

SustainUS submission on behalf of the International Youth Delegation Forests and Land Use Working Group

Views on issues relating to indigenous people and local communities for the development and application of methodologies

The International Youth Delegation (IYD) is a growing coalition of young people from around the world that are united around a common and shared vision for a bold, just, and long-term global climate treaty that safeguards the survival of all countries and peoples. Comprised of young people working on climate issues from over fifty countries and six continents, the IYD included over 500 members at COP 14 in Poznań. IYD members prepared several interventions and other statements in Poznań, and are looking forward to participating in the various UNFCCC meetings throughout the year in preparation for COP 15 in Copenhagen.

International Youth are alarmed that a fundamental point was absent from the COP 14 discussions in Poznań. We saw little evidence to guarantee that indigenous peoples rights to land and livelihood will remain after the negotiations have concluded in Copenhagen later this year. We observed several countries attempt to strip indigenous rights out of the REDD text. We saw countries consider cheap forest carbon credits more than they committed to drastically reducing their own domestic emissions. The International Youth Delegation will not allow for indigenous and local communities' rights and security to land be ignored or discounted, especially when REDD could provide the international community a profound opportunity to rethink conservation of forest ecosystems while ensuring that people's rights are embraced. What follows are views from the International Youth Delegation on ways to further stimulate action on REDD that is equitable, lasting, and effective.

The International Youth Delegation calls upon all countries to agree to the following principles on the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) mechanism in the next climate treaty:

- Forests are more than trees and carbon; a REDD mechanism must reflect the reality that forests **both** function as the home and source of livelihoods of 1.6 billion people and **contribute massively to the world's** biodiversity.
- REDD must respect and promote the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, and must not adversely affect their rights and benefits pursuant to other international instruments, treaties, agreements or recommendations. REDD policies must be built upon, and not undermine, international agreements like the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and international declarations and treaties confirming indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).¹
- Where REDD schemes and projects will influence indigenous peoples and local communities living in forests, the following principles, derived from the UNDRIP, must be respected, protected and ensured:
 - Free, prior and informed consent
 - Meaningful participation
 - The right to self-determination and self-government

¹ While UNDRIP and the ILO Convention 169 deal with the rights of indigenous peoples, article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on minorities' right to culture is also valid with regard to non-indigenous forest groups

- Equitable benefit-sharing
 - Land tenure and land rights
 - The right to management and customary use of natural resources
- It is essential that deforestation and forest degradation be dramatically reduced in developing countries equitably and rapidly.
 - An equitable and effective REDD mechanism must guarantee the security of land **and** property rights of local and indigenous communities as well as their continued direct participation in **matters concerning** the **management and** conservation of their forests.
 - If the rights and needs of forest-dependent peoples are not addressed and respected in REDD schemes, social instability and **a** lack of support for measures taken will threaten the effectiveness and permanence of REDD and could **render it entirely ineffective**.
 - The International Youth Delegation also support the recommendations made in the Ecosystem Climate Alliance submission on REDD and LULUCF issues.

The points outlined in this submission are essential for ensuring indigenous peoples rights to land and livelihood are respected and embraced. Including these points will be an essential step in forming an effective and inclusive program on REDD.

To contact the Forests & Land Use Working Group of the IYD, please email youthforests@googlegroups.com.

For more information on the International Youth Delegation, please visit <http://youthclimate.org>.