



Submission on Behalf of the Global Forest Coalition and all of its member groups in support of Rights based Conservation methodologies in relation to REDD.

International Secretariat:

Yolanda Sikking
communications manager
yolandasikking@yahoo.co.uk
2e Schinkelstraat 134, 1075
TT Amsterdam, the
Netherlands
tel: 31-6-23913217
Fax: 31-20-6765870
www.globalforestcoalition.org
Postbank Amsterdam
account no: 9103230

Southern Office:

Bruselas 2273
Asunción, Paraguay
tel/fax: 595-21-663654
Simonelovera@yahoo.com

Africa:

Lucy Mulenkei
Indigenous Information
Network, Kenya
mulenkei@yahoo.com
iin@iin.co.ke

Southern Africa

Wally Menne
The Timberwatch Coalition South
Africa
Plantnet@iafrica.com

**Eastern Europe Northern
and Central Asia:**

Andrey Laletin
Friends of the Siberian
Forests, Russia
sibforest@akadem.ru

Europe:

Sini Harkki
Finish Association for Nature
Conservation, Finland
harkki@yahoo.com

Latin America:

Diego Cardona
Censat Agua Viva
Amigos de la Tierra Colombia
selvas@censat.org

North America:

Orin Langelle and Anne
Petermann
Global Justice Ecology Project,
USA;
langelle@globaljusticeecology.org
globalecology@gmavt.net

In forming the Global Forest Coalition, there was recognition that in protecting the planet we should not do so at the risk of endangering her people or their rights. To this end we remain dedicated to enhancing the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities both as a rights and justice issue but also as an effective conservation mechanism. Major research referred to in both the excellent submission by Friends of the Earth International and the document prepared for the IUCN conference in Barcelona, called "The Hottest REDD Issues: Rights, Equity, Development, Deforestation and Governance by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities." This later document has been appended as a reference to this document.

First of all the Global Forest Coalition believes that the Poznan Conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change saw a serious step backwards in terms of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the adoption of language adopted at the meeting and we are asking SBSTA to support the re-installation of appropriate language to take the UNFCCC back into line with other international agreements (and indeed previous decisions taken by the COP) in reference to the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

The first issue we would like to raise in reference to the issue of rights is the language of FCCC/SBSTA/2008/L.23 in removing the s from the end of Indigenous Peoples, the COP took a decision that denies Indigenous Peoples their customary and traditional group rights and the fact that the world's Indigenous Peoples come from diverse backgrounds and cultures and do not necessarily identify as a single body or people.

So our first submission would be that this language be amended by SBSTA to revert back to the customary "Peoples" This would take the convention into line with the almost unanimously supported United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, principle 22 of the Rio declaration which states, "Indigenous people and their communities and other local communities have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development."

It would also provide for more consistency between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UNFCCC which is an undertaking that both conventions have committed to. The CBD states that its parties shall "respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities" and "protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements".



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g
globalecology@gmavt.net

It is the submission that the actions of the UNFCCC in removing the s from the phrase Indigenous Peoples in that decision acted in contravention of several international agreements and organisations that should in fact be working in harmony with the UNFCCC at a time when our planet and its smallest communities face unprecedented danger.

It should also be noted that in protecting human rights in relation to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, the UNFCCC would not only be acting out of respect for human rights but in fact strengthening the possibility of any forest protection mechanism succeeding. Both Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities live amongst, next to and are dependant on the forests that the Parties desire to protect. As such they serve not only the first line of defence of said forests but also as an early warning system. Research (referred to in the IUCN document) has already suggested that the best way to ensure the compliance of Local Communities with any protection mechanism is to ensure their effective and full participation in the decision making process impacting on what is after all (in most cases) their lands. Communities will fight and preserve a mechanism that they feel they are a part of but may well ignore (or deliberately breach) those they feel imposed upon them against their express will.

The FOEI submission is full of good examples of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities serving as these front lines in the fight for forest protection. It also gives evidence to support the argument that where Indigenous land rights are formalised the support of these communities is strengthened. Almost unanimously, those Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities who spoke in both Poznan and in Accra talked of fears about weakening of Indigenous land rights within the framework of REDD and the SBSTA must take measures to ensure that the language on REDD reflects the concerns of these communities and supports their legal rights to secure land tenure by including it as a pre-requisite to any REDD agreement. We would ask that the Parties support this initiative as an indication that the intent of the REDD framework is not designed as a mechanism to deny human rights.

The Global Forest Coalition also believes that there is a problem in the design of the REDD mechanism in that it could well be read as supporting perverse incentives that could heighten deforestation rather than combat it. Many Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (and some countries) started heeding the call to avoid deforestation some years ago and as such have low current rates of deforestation. Rather than reward those countries that have been historically reducing deforestation, we believe that the current design of the mechanism rewards those countries with current high rates of deforestation and signals to others that in order to qualify for funding to “avoid” deforestation they first need to raise their current rate. While we do not believe that this was the deliberate intent of the Parties (to create a perverse incentive to reduce forest cover), we do believe that is an unfortunate by-product of the desire to encourage a



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few wayward countries to reduce their current rates of deforestation and we believe that there should be formed a cross sectoral working group specifically to avoid this problem. There is no doubting the fact that an increase in deforestation would place the very smallest and most vulnerable communities and nations in grave peril. We support the delegate from Tuvalu who spoke of the right of sovereign nations to survival and call on the Parties to take serious actions to prevent further destruction to an already endangered group of nations and communities.

The Global Forest Coalition also supports the call of the Indigenous Forum for the establishment of an expert working group on climate change that includes representatives of those impacted communities and Indigenous Peoples and call upon the Parties to make this call a reality.

We further support the establishment of a voluntary fund (similar to that operated by the Convention on Biological Diversity with which the UNFCCC is supposed to be working in synergy) to support the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities within the processes and mechanisms of the UNFCCC and in particular those meetings at which REDD is to become a major issue, because of the potential to impact on Indigenous rights including secure land tenure systems.

The Global Forest Coalition also supports the call for reparation for the environmental damage already caused to impoverished nations through the colonisation process which saw the stripping of the environmental resources of the colonised countries and communities. We support the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the impacts that colonisation has had on these countries, with particular attention being given to those countries highly susceptible to the variables of climate change.

When the Framework Convention first began, it was never intended that it should oversee the "relocation" of impacted communities and nations in order that the comfortable lifestyle of the West should be maintained and we call upon the parties to take action to address the problem of overconsumption within the Western world instead of shipping their problems overseas in the form of mechanisms such as those proposed within the REDD framework.