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Xapuri Declaration, May 28, 2017

Posted on Jun 14, 2017



We, forest dwellers, rubber tappers, Apurinã, Huni Kui, Jaminawa, Manchineri and Shawadawa indigenous people, members of supportive organizations and the Jesuit Travelling Team, teachers from different universities, united in the city of Xapuri in the Brazilian state of Acre from 26 to 28 May 2017, at the meeting “The effects of environmental / climatic policies on traditional populations”, declare:

- That, at this moment of resurgence, we are unifying the struggles of indigenous peoples and rubber tappers in the same cause. Our union is our main weapon against capital.
- That, aware of the history of resistance of the forest peoples and the legacy of Chico Mendes, we will stand firm in the defense of our territories. Like the ones that preceded us, we will continue to oppose attempts to expropriate our ways of life. We demand the demarcation and recognition of our rights to land and territory.
- We reject the ongoing initiatives materialized in policies that aim to convey our territories to private capital groups, including ranchers and loggers. We are concerned about the lack of transparency and the way that different mechanisms have been put forward, including payments for environmental services such as REDD and its variations, unsustainable forest management plans and mechanisms foreseen in the new Brazilian Forest Code, many of which are imposed through intimidation, blackmail, negotiations under false pretences and with bad faith.
- We express our indignation about the false solutions, which legitimize the continuity and expansion of a socially and environmentally destructive model. We reject initiatives to offset pollution. We do not accept mechanisms based on restrictions on our way of life, and we express solidarity with people living in the areas that are contaminated by companies seeking compensation (offsets). We stand by the people from other countries who live in the areas impacted by the pollution generated by destructive companies. No one should live in contaminated areas; it is time to end all kinds of racism, including environmental racism.
- We are being harmed by the arrangements and negotiations between the government of Acre and other states and countries in favor of corporations eager for pollution credits, including oil and mining companies, loggers and agribusiness companies. We are concerned about ongoing talks about aviation emissions compensation through Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation of Tropical Forests, the so-called REDD mechanisms. We refuse to use the term carbon credits, understanding that they are actually pollution credits, which aggravate rather than solve the problem. We reject any form of climate colonialism.
- We express total solidarity with women and men who, forced to fulfill impossible prerogatives, get fined, criminalized, indebted, without conditions to maintain their ways of life, trapped in schemes that refer back to semi-slavery and debt bondage of rubber tappers in colonial times. We also express solidarity with the residents of the rubber tree areas Valparaíso and Russas, who, coerced to submit to a REDD project, are threatened with expropriation of the lands that are rightfully theirs.
- Solidarity to the native community of Nova Oceania, of the Upper Tauhamanu River, in the municipality of Iberia, Peru. Our brothers and sisters Pyru Yini and other communities in isolation face the advance of deforestation, driven by timber concessions, which rely on the direct participation of businesspersons from Acre and others. These groups are involved in REDD projects and, while brokering international agreements with the support of Brazilian authorities, maintain predatory practices. We share the complaint that a village was destroyed, with 18 houses burned, in July 2014, with absolutely no action taken by the authorities, in an episode stained by impunity.
- We call on other rural and urban working people to reject this destructive pattern, marked by inequality and violation of the rights of indigenous peoples and traditional communities. We reiterate our unity in the struggle and willingness to resist to the end. Chico Mendes lives, not in the actions of governmental marketing, but in the struggle of the forest peoples.

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