

NATURE, FORESTS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ARE NOT FOR SALE

Indigenous brothers of the world:

I am deeply concerned because some pretend to use leaders and indigenous groups to promote the commoditization of nature and in particular of forest through the establishment of the REDD mechanism (Reduction Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) and its versions REDD+ REED++.

Every day an extension of forests and rainforest equivalent to 36,000 football fields disappears in the world. Each year 13 million hectares of forest and rain forest are lost. At this rate, the forests will disappear by the end of the century.

The forests and rainforest are the largest source of biodiversity. If deforestation continues, thousands of species, animals and plants will be lost forever. More than three quarters of accessible fresh water zones come from uptake zones in forests, hence the worsening of water quality when the forest condition deteriorates. Forests provide protection from flooding, erosion and natural disasters. They provide non-timber goods as well as timber goods. Forests are a source of natural medicines and healing elements not yet discovered. Forests and the rainforest are the lungs of the atmosphere. **18% of all emissions of greenhouse gases occurring in the world are caused by deforestation.**

It is essential to stop the destruction of our Mother Earth.

Currently, during climate change negotiations *everyone recognizes that it is essential to avoid the deforestation and degradation of the forest.* However, to achieve this, **some propose to commoditize forests on the false argument that only what has a price and owner is worth taking care of.**

Their proposal is to consider only one of the functions of forests, which is its ability to absorb carbon dioxide, and issue "certificates", "credits" or "Carbon rights" to be commercialized in a carbon market. This way, companies of the North have the choice of reducing their emissions or buy "REDD certificates" in the South according to their economic convenience. For example, if a company has to invest USD40 or USD50 to reduce the emission of one ton of CO₂ in a "developed country", they would prefer to buy a "REDD certificate" for USD10 or USD20 in a "developing country", so they can they say they have fulfilled to reduce the emissions of the mentioned ton of CO₂.

Through this mechanism, developed countries will have handed their obligation to reduce their emissions to developing countries, **and the South will once again fund the North** and that same northern company will have saved a lot of money by buying "certified" carbon from the Southern forests. However, **they will not only have cheated their commitments to reduce emissions**, but **they will have also begun the commoditization of nature**, with the forests

The forests will start to be priced by the CO2 tonnage they are able to absorb. The "credit" or "carbon right" which certifies that absorptive capacity will be bought and sold like any commodity worldwide. To ensure that no one affects the ownership of "REDD certificates" buyers, a series of restrictions will be put into place, which will eventually affect the sovereign right of countries and indigenous peoples over their forests and rainforests. **So begins a new stage of privatization of nature never seen before which will extend to water, biodiversity and what they call "environmental services"**.

While we assert that **capitalism is the cause of global warming** and the destruction of forests, rainforests and Mother Earth, they **seek to expand capitalism to the commoditization of nature with the word "green economy"**.

To get support for this proposal of commoditization of nature, **some financial institutions, governments, NGOs, foundations, "experts" and trading companies are offering a percentage of the "benefits" of this commoditization of nature to indigenous peoples** and communities living in native forests and the rainforest.

Nature, forests and indigenous peoples are not for sale.

For centuries, Indigenous peoples have lived conserving and preserving natural forests and rainforest. For us the forest and rainforest are not objects, are not things you can price and privatize. **We do not accept that native forests and rainforest be reduced to a simple measurable quantity of carbon. Nor do we accept that native forests be confused with simple plantations of a single or two tree species.** The forest is our home, a big house where plants, animals, water, soil, pure air and human beings coexist.

It is essential that all countries of the world work together to prevent forest and rainforest deforestation and degradation. It is an obligation of developed countries, and **it is part of its climate and environmental debt climate, to**

contribute financially to the preservation of forests, but **NOT** through its commoditization. There are many ways of supporting and financing developing countries, indigenous peoples and local communities that contribute to the preservation of forests.

Developed countries spend tens of times more public resources on defense, security and war than in climate change. Even during the financial crisis many have maintained and increased their military spending. **It is inadmissible that by using the needs communities have and the ambitions of some leaders and indigenous "experts", indigenous peoples are expected to be involved with the commoditization of nature.**

All forests and rainforests protection mechanisms should guarantee indigenous rights and participation, but **not because indigenous participation is achieved in REDD, we can accept that a price for forests and rainforests is set and negotiated in a global carbon market.**

Indigenous brothers, let us not be confused. Some tell us that the carbon market mechanism in REDD will be voluntary. That is to say that whoever wants to sell and buy, will be able, and whoever does not want to, will be able to stand aside. **We cannot accept that, with our consent, a mechanism is created where one voluntarily sells Mother Earth while others look crossed handed**

Faced with the reductionist views of forests and rainforest commoditization, indigenous peoples with peasants and social movements of the world must fight for the proposals that emerged of the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth:

1) Integrated management of native forests and rainforest not only considering its mitigation function as CO₂ sink but all its functions and potentiality, whilst avoiding confusing them with simple plantations.

2) Respect the sovereignty of developing countries in their integral management of forests.

3) Full compliance with the Rights of Indigenous Peoples established by the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Convention No. 169 of the ILO and other international instruments; recognition and respect to their territories; revalorization and implementation of indigenous knowledge for

the preservation of forests; indigenous peoples participation and indigenous management of forest and rainforest.

4) Funding of developed countries to developing countries and indigenous peoples for integral management of forest as part of their climate and environmental debt. No establishment of any mechanism of carbon markets or "incentives" that may lead to the commoditization of forests and rainforest.

5) Recognition of the rights of Mother Earth, which includes forests, rainforest and all its components. In order to restore harmony with Mother Earth, putting a price on nature is not the way but to recognize that not only human beings have the right to life and to reproduce, but nature also has a right to life and to regenerate, and that without Mother Earth Humans cannot live.

Indigenous brothers, together with our peasant brothers and social movements of the world, we must mobilize so that the conclusions of Cochabamba are assumed in Cancun and to impulse a mechanism of RELATED ACTIONS TO THE FORESTS based on these five principles, while always maintaining high the unity of indigenous peoples and the principles of respect for Mother Earth, which for centuries we have preserved and inherited from our ancestors.

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