St. Elias Mines Ltd. - Drilling Program - Tesoro Gold Project, Tesoro

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VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Dec. 12, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Lori McClenahan, President of St. Elias Mines Ltd.

('St. Elias' or the 'Company'), announces that St. Elias has increased the ongoing diamond drilling program at its wholly owned Tesoro Gold Project in Peru (the 'Project') from an initial 10,000 metres to 20,000 metres. In order to accomplish this in a timely manner, the Company is taking all necessary steps to mobilize a second diamond drill rig to the Tesoro Project. It is anticipated that the rig will be on site in January 2012.

Further mechanical trenching on both the Main Structural Corridor and the Parallel Structural Corridor is scheduled to commence in January 2012. The Company is also in the process of hiring three additional geologists for the project and the necessary Project infrastructure is being increased to accommodate the additional personnel.

The drilling program has been designed to test near-surface and deeper-seated geophysical anomalies identified by Titan 24 geophysical surveys.

A Brief History of the Tesoro Gold Project

The Tesoro Gold Project is 100% owned by the Company with no underlying royalties. The property covers approximately 6,974 hectares (17,436 acres) and is part of the prolific 300km X 30km Nazca-Ocona gold belt parallel to the Pacific coast of southwestern Peru. The Nazca-Ocona gold belt has a long mining history dating back to pre-Incan time. Gold is associated with disseminated sulphides in quartz veins and fractures within intrusive rocks. The continuity of the quartz veins and fractures is very impressive in the Nazca-Ocona gold belt. While the veins tend to be narrow, the grade is significant and the mineralized structures tend to extend along strike for several kilometers and to depths of up to 1,000 metres.

To date, the Company has identified five mineralized zones with more than 50 quartz veins (having a total combined length of 9km) at the Tesoro Project and has carried out underground exploration and development work on three of these veins (C1, C2 and A4 Veins.) The veins are mesothermal, indicating that the vein structures may extend to considerable depths.

The Tesoro Property has never been evaluated to depth, or to its full strike potential. This leaves a large potential for the discovery of additional mineralization.

For additional information on St. Elias and its projects, please visit us at www.steliasmines.com or call 1-888-895-5522 (toll free US and Canada) or contact:

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ST. ELIAS MINES LTD.

(signed 'Lori McClenahan')

Lori McClenahan, President

The TSX Venture Exchange has not reviewed and does not accept responsibility for the adequacy or the accuracy of the contents of this document.

This News Release may contain forward-looking statements including, but not limited to, comments regarding the timing and content of upcoming work programs, geological interpretations, potential mineral recovery processes, etc. Forward-looking statements address future events and conditions and therefore involve inherent risks and uncertainties. Actual results may differ materially from those currently anticipated in such statement.

St. Elias Mines Ltd.