



Three Basins Summit Statement

Threats to tropical forests are growing: that is why Indigenous and community rights must be at the centre of the Three Basins initiative

To: Heads of States of the countries of the Three Basins Summit initiative

Solutions to tropical deforestation have to come from within tropical forest countries. That is why we welcome greater south-south cooperation and the gathering of the Three Basins Summit in Brazzaville, from October 26 to 28.

However, we the undersigned Indigenous, environmental, human rights and other frontline organisations are writing to express our concerns over the initiative's direction of travel, specifically the lack of attention given to impacts of extractives and other harmful industries on rainforests and to the engagement of civil society and rights-holders in the process.

While the stated aim of the summit is to preserve and restore the planet's three great rainforest basins, [new research](#) shows in practice many countries from the three rainforest basins are in fact advancing plans that will do exactly the opposite. For example:

In the Amazon Basin: Existing or planned oil and gas blocks now overlap an estimated 65 million hectares, or 13 percent, of intact tropical forest and more than 31 million hectares of Indigenous Territories home to over 500 indigenous nationalities.

In the Congo Basin: Planned oil and gas blocks overlap with more than 72 million hectares, or 39 percent, of intact tropical forests, which are home to more than 17,000 populated places inclusive of Indigenous and forest-dependent communities.

In Southeast Asia: Oil and gas blocks designated for production or exploration cover more than 34.8 million hectares, or nearly 20%, of intact tropical forests. In Indonesia, more than 99,000 populated places inclusive of a high degree of Indigenous and forest-based people fall within oil and gas blocks.

Meanwhile Indigenous People and environmental defenders are [persecuted and killed in ever greater numbers for defending](#) the forest lands the Three Basins Summit is calling to protect. Often, perpetrators use their power and influence on authorities to keep destroying lives and forests to act with impunity. It is also clear that continuing down the path of ever-expanding extractivism will make it impossible to meet global climate and biodiversity targets.

We need a different pathway, one that is founded on a just energy transition, sustainable economies and protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to defend and manage territories. The evidence is clear that forests under the [custodianship of these groups store more carbon, harbour more biodiversity and benefit more people](#).

We are deeply concerned, however, that the Three Basins initiative appears to be more preoccupied with carbon markets than with the human rights of Indigenous People and of others on the frontlines of deforestation and forest degradation. Civil society representatives have also regretted their lack of participation in the event. Marginalising these voices will only result in yet more top-down and ineffective interventions that have so often failed people and forests.

As such, we call on the Three Basins governments to commit to the following in its final communiqué and in all subsequent work:

- Scale up rights based legal protection, demarcation and recognition of forest communities' lands and territories as a prerequisite to more effective forest protection.
- Uphold communities' right to fully and effectively participate in decision-making on any developments planned in these areas; respecting Indigenous Peoples' right to free, prior and informed consent, as well as securing the protection of those living in voluntary isolation.
- Empower and protect Indigenous Peoples and other frontline environmental and human rights defenders including by enhancing access to justice.
- Halt and reverse loss and degradation of all natural ecosystems from large-scale agriculture, mining, extractives and other industries, such as through a global moratorium on industrial activities in primary forests as well as priority forests.
- Accelerate true low-carbon development in tropical forest countries through a just energy transition, protecting natural forests and the rights and food sovereignty of local communities and Indigenous Peoples.
- Adopt timebound and measurable goals towards these objectives, for transparency and accountability.

In addition, we call on the international community and particularly governments in the global north to:

- Reduce consumption of forest and climate destroying commodities.
- Channel more and better quality investments to forest protection efforts in the three basins including to Indigenous-led funds in these regions.
- Advance a new funding architecture for forests including through a global carbon levy, subsidy redirection, equitable payments for ecosystem services and debt relief, ensuring a far greater share of this funding goes directly to Indigenous Peoples, local communities and grassroots organisations.
- Protect low-income individuals and groups from potential regressive impacts of the global energy transition through social protection measures, grants and tax reforms and ensuring their access to affordable renewable energy.

Signed by:

Aceh Wetland Foundation – Indonesia

Action Communautaire pour l'accompagnement des Peuples Autochtones et Développement Local (ACPADEL) - Cameroon

Actions pour la Promotion et Protection des Peuples et Espèces Menacés (APEM) - DRC

Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) - Uganda

Ajemalebu Self Help (AJESH) - Cameroon

Appui à l'autopromotion et l'insertion des femmes, des jeunes et des désœuvrés (APIFED) - Cameroon

Association Paysanne pour la Réhabilitation et Protection des Pygmées (PREPPYG) - DRC

Association pour la défense et la promotion des peuples autochtones – Republic of Congo

CENTRAL ASHANINKA DEL RIO ENE – Peru

Centre Africain pour le Développement Durable et l'Environnement (CADDE) - Gabon

Centre d'Actions pour le Développement (CAD) - Republic of Congo

Centre D'Appui à la Gestion Durable des Forêts Tropicales (CAGDFT) - DRC

Centre d'Appui pour le Développement Durable (CADD) - Central African Republic

Centre pour le Développement et l'Environnement (CED) - Cameroon

Coalition des Organisations de la Société Civile pour le Suivi des Réformes et de l'Action Publique (CORAP) - DRC

Comptoir Juridique Junior (CJJ) - Republic of Congo

Dynamique des Groupes des Peuples Autochtones (DGPA) – DRC

Dynamique pour le Développement Durable du Massif d'Itombwe -DRC

EcoCiencia- Ecuador

EcoDev - Cameroon

EcoNusa Foundation – Indonesia

Feri Irawan, Perkumpulan Hijau, Indonesia

Fondation Camerounaise Terre Vivante (FCTV) - Cameroon

Forêts et Développement Rural (FODER) - Cameroon

Forest Watch Indonesia

Forum pour la gouvernance et les droits de l'Homme (FGDH) - Republic of Congo

Friend of the Earth – Sri Lanka

GeoFirst Development - DRC

Groupe d'action pour sauver l'homme et son environnement (GASHE) - DRC

JARINGAN ADVOKASI TAMBANG SULAWESI TENGAH - Indonesia

JPIC Kalimantan - Indonesia

Mouvement de Jeunes pour la Protection de l'Environnement (MJPE) - DRC

Observatoire Congolais des Droits de l'Homme (OCDH) - Republic of Congo

Réseau pour la Conservation et la Réhabilitation des Écosystèmes Forestiers (Réseau CREF) -DRC

Rencontre pour la Paix et les Droits de l'Homme (RPDH) - Republic of Congo

Save Our Borneo, Indonesia

Tasha Research Institute Africa - Uganda

Travail en Réseau avec les Fédérations des Femmes et Enfants en Détresse - DRC

Trend Asia - Indonesia

WALHI East Nusa Tenggara - Indonesia

WALHI South Sulawesi - Indonesia

Yayasan Pusaka Bentala Rakyat – Indonesia

Yihu - Indonesia

Supported by:

Amazon Watch

Amnesty International

Earth Insight

Earthrights International

Environmental Investigation Agency

Global Witness

Green Finance Observatory

Greenpeace Africa

Rainforest Action Network

Rainforest Foundation Norway

Rainforest Foundation US

Rainforest Foundation UK

Rainforest Rescue - Switzerland

Rainforest Rescue - Germany

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