

PROTEST: Indigenous Peoples "2nd MAY REVOLT" at the UNPFII

Monday, 12 May 2008

PROTEST: Indigenous Peoples "2nd MAY REVOLT" at the UNPFII (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues)

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Indigenous Peoples representatives and organizations held a protest at the May 2 2008 conclusion of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in New York.

They were angered by the final report of the Permanent Forum, which ignored Indigenous Peoples stated concerns about carbon trading projects (REDD), Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and other so called "good practice" initiatives.

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Communiqué from the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) on the matter of the World Bank, REDDs™ issue resulting in the action on the last day of the Permanent Forum.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Attached below are paragraphs 5 and 37, which 32 Indigenous organizations and NGO's participating in last weeks' 7th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues were opposed to. Despite a lot of lobbying of Permanent Forum members, the language stayed in the final report. It must be known by our Indigenous brothers and sisters to know that there were certain people on the Permanent Forum that were advocating for support and implementation of carbon market initiatives concerning climate change mitigation and the protection of forest lands.

It was noted that during the first week of the Permanent Forum, there were numerous statements made by Indigenous Peoples opposing the REDD [Reduced Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries] initiative www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/EGM_cs08_diaz.doc that the World Bank is initiating through a Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) project. When the Permanent Forum released a draft of its recommendations on the theme of climate on Monday, April 28, 2008, it was discovered that the draft recommendations (paragraph 37) strongly supported the World Bank initiative and completely ignored the voices of Indigenous Peoples that opposed the REDD initiative, as well as other carbon market solutions. Indigenous participants felt completely ignored and marginalized. One Indigenous brother from the Amazon basin region said, "I don't even know why I came to this Permanent Forum, it seems they already had their mind made up on what they wanted to say."

It was surprising to see language in the Permanent Forum recommendations citing the consultations held by the World Bank to be recognized. Indigenous Peoples from South America had noted the World Bank consultation in South America resulted in Indigenous Peoples walking out. Walking out on this so-called consultation does not interpret into support for the FCPF - REDD project.

Within paragraph 5, it was appalling to many Indigenous Peoples that the Permanent Forum recommended the Kyoto Protocols' Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and the World Bank's Clean Energy Investment Framework as "good examples" of partnerships. Please look at the Petition, for these two initiatives are not good examples of partnerships and many CDM projects have reports of human rights violations.

After the draft report of recommendations on the theme of climate was released, concerned Indigenous peoples, especially the forested-peoples of the global south, converged. After lobbying for language in paragraph 5 and 37 to be omitted, it seemed like swimming upstream. Many Permanent Forum members were not fully knowledgeable on the REDDs initiative, nor fully aware of carbon offset and carbon market regimes. A strategy to present a unified presence was decided upon. A petition was prepared by IEN and signed by 32 Indigenous organizations and submitted to the 16 independent experts of the Permanent Forum. (8 of the members are nominated by governments and 8 are nominated directly by indigenous organizations in their regions. Members of the Permanent Forum are listed at this web site: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/members.html>

The language of the draft recommendation that was released by the Permanent Forum members on Monday, April 28, 2008, is provided below.

(UN document number: United Nations E/C.19/2008/L.2, Agenda item 3 of the provisional agenda)

5. The Permanent Forum notes that the clean development mechanism, the Clean Energy Investment Framework, the Nairobi Framework, the Nairobi Work Programme and the Global Environment Facility adaptation funds are good examples of the kind of partnership that will become increasingly important. These mechanisms respond to the needs of indigenous peoples and include them as partners in designing and implementing programmes that are responsive to local problems and to the goals and visions of indigenous women and men.

37. The Permanent Forum recommends that the recommendations and proposals that emerged from the consultations of indigenous peoples and the World Bank on the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and other carbon funds, such as the BioCarbon Fund, be implemented by the Bank and other relevant agencies. Indigenous peoples should be effectively involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. Displacement and exclusion of indigenous peoples from their forests which may be triggered by projects funded by the Partnership Facility, should be avoided at all costs. Indigenous peoples or their representatives should have a voice in and a vote on the decision making body of the Partnership Facility and of other climate change funds that will have impacts on them. In the case of those who opt not to participate in reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation or in the projects supported by the Partnership Facility, their choice should be respected.

In response to these 2 paragraphs above, Indigenous organizations and supporting organizations registered at the Permanent Forum presented the following Petition to the Permanent Forum members.

Seventh Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

20 April 2008 – 2 May 2009

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^ ^ ^ Petition to the Members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

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^ ^ ^ Concerning Paragraph 5 and 37 of the draft Climate report ^ ^ ^ ^

^ ^ ^ Members of the Permanent Forum,

^ ^ ^ We would like to express our profound concern about the inclusion of our forests in the carbon market through the mechanism known as "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Destruction" (REDD). During this 7th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, many interventions were made by Indigenous participants expressing opposition to the World Banks' Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and its efforts to develop a framework for implementing the REDD initiative.

^ ^ ^ We strongly urge the deletion of Paragraph 37 of the "Recommendations on the special theme "Climate change, biocultural diversity and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges" [E/C.19/2008/L.2]. The World Bank on the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and other carbon funds, such as the BioCarbon Fund are facing broad resistance by indigenous peoples in developing countries and becoming very contentious and the cause of conflicts and divisions in our communities. At one of the World Bank consultations on the FCPF, there was even a walkout by indigenous peoples. The Permanent Forum must not put itself in the position at this time of becoming an advocate for the World Banks' FCPF and its efforts to promote the REDD initiative.

^ ^ ^ Many adaptation and mitigation policies and projects promoted as solutions to climate change such as emissions trading, agofuels and the Clean Development Mechanism devastate Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories and cause human rights violations. The consensus statement of the Global Indigenous Caucus presented on the 2nd day of this session reflected this view as well. ^ ^

^ ^ ^ The vast majority of indigenous peoples feel that the REDD will not benefit Indigenous Peoples, but in fact will result in more violations of Indigenous Peoples' rights. It will increase the violation of our rights to our lands, territories and resources; cause forced evictions; prevent access and threaten indigenous agriculture practices; destroy biodiversity, cultural diversity, traditional livelihoods and knowledge systems; and cause social conflicts. Under REDD, States and carbon traders will take more control over our forests.

^ ^ ^ We would like further to inform the Permanent Forum that steps are already being taken in many countries, including India, to put in place legislation and programmes that would enable dispossession of indigenous lands in favour of corporate and international NGO control as conservation parks and sanctuaries in anticipation of implementing REDD projects. These legal and policy initiatives demonstrate clearly that REDD would result in displacement of indigenous peoples and forest dwelling communities on a massive scale.

^ ^ ^ The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on September 13 of this year and consecrates fundamental rights of indigenous peoples which are

relevant to the REDD discussions, especially Articles 10, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32.

Given the threat to Indigenous Peoples' Rights that REDD represents, we call on the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to recommend strongly to the UNFCCC, the UN Forum of Forests, concerned UN agencies such as UNEP, the World Bank, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples and nation states that REDD not be considered as a strategy to combat Climate Change but, in fact, is in violation of the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, we also urge the Permanent Forum to recommend strongly to the Convention on Biological Diversity that the implementation of the programme of work on Forests and biodiversity prohibit REDD.

We also further urge that Paragraph 5 be amended to remove "clean development mechanism, the Clean Energy Investment Framework, and the Global Environment Facility". These initiatives do not demonstrate good examples of partnership with indigenous peoples. There are many CDM projects that have human rights violations, lack of transparency and have failed to recognize the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent. The Clean Energy Investment Framework is a World Bank initiative developed in response to a mandate from the G-8 summit in Gleneagles in 2005. It is suppose to increase access to energy in developing countries, reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the energy sector, and assist developing countries to adapt to climate change. Friends of the Earth reported that instead of combating climate change, the World Bank Investment Framework promotes coal-fired power, nuclear power and large hydropower projects. The report, published by international environment and development organizations, concluded that the World Bank's new Investment Framework on Clean Energy and Development will not be effective at combating climate change and expanding energy access for the poor. Indigenous peoples must be extremely cautious on who we partner with.

Organizations that Endorse this Statement :

Name of Organizations

1. Indigenous Environmental Network
2. CORE Manipur
3. Federation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Asia (FITPA)
4. Na Koa Ikuiku Kalahui Hawaii
5. Indigenous World Association
6. CAPAJ- Parlamento del Pueblo Qollana
7. International Indian Treaty Council
8. Amazon Alliance
9. COICA
10. Instituto Indigena Brasileiro para la Propiedad Intelctual
11. The Haudenosaunee Delegation
12. Agence Kanak de Developpement
13. Mary Simat-MAWEED
14. Marcos Terena-Comite Intertribal-ITC-Brasil

15. Land is Life
16. ARPI-SC-Peru Amazonia
17. Asociaciones de Mujeres Waorani de la Amazonia AMWAE
18. Kus Kura S.C.
19. Indigenous Network on Economic and Trade
20. Aguomon FEINE
21. Friends of the Earth International
22. Amerindian Peoples Association
23. FIMI North America
24. L. Ole L. Lengai-Sinyati Youth Alliance
25. Beverly Longid-Cordillera Peoples Alliance Philippines
26. Red de Mujeres Indigenas sobre Biodiversidad de Abgatala
27. Fundacion para la Promocion de Conocimiento Indigena
28. Asociacion Indigena Ambiental
29. INTI-Intercambio Nativa Tradicional Internacional
30. Global Forest Coalition
31. Fuerza de Mujeres Wayuu
32. Caf   ek

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Representatives of Indigenous organizations lobbied various members of the Permanent Forum on the importance of not recommending implementation of the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and its REDD initiative. It must be noted that a couple days later, the Asia Indigenous Caucus drafted its own proposed language surrounding the World Bank REDD initiative. This was in response to the Petition. While the Latin America Indigenous peoples were largely opposed to the World Bank REDD issue, members of the Asia Indigenous Caucus were split on the issue. The Asia Indigenous Caucus supported paragraph 37 to stay, and lobbied for two additional paragraphs. Their version is provided below:

THE ASIA CAUCUS PROPOSALS TO THE UNPFII RECOMMENDATIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Concerning Recommendations on the special theme, "Climate Change, biocultural diversity and livelihoods : the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges"

Insert Additional Paragraphs after paragraph 36 :

37. The Permanent Forum recommends to use the renewed political focus on forests stimulated by current policy debates on Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) under the UNFCCC, towards securing the rights of indigenous peoples living in forests, and protecting rewarding their historical guardianship stewardship role and continuing conservation and sustainable use of forests. Indigenous peoples must not be excluded, and should be centrally involved in deciding forest policies and programmes at all levels, that deliver on justice and equity, and contribute to sustainable development, biodiversity protection and climate mitigation and adaptation.

38. The Permanent Forum has heard that the current framework for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) is unacceptable for most indigenous peoples. Existing REDD proposals, would reward deforesters and polluters rather than indigenous peoples; reinforce centralized top-down management of forests, involve carbon offset regimes that violate indigenous cosmology and world view and undermine indigenous peoples rights. In order to benefit indigenous peoples, new proposals for avoided deforestation or reduced emissions from deforestation must include address the need for global and national policy reforms and be guided by implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, respecting rights to land, territories and resources; and the rights of self determination and to the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of the indigenous peoples concerned.

Despite all the efforts to try to lobby Permanent Forum members on the issue, and numerous closed door meetings by the Permanent Forum members discussing the issue, on the last day of the Permanent Forum, the final recommendations were released. The final recommendations maintained paragraph 37, and added the two additional paragraphs proposed by the Asia Indigenous Caucus. Paragraph 5 stayed in the final report, as well.

This is when the Indigenous organizations demanded a voice on this issue. The final day didn't allow for interventions (statements) from Indigenous groups (observers).