

Forests of the World's submission on NBS to UN Climate Action Summit

1. Title of Submission (*a descriptive name that catches attention*)

Conservation through Land Titling of Indigenous Peoples Lands and Sustainable Management of their Natural Resources.

2. What kind of contribution / climate solution is this?

- *Rights-based conservation of land through secure resource tenure;*
- *Institutional strengthening*
- *Community forest management;*
- *Agroforestry;*
- *Reforestation*
- *Climate-compatible food system changes;*
- *Community forest monitoring*

3. Who is involved?

Forests of the World, MOPAWI, MASTA, FETRIXY,

4. Where is the project taking place?

In two regions of Honduras:

- 1) In two Miskitu territories in the department Gracias a Dios in La Mosquitia
- 2) In three Tolupan territories in the department of Yoro

5. Description of the climate action / innovation

In many parts of Central America you see a great overlap between the intact forests and the indigenous peoples territories, as the indigenous peoples have been living in these areas for generations and have fought to defend their territories from outside invasion and overexploitation. Strengthening the indigenous peoples may therefore be the best strategy to ensure a long-term conservation of those natural resources. Forests of the World and MOPAWI are working with two indigenous peoples in Honduras, the Miskitu and Tolupan peoples, to conserve forest ecosystems through a combined focus on land rights, institutional strengthening and sustainable management of natural resources.

- **Land Rights** is a key issue, as the indigenous peoples are under a constant pressure from illegal settlers, private landowners and extractive industries which seek to invade their territories and exploit their resources. The authorities are not only neglecting to intervene, but often support the land claims of the invaders within the territories. For this reason it's important to strengthen the indigenous peoples by granting titles to their

territories, settling of existing conflicts within the territories and the recognition of their right to self-determination and self-governance.

- **Institutional strengthening** is important, as strong and well-functioning organizations are key to ensure long-term stability, democracy and continuous progress. For this reason the strengthening of the indigenous peoples organizations is important as it enables them to fulfil their strategic mission and to extend the capacities and resources received to other beneficiaries.
- **Sustainable management of natural resources** serves a multitude of social as well as environmental and economic purposes. Establishing agroforestry systems serves as important strategies for rural families to adapt to climate changes as it improves yields, diversifies income, improves food security, provides a local income and serves as a social safety net. The reintroduction of native crops and new pest resistant variants improves food security and the reforestation of water catchment areas is fundamental for the livelihood of many rural families. Establishment of timber plantations as well as sustainable management of the existing forest resources and the organized commercialization of forest products ensure a stable income for the territories and strengthen the local organisations. Finally, community based forest monitoring using open source satellite images and GIS-software enables the indigenous peoples to combat forest fires and pest outbreaks as well as to curtail illegal logging and poaching in their territories.

6. **How does the action** *(describe all that are relevant):*

- a. **Increase climate resilience (adaptation)** – Establishment of agroforestry systems, the introduction of native crops and resilient varieties as well as the reforestation of water catchment areas are important means in the strategies of rural families to adapt to climate change.
- b. **Reduce carbon emissions (mitigation)** – Some of the biggest drivers of deforestation in miskitu and tolupan territories are currently illegal logging, illegal settlers, bark beetle outbreaks and forest fires. Empowering the indigenous peoples to legally defend their forests and to efficiently monitor and combat deforestation, pest outbreaks and forest fires is a good strategy to curtail deforestation and thus reduce carbon emissions.
- c. **Increase carbon capture (mitigation)** - Reforestation deforested and degraded lands, particularly in strategically important areas, such as water catchment areas and biodiversity-rich areas increases the carbon capture. The conversion of agricultural lands to agroforestry systems also increases carbon uptake through the introduction of trees.
- d. **Lead to positive social and economic impacts** – The capacity building of rural families and the institutional strengthening of representative authorities and local organizations provide important pathways to improve the livelihoods of rural families and ensure the rights of the indigenous peoples. The introduction of cash crops and timber trees as well as the organization of the commercialization of forest and agroforestry products generates local income and ensures fairer pricing of local products. Capacity building in

sustainable forest management enables the indigenous peoples to protect their own forest resources from pests and fires and generates local jobs that would normally be undertaken by outside contractors.

- e. **Support biodiversity and ecosystem resilience** – The two major negative impacts on biodiversity are the loss of habitat and the excessive hunting of vulnerable species. Increasing awareness of the importance of biodiversity, creating awareness of the state of current animal populations in the territories and curtailing poaching will therefore have a positive impact on biodiversity as it reduced pressure on vulnerable species. The efforts to maintain forest cover protects the habitats of forest-dependent species and thus further contributes to this effort.
7. **This action is transformational** because it empowers the indigenous peoples themselves to continue defending the intact forest resources they've been defending through generations, but now through legal means and via remote sensing systems. The sustainable management of the natural resources and the reforestation of degraded lands enables the rural families to better adapt to climate changes while at the same time providing an important incentive to keep on defending and protecting the forest resources.
8. **This action could be scaled up through** government support for land titling processes of indigenous peoples lands, resolution of existing land disputes and the recognition of the right of the indigenous peoples to self determination and to self-govern their territories. Continuous research into new resilient crop varieties is another important focus, as pest outbreaks can seriously jeopardize the livelihood of rural families. Furthermore, additional funding is also needed, in order to reach as many communities as possible.
9. **Contact / For Further Information:**
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