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INDIGENOUS LEADERS QUESTION WORLD BANK'S CLIMATE CHANGE APPROACH

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Today, indigenous leaders from the world's tropical forests petitioned the World Bank to stop excluding them from international climate change discussions. These leaders spoke to the participants of the "Global Forest Leaders Forum on Forests and Climate Change," hosted by the World Bank this week.

Indigenous leaders explained to meeting participants that indigenous peoples living in forested regions of the world must be included in climate change negotiations that shape policies pertaining to their forests. Because indigenous peoples are guardians of the remaining rainforests, they are the guardians of the earth's climate. They are also the first to suffer from ecosystem collapse due to the climactic changes that industrial societies have created.

After highlighting the critical role the Amazon plays in stabilizing global weather patterns and restraining climate change, Juan Carlos Jintiach and Trevor Stevenson of the Amazon Alliance urged the World Bank to stop excluding the inhabitants of the region from important international climate change negotiations. Jintiach emphasized that indigenous peoples have the right to fully participate in decision-making processes affecting the future of their forests. This right is mandated by numerous international standards, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, and is even required by the World Bank's own policies.

Regardless of these international standards, countless declarations and reports by indigenous leaders express deep concern about the World Bank's systematic exclusion of indigenous peoples from climate change policy-making and planning. Amazonian indigenous leaders demand that the World Bank produce a public report detailing exactly how it will comply with international standards and ensure independent monitoring of its activities; guarantee that it will finance the full participation of the legitimate indigenous leaders of the world in the design and implementation of its climate change and forest management efforts; create a mechanism to ensure that indigenous peoples' organizations can be effectively involved in policy-making and planning at every stage and level; and fully renegotiate all World Bank policies on indigenous peoples to meet international standards.

The Amazon Alliance invites representatives of the media to our office (see address above) TOMORROW (WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17) FROM 3:30 TO 6:00pm to informally meet with indigenous leaders in attendance at the Global Forest Leaders Forum.