

## **Declaration on Climate Change and REDD + of the National Coordination of Indigenous Peoples of Panama (COONAPIP) and the Mesoamerican people and forest alliance**

During September 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> in 2011 in Panama City, the sisters and brothers, traditional authorities and representatives of indigenous people: Embera, Wounaan, Naso Tjërdi, Ngäbe, Bugle, Guna, Bribri, THE NATIONAL COORDINATION OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF PANAMA (COONAPIP), representatives of the MESOAMERICAN PEOPLE AND FOREST ALLIANCE (AMPB) have come together to conduct the "Mesoamerican Analysis of a common approach for the environmental and social safeguards under REDD+ from the territories " with the aim to express our position in front of the FCPF, WB, UN-REDD, governments and other instances that implement initiatives on climate change and REDD+.

The territories of Indigenous people, local and forest communities in Mesoamerica consist of the largest forest areas of the region, outside and within protected areas, and these lands are preserved and managed by ourselves since ancient times.

We reaffirm that in our territories a high biodiversity can be found, also well maintained ecosystems providing ecosystem services and benefits to the society in general, as well as to the highest cultural diversity that has been transmitted historically from generation to generation. Nevertheless, these practices are threatened by public and private projects with a high negative environmental impact.

The traditional authorities, representatives of the Indigenous people and of the local and forest communities are not the reason of the current climate crisis. Rather more, our way of life and way how to manage our resources and our territories contribute to climate mitigation and adaption, reducing the vulnerability and help to decrease deforestation and forest degradation and support their protection and conservation. Nevertheless, our cosmogonic principles that have been transmitted from generation to generation oblige us to continue to work in favour of the planet and its natural resources.

Despite of the recognition and our contribution of expertise towards the conservation of natural resources that support climate change mitigation and adaption, the United Nations, the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), does not take into account the collective rights of the indigenous people, neither in their strategy, nor in their arranged mechanism, which does no guarantee the collective rights of indigenous people on country level as recognized by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of indigenous Peoples, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention 169 of the international labour organization about indigenous and Tribal Peoples in independent countries, the American convention on human rights and other legal instruments.

Therefore, we urge the regional governments to align intern legislation with the international policy and agreements that recognize and respect the rights of indigenous People, local and forest communities. Likewise, we demand organizations and international companies to implement strategies and projects and programs concerning our territories that are coherent with the already mentioned politics and that the following points have to be considered:

- That we define of our territories effective concepts of full participation and of wider consultation stipulated in the agreed safeguarding for the preparation of REDD+ strategies in our countries.
- That our right of full and effective participation will be fostered and guaranteed and which should be defined by indigenous people and local and forest communities and their organizations in the international and national negotiations under the framework convention on Climate

Change and adjacent topics, particularly about REDD+ mechanism, to recognize and respect our worldview and ways towards development.

- That the mechanism of participation and consultation are compliant with the proper methodologies of the indigenous people and, thereby, prevailing the principle of free, prior and informed consent, that until now not have been applied, as well as to respect the collective rights of indigenous people, of the local and forest communities and their organizations. Up to present time these mechanism have not been fully observed by our governments or only have been simulated.
- That our rights, particularly the free, previous and informed consent of indigenous people and local communities are recognized and guaranteed and to consider dissent and our right of self-determination. Furthermore, the local and regional agendas of the indigenous people should be considered.
- To recognize, respect, accomplish, ensure, and strengthen the organizational forms and processes of decision making of the indigenous people, local and forest communities as well as the territorial governance that allows to build up a new relation with our governments and international agencies.
- That the implementation of REDD+ mechanism and compensation for environmental services recognize and respect the collective rights of our territories and resources and to focus on an increased access of your livelihoods, as well as to strengthen local capacity building that includes the diversity of organizational forms and processes of decision making of the indigenous people and local communities.
- That ourselves, the indigenous people, local and forest communities with our traditional knowledge and capacity building propose and implement the models of local and communitarian development out of our worldview to perpetuate our way of life with the aim to pursue completely our right of development.
- That the implementation of the REDD+ mechanism recognizes and reassesses the environmental and cultural services that are generated by different ecosystems in the territories of the indigenous people.
- To integrate levelling mechanisms and strategies of knowledge and socialization of the information about REDD + mechanism, guaranteeing the training and understanding, so that our communities are effectively capacitated towards the control and monitoring of our resources.
- The priority is the right adequacy and efficiency of the legal norms to harmonize political, economical, environmental, and territorial relations with the indigenous people under the framework of national legislations that allow the creation of new relationships between indigenous people and national states.
- We call upon indigenous organizations, forestry organizations, academic institutions, NGOs, social organizations and common society of the region, to join this declaration regarding the process of the development of the REDD+ mechanism in Mesoamerica.

- We point out the concern about our governments to provide no solution towards the constant invasions that are realized in our territories and that are harming our collective land rights, natural resources, and that in many cases our leaders are persecuted by the justice system because of defending these rights.

We demand and propose the bilateral and multilateral organizations, the organizations of the Central American Integration System (SICA), the country of Mexico as an observer and especially the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD) as well as the responsible authorities for the implementation of REDD + strategies in our countries to integrate and follow the recommendations of this declaration.