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Peruvian Government Commission Confirms Contamination by Maple Energy in the Amazon

CONTAMANA, LORETO, Peru, September 12, 2011 – A special multi-sectoral commission created under the recently elected Peruvian President Ollanta Humala investigated and confirmed Maple Energy's continuing contamination of indigenous communities in the Peruvian Amazon. In the commission's four days of meetings with the indigenous communities of Canaán de Cachiyacu and Nuevo Sucre, the commission also confirmed Maple's role in health problems in the communities and noted that Maple has failed to properly remediate their oil spills. The commission, comprised of representatives from the Ministries of Health, Environment, Agriculture, and Energy & Mines, visited the affected areas with members of the indigenous communities and acknowledged Maple's role in harming these communities, validating the communities' long-standing complaints that have been denied by the company and its World Bank Group investor, the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

The Vice-minister of Strategic Development of Natural Resources of the Ministry of Environment, Hugo Cabieses, established the commission after receiving requests from local indigenous organizations for immediate investigation following the sixth Maple oil spill in a three-year period on July 10-11, 2011. The commission is also a response to a recent breakdown in negotiations between the communities and Maple, when the company refused to adequately respond to the most recent oil spill. Maple intentionally exposed villagers from Nuevo Sucre to crude oil when it failed to provide workers with protective equipment, failed to warn the community about the spill, refused to provide medical care for those exposed and suffering, and failed to fully remediate after the disaster. Maple further refused to provide villagers with potable water and food after contaminating their primary source of water and fish.

During site visits to the community streams and Maple's oil fields, the commission confirmed the presence of vegetation "impregnated" with crude, nearly two months after the most recent spill. Government experts also observed poor maintenance on the Maquia oil field, noting probable contamination from crude residue and waste products that drain into the community's creeks with every rain. A doctor from the Peruvian National Institute of Health conducted a review of available health records in each community, and noted high levels of digestive, skin and vision problems immediately following the July 2011 spill in Nuevo Sucre. Other members of the commission confirmed Maple's non-compliance with community relations plans and occupational health and safety standards through interviews of community members.

"We hope for a prompt response from the government of President Humala," says Raul Tuesta, chief of Nuevo Sucre. "We feel they have a willingness and interest in ensuring that companies comply with the laws of this country." The government commission committed to conducting an in-depth evaluation of the communities' health and environmental concerns in the coming months. They will take the necessary steps to ensure transparency of documents and information, and coordinate with local and regional governments to improve development efforts in the communities.

Maple Energy plc is a transnational petroleum company, incorporated in Ireland and headquartered in Lima, Peru. It is the parent company and owner of Maple Gas Corporation del Peru, local operator concession Blocks 31-B and 31-E.

For more information, please contact:

Lizardo Cauper Pezo, President of FECONBU (Federation of Native Communities of the Lower Ucayali): +51 980 374 674, licauperp@yahoo.es (Spanish only)

Félix Rojas Silvano, Secretary, ORAU (Regional Organization of AIDASEP in Ucayali): +51 964 484 997, ferosil2009@hotmail.com (Spanish only)

Komala Ramachandra, Staff Attorney, Accountability Counsel: +51 949 225 717, komala@accountabilitycounsel.org (English and Spanish)

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