MANAUS DECLARATION

“INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN ROUTE TO THE RIO + 20 CONFERENCE”
Global preparatory meeting of Indigenous Peoples on Rio + 20 and Karioca 2

22-24 August 2011, Manaus, Brazil

We, representatives of indigenous peoples’ communities, organizations and networks from Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and North America, came together to unite on how we can engage effectively with the preparatory processes and the conference proper of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development or Rio Plus 20. We thank the Ford Foundation, Fondo Indigena and UN WOMEN for providing the resources to allow for this meeting to happen. We also thank COICA, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Inter-tribal Committee and COIAB, for co-organizing this event.

We recalled our active participation in the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and the parallel processes we organized which resulted into the Karioca Indigenous Peoples’ Declaration. The UNCED documents which included the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 recognized the vital role of indigenous peoples in sustainable development and identified them as one of the 9 Major Groups.

We organized our own events during the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD/Rio +10) in Johannesburg, South Africa where we adopted the Kimberley Declaration and the Indigenous Peoples’ Plan of Implementation for Sustainable Development. The WSSD, a high-level UN event with more than one hundred Heads of States, recognized and used the phrase “indigenous peoples” for the first time in the history of the UN. This decision helped us to get the UN to accept the phrase “indigenous peoples” for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We have achieved, since Rio 92 and Johannesburg 2002, the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the establishment of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and the Expert Mechanism on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights. These allowed our increased participation and visibility and raised the awareness of the global community on indigenous peoples’ rights and issues. We participated in the processes of various UN bodies, agencies and funds in the development or revision of their policies on indigenous peoples.

In 2010 the Cancun Agreement of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing of Genetic Resources acknowledged the UNDRIP and the need to respect and protect the rights and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples. The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants also contains references to indigenous peoples. We recognized the need to improve our engagement with the Convention to Combat Desertification. There is still much room for strengthening these multilateral environmental agreements to respond adequately to the rights and needs of indigenous peoples and to recognize their actual and potential contributions to sustainable development.

We strongly believe that the UNDRIP should serve as a key framework which underpins all international and national policies and programmes on sustainable development.
We recognize the major gaps in the implementation of international agreements on human rights, including the UNDRIP, and on sustainable development, by states, governments and private corporations.

The continuing gross violations of our rights to our lands, territories and resources and to self-determination by governments and corporations, remain as key obstacles to the achievement of sustainable development. Indigenous activists and leaders defending their territories still continue to be harassed, tortured, vilified as “terrorists” and assassinated by powerful vested interests. Since sustainable development has not been substantially implemented, the world is now in a multiple crisis; ecological, economic and climatic, including biodiversity erosion, desertification, food, water and energy shortage and worsening global economic recession, social instability and crisis of values.

We urge a moratorium to the activities of extractive industries developed without consent within indigenous peoples’ lands and territories especially the ones that contaminate and produce green house gases.

We are convinced of the crucial contributions we can make for sustainable development by sustaining our indigenous governance, social and economic systems and our traditional knowledge and practices. We call on Rio + 20 to include culture as one of the major pillars of sustainable development.

We call on the UN to ensure the full, formal and effective participation of indigenous peoples in all processes and activities of the Rio+20 conference, and its preparatory and follow-up mechanisms, in accordance with the UNDRIP and the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

We are concerned about the substance of and processes related to the green economy and institutional frameworks on sustainable development. In relation to the institutional framework for sustainable development, we believe that as long as governments continue to implement the dominant development model, any effort to reform the global and national institutions will be inadequate.

We continue to challenge this development model which promotes domination of nature, incessant economic growth, limitless resource extraction, profit-seeking, unsustainable consumption and production and the unregulated commodity and financial markets. This prevailing system fails to understand that humans are an integral part of the natural world, and fails to respect inherent human rights, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples. We believe that our worldview and respect for natural law, our spiritualities and cultures and our values of reciprocity, harmony with nature, solidarity, collectivity, and caring and sharing, among others, are crucial in bringing about a more just, equitable and sustainable world.

We continue to inhabit and maintain the last remaining sustainable ecosystems and biodiversity hotspots in the world. We can contribute substantially to sustainable development but we believe that a holistic framework for sustainable development should be promoted. This includes the integration of the human-rights based approach, ecosystem approach and culturally-sensitive and knowledge-based approaches.
On the road to Rio + 20 we agreed to do the following;

1. To do our assessments of how we have implemented our Indigenous Peoples’ Implementation Plan on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg 2002) and to consolidate these into regional and global reports which can be submitted to the Outcome Document of Rio +20 and the 11th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and other relevant bodies;

2. Create adequate opportunities for indigenous peoples to critique the concepts of the green economy and institutional framework for sustainable development being developed, so far;

3. To widely disseminate information to our constituencies and communities and to encourage them to contribute their views and the work they are doing to promote sustainable development at various levels;

4. To organize regional and sub-regional preparatory conferences to allow for more participation of indigenous peoples;

5. To participate in the various officially mandated preparatory meetings for Rio + 20 set by the UN and the Conference Proper and to contribute to the contents of the Outcome Document of the Conference;

6. To organize Karioca 2 as a global conference of Indigenous Peoples where we will share our efforts to implement development with identity and culture or our self-determined development, life plans, concepts of good living and well-being such as buen vivir, laman laka, inayann, etc. and to endeavour to reach a consensus on themes and issues of Rio +20;

7. To establish an exhibition of how we are operationalizing sustainable development in our communities, how we are defending our lands, territories and resources as well as our ways of addressing the obstacles we face;

8. To organize side events and press briefings during Rio + 20 which will be held both at the official venue and other sites allocated for Major Groups;

9. To hold dialogues with other social movements, other major groups, UN agencies, programmes and funds before and during the Rio + 20 conference;

10. To ensure the balanced participation indigenous women, elders and youth.

Signed and agreed to by the participants on August 24, 2011 in Manaus, Brazil.