

# **Contribution of the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities of the Tropical Forests**

*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMA)*  
*Le Réseau des Populations Autochtones et Locales pour la Gestion Durable des Ecosystèmes Forestiers de la RDC (REPALEF RDC).*  
*Coordinadora Indígena de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA).*  
*Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil (APIB).*  
*Alianza Mesoamericana de Pueblos y Bosques (AMPB).*

## ***i. Title***

Global Coordination for carbon storage in collective territories of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the equatorial region

## ***ii. Background and justification***

The international community urgently needs to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, and improve the sustainable use, conservation and restoration of vital ecosystems. However, evidence to date shows that the closest and best positioned to manage the Earth's carbon-rich lands, especially Indigenous Peoples and local communities, have not yet been integrated into emerging national and global climate solutions. .

Beyond the fact that climate change is already affecting many indigenous territories and that the protection of forests within those territories is fundamental to maintaining climate stability, these forests are more than large carbon reserves. They provide multiple social, cultural and ecological benefits and are a fundamental part of the cultural identity of indigenous peoples and their traditional way of life. Any policy that leads to the conservation of tropical forests from the mitigation of climate change must also take into account the possible social and environmental impacts on people living in these forests

## ***iii. General vision on the contribution***

The indigenous territories located in the Amazon Basin, in the Mesoamerican region, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and in Indonesia contain 20.1% of the carbon stored on the surface in the tropical forests of the planet. This issue demonstrates the historical role that indigenous territories have had in the conservation of these forests and their potential in solving a key challenge for the maintenance of long-term climate stability: maintaining those same forests standing.

## ***iv. How does the contribution take advantage of living natural systems as a solution to avoid climate change?***

Indigenous peoples and local communities have been excellent stewards of their forested territories, thus preventing large amounts of carbon from being released into the atmosphere, through relatively low intensity land uses, or through the active protection of their borders. Up to 2.5 billion people earn their living in rural economies through the administration of community forests and other community lands that play an essential role in maintaining ecosystem services at the landscape level.

The forests of the indigenous territories and of the local communities in Mesoamerica contain at least half (49.3%) of the carbon stored on the surface in the tropical forests of the region. In the Amazon Basin, indigenous territories contain approximately one third (32.8%) of the surface forest carbon stocks. In the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), indigenous territories store 31.4% of surface carbon. The indigenous territories of Indonesia store 36% of the carbon in the surface of the tropical forests of this country.

***v. How could the contribution support climate, mitigation and adaptation, as well as other important co-benefits and social, economic and environmental outcomes in the coming years, including:***

a. Reduction of carbon emissions and carbon sequestration (GTonnes)

The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that would be released into the atmosphere if those territories were deforested would be approximately 168.3 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub>, or the equivalent of more than 3 times the global emissions in 2014.

b. Efficient management and territorial control.

The management of territories at a more local level allows greater efficiency in their conservation; the inhabitants of a territory will be the first ones informed in case of cases of unauthorized forest clearing, or illicit mining activities. However, there are more developed examples of management in the territories, when some organizations, with technical and financial support, get equipment such as surveillance drones or satellite images, which allow a more efficient control of the territories. There are examples of this in Indonesia (bases of AMAN in Kalimantan), in Peru (bases of COICA), in Guatemala (bases of AMPB).

c. Social Impact

The current management of the territories avoids the emigration to the cities and the constitution of belts of poverty. The notion of Unsatisfied Basic Needs does not necessarily apply in these territories, where the notions of Good Living, which involve security and food sovereignty, apply more than the notions of Gross Domestic Product.

d. Economic Impact

The economic damage caused by a ton of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is often considered as the social cost of carbon. It is estimated that the social cost of carbon is \$ 220 (Frances Moore Study, PhD student in the Interdisciplinary Emmett Program in Environment and Resources of the Stanford School of Earth Sciences). It is expected that these damages will occur in several ways, including the reduction of agricultural yields and damage to human health related to climate change.

1 GT equals 1,000,000,000 metric tons.

168.3 GT to X equals? = 168,300,000,000 metric ton.

Damage = U \$ 37,026,000,000,000, is the economic damage avoided by Carbon Storage in collective territories of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the global equatorial region.

According to the World Resources Institute (WRI) report, in Brazil alone, the profitability of securing indigenous territories ranges from 523,000 million dollars to 1,165 billion dollars over the next two decades, taking into account the global benefits of carbon and conservation of the ecosystem.

e. Impact on the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, to reduce the effects of climate change (13)

F. Transition. N/A

g. Food security

The territories in good condition allow to assure the security and food sovereignty of the populations that currently occupy them.

h. Minimize the extinction of species and ecological losses and encourage an increase in biodiversity.

Different studies show that the forests managed by the populations are richer in biodiversity than forests where there is no anthropic intervention. Rules are needed to avoid overexploitation, but peoples and communities often count on customary rules that need to be strengthened.

**vi. Which countries and organizations participate in the contribution?**

- Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN), Indonesia.
- Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil (APIB), Brasil.
- Le Réseau des Populations Autochtones et Locales pour la Gestion Durable des Ecosystèmes Forestiers de la RDC (REPALEF RDC).
- Coordinadora Indígena de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA), 9 países de la Cuenca Amazónica.

- Alianza Mesoamericana de Pueblos y Bosques (AMPB), 6 Países de Mesoamérica.

***vii How have stakeholders been consulted (for example, indigenous peoples, local communities and youth) to develop the contribution?***

It is important to mention that, unlike other organizations that speak on behalf of indigenous peoples or local communities, the aforementioned organizations represent organizations with a territorial base, with a pyramidal organization, from federations of villages or communities, which are grouped together in 2nd grade organizations, which are grouped in 3rd grade organizations at the level of their departments or provinces, up to 4th grade organizations at the national level.

The Alliance that these organizations begin to constitute more consciously as of April 2018 is a 5th grade organization, which represents territories in 17 countries. When their leaders speak, they are speaking on behalf of all these territories. That is to say, that the consultation processes are those of a system of territorial representation. Even though there may be imperfections in this system, the truth is that there is no other system that covers the populations of the forest territories, since the system of political representation at the country level has other biases (historical, social, economic), which means that national and even subnational governments do not always adequately represent their forest populations. These organizations also have solutions to include women and young in their representative system.

The mentioned organizations have been coming together through exchanges since 2014, at the time of the Climate Summit organized by the United Nations in New York.

Since that first approach, which led some of them to sign the Declaration of New York for the Forests in that year, different exchanges have taken place between their territories, and different actions have been taken to try to make the situation of indigenous peoples and communities local that they represent known in large global fora. However, the global of discussion around global warming, deforestation and loss of biodiversity does not take into account these voices.

***viii. ¿ Where can the contribution be put into action?***

In 17 countries covered by AMAN, APIB, REPALF, AMPB and COICA: Indonesia, Brazil, Democratic Republic of Congo, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Guyana, Suriname, French Guyana, Venezuela, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Mexico.

***ix How will the contribution be delivered? How will the different stakeholders be involved in its implementation? What are the possible transformational impacts?***

The contribution is beginning to be constituted in an increasingly formal way, in order to intervene in global spaces where the advances of climate change, the loss of biodiversity and protected areas are discussed. In all these spaces, the voices of indigenous peoples and

local communities are not taken into account in order to represent the territories; the United Nations representativeness system imperfectly covers large geographic areas, but it does not reach to represent the territories, especially those with tropical forest cover. The proposal is to create an alliance that can speak for all these tropical forest territories.

***X. This initiative contributes to the workflow of the Climate Action Summit?***

This contribution covers the following topics: Resilience and adaptation; social and political engines; mitigation strategy.

***xi Examples of experiences to date: how is this contribution based on this experience? How is the contribution linked to different initiatives in progress?***

This contribution is exemplified by the case of Peru, where the State has begun to implement a management model that associates local people's organizations in the management of the territories they have historically occupied. Another example is community forestry concessions, such as in Guatemala or Mexico.

***xii Financing mechanisms (with specific emphasis on the potential of association).***

Both the AMPB and COICA are working on their own financing mechanisms to be able to direct funds for a more inclusive territorial management. AMAN and APIB are still in processes of reflection to constitute theirs.

***xiii Means of administration/metrics***

- % reduction in degradation and deforestation
- Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that reflect the climate policies of countries and their actions to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change.
- Realization of data update investigations.

***xiv Communication strategy***

The Alliance has been implementing a communication campaign since 2017 with the support of professional communication actors, through the "Guardians of the Forest" campaign, using different media: social networks, written press.

By 2019 a new joint communication campaign is being prepared, using various means, which will focus on a well-defined target audience, articulating two series of messages: one of resistance, to denounce the attacks against the territories, and another proposal, focused on alternatives already implemented by different groups at the grassroots level.

***xv Contact details***

- Tuntiak Katan [tuntiakk@yahoo.com](mailto:tuntiakk@yahoo.com)

General Coordinator, Global Alliance of Territorial Communities

- Michel Laforge, [laforgenerator@gmail.com](mailto:laforgenerator@gmail.com)

Facilitator, Global Alliance of Territorial Communities