

## Mesoamerican Contribution

### Mesoamerican Alliance of People and Forests (AMPB, by its acronym in Spanish)

#### *i. Title.*

Facing climate change in the field: Models of forest and territorial governance working in a positive way in Mesoamerica.

#### *ii. Context and justification.*

The situation in Mesoamerica contrasts with Asia and Africa, **since 65% of 83 million hectares of forests are located on formally recognized indigenous or community lands**, a figure much higher than any other region in the world. A wide range of community experiences in this region show the viability of territorial governance as a strategy for mitigating climate change. Achieving reducing emissions derived from deforestation, through a model of integrated management of its natural landscape. With implications for adaptation to climate change, watershed management and food security. This is possible by the implementation of a variety of agroforestry models, based on a set of rules for local use; managed by elected authorities for their communities.

#### *iii. An overview of the contribution.*

The Mesoamerican experience confirms that where territorial and cultural rights are recognized for the access and use of natural resources, the beneficiaries and holders of such rights assume the control and management of their forests and the biodiversity contained there by giving rise to a rich variety of forms of conservation and sustainable management of these resources. Indigenous lands in Panama, forestry concessions in Guatemala, Indigenous Territorial Governments in Nicaragua, among others, from their own worldview and enriched by the constant exchange of experiences, they have evolved to face the variety of current pressures on their territories. In summary, these right holders have become central authorities to defend and manage Mesoamerican forests.

This experience offers important lessons and lessons for other tropical regions of the world **which seek to implement reforms and promote governance based on land rights, as a key strategy to stop deforestation and tackle climate change.**

#### *iv. How does the contribution take advantage of living natural systems as a solution to avoid climate change?*

The experience of Mesoamerican territorial governance is responsible for the Healthy State in which the main forest masses in the region are maintained, the main six and largest protected areas (Biosphere Reserves recognized internationally by UNESCO and its EL Hombre Program and MAB Biosphere) are part of the territories managed under indigenous

territorial authorities and local communities. Management models based on the rich and diverse Cultural Worldview of the Mayan, Gunas, Embera, Miskitus, Mayangnas peoples.

In all cases, indigenous and community organizations are counterparts and a factor of governance for national and municipal governments in the implementation of local strategies.

***v. How could the contribution support climate, mitigation and adaptation as well as other important co-benefits and social, economic and environmental outcomes in the coming years?***

This includes taking as reference the experience of the forest concessions of Petén, Guatemala with half a million hectares under community management. This experience offers the following contributions:

a. Reduction of carbon emissions and carbon sequestration (GTonnes)

Reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> 37 million tons through the Project for Reducing Emissions from avoiding Deforestation in the Multiple Use Zone of the Mayan Biosphere Reserve (Guatecarbon Project), promoted by the organizations of the community forest licensees of the Mayan Reserve Biosphere and the State of Guatemala.

The Guatecarbon Project is a new and innovative example of partnership between the government and local communities.

b. Efficient management and territorial control.

The experience of community management and control of the forest in the Mayan Biosphere

The experience of community management and control of the forest in the Mayan Biosphere Reserve has ensured the conservation of the forest with a deforestation rate of 0.1% per year between 2000 and 2013. In the same way, it has managed to maintain an incidence of forest fires only 0.8%, 28% times less than the area not managed by the communities. Year after year, firefighting work in the hand of communities contributes to reducing carbon dioxide production, forest degradation and loss of biodiversity.

c. Social Impact (increase in employment; reduction of poverty, etc.)

500,000 hectares of certified forest (FSC) managed by community organizations which directly and indirectly benefit approximately 15,000 people through timber and non-timber forest activities, low impact tourism, among others.

d. Net economic impact (total in US \$; how was it achieved?)

Between 2012 and 2016, the concessions generated revenues of \$24.5 million for the sale of certified Wood and \$3 million for the sale of non-timber forest products such as Xate and Nuez de Ramón.

e. Impact on the realization of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (particularly the SDGs 1,2,6,12,13,14,15,16)

Generation of employment for poverty reduction (1), strengthening of organizational capacities to reduce deforestation and reduction of forest organization capacities to reduce deforestation and reduction of forest fires (13), Sustainable management of forest resources (13), Sustainable management of forest resources (15), legal access to land (16).

F. Only Transition. N/A

g. Food Security. N/A

h. Minimize the extinction of species and ecological losses and encourage an increase in biodiversity. N/A

***vi. Which countries and organizations participate in the contribution?***

- Mexico, Mexican Network of Forest Peasant Organizations, A.C. REDMOCAF,
- Guatemala, The Association of Forest Communities of Peten, ACOFOP.
- Guatemala, The National Alliance of Forest Organizations of Guatemala.
- Honduras, Mosquitia Asla Takanka, MASTA.
- Nicaragua, Yapti Tasba Masraka Nanih Aslatakanka, Yatama
- Nicaragua, The Mayangna Nation.
- Costa Rica, Bribri Cabecar Indigenous Network
- Panamá, The Embera Wounan General Congress.
- Panamá, The Guna General Congress.

***vii How have stakeholders (e.g. indigenous people, local communities and youth) been consulted to develop the contribution?***

Territorial management models are part of community decision, endorsed socially and culturally by means of the different forms of decision and consensus of each town. Assemblies, General Congresses approve and know the advances in these matters every year according to their uses and customs.

***viii. Where can the contribution put into action?***

The Mesoamerican territorial management model opens a path of possible options for territories that area not demarcated or titled as Amazon, Brazil, Indonesia, The Congo Basin. As well as for those territories that have advanced in recognition and titling, in terms of enriching experiences on the ground.

***ix How will the contribution be delivered? How will the different stakeholders be involved in its implementation? What are the possible transformational impacts?***

These experiences are going to be presented as successful documented cases of territorial governance:

-Relating the Ground Actions in terms of territorial management (e.g. community control and surveillance) and their impacts through indicators such as deforestation/conservation evolution, natural regeneration, forest fire behavior, status of emblematic species (based on Monitoring).

-The agreements, rules and protocols resulting from the pact, alliance and convention with public agencies in charge of environmental management and other non-governmental actors and scientific research centers.

The main foreseeable transformational impacts are:

- Contributing to the paradigm shift of conservation approaches and the fight against climate change, about the leading role of indigenous people and local communities. The relationship between legally recognized territorial rights and the strengthening of territorial governance at the field level.
- Governments expanding their vision on community contribution to durable climate solutions.
- Expanding and consolidating successful community experiences through the dissemination and exchange of South-South experiences at the global tropic level.

***X. Does this initiative contribute to the workflow of the Climate Action Summit (transition of the industry, energy transition, climate finance and carbon price fixation; infrastructure, cities and local action, resilience and adaptation, citizen and youth mobilization, social and political engine; mitigation strategy)?***

The recognition of rights in a matter of political will of the National States and the fight by indigenous towns and local communities. This experience focuses its contribution to the workflow of the summit related to the social and political engines, Resilience and adaptation, Mitigation Strategy.

***xi Examples of experiences to date: how is this contribution on this experience? How is the contribution linking to different initiatives in progress?***

- Sustainable Forest Management of Peten Community Forest Concessions in the Mayan Biosphere Reserve.
- Territorial Governance of Miskito Indigenous Territorial Councils. The Miskito people have recently achieved the titling of their territory with an approximate size of half the surface of El Salvador.

- Territorial Governance of the Indigenous Territorial Governments in Nicaragua. 24 territories that represent 31.16% of the national territory.
- Experience of the Payments for Environmental Services Program managed by the Indigenous Associations in Costa Rica.
- Model of Territorial Governance of the Guna Peoples in Panama.
- Indigenous forest management of the Embera Wounan people of Panama
- Historical Community Forest Management of ejidos and indigenous communities of Mexico.

***xii Financing Procedures (with specific emphasis on the potential for association).***

The Mesoamerican Territorial Fund links local communities, indigenous peoples, governments and the private sector to support territorial initiatives to confront climate change, guaranteeing territorial rights.

***xiii Means of administration, metrics for monitoring.***

- % reduction in degradation and deforestation.
- Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that reflect the climate policies of countries and their actions to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change.
- Level of compliance of states in the exercise of land rights.
- Approval of incentive policies for Community Territorial Governance
- Level of compliance with international conventions such as ILO 169, the Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People of the United Nations.
- Carrying out data update investigations

***xiv Communication Strategy***

- Directed to decision makers and civil society.
- High content of visual Project which invites to action
- Systematization of experiences
- Dissemination of new research data

***xv Contact details of the proponents (indicating the degree of commitment between the countries and the organizations that are named).***

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