

## **Statement to the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Session on Indigenous Rights and Free, Prior and Informed Consent**

*Delivered on behalf of the UN-REDD Programme by Charles I. McNeill, UNDP*

We are grateful to the Forum for providing this opportunity to speak on behalf of the UN-REDD Programme (the United Nations Collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) in developing countries), implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Programme was launched in September 2008 to assist developing countries prepare and implement national REDD+ strategies.

Of course, all of us gathered here today are acutely aware of the crucial importance of upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the area of forest management. While Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately impacted by the negative effects of ecosystem degradation and climate change, we also know they hold some answers to these problems, as sources of resilience and drivers of innovation.

REDD+ aims to create value for forests as a means to protect them. If implemented in an inclusive manner, REDD+ could contribute to generating revenue, securing indigenous lands and livelihoods, and maintaining the culture of forest dependent communities.

However, if forest management decisions are made and implemented without the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples – their rights could be threatened.

Acknowledging these profound implications to Indigenous Peoples, the Permanent Forum has specifically recommended that global and national REDD+ policy should be guided by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and, specifically, that the right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) should be central to REDD+ decision making processes.

The UN-REDD Programme too is acutely aware of the need to uphold indigenous rights in the design and implementation of REDD+. Driven by its obligations as a UN programme to support the implementation of international human rights law, the Programme is guided by UNDRIP and ILO Convention 169, as well as other important international instruments. The Programme is therefore committed to upholding the right of Indigenous Peoples to FPIC as articulated under UNDRIP.

To this end, the UN-REDD Programme has been working with Indigenous Peoples' representatives, including representatives from the Office of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and regional and national Indigenous Peoples networks – a number of whom are in this room today – through three regional consultations on FPIC and recourse. Held in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean between June 2010 and February 2011, these regional consultations provided the UN-REDD Programme with detailed input towards the development of operational guidelines to ensure that the right to FPIC and adequate recourse is upheld in the design and implementation of REDD+ actions under the Programme. These guidelines are also informed by early pilot activities on FPIC carried out by the UN-REDD Programme.

This input is being synthesised into draft guidelines for use by UN-REDD Programme countries in all three regions and will be presented at a side event here on Tuesday, 24 May at 3pm in Conference Room 1. We look forward to your feedback at this session and we invite you to provide further guidance in the coming weeks as we will be opening the guidelines for an extensive public review process starting in June 2011.

The UN-REDD Programme has a deep commitment to ensuring that the views and concerns of Indigenous Peoples are fully incorporated in our work. As a full member of the UN-REDD Programme Policy Board, the Chair of the Permanent Forum, along with self-selected regional and civil society representatives, has contributed to this goal through participation and leadership in the official decision-making processes of the Programme.

We also look to you -- the Permanent Forum, the representatives gathered here today, and the constituents you represent -- to continue to critically assess, engage in and challenge the work of the UN-REDD Programme.

We thank you for your attention and we look forward to engaging further with the Permanent Forum to help put indigenous rights where they belong: at the heart of REDD+ discourse, policies and implementation.

**Contact details for the Regional Indigenous Peoples' and Civil Society representatives to the UN-REDD Programme Policy Board:**

**Africa**

Indigenous Representative: Mr. Elifuraha Laltaika, Community Research and Development Services (CORDS), [elilaltaika@yahoo.com](mailto:elilaltaika@yahoo.com)

Civil Society Representative: Mr. Pacifique Mukumba, Le Centre d'Accompagnement des Autochtones Pygmées et Minoritaires Vulnérables (CAMV), [camvorg@yahoo.fr](mailto:camvorg@yahoo.fr)

**Asia**

Indigenous Representative: Mr. Abdon Nababan or Ms. Mina Setra Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN), [abdon.nababan@aman.or.id](mailto:abdon.nababan@aman.or.id)/[minasetra@aman.or.id](mailto:minasetra@aman.or.id)

Civil Society Representative: Kenn Mondiai, The Papua New Guinea Eco Forestry Forum (EFF), [kmondiai@pwwmpng.org.pg](mailto:kmondiai@pwwmpng.org.pg)

**Latin America and the Caribbean**

Indigenous Representative: Mr. Diego Ivan Escobar Guzman, Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA)

Civil Society Representative: Ms. Mariana Christovam, Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia (IPAM), [mariana.christovam@ipam.org.br](mailto:mariana.christovam@ipam.org.br)

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Please check the UN-REDD Programme website ([www.un-redd.org](http://www.un-redd.org)) for updates on the FPIC public review process which will commence early next month.