

# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CLIMATE CHANGE & REDD



## What is Climate Change?

Any change in global temperatures and precipitation over time largely due to human activities that are emitting "green house gases" GHG - mainly carbon dioxide. The accumulation of "green house gases" (GHGs) in the atmosphere, which traps the heat that comes into the earth, is then causing global warming.

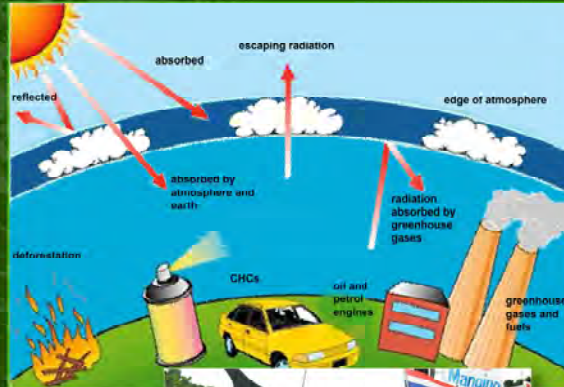
The impacts of climate change are then felt in all parts of the globe through the unpredictable weather patterns, long droughts, massive flooding, and tsunami, among others. Indigenous peoples who have the least contribution to global warming with their simple, low carbon-lifestyles, are now suffering from the adverse impacts of climate change resulting in food insecurity, loss of livelihoods and traditional knowledge, displacements among others.

## Who is responsible for Global Warming?

The industrialized (rich) countries that are emitting large amounts of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels (ie gasoline) during their process of industrialization and by maintaining a life style of high energy consumption are mainly responsible for global warming. Developed countries are then obligated to make drastic cuts of their carbon emission, and to assist developing countries to enable them to adapt and mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change through finance and technology transfer among others. These are the core issues under negotiation for an internationally binding agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

## Why are forests important for addressing Climate Change?

20% of the current global carbon emission is caused by deforestation and forest degradation, largely because of massive logging and destruction of forestlands. When trees grow they absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and bind it into themselves and their root systems. When trees die (ie from burning and cutting) the carbon dioxide is released back into the atmosphere. Thus, the conservation of remaining forests can also slow down climate change.



## What is REDD?

REDD means Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in Developing countries. REDD programme is designed for developing countries to conserve their forests and by doing so, will receive huge payment from developed countries. The payment will be based on the level of carbon dioxide prevented from being released into the atmosphere, and by the amount of carbon that will be absorbed by the forests. However rich countries are also intending to trade forest carbon payment as an excuse to continue to burn fossil fuels, instead of cutting back their domestic carbon emission.



## How are Indigenous Peoples going to be affected by REDD?

Millions of indigenous peoples are dependent on forests for their collective survival, as well as for maintaining their cultural and spiritual integrity. However REDD schemes will make rules about what can and cannot happen inside forests e.g. strict regulations on farming, hunting, gathering food or medicines, cutting firewood or grazing or any other use of resources in the forest. These measures will further undermine the governance of indigenous peoples over natural resources. Unless the rights of indigenous peoples over their lands, territories and natural resources are clearly recognized, REDD can cause immense human sufferings such as relocation, displacement, landlessness, poverty and hunger.

On the other hand, if genuine partnership can also be established under the common goal of conserving the forest with due recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, it can be an opportunity for indigenous peoples to strengthen their exercise of sustainable resource management and governance.

## What is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)?

The UNDRIP sets the minimum human rights standards for the collective survival, dignity and well being of the indigenous peoples of the world. This document clearly stipulates the collective rights of the indigenous peoples, including their right to self determination, rights to land, forest and natural resources, the implementation of the provisions for the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC); respect and recognition of the cultural integrity and spirituality among others. States have the moral obligation to implement the UNDRIP.

## What can indigenous communities do?

A few of the important things that indigenous communities can do are:

- To know more about REDD and climate change, and be aware of REDD and climate change mitigation and adaptation programmes to be or being implemented in your communities
- To know your rights embodied in the UNDRIP and to advocate the respect and recognition of your rights under REDD and concerns relating to climate change at the local, national and international levels. In particular to assert the implementation of the Free Prior and Informed Consent of indigenous peoples in REDD programmes and on adaptation and mitigation actions.
- To link up with indigenous organizations, service/ advocate organizations (NGOs) institutions etc for support and assistance in your advocacy, and lobby activities for the recognition of your rights.

