

Statement

Rome, February, 2008*

Thank you Mr Chairman.
Mr. Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

Over the last fifteen years indigenous peoples have been participating in the CBD process contributing to its work and implementation with the best of our experiences, knowledge and will. Our efforts have been recognized on many occasions and we therefore have been able to participate and contribute to the deliberations and positive outcomes. Throughout this time we have been able to express our views and concerns regarding our fundamental rights, which are a critical aspect of biological diversity and conservation and of the international obligations of all state Parties.

The CBD calls for full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities in the implementation and processes of the Convention, at the national, regional and international levels (goal 4.3 of the Strategic Plan and 2010 Biodiversity Target). As you may be aware, COP 5 formally recognized the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity as an advisory body of the CBD. Furthermore, Decision 8/24 stressed the need for the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities respecting fully their rights consistent with national law and applicable international obligations.

Mr. chairman, we have made great efforts to be part of this process. However, it is with great disappointment that right from the beginning of this WGPA-2 meeting we have found ourselves marginalized and without opportunity to take the floor in a timely manner to express our points of view. Yesterday afternoon we were silenced at a critical moment of providing our contributions to the deliberations on the recommendations on implementation of the Programme of Work. Further, despite your assurances, Mr. Chairman, that all recommendations would be included in the CRP, none of our recommendations were included in CRP2. This is extremely disturbing in light of the relevance of these recommendations to our lives, lands and the effective implementation of the Programme of Work.

Mr. Chairman, in view of this unacceptable censoring, the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity expresses its strong protest at this treatment and has unanimously decided to leave this process which clearly does not respect our rights and participation. We refuse to participate in a process that is making decisions over our lives and yet expects us to be silent observers.

We will be considering further appropriate measures. We have been advised by several NGOs that we also have their support on our decision.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Support from the following:

1. Global Forest Coalition
2. Pojoaju - The Association of Paraguayan NGOs (Paraguay)
3. Kalpavriksh (India)
4. Equations (India)
5. The Timberwatch Coalition (South Africa)
6. O'le Siosiomaga Society (Samoa)
7. Censat/ Amigos De la Tierra (Colombia)
8. CDO (Nepal)
9. Global Justice Ecology Project (USA)
10. Forest Peoples Programme (UK)

11. Friends of the Earth International
12. COECO-CEIBA/ Friends of the Earth-Costa Rica