

Statement read at the United Nations co-written by all the 15 members of the Global Access Project

This was the co-written by the 15 participants (including Damon Corrie of Barbados) of the Global Access Project - training for Indigenous Peoples 2008, with the collaboration of Tribal Link Foundation and the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues of the United Nations.

The statement was read by Adan Alarcon, an Aymara youth from Peru representing CAPAJ.

"Thank you Madame Chair,

Indigenous Peoples from six regions of the world participating in the 'Global Access Project – Training for Indigenous Peoples 2008', meeting in New York from April 16th - 18th 2008, have shared our experiences and concerns over the dramatic effects of climate change in our traditional territories, which constitute the basis of our lives as peoples.

Climate change is a reality for our peoples; the seasons have changed dramatically, leading to drought and desertification of our territories, melting of glaciers and sea ice, and death of animals, plants, and a decrease of biodiversity.

Pacific islands such as Tuvalu are sinking and the coasts are eroding. On other islands in the Pacific and the Caribbean, food security is threatened by soil erosion and an accelerated disappearance of the rain forests.

The Andean zone and the Amazon Basin of South America, and the continent of Africa are undergoing an accelerated desertification. Forests areas are disappearing, and lakes and water are diminishing, threatening the traditional subsistence of indigenous peoples, which is the basis of our lives.

We are not the ones responsible for climate change. The actions of governments and corporations have created the effects of climate change. To the contrary, we have contributed as indigenous peoples through our knowledge, which dates back from time immemorial, on how to live in harmony with nature and Mother Earth.

The efforts of governments which are bound to carbon trading and the development of 'bio fuels/agro fuels', far from contributing to solving problems, have generated a loss of rights for Indigenous Peoples, greater environmental destruction and forced displacement.

Therefore, Madame Chair, we propose the following to the 7th Session of the Permanent Forum:

We urge you in your final report, to call upon the parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change to include the Indigenous Peoples on an equal footing with the States in the discussion on climate change – including:

1. The establishment of sessions of indigenous peoples and non-indigenous experts to present our concerns and develop recommendations for the discussion of the Conference of the Parties.
2. Flexibility for direct access by indigenous peoples, including the adaption fund.
3. Application of the provisions of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the General Assembly, as a minimum standard in the development of mitigation and adaption policies.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, we urge the Permanent Forum to inform the United Nations bodies and agencies, including the Security Council, of this immediate threat to human rights and the lives of our indigenous peoples and all the peoples of the world.

Thank you Madame Chair,

Co-written by:

Gulnara Abbasova of the Foundation for Research and Support of Indigenous Peoples of Crimea/Ukraine.

Pelpina Sahurena of the Bangsa Adat Alifuru of Maluku (The Molluccas)

Ronald Taggaoo of the Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network of the Phillipines

Tafue Lusama of the Tuvalu Climate Action Network of Tuvalu.

Christina Louwa of the ElMolo Forum of Kenya

Damon Corrie of the Eagle Clan Arawaks of Barbados and Guyana.

Daniel Salau Rogei of the Simba Masai Outreach Organization of Kenya.

Manuela Kenya Ima of the Waorani Womens Association of the Amazon in Ecuador.

Mildred Gandia Reyes Zieglasch of the United Confederation of Taino Peoples.

Ole Lengai of the Sinyatt Youth Association of Tanzania.

Rene Rimas of the Massai Women for Education and Economic Development in Kenya.

Thomas Alarcon of the Judicial Commission for the Self Development of the First Andean Peoples on Peru.

Mary Simat of the Massai Women for Education and Development in Kenya.

Johnson Cerda of the Santa Elena Community of Ecuador.