

MANAUS DECLARATION

April 4, 2008

We, organizations of the Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Communities of Latin America, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Indonesia, meeting in the city of Manaus, Brazil at the Latin American Workshop, “Climate Change and Forest Peoples: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) and the Rights of Indigenous and Traditional Peoples” affirm that:

1. **Global Climate Change represents an unparalleled threat to the future of humanity and the Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Communities**, who live in or depend on the forest and are already suffering its effects. These include severe regional droughts, drastic changes in rainfall regimes and increasingly frequent forest fires.
2. At current deforestation rates, in conjunction with increasing global warming, **large part of the world’s tropical forests are being drastically degraded, presenting a real threat to the subsistence and traditional ways of life** of our peoples and the planet as a whole.
3. Historically, **the Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Communities have played a fundamental role in the defense and protection of hundreds of millions of hectares of forest**, contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from tropical deforestation, without recognition of or compensation for this environmental service.
4. To address the challenges that Climate Change represents, **we consider it necessary to broaden and strengthen Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Communities’ organization internationally** so as to guarantee the effective diffusion of their ideas and proposals in the negotiations for a new, post-2012 emissions control regime in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This network should (1) seek **broad recognition of the role of indigenous people and traditional communities in forest conservation** and in reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from tropical deforestation; (2) **guarantee effective participation of the indigenous people and traditional communities in the construction of mechanisms that compensate them for the forest protection** they promote, such as those under discussion in the context of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) in the UNFCCC. This participation should extend to REDD pilot projects implemented by governments and the private sector. Finally, the two prior points must be closely linked to (3) **broader and complete respect for Indigenous Peoples’ and Traditional Communities’ Rights** and (4) observance of existing national and international legal principles of indigenous peoples’ territorial rights and traditional communities’ land rights.

5. To advance this international network of Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Communities, the participants the Manaus meeting propose to create a **Provisional Committee** composed of six members: three from South America, including two from Amazonia, one from the Congo Basin, one from Meso-America and one from Papua, Indonesia. This Committee, in coordination with the organizations signing this Declaration, will be charged with promoting, facilitating and mobilizing Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Communities internationally to more effectively participate in the United Nations negotiations on climate change, in particular REDD, as well as in initiatives on this issue in their respective countries, while keeping the members of the network, insofar as is possible, informed of their actions. The Committee will, in addition, have the mission of promoting information exchange and capacity building, ensuring young peoples' and women's' participation, as well as monitoring national and regional projects and programs for reducing deforestation. The Committee will remain active until January 2009, when, on the occasion of the World Social Forum to be held in Belém, Brazil, it will be responsible for convening the members of the network now formed, in order for them to create the definitive structure of an **International Alliance of Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Communities of the Forest**.

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