

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES CAUCUS

Seventh Session of the Conference of the Parties
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco
(October 29 to November 9, 2001)

We, the representatives of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities present at the Seventh Conference of the Parties (COP7) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol (KP) held in Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco, taking into account our Declarations of Lyon, The Hague and Bonn, convey the following proposals on the matters that directly concern our peoples and communities:

1. Indigenous Peoples represent approximately 350 million people in the world. For our Indigenous Peoples who live in the most fragile and vulnerable ecosystems of the world, Mother Earth is sacred and must be honored, protected and loved. This particular relationship has allowed us to conserve biodiversity for the survival of the present and future generations. Our territories and natural and spiritual resources are the fundamental basis for our physical and cultural existence. In our territories, we establish our sacred relationship with Mother Earth.
2. Diverse instruments of positive international law and some normative processes recognize our particular and specific collective rights of Indigenous Peoples and Communities. We should be full beneficiaries of these already established rights. However, despite being guardians of Mother Earth, in practice, our rights to recover, administer and develop our territories and natural resources are denied. Furthermore, this denial hinders, limits and/or restricts our rights to conserve, recreate, project and transmit the totality of our cultural heritages to future generations, thus, constituting a grave violation of our right to exist as peoples.
3. The interrelation of the philosophy, principles and provisions of the international instruments born almost a decade ago, at and after the World Conference on Development and Environment (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), for us is self-evident. These instruments were drafted in accordance with the noble objectives of the UN Charter. The existing linkages amongst the UNFCCC, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification and key chapters of the Program of Action of the World Summit on Development and Environment (Agenda 21), are crucial for climate change mitigation, as well as for the recognition of the provisions related to the respect and defense of the particular and specific rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. COP7 offers a historic opportunity for implementing this interrelation.
4. Unfortunately, as it now stands, neither the UNFCCC nor the Kyoto Protocol take into account the sacred nature of the Earth nor do they include the particular and specific rights of Indigenous Peoples. Furthermore, neither the COPs nor the Subsidiary Body meetings have included an agenda item on Indigenous Peoples. These omissions exist despite the Third Assessment Report of the IPCC (TAR-IPCC) that points out that Indigenous Peoples directly

suffer the adverse effects of climate change, and despite the fact that some climate change mitigation strategies could threaten the survival of our peoples and communities. The inclusion of carbon sinks in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) will constitute a dangerous tool for the expropriation of our lands and territories and culminate in a new form of colonialism. No development mechanism can be clean, from our point of view, if it does not guarantee the rights of Indigenous Peoples including the right to free, prior informed consent of indigenous and local communities and the respect of our cultures, practices, sciences and knowledge. Nonetheless, we resolve to continue contributing with our knowledge of nature conservation and management to prevent and mitigate the effects of climate change.

5. To correct this inconsistency, we need an adequate space and special status in the structure of the UNFCCC. Taking into account all of the above and what we have stated and proposed at previous COPs, on behalf of our peoples and communities we request that COP7:

a. Recognize the particularity and specificity of Indigenous Peoples in relation to climate change and grant Indigenous Peoples Special Status.

b. Create an Ad Hoc Open-Ended Inter-sessional Working Group on Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and Climate Change whose objectives will be to study and propose timely, effective and adequate solutions to respond to the urgent situations caused by climate change that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities face. This Working Group will provide an adequate mechanism for the imperative full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the discussions, debates and programs of the UNFCCC; it will also be an apt space for channeling the contributions of our peoples and communities to climate change mitigation, and for exchanging viewpoints and experiences with the Parties of the Convention.

c. Decide to include in the UNFCCC Report for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio +10) requested by the United Nations General Assembly (Decision A/55/199), the situation of Indigenous Peoples as a priority criteria for the evaluation of the achievement of sustainable development, duly taking into account Agenda 21, specifically Chapter 26 and 20 on the participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities respectively.

d. Decide to include in the agenda of the COPs and its Subsidiary Body meetings an agenda item on Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and Climate Change.

Approved by the below signatories in Marrakech on November 5, 2001.

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