March 18, 2009. We would be happy to answer any questions or discuss these issues with you.

Regards,



John Norris, Executive Director



Mark Hanis, Executive Director



Nick Gaw, Student Director



**International Labor Rights Forum**  
Bama Athreya, Executive Director



Scott Cardiff, International Campaign Coordinator, EARTHWORKS and No Dirty Gold campaign



Arend de Haas, Director - Conservation  
African Conservation Foundation



James E. Winkler, General Secretary



Rev. LaMarco A. Cable, Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ



Tzivia Schwartz Getzug  
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Dr. Craig Zelizer, Senior Partner



Sean D. Carasso, CEO



**ECO•CELL**

Eric Ronay, President



**Changemaker Finland**

Kaarina Määttä, Network Coordinator



**Pro Fair Trade Finland**

Säde Hormio, Make IT Fair Coordinator, Finland

#### Other international NGO signatories:

- Action Contre l'impunité pour les Droits Humains (ACIDH)
- Association de développement des initiatives féminines (ADIF)
- Association des Exploitants Miniers Artisans pour la Pacification et Reconstruction de l'Ituri (AEMAPRI)
- Association des jeunes femmes du Maniema (AJFMA)
- Association des Journalistes pour les Droits humains (AJPDH)
- Association Africaine de défense des Droits Humains (ASADHO)
- Centre des Droits de l'Homme et du Droit humanitaire (CDH)
- Centre de Recherche sur l'Environnement et les Droits de l'Homme (CREDDHO)
- Centre d'Etudes Juridiques Appliquées (CEJA)
- Centre pour la promotion et l'Education des Communautés de base (CEPECO)
- Collectif pour le Développement Economique, Social et Culturel Intégré (CODESCI)
- Communicateurs pour la Protection, la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l'homme (COPPRODDHO)
- Forum pour la démocratie et la bonne gouvernance (FDBG)
- Le Forum de la Société civile congolaise (FSCC)

- Voix des sans voix pour les droits de l'homme (VSV)

**To respond or ask questions about this letter, please contact:**

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