

The Bonn Declaration Third International Forum of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities on Climate Change

**July 14 - 15, 2001
Bonn, Germany**

Preamble

We, the delegates of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and indigenous organisations in the Third International Forum of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities on Climate Change convened in Bonn on July 14th and 15th, 2001 for the second session of the sixth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP6B); reaffirm the Albuquerque Declaration, Quito Declaration, the Lyon Declaration of the First International Forum of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities on Climate Change, and the Hague Declaration of the Second Forum.

We have historically and continue to play a fundamental role in the conservation and protection of the forests, biological diversity and the maintenance of ecosystems crucial for the prevention of severe climatic change. Long ago, our elders and our sciences foretold of the severe impacts of Western "development" models based on indiscriminate logging, oil exploitation, mining, carbon-emitting industries, persistent organic pollutants and the insatiable consumption patterns of the industrialized countries. Today, these unsustainable models threaten the very life of Mother Earth and the lives of all of us who are her children.

We denounce the fact that neither the UNFCCC nor the Kyoto Protocol recognizes the existence or the contributions of Indigenous Peoples. Furthermore, the debates under these instruments have not considered the suggestions and proposals of the Indigenous Peoples nor have the appropriate mechanisms to guarantee our participation in all the debates that directly concern the Indigenous Peoples been established.

In this declaration, we address the Parties and other participants of this Conference to present the conclusions of our Forum.

Considerations

Indigenous Peoples, as part of the international community, have the right to self-determination over our lives, our territories and our resources. Self-determination includes, inter alia, the right to possess, control, and administer our territories. Furthermore, self-determination also includes the right to real, full and effective participation; the right to be consulted in all matters that concern us; the right to prior and informed consent and the right to veto, and that our opinions and decisions are respected.

The discussions under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol have totally excluded the indigenous peoples to the extent that neither recognizes the right of indigenous peoples to full and effective participation and to contribute to discussions and debates. This contrasts with

other international processes which assure our participation and contribution within discussions.

The particular and specific rights we are demanding are consecrated in the international arena in other international instruments of equal importance to the UNFCCC, including:

The Rio de Janeiro Declaration on the Environment and Development (in particular, principle 22); The Program of Action on Sustainable Development (in particular, chapters 11 and 26); The Convention on Biological Diversity (in particular, articles 8 (j) and related provisions); The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; The Statement on Forest Principles; Convention 169 of the ILO on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples; and other additional instruments, principles and programs of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

The concepts, practices and measures that have been proposed as solutions to the problem of climate change, such as plantations, sinks and the carbon market, among others, will result in projects with negative and adverse effects on Indigenous Peoples, our territories and our ecosystems, and in violations of our rights as Indigenous Peoples.

We openly oppose the measures to mitigate climate change under discussion that are based essentially on a mercantilist and utilitarian vision of the forests, seas, territories and resources of Indigenous Peoples, which are being exclusively valued for their capacity to absorb CO₂ and produce oxygen, and which negate our traditional cultural practices and spiritual values.

We, Indigenous Peoples reject the inclusion of sinks in the Clean Development Mechanism and the definition of sinks contemplated under the Kyoto Protocol and we oppose that the forests are considered solely for their carbon sequestration capacity.

We register our disagreement with proposals surrounding definitions including Afforestation, Deforestation and Reforestation proposed in the context of the UNFCCC. We express our grave concern that the UNFCCC ignores the concept of conservation, the importance of biodiversity, and the fundamental role of Indigenous Peoples in the management of our territories, forests and other ecosystems.

Based on these considerations, Indigenous Peoples will not accept, under any conditions, agreements or guidelines that limit, deny or violate these previously recognized rights.

Call To Action

1. We call upon the Conference of the Parties to:

- recognize the fundamental role of Indigenous Peoples and their organizations in the conservation of the environment and the prevention and mitigation of climate change;
- establish - in consultation with indigenous organizations - a Special Status for the representative organizations of Indigenous Peoples to participate in the Conference of Parties, the Subsidiary Body and other activities;
- authorize the creation, regulate the functioning and approve the pertinent provisions for an Ad-Hoc Inter-Sessional Working Group on Indigenous Peoples of the UNFCCC.

On this basis we recommend that the Conference of Parties adopts a decision to finance workshops for delegates of indigenous peoples and organizations to develop a concrete proposal in these areas.

2. We have the obligation to inform the international community about our grave concern regarding the social, cultural, economic and security threats posed by climate change to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities living in small island states. Given the extreme urgency of the need for adaptation activities in small island states, we urge that an Adaptation Fund be immediately established and activated with the full participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, even if the Kyoto Protocol is not ratified.

Conclusions

We, the representatives of the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities who participated in the Third International Forum of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities on Climate Change are profoundly convinced of the sacred character of Mother Earth. We also continue to be gravely concerned about the effects of climate change in our territories.

We reiterate our decision to continue contributing to the debates of the UNFCCC. We demand a full compliance of said instrument and at the same time we demand full participation in all the debates.

We are convinced that our philosophies and traditional practices are the most appropriate for the management of the ecosystems of our territories. Finally, we are also particularly concerned about the emergence of "biocolonialism" and "environmental racism" that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities of the world continually confront.

The damage caused by climate change exacerbates existing concerns and inequities, and constitutes a matter of environmental and climate justice. The issue confronting humanity today is one of justice.

The UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol were developed to address climate change without the participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and constitute a shameful ethical and moral precedent for the future of humanity.

Document approved in Bonn on Monday the 15th of July 2001, by the signatories below.

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