



**International Alliance of Indigenous-Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests  
Alianza Mundial de Pueblos Indígenas y Tribales de los Bosques Tropicales.  
Alliance Internationale des Peuples Autochtones –Tribaux des Forêts Tropicales.**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**08 November 2001**

**Press Tent - Room Alwaha**

**13:15 - 14:00**

## **Indigenous Peoples Demand Special Status, Working Group in the Climate Change Negotiations**

**Contacts:**

Hector Huertas or Lucy Mulenkei, e-mail: [oloubili@yahoo.com](mailto:oloubili@yahoo.com)/[mulenkei@yahoo.com](mailto:mulenkei@yahoo.com)

MARRAKESH (Thursday, November 8) - 350 million indigenous peoples and still no full and effective participation in the climate change negotiations!

Representatives of indigenous peoples present in Marrakech, Morocco for the UNFCCC Conference of Parties 7 have expressed dismay over how the current negotiations have excluded indigenous peoples.

According to Lucy Mulenkei of the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Caucus, indigenous peoples are one of the most severely affected by climate change as they live in the most fragile ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, arctic, desert, coastal and marine areas. This vulnerability, she added, is also because indigenous peoples' physical and cultural existence are entwined with Mother Earth's. Even the Third Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognizes that indigenous peoples suffer directly from climate change according to a statement released by the Indigenous Caucus.

Given this particularity, the Indigenous Caucus specifically calls for the granting of special status to indigenous peoples and the establishment of Working Group on Indigenous Peoples within the UNFCCC. "This working group will provide an adequate mechanism for indigenous peoples' full participation in the negotiations and will recognize the particular role that we play in conserving and preserving Mother Earth," according to Hector Huertas of the Panama-based MesoAmerican Indigenous Organization on Climate Change

"By our sheer number alone, we deserve to be heard in these negotiations. Other UN bodies, processes and international instruments such as the UN Convention on Biological Diversity have already recognized indigenous peoples but the UNFCCC refuses to do so! Giving us special status is the only moral and ethical thing to do.", Mulenkei added.

#####