

# MANDALUYONG DECLARATION OF THE GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS WOMEN, CLIMATE CHANGE AND REDD PLUS

Legend Villas, Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines  
18-19 November 2010

*“ We must search through our past to understand the ways  
of our ancestors for thousands of years  
when they lived in unity  
with the spirits of the land and mother earth.”*

We, 80 indigenous women coming from 60 indigenous nations and peoples and representing our communities and organizations from 29 countries<sup>1</sup> gathered together on 18-21 November 2010 in Manila, Philippines for the “Global Conference on Indigenous Women, Climate Change and REDD Plus.” We came to tell our stories on how we are differentially affected by the impacts of climate change because we are women and because we are indigenous peoples. We shared how we are coping or adapting to climate change. We also examined our distinct contributions in mitigating climate change or reducing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere. On the last day, we agreed on priority areas of work and activities which we can collectively or individually do within our own organizations and networks.

While we have least contributed to the problem of climate change, we have to carry the burdens of adapting to its adverse impacts. This is because of the unwillingness of rich, industrialized countries to change their unsustainable production and consumption patterns and pay their environmental debt for causing this ecological disaster. Modernity and capitalist development which is based on the use of fossil fuels and which promote unsustainable and excessive production and consumption of unnecessary goods and services, individualism, patriarchy, and incessant profit-seeking have caused climate change.

Extreme and variable weather conditions brought about by climate change have undermined our traditional livelihoods such as rotational agriculture, hunting and gathering, pastoralism, high montane agriculture, lowland agriculture, agro-forestry, marine and coastal livelihoods, and handicraft production, among others. These ecosystem-based livelihoods have ensured food and water security and the well-being of our families, communities and nations for centuries. Unfortunately, these are grossly undermined not just by climate change but by the dominant economic paradigm which is highly extractive and destructive of nature. We have experienced and continue to suffer from unprecedented disasters brought about by super-typhoons and hurricanes causing massive floods and landslides. Aside from the loss of lives, some of us have lost our homes and even our ancestral territories. With prolonged droughts, high temperatures and widespread bush and forest fires, some of our peoples suffer from hunger, disease and misery.

Diseases caused by the lack of food and potable water and by extreme hot and cold temperatures have

<sup>1</sup> *Aotearoa (New Zealand), Bangladesh, Burma, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Laos, Micronesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Tanzania, Suriname, the USA and Viet Nam*

been worsened many times over. Widespread outbreaks of vector-borne and water-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, cholera and other gastro-intestinal diseases, and leptospirosis, among others, continue to happen. Yet health services to address these are sorely inadequate. Thus, our burdens as caregivers and nurturers of our families and communities increased to a point where our capacity to adapt is now seriously weakened.

Water and food insecurity is exacerbated by the salinization of water aquifers in the low lying coastal areas in the islands of the Philippines, Indonesia and the Pacific; the deforestation and degradation of our tropical and temperate forests which are the watersheds; and the melting of glaciers in the high montane areas in the Andes in South America, the Himalayas in Asia and Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa. Prolonged droughts have resulted in the drying up of our springs and rivers. All these have grossly affected our traditional livelihoods and well-being which are intricately linked with the integrity of our ecosystems. These also led to conflicts over water which are further worsened by the privatization of common water sources by foreign and domestic water corporations and the pollution of these by extractive industries like mining and oil extraction. As the main water providers, we have to search and fight for access to the few remaining water sources.

Rising sea levels are drowning or have already drowned our islands. Those of us from the small islands, such as from Carteret Islands in Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, are forced to leave our ancestral islands and are now refugees on lands located on higher ground. In this particular case, what is at stake are questions of territorial and political sovereignty and identity of the peoples of Carteret. What does sovereignty mean when your ancestral territory is lost? Many other low lying coastal areas are under the same threat.

Cultural norms and values that guide customary sustainable resource use and management associated with food production and consumption are weakened. Miskito women shared: “We now live in a hurry and daughters do not cook as grandmothers... We do not catch fish as before, do not cook as before; we cannot store food and seeds as before; the land no longer produces the same; small rivers are drying up... I think that along with the death of our rivers, our culture also dies...”<sup>2</sup> In Cameroon, the continuing disappearance of the fish called *nwaha* has affected the performance of the traditional ritual for Baka girls entering womanhood. The inability to perform this rite not only deprives young women the pride and honor of being initiated into adulthood. It also leads to the continuing erosion of the culture, knowledge and values associated with the ritual. With food scarcity, the health and well-being of the new generation are at risk.

Complicating these are the situations of multiple discrimination based on gender and ethnic identity. These are manifested in the lack of gender- and culturally-sensitive basic social services such as education and health and our lack of access to basic utility services such as water and energy. The systematic discrimination and non-recognition of our sustainable resource management and customary governance systems and their access, control and ownership of their lands, territories and resources persists.

Out of the two billion people in the world today who do not have access to energy resources, a significant number of these are us, indigenous peoples, because we live in the most remote and isolated areas. Some of us, whose territories are used for mega-hydroelectric dams, still do not have energy in our communities. We spend between two to nine hours to collect firewood and biomass for cooking. The worsening conflicts over ownership and access to our land and resources brought about by past and

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<sup>2</sup> Interviews with M. Bobb, Smith Otila Escobar Duarte, Albita Solis, Lydia Wilson, Clarence Tummy Cleophas and Thomas Prudilia in a paper presented by Rose Cunningham, Wangki Tangni and CADPI, Nicaragua.

present discriminatory legal, political and economic systems, some conservation regimes and some climate change responses, as well as the unregulated behavior of corporations, are taking a serious toll on us. We have to continue nurturing our families and communities under such difficult situations. The Bagua Massacre in Peru in June 2009 where the military fired upon indigenous peoples protesting against discriminatory laws which favored mining corporations over them represents what is happening to many indigenous peoples in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

Pastoralism, which is nomadic or semi-nomadic in character, is the main livelihood of our indigenous sisters and brothers in West, East and the Horn of Africa, Mongolia, in the Himalayas, Russia, some parts of India and in Samiland. While scores of cattle die due to prolonged droughts in Africa, pastoralism still contributes significantly to the national revenues of governments. We, indigenous women who belong to pastoralist communities, suffer discrimination from the State which considers pastoralism as backward and, as a result, systematically marginalizes us in many aspects. We have a high rate of illiteracy because we keep on moving, we hardly have access to basic social services like health and education. We suffer from violence committed against us in the forms of rape, sexual harassment and bigotry.

Amidst all these, we have and continue to struggle against institutionalized discrimination and inequality. Because we live in the most fragile ecosystems, we are highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. Those of us from Ecuador, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Papua, Peru, Philippines, and Suriname shared how we stood in the forefront of the struggles against mining, deforestation, oil and gas extraction, and dam-building, which have led to the destruction of our forests and waters and traditional livelihood sources. In New Mexico, USA, our indigenous sisters are engaged in documenting the environmental and health impacts of uranium mining and pressuring government to implement the 1990 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act. Our Baka and Batwa sisters from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi and our indigenous sisters from Thailand are not even considered as citizens in the States where they live; so they are struggling to get their citizenship. In the Central Belt of India, Adivasi women such as the Jharkand and Oraon women continue to fight against the attempts of the State to further exploit their forests and open these up to mineral extraction.

We shared how we are addressing the issues of food, water and energy insecurity. How we are sustaining and transmitting our traditional knowledge to the younger generations. How we are continuing our traditional land, water and forest resource management systems. How we are exerting our best to ensure the overall health and well-being of our families and communities. Our efforts to recover, strengthen, use, and adapt our traditional knowledge and our ecosystems to climate change and to transmit these to our youth are bearing some good results. We recognize the imperative to enhance our capacities for disaster preparedness, management and rehabilitation but we should be provided the necessary financial and technical support. We shared our indigenous ways of predicting and coping with climate change-related disasters and we hope to further strengthen these knowledge and practices.

To address food insecurity, we are diversifying our crops and using and developing further our viable traditional plant and livestock species that are more tolerant of extreme weather conditions. We continue to use and adapt our traditional knowledge and land, water, forest and natural resource management systems to climate change. We, who belong to hunting and gathering communities, are getting more into crop cultivation including domestication of fruit trees, and food substitution as we continue to protect our forests from drivers of deforestation such as logging, mining, large-scale chemical-based agriculture and monocrop plantations. Realizing the adverse impacts of industrialized chemical-based agriculture, those of us engaged in rotational agriculture and small-scale cash crop production are reviving and strengthening traditional land, water and pest management systems,

recycling of biodegradable wastes, among others.

We are also strengthening our mutual labour exchange systems which embed the values of reciprocity, solidarity and self-help as well as our traditional forest management practices. Examples of these are the *ug-ugbo* of the Kankana-ey Igorot and *muyong* of the Ifugao in the Philippines, the *bakahnu* among the Miskito of Nicaragua, *dahas* of the Dayak in Indonesia, *engelehe* of the Maasai in Africa, among others. Our spirituality which link humans and nature, the seen and the unseen, the past, present and future, and the living and non-living has been and remains as the foundation of our sustainable resource management and use. We believe that if we continue to live by our values and still use our sustainable systems and practices for meeting our basic needs, we can adapt better to climate change.

We assert that before we take part in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, programmes and activities, we need to learn more profoundly what the risks and opportunities are for us. All adaptation and mitigation plans and activities implemented in our territories, including initiatives such as REDD Plus (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Conservation, Sustainable Management of Forests, Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks), should be adequately understood by our communities before they make their decisions on how to deal with these. Our free, prior and informed consent should be obtained for any climate change project brought into our communities. Most of the world's remaining tropical forests which are those targeted for REDD Plus are our traditional territories.

We are therefore keen to see that the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) be integrally included as the main instrument to protect us against the potential risks from REDD Plus. These risks include our possible displacement from our forests, elite capture of benefits, gross commodification of our forests and all resources found therein, among others. At the same time, we can see some opportunities for us to occupy decision making spaces, reform forest and land laws to recognize indigenous peoples' rights, abatement of deforestation, and possible real and sustained efforts to address land tenure issues and the drivers of deforestation. As indigenous women who are dependent and who live in forests, we continue to play significant roles in protecting the biodiversity and other ecosystem services provided by our forests. We still gather wild food plants and medicinal plants as well as fuel, fodder and fiber. We protect the forest because of its multiple function and roles in our economic, environment, social-cultural and spiritual lives. We cannot see forests, therefore, as just timber or carbon. Our holistic regard and our reciprocal relationship with our forest and our rights to these forests and resources should be the defining elements to consider in any initiative around forests and climate change.

We agreed on the following priority areas of work and actions which we will seek to implement in our communities and organizations, jointly with our partners and supporters.

## ***1. AWARENESS RAISING, SKILLS TRAINING WORKSHOPS, INFORMATION DISSEMINATION***

### 1.1. Awareness-raising and training seminars to increase our basic knowledge on:

- Climate change, policies and programmes on climate change adaptation and mitigation of States and NGOs at the national and global levels, which include, among others, the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol, REDD Plus, disaster preparedness and risk management;

- Human rights-based, ecosystem approach and knowledge-based framework to climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- Understanding the UNDRIP and CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women);
- Gender analysis of policies and approaches for mitigation and adaptation.

1.2. Skills training workshops on how to develop popular education materials; effective and culturally- and gender-sensitive methods and approaches to teaching and learning; project proposal development and fund-raising, as well as organizational and finance management.

1.3. More effective and wider dissemination of relevant information and sharing of knowledge on climate change, adaptation and mitigation with the grassroots women's organizations:

- Develop and use diverse methodologies and technologies for information sharing and awareness raising, e.g., community radio, video documentation, community theatre, community newspapers and wall posters, etc.;
- Translation of materials into languages understood by community women;
- Setting up of multiple communications networks at the national, regional and global level for faster dissemination of information;
- Use of multimedia.

## ***2. RESEARCH, DOCUMENTATION AND PUBLICATION***

2.1. Research and documentation on climate change impacts on indigenous women and on climate change adaptation and mitigation:

- Undertake training-workshops on participatory and policy research for indigenous women who are interested to do research work that can be used for education and awareness raising and for policy advocacy. Research themes and agenda can cover the following areas:
  - Food security and climate change – impacts and roles of women;
  - Traditional knowledge and community forest management practices and the roles of indigenous women;
  - Monitoring of climate change mitigation measures such as REDD Plus;
  - Traditional livelihoods of indigenous women and climate change;
  - Renewable energy development, energy security and indigenous women;
  - Gender dimensions of adaptation and mitigation policies and measures;
- Use of multimedia to disseminate widely research results to the communities, to policy and decision makers and to the media.

2.2. Publish the studies prepared by the indigenous women for this Conference and launch this publication during the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

### **3. ENHANCE CAPACITIES OF OUR COMMUNITIES TO ADAPT TO AND MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE**

3.1. Enhance adaptive capacities and livelihoods including enhancement of our traditional agricultural practices and systems, agro-forestry and the development and promotion of ecological agricultural practices adapted to climate change impacts, including development of and access to diverse seed varieties for food, fiber.

3.2. Facilitate direct access to adaptation funds and technologies for climate change adaptation at the local, national, regional and global levels:

- Gather and disseminate widely information on existing funds and resources which indigenous women's organizations and networks can tap:
  - FIMI (International Indigenous Women's Forum) – Indigenous Women's Fund: [www.fimi-iiwg.org](http://www.fimi-iiwg.org), Tebtebba: [www.tebtebba.org](http://www.tebtebba.org), AIWN: [www.asiaindigenouswomen.org](http://www.asiaindigenouswomen.org);
  - Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF) – IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development): [www.tebtebba.org](http://www.tebtebba.org),
  - UN Voluntary Fund for the Second Decade of the World's Indigenous People: [www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii)

3.3. Enhance access of indigenous women to disaster and relief funds from governments and donor agencies and organize disaster and relief task forces of indigenous women.

3.4. Reinforce indigenous women's traditional knowledge on mitigation and adaptation and facilitate the transfer of this knowledge to the younger generations. This includes knowledge on traditional forest management, sustainable agriculture, pastoralism, disaster preparedness and rehabilitation, etc.

3.5. Enhance traditional community sharing and self-help systems like the *ug-ugbo*, *engelehe*, *binnadang*, and *bakahnu*, among others.

3.6. Facilitate exchange visits between indigenous women from different countries and communities for learning and sharing of experiences.

3.7. Document in multimedia, successful adaptation and mitigation practices of indigenous women.

### **4. INCREASE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND POLICY ADVOCACY**

4.1. Ensure full and effective participation of indigenous women in political and decision-making bodies and processes and in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of climate change adaptation and mitigation policies, programmes and projects at the local, national, regional and global levels:

- Undertake training-workshops for indigenous women on political participation and policy advocacy and on leadership development.

4.2. Develop statements and interventions of indigenous women to be presented to relevant bodies and processes at various levels.

## **5. NETWORKING**

5.1. Participate actively in the Indigenous Peoples' Global Network on Climate Change and Sustainable Development (IPCCSD).

5.2. Facilitate participation of indigenous women to relevant national and global processes related to climate change and human rights and encourage them to join or play active roles in national, regional and global climate change multistakeholder formations such as National Climate Change Networks, National REDD Plus Formations, etc.

5.3. Facilitate linkages of indigenous women with existing civil society and women's NGOs and organizations that are doing work on climate change.

5.4. Facilitate participation of indigenous women in campaigns and mass actions that are related to women, climate change and human rights.

5.5. Support indigenous women parliamentarians or those in the bureaucracies of official bodies to promote indigenous women's agenda on climate change and human rights.

## **6. WORK WITH STATES, THE UN, OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND MULTILATERAL FINANCING INSTITUTIONS, NGOS AND OTHER INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' FORMATIONS TO ENSURE THE RECOGNITION AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN ALL CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES.**

## **7. DEVELOP WITH OTHERS A HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK FOR A GENDER-SENSITIVE, ECOSYSTEM, HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED, AND KNOWLEDGE-BASED APPROACH TO CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION EFFORTS.**

*Signed by indigenous women in 19 November 2010 at the Legend Villas in Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines*