

Milan Declaration of the Sixth International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change

COP 9, UNFCCC, Milan, Italy, November 29 – 30, 2003

We, the representatives of the Indigenous Peoples of the world present at the 6th International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change held prior to the 9th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Milan, Italy, restate our principles and present the following proposals on matters concerning our peoples and communities:

1. Reaffirming that our special relationship with Mother Earth is sacred and must be honoured, protected and loved. We further declare our holistic vision which strongly binds biological diversity, cultural and spiritual identity and unites people with its ancestral territories. Our ancestral territories, spiritual, social, biological and cultural resources are the fundamental basis for our existence, health and livelihoods but are threatened and destroyed by climate change and its consequences;

2. Recalling, during the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples (1995-2004), the United Nations has clearly recognized our rights to participate in the UN processes through the establishment of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII); the UN Permanent Forum, in its last session, has recommended to the UNFCCC through United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to consider the establishment of the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change for the effective participation of Indigenous Peoples [EC.19/2003/32];

3. Noting "the vital role of Indigenous Peoples in sustainable development" as affirmed by the political declaration of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 2002 in paragraph 25;

4. Affirming the international provisions already acknowledged in other international instruments and mechanisms that ensure our participation and contribution within the discussions, such as:

The Rio de Janeiro Declaration on the Environment and Development (in particular Principle 22), the Agenda 21 (in particular Chapters 11 and 26); the Convention on Biological Diversity (in particular Article 8 (j) and related provisions); the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Statement on Forest Principles and IPF/IF/UNFF; Convention 169 of the ILO on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, among others;

5. Reaffirming our previous declarations of the First International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change at Lyon, France in September 2000; Declaration of Second International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change, The Hague, The Netherlands, November 2000; and Indigenous Peoples Statement at 7th Conference of the Parties at Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco, 5th November 2001; the International Indigenous Peoples

Forum's Statement of New Delhi, India at the 8th Conference of Parties in October 2002; Indigenous Peoples Political Declaration at Bali, Indonesia, June 2002; the Kimberley Declaration and the Indigenous Peoples. Plan of Implementation on Sustainable Development, at WSSD, South Africa August 2002.

6. Expressing our appreciation to the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, Ms. Joke Waller-Hunter for the statement made on the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples on August 9, 2003 taking special note of the contribution and aspirations of indigenous peoples in addressing complex global issues.

We therefore call upon the States Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that:

- a. COP 9 to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change recognizes the fundamental role of Indigenous Peoples in addressing climate change and environmental degradation to restore the natural balance.
- b. COP 9 considers the creation of the Inter-sessional Ad hoc Working Group on Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change for the timely, effective and adequate solutions in response to the urgent situation caused by climate change.
- c. COP 9 provides necessary support to indigenous peoples for their full and effective participation in all levels of discussion, decision making and implementation as well as ensuring that the necessary funding be provided to guarantee such participation and to strengthen their capacities.
- d. Include Indigenous Peoples and climate change as items in the agenda of the COP and the Subsidiary Bodies meetings with specific reference to vulnerability, adaptation, poverty, and other climate change related issues.
- e. The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Joint Implementation (JI) must incorporate principles which address transparency, free, prior and informed consent and equitable benefit sharing with Indigenous Peoples in order to accomplish the objectives of lowering greenhouse gas emissions and achieving sustainable development in developed and developing countries.
- f. All development projects within indigenous ancestral territories must respect our fundamental rights to lands, territories, self-determination and ensure our right to our free, prior and informed consent. Sinks project do not contribute to climate change mitigation and sustainable development. The modalities and procedures for afforestation and reforestation project activities under the CDM do not respect and guarantee our right to lands, territories, and self-determination.
- g. We vigorously support the creation and financing of the Adaptation Fund to be accessed by Indigenous Peoples to address the potential and actual impacts of climate change in a manner compatible with our traditional knowledge, customs, culture and lifestyles.
- h. We express our desire to be included in UNFCCC capacity building initiatives and propose

that special capacity building be undertaken for Indigenous Peoples. Such capacity building would strengthen our ability to exercise our right to fully participate in climate change negotiations.

i. We call upon all governments to implement Climate Impact Assessments which take into account indigenous knowledge systems, culture, social values, spirituality and ecosystems; as well as the full and equal participation of Indigenous Peoples in all aspects and stages of the assessment.

Recognizing all of the above, we call upon the UNFCCC to recognize that through the protection and promotion of Indigenous Peoples' rights and through recognizing and integrating our dynamic and holistic visions, we are securing not only our future, but the future of humanity and social and environmental justice for all.

Signed by the representatives of Indigenous Peoples present at COP 9 of UNFCCC in Milan, Italy, 30th November 2003.

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