

STATEMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES (UNPFII)

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz
Chairperson, UNPFII

Agenda Item 2: Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD): approaches to stimulate action

**Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA)
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Thank you very much Madame Chair for giving me the opportunity to speak under this Agenda Item on REDD.

The 7th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues had for its special theme, Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples, specifically on the impact of climate change mitigation measures on indigenous peoples. One of the issues discussed was REDD, as this is a mitigation measure being proposed to be included in the 2010 Copenhagen Conference of Parties.

We listened closely to indigenous representatives who expressed their fears on the potential risks that can result from the implementation of REDD. In our concluding observations we expressed that one risk of REDD is that it will further reinforce the highly centralized governance and finance for forests and that discussions on this will become highly technical, thereby excluding indigenous peoples again from sharing their traditional knowledge on forests and from controlling and managing their own forests. Indigenous peoples have shown that they are the best custodians and stewards of forests. Global data coming in shows that the most of the world's remaining forests are found mainly in indigenous peoples territories.

We believe that the renewed focus on forests should be used as an opportunity to push for policy and legal reforms on forests and indigenous peoples rights. This can also be an opportunity for indigenous peoples to further enhance their traditional knowledge on forest and biodiversity conservation.

The Permanent Forum is of the view that undertaking reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation without the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in making the design and in its implementation will lead to failure. It, therefore, calls on the international community and on the governments to ensure that the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) be used as an overarching framework for the design, methodologies, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of REDD. No REDD project should be done on indigenous peoples territories without obtaining their free, prior and informed consent.

As far as methodological issues are concerned, the Forum asserts that indigenous peoples should be involved in the development of methodologies related to REDD. Their traditional knowledge on forests and biological diversity cannot be under-estimated. Measures should be undertaken to involve them in developing these methodologies and their capacities should also be enhanced.

The reports of the various consultations we held and other UN bodies and NGOs held with indigenous peoples on this issue will be submitted to the Secretariat for your use.

Thank you, Madame Chair.