



**APEX MINING CO., INC.**



### **ISRI INKS MOU WITH DALICNO SMALL MINERS ASSCN FOR BIG BROTHER SMALL BROTHER COLLABORATION**

***DENR Secretary lauds ISRI for pushing win-win collaboration with pocket miners***

Itogon-Suyoc Resources, Inc (ISRI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Dalicno Small Scale Miners Association (DaSSMA) under its Big Brother Small Brother (BBSB) program. ISRI's BBSB provides an economic lifeline to pocket miners who have been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the BBSB, DaSSMA will mine in designated areas within ISRI's tenements, with its members also undergoing ISRI's standard miners underground orientation, including safety, security and ISO compliance.

The advantages of the *big brother, small brother* approach include a safer operating environment for the small-scale miners, minimal displacement of people and livelihood, promotion of environmental protection and proper accounting of production and collection of taxes.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu, who attended the virtual signing ceremony, congratulated both ISRI and DaSSMA for their collaboration. "I believe in what you are doing," he said.

Luis Sarmiento, president and CEO of Apex Mining Co. Inc. thanked DENR as well as DENR-MGB (Mines and Geosciences Bureau), under the leadership of Atty



Wilfredo G. Moncano, and the Municipality of Itogon for supporting ISRI's bid to help small scale mining thrive. "It is in the DNA of the Apex group of companies to work

harmoniously with our host communities... One role we see for ourselves is to enable the economic upliftment of our neighbors in the best possible way we know how – through mining operations that are not just legally compliant, but sustainable as well," he said.

Illegal small-scale mining has been a sad reality in many gold mining districts in the country. With limited choices for income-generation, many in the rural areas that host mining activities resort to living dangerously inside underground, cramped, unsupported dog-hole tunnels to mine gold ore. What is more alarming is that the unregulated processing plants used by the small-scale mining operators have been causing serious environmental damage.

The Maco operations of Apex has been successful at implementing BBSB. Since acquiring ISRI in 2015, the company has been working towards a successful rollout of BBSB in its host communities in Benguet, as well.

Also in attendance at the virtual signing ceremony were Itogon's Mayor Victorio Palangdan and Vice Mayor Adriano Carantes, Jr. and MGB-CAR Regional Director Fay Apil. DaSSMA was represented by its president, Cesar Carbonel and its group leaders (Luis B. Ibag, Menandro P. Singwa, Rogelio B. Sacpa, Joven H. Ediong, Cesar L. Carbonel, Jonas O. Sacpa, Luciano Manuel and Marlon S. Pettoco). Apex's Chairman Emeritus, Dr Walter W. Brown, who is considered the prime mover behind the BBSB while he was still president of Apex, was also at the online event.

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