

Statement from the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change

**Accra Climate Change Talks
Accra, Ghana
21-27 August 2008**

Sir (Madam) Chair:

We, the Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change would like to reiterate that this meeting on REDD convened in the city of Accra, Ghana is held at a time when the climate negotiations are at an absolute crossroads in terms of the future of our planet.

We have the opportunity to recognize and respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and to incorporate these issues into the basic framework of the climate convention so that we all progress down the road of finding workable solutions to the problems presented by climate change as equals. On the other hand, we face the very real danger that the decisions we make here today will be in breach of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and will set back the fight for justice on many fronts.

Likewise the decisions that we make on the future of the REDD discussions must ensure that if this is to progress, it does so in a manner designed to enhance human rights, ensure real reductions in Greenhouse gas emissions at source, and in a manner designed to recognize, protect and preserve the issues of social justice and economic equity.

To that end, in order to ensure that any agreement on forests is based on the full implementation of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we again call on the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change gathered here in Accra to:

- 1) Establish a formal recognition of the Indigenous Forum on Climate Change.
- 2) Establish a voluntary fund to facilitate the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities with all levels of the convention.
- 3) Insist that whatever mechanism goes forward from this meeting on REDD includes the necessity of the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples (including complete and timely access to information).
- 4) The clear recognition of Indigenous Peoples as guardians and protectors of the forests which form an integral part of their traditional lands and territories, and which form the basis for a large part of their traditional knowledge.
- 5) The rights of Indigenous Peoples to expect a secure and permanent land tenure system which recognizes and entrenches traditional lands and territories in the hands of the traditional owners of these lands.

- 6) Given that in the REDD talks we are addressing approximately 18% of total GHG, the REDD discussions must not be seen as a way of annex one nations abrogating their responsibilities in terms of real and permanent reductions in their domestic emissions.

Sir/ Madam, we recognize that Indigenous rights are but a part of the necessary mechanisms that we must all undertake to fight climate change and we wish to signal that we, as Indigenous Peoples are prepared to play our part in that fight but that this must be done as equals. To this end, we invite the signatures of our friends and colleagues from NGOs and the rest of civil society to endorse this historic statement which we sincerely hope heralds a new era in the climate discussions. One in which we come together as a united planet to fight a common enemy, one in which, at least temporarily, we are prepared to put aside our sometimes considerable differences in order the common good might prevail. We would also like to welcome the signatures of those nations who see this as an opportunity for real change.

Thank you

Signatories

Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change
Friends of the Earth International
Global Forest Coalition
PIPEC (Pacific Indigenous Peoples Environment Coalition)

27 August 2008