

The Hague Declaration of the Second International Forum of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities on Climate Change

The Hague, November 11 - 12, 2000

I. PREAMBLE

We, the Indigenous Peoples of our Mother Earth, as partners with in the United Nations Family, have collectively developed our rights, responsibilities and aspirations in international law and formal declarations, including the U.N. Draft Declaration on Indigenous Peoples Rights. In the light and spirit of these instruments we welcome this opportunity to participate in the UNFCCC -Process, for the recognition, promotion and protection of our rights. As the Delegates of Indigenous Peoples and organisations convened on the occasion of the Sixth Conference of the Parties of the Framework Convention on Climate Change in the Second International Indigenous Forum on Climate Change at the Hague from November 11th to the 12th, 2000, we affirm the Albuquerque Declaration, the Quito Declaration, Lyon Declaration and Position Paper of the First Forum of the Indigenous Peoples on Climatic Change. Furthermore, we address the Parties and other participants at this Conference to share the conclusions of our Forum:

II. CONSIDERATIONS

- 1.** Earth is our Mother. Our special relationship with Earth as stewards, as holders of indigenous knowledge cannot be set aside. Our special relation with her has allowed us to develop for millenia a particular knowledge of the environment that is the foundation of our lifestyles, institutions, spirituality and world view. Therefore, in our philosophies, the Earth is not a commodity, but a sacred space that the Creator has entrusted to us to care for her, this home where all beings live.
- 2.** Our traditional knowledge on sustainable use, conservation and protection of our territories has allowed us to maintain our ecosystems in equilibrium. This role has been recognised at the Earth Summit and is and has been our contribution to the planet's economy and sustainability for the benefit present and future generations.
- 3.** Our cultures, and the territories under our stewardship, are now the last ecological mechanisms remaining in the struggle against climate devastation. All Peoples of the Earth truly owe a debt to Indigenous Peoples for the beneficial role our traditional subsistence economies play in the maintenance of planet's ecology.
- 4.** Over twenty international instruments affirm, promote or suggest the rights of Indigenous Peoples to full and direct participation without discrimination in the development of national and international policies that have the potential to impact upon us. However, while instruments such as the ILO Convention covers a wide range of Indigenous Peoples rights, such as labor issues, land rights, social and economic rights, cultural rights, political representation and self-governance, they fail to adequately protect our concerns with regard to the destruction of the Earth's climate.
- 5.** We reaffirm our ancestral rights to self-determination and our right to decide without any outside interference on issues directly or indirectly related to our lands and territories, that include terrestrial and marine ecosystems and that are among the most diverse and particularly fragile on the planet.
- 6.** There have been advances in the legal-philosophical debate for the recognition of our collective rights. Furthermore, we think that there have been regional and national advances

on this matter, but unfortunately, grave and systematic human rights violations and violations of the fundamental liberties of the Indigenous Peoples persist.

7. Climate change is a reality and is affecting hundreds of millions of our peoples and our territories, resulting in famine, extreme poverty, disease, loss of basic resources in our traditional habitats and provoking involuntary displacements of our peoples as environmental refugees. The causes of climate change are the production and consumption patterns in industrialised countries and are therefore, the primary responsibility of these countries. The policies of developing countries and economies in transition that promote coal and uranium mining, logging, nuclear and large hydro electric power station and oil and gas extraction and transportation contribute to climate change and the destruction of our territories.

8. We are profoundly concerned that current discussions within the Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as the practical implementation of the Kyoto Protocol do not recognise our right to adequate participation. These policies and mechanisms exclude us as participants, deny our contributions, and marginalize our Peoples. These policies and mechanisms will permit developed countries to avoid their responsibility to reduce emissions at source, promote the expansion of global capital, and deepen our marginalization.

9. We are also profoundly concerned that the measures to mitigate climate change currently being negotiated are based on a worldview of territory that reduces forests, lands, seas and sacred sites to only their carbon absorption capacity. This world view and its practices adversely affect the lives of Indigenous Peoples and violate our fundamental rights and liberties, particularly, our right to recuperate, maintain, control and administer our territories which are consecrated and established in instruments of the United Nations.

10. We reject the inclusion of carbon sinks within the CDM and disagree with the definition of carbon sinks as stated in the Kyoto Protocol. We, as Indigenous Peoples, manage the "natural carbon sinks" in our territories according to our world view and their integral use is a right that our people have and exercise according to our local and specific needs. We do not accept that forests are valued only for their carbon sequestration capacity.

11. We are profoundly concerned that the current proposed definitions of afforestation, deforestation, and reforestation pose a threat to the traditional uses of Indigenous Peoples of their lands and territories. We demand that these definitions be in accord with the already accepted definitions in other international conventions, specifically the Convention on Biological Diversity.

12. Concepts, practices, and measures, such as plantations, carbon sinks and tradeable emissions, will result in projects which adversely impact upon our natural, sensitive and fragile eco-systems, contaminating our soils, forests and waters. In the past, even well intentioned development policies and projects have resulted in disastrous social and ecological consequences. In this case, the concepts, policies and measures being negotiated do not consider the best interests of Indigenous Peoples. Consequently, we cannot accept any concepts, projects or programmes that ravage our territories or deny, limit, or restrict our fundamental rights and freedom.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We propose that COP guarantees the fullest and most effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in all activities related to the FCCC through:

a. notation of this Declaration,

b. accreditation of Indigenous Peoples with special status in the decision-making processes in the Conference of the Parties, meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies, as well as at all activities carried out within the Convention;

c. establishment of an ad-hoc, open-ended working group on Indigenous Peoples and climate

change with the broad participation of Indigenous Peoples;
d. creation of a Division on Indigenous Peoples within the Convention's Secretariat;
e. inclusion of a permanent agenda item on Indigenous Peoples in the permanent agenda of the COP and its subsidiary bodies and all activities that they organise;
f. meaningful consultation between the FCCC and the CBD, the proposed Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and other bodies dealing with Indigenous issues;
g. inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in the IPCC, Executive Board of the CDM, expert review teams and the compliance committee;

2. We propose that COP establish appropriate programs of capacity building, formation and diffusion of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol and its activities with the participation of the representative Indigenous organisations.

3. We propose that COP support access for Indigenous Peoples as equal partners at every level of decision-making including needs assessments, case studies, and national and international policy-making activities concerning climate change impacts, causes and solutions.

4. We propose that to ensure the non intervention of oil, gas, nuclear and large hydro-electric power station, logging and mining companies, in their exploitation of natural resources in Indigenous territories, COP support Indigenous Peoples in our permanent struggle to defend the environment through such actions as:

a. establishment of a moratorium on these activities in pristine areas and the promotion of locally appropriate, renewable, and efficient energy solutions;

b. imposition of legally binding obligations to restore all areas already affected by such activities, with the participation of Indigenous Peoples; and

c. creation of a fund for use by Indigenous Peoples to address the potential and actual impacts of development and climate change in the short and long term in a manner compatible with our traditional and customary cultures and lifestyles.

The Hague on the 15th of November, 2000

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