

**Statement by Parshuram Tamang,  
Member of International Coordinating Committee of  
The International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forest  
at the Summit on Climate Change Convened by the Secretary-General, United Nations,  
22 September 2009.**

The year 2009 is a crucial year for the international community in order to address climate change impacts. The UN Climate Change Convention has developed a series of meetings of the UN Climate Change Convention to culminate in an effective international response to climate change to be agreed upon at the 15th conference of Parties in Copenhagen, Denmark, December 2009.

Global warming poses significantly different types of risks, threats to indigenous and local communities from the Arctic, North America, Latin America to Africa, Asia, Pacific Islands and every region and territory of the world. Climate change poses an immediate danger to the continuation of the way of life of the indigenous peoples of the arctic polar-regions and the Himalayas and mountains who are watching their world melt-before their eyes. Small Island communities are further threatened with becoming submerged by rising oceans. Climate change, if not halted, will result in increased frequency and severity of extreme weather patterns, storms, floods, draughts and water shortage in unprecedented scale.

Indigenous peoples thus have struggled to have a voice in the Climate Convention procedures and unfortunately have been ignored by the parties. Indigenous peoples have tried so far unsuccessfully, to be an official part of this process, to be recognized not only because they are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change but because they are also affected by the decisions of the alleged solutions taken during this process and subsequent actions that are taken.

The Kyoto Protocol has established measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change, unfortunately in many cases, these mechanisms run counter to the health, survival and existence of our people. In particular, the Clean Development Mechanism established under the protocol promotes activities and projects like the development of carbon sinks that not only threaten the traditional lifestyles of indigenous peoples but also has little chance to really mitigate the effects of climate change.

The purpose of our participation in the proceedings before Copenhagen is to continue lobbying for the negotiating text to take into consideration the rights of Indigenous Peoples and that the rights of Indigenous Peoples and indigenous participation occurs at all levels in the process of climate change, therefore we continue monitoring, supervising and lobbying in the negotiations at the UNFCCC, and supporting the full and effective participation of the delegations of the Indigenous Peoples and pressing for a stronger commitment of the parties to ensure that the Copenhagen agreement is firmly based on human rights and their unique contribution to climate justice.

At the moment, the negotiating text for Copenhagen mentions and acknowledges indigenous peoples' role and importance of their traditional knowledge in adaptation and mitigation of climate change, there is a need to ensure that climate-related actions fulfill the obligations of international instruments of human rights and the obligations contained in the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous peoples also concern that Indigenous peoples' land, and resource rights, **including carbon rights** must be recognized prior to the inclusion of our lands, territories and forests in REDD schemes. REDD initiatives are designed and implemented with full respect for the rights of indigenous peoples, including our rights to our territorial lands and resources, the right to free prior and informed consent. Other actors involved in forest management should be capacitated to understand the world view and management practices relevant for forest management by indigenous peoples.

The climate change should be considered in the broader context of the situation of indigenous peoples, who are among the most marginalized, poor and vulnerable peoples in the world because the climate change magnifies existing problems and because the unprecedented changes in the environment and natural resource base and policies to address these changes erode the resilience of indigenous peoples and the resilience of communities has an adverse impact on their livelihoods, their land rights and further limits threaten food security and sovereignty.

I strongly reiterate that the recognition and promotion of indigenous peoples' rights, as outlined in the UNDRIP is a crucial and imperative component in the search for meaningful and lasting solutions to the problems brought about by climate change. Indigenous Peoples should and must be recognized as equal participants in all discussions related to Climate Change process as the issues are all inter-related.

Thank you