



Land is Life

Inter-Sessional Meeting - Rio+20

New York, January 11, 2011

Indigenous Peoples - Statement by Marcos Terena

Greetings to the co-chairs, governments, brothers and sisters. I am an indigenous person from Brazil. I can say that the indigenous peoples in Brazil are very content that you are going to arrive there next year debate, dialogue and, we hope, to also listen to the voices of indigenous peoples, the voice of Mother Earth.

I want to inform the Chair that we will also be organizing a meeting, of some 600 indigenous peoples from around the world, to debate the same things that you are talking about here, what you call a “green economy”. The first time we heard the words “green economy” it worried us, because we thought you were talking about our forests, our lands. But now, listening to the professors explain their views, we know that you are looking for models of development that are sustainable and that protect the environment.

If there are peoples who know how to create a green economy, it is us, indigenous peoples, who utilize our resources in a way that is based on respect, including spiritual respect for our Mother Earth, who have economies that seek to achieve the dignity of “buen vivir”, or “good life”.

Maybe the professors here today can think about studying and developing recommendations for a green economy that is not based on ‘poor’ and ‘rich’, because that way cannot give us security in what we call – our common future. It is important to look to generate quality of life, and the dignity of humanity. We also need to consider what nature gives us, things that you cannot put a price on, things that cannot be sold, like water.

Looking at the table that is leading this intersessional meeting, we’d like to make a suggestion on the importance of participation of women at all levels of discussion and decision-making in this Rio+20 process. For us, creating a green economy can only be done with the inspiration of women.

For Rio+20, the participation of indigenous peoples is of utmost importance. That is why we are planning to hold our own conference, with more than 600 participants, Kari-Oca: The Voice of Mother Earth. For us it is important that, in moving forward towards Rio+20, two achievements that indigenous peoples have made within the United Nations, after more than 20 years of struggle, be respected: first, guarantee the participation of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in this process; and second, apply the principles elaborated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007, with the support of Brazil, and which affirms the importance of indigenous peoples’ participation in these meetings.

Thank you very much, and may the Great Spirit of Mother Earth give you all inspiration.

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Inter-Tribal Committee – Land is Life

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