

Declaration on Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples of El Salvador

Salvadoran Indigenous National Coordinator Council -CCNIS-
(El Salvador, October 2009)

Face to current international negotiations on climate change and with fully respect to our ancestors and our Mother Earth, the indigenous peoples and communities represented in the organization structures of El Salvador that integrate the CCNIS and that endorse the current Declaration,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT:

- a) Indigenous peoples live in the most fragile ecosystems of the Earth, namely: tropical wet forests, mountainous systems, coastal plains, deserts, moors and islands, among others, and are human populations highly vulnerable to climate variability and change. The negative impacts due to global climate change threat all forms of life that currently exist in our Mother Earth, as well as the diverse human cultures, natural environments and livelihoods of rural human populations.
- b) Global climate change currently observed has been the result of the excessive and unlimited economic growth of highly industrialized countries, which emitted huge amounts of greenhouse gas emissions to the terrestrial atmosphere at the expense of poor countries that are suffering the adverse impacts of climate change. Such economic growth is based on production models that promote the consumerism and spoiling of energy and of all the limited resources of our Mother Earth.
- c) The prevailing western economic system is a voracious capitalism coupled with a global neoliberal economic model, imposed to developing countries in order to expand markets for global production. It is based on the irrational premise stating that economic growth is unlimited, disregarding that terrestrial resources are finite . Natural dynamics of Mother Earth has been ignored, desecrated and forced, and has been subordinated to the economic dynamics of human societies.
- d) It has been estimated that during this century global mean temperature will increase up to 1.8°C - 4.0°C. It will be accelerating the adverse impacts of climate change on indigenous peoples and their basic natural ecosystems. Developed countries are historically responsible of the changes that are deeply affecting our Mother Earth, thus we refuse any insinuation stating that indigenous peoples are responsible of climate change.
- e) Climate change signals are already creating catastrophic effects on our territories, such as changes related to rainfall patterns, levels or intensities; higher intensity and frequency of droughts and floods; sea level rise; water flows and aquifer levels decrease; land humidity reduction and animal and plant species extinction. The previous disrupts life cycles and creates food insecurity, landslides, outbreaks and expansion of vectors and infections associated to human health, forest fires, pests,

land and aquifers salinization; threatening survival of indigenous and non indigenous peoples, particularly indigenous women, exacerbating the high indices of poverty and extreme poverty.

- f) Even though we are suffering disproportionately current climate change impacts, which are exacerbated by the exploitation of natural resources and the environmental degradation dynamics existing in our territories, we have been marginalized from participating in the definition and implementation of policies, programs, plans and actions related to mitigation and adaptation to climate change, either at the national or international levels.
- g) Some of the mitigation and adaptation policies proposed as solutions by the various actors and agents within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) multilateral process could generate additional impacts and vulnerabilities and adversely affect the implementation of our rights and attempt against our livelihoods and life, namely: monocultures, agro-fuels, hydropower, organisms genetically modified (OGM), carbon uptake, emission reductions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) and protected areas.
- h) The establishment of a weak and ineffective REDD regime either socially or environmentally would generate high risks for indigenous peoples and communities dependent on forests, for it could bring about illegal felling, including the expansion of plantations linked to wood industry and income uptake on the part of elites. The previous could prevent indigenous peoples from access to forest and land which supply their livelihoods and cultural needs and affect women who are responsible of water, firewood and forest products collection within the family economy.
- i) Thanks to our ancestral knowledge and learning, indigenous peoples have had the capacity to adapt to the various pressures and to the historical environmental and socioeconomic changes. Thus, we have knowledge, technologies and capacities to adapt to changing environments and could contribute to mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

WE DECLARE THAT:

1. The rights of indigenous peoples of El Salvador should be fully recognized within the national and international processes related to negotiations and actions on climate change, and that their effective participation in the UNFCCC multilateral process should be facilitated.
2. An expert group on climate change and ancestral knowledge, integrated by indigenous peoples should be proposed and supported under the UNFCCC multilateral process.
3. Indigenous peoples should be incorporated in the national and regional processes related to the definition and implementation of mitigation and adaptation policies, so they can contribute with ancestral knowledge, learning and practices which have been

adapted to changing environmental conditions and transmitted orally through generations.

4. The Special Rapporteur on the human rights status and the basic freedoms of indigenous peoples should elaborate a report on the adverse effects of climate change on the indigenous peoples.
5. A national report in El Salvador on the levels of vulnerability and impacts on indigenous peoples and their territories due to current and projected climate variability and change should be elaborated, as a basis for them to be prioritized in governmental adaptation plans and programs.
6. Indigenous peoples rights should be respected, and their full and effective participation should be assured in the definition and implementation of activities related to REDD, adaptation and mitigation within the UNFCCC multilateral process, taking into account the principle of free, previous and informed consent, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the indigenous peoples rights, adopted by El Salvador on the 13th September 2007.
7. Indigenous peoples rights, forest and natural resources control, and their role in forest conservation and management, should be addressed in a transparent and appropriate manner. Thus, any REDD scheme prior to any action should assure: (a) the recognition of land property as for the traditional modes, uses and indigenous laws, and (b) the multiple benefits offered by forests to indigenous peoples, namely water, livelihoods, local climate, firewood, food security and cultural values.
8. Due to the high risk of reversion inherent to REDD actions in developing countries and the leakage or emissions displacement, such actions should not be linked to quantified emission reductions goals of developed countries and should not be addressed under carbon market-oriented schemes which could undermine the environmental integrity of the global emission reduction goal.
9. While implementing national or regional climate change policies, plans and programs, indigenous peoples' strategies, systems and practices addressing mitigation or adaptation to climate change, should be recognized and supported.
10. Financing mechanisms for climate change adaptation and mitigation should be established under the governance and guidance of the UNFCCC, and should be managed by an executive board integrated by countries in a balanced manner on the basis of the Convention principles, facilitating indigenous peoples access to adaptation funding, capacity building, REDD, development and transfer of technologies.

Due in San Salvador, on the 23th October 2009

ORGANIZATIONS MEMBERS OF CCNIS:

- Movimiento Autóctono Indígena Salvadoreño **MAIS**.
- Asociación Democrática de Trabajadores Agropecuarios Indígenas Salvadoreños **ADTAIS**
- Asociación de Desarrollo Comunal Indígena Nahuat Pipil **ADCINP**
- Asociación Comunal Lenca de Guatajiagua **ACOLGUA**
- Artistas Para la Revivificación de la Cultura Original **ARCO**
- Asociación Para la Recuperación de la Cultura Autóctona Salvadoreña **ARCAS**
- Alcaldía Del Común de Izalco
- Asociación de Artesanos de El Salvador **ITZAMA**
- Asociación de Desarrollo Comunal de Santo Domingo de Guzmán **ADESCOIN**
- Asociación Cultural Ecológica de Panchimalco **ACEIS**
- Organización de Artesanos de los Planes de Renderos **OAP**
- Comunidad Indígena la COMARCA de Nuhuilingo
- Asociación Indígena de Juayua.
- Comisión de Derechos Humanos y Derechos de Pueblos Indígenas de El Salvador **CODEHUINESAL**
- Intercomunal Indígena de Santo Tomás
- Asociación de Desarrollo Comunal Cantón Sabana Grande **ADESCOG**
- Grupo Espiritual "TEPECTONAL
- Fundación Ama de Izalco
- Asociación de Pueblos Originarios Lencas en defensa del río Torola.