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## **United Methodist Agencies' Human Rights and Investment Ethics Task Force—UPDATE**

*Glenview, IL*—The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits and the General Board of Global Ministries today provided an update on the third meeting of the Human Rights and Investment Ethics Task Force held this month at The Carter Center, Atlanta, GA. The [task force](#) began to review and identify resources, principles and procedures that express a commitment to human rights, taking into account fiduciary responsibility and ministry priorities consistent with the global mission of The United Methodist Church.

### **Foundational Perspectives**

Based on the theological conviction that every person has value as a beloved child of God, and affirming the United Methodist Social Principles, the task force grappled with the tensions inherent in missional and fiduciary priorities in countries with known human rights violations.

Task Force Chair Bishop Ken Carter, Jr. (Florida Episcopal Area) noted that the United Methodist connection is an ecosystem holding both social and investment principles. "We need to look at how to integrate our financial, missional and advocacy resources in a way that gives United Methodists in different contexts a framework to make informed decisions," he said. This will help the task force derive a process approach to dealing with human rights and investment issues.

### **Case Studies and Impact Assessments**

The task force is examining case studies to illuminate aspects of human rights situations that evolved into ethical considerations influencing investment decision-making. In conjunction with this examination, impact assessments are providing an understanding of human rights situations from the viewpoints of entities involved: corporations, local communities, civil society, governmental organizations, churches and individuals. This comprehensive examination will help lay a foundation for ways to proceed in similar situations.

In particular, the task force explored the impact of mining companies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The Rev. Mande Muyombo (a Global Ministries' DRC executive) led a case study on local mining, a major industry in the country, and its effect on local populations. The mining operations significantly impact the local environment, livelihoods, government and schools in both positive and negative ways.

He presented the grassroots perspective and noted The United Methodist Church presence in DRC as a potential agent of change in improving mining industry operations. Representatives from The Carter Center also provided insight on systemic issues impacting mining in the DRC based on their work in the region.

The Human Rights and Investment Ethics Task Force will release periodic updates as the members address and finalize various aspects of their work.

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**About the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits**

*The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBPHB) is a not-for-profit administrative agency of The United Methodist Church, responsible for the general supervision and administration of the retirement, health and welfare benefit plans, programs and funds for more than 91,000 clergy and lay employees of the Church.*

*GBPHB invests over \$19 billion as the largest faith-based pension fund in the United States and ranks among the top 100 pension funds in the country. As a socially responsible investor, GBPHB is actively involved in shareholder advocacy, proxy voting, portfolio screening and community investing.*

**About the General Board of Global Ministries**

*The General Board of Global Ministries is the global mission agency of The United Methodist Church, its annual conferences, missionary conferences, and local congregations. Its purpose is to connect the Church in mission; its vision is to equip and transform people and places for God's mission around the world.*

*Global Ministries has Four Mission Goals:*

- 1. Make disciples of Jesus Christ;*
- 2. Strengthen, develop, and renew Christian congregations and communities;*
- 3. Alleviate human suffering; and*
- 4. Seek justice, freedom and peace.*