

Fourth World Journal

A Photo Essay: Indigenous Peoples' Climate Change

**United Nations Climate Negotiations –
Durban, Kwazulu, South Africa. Nov 28 – Dec
9, 2011**

By Ben Powless



“The failure to act – because of the greed of a few countries – would result in an attack on our cultures around the world, and the ecosystems we depend upon. This would only perpetuate injustice to the peoples of the world.”

*IIPFCC, AWG-KP intervention
Durban, 6 December, 2011*

International Indigenous Peoples'
Forum on Climate Change
Opening Session of Climate

Change Talks – November 2011,
Durban, Kwazulu, SA



Climate Change Talks
Plenary Session



“Current climate change measures and actions are resulting in serious and massive human rights violations of indigenous peoples in addition to the worsening impacts of climate change.”

*IIPFCC, AWG-KP intervention
Durban, 6 December, 2011*



During previous sessions of the annual Climate Change talks, Indigenous Peoples have actively sought to engage states' party negotiators— frequently to deaf ears.

“We do take note of advances in the decisions relative to REDD+ and agriculture affirming respect for traditional knowledge and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. However, these references are omitted from all other COP outcome documents.”

*IIPFCC, High Level Statement,
Copenhagen, 18 December 2009*

“Mr. Chair, I remind this body that scientific study and practical experiences confirm that Indigenous Peoples are the most directly and severely affected by climate change throughout the world.” *IIPFCC, SBI Closing Durban, 2 December, 2011*



“You all know what our traditional peoples have been telling us for many years, and what scientists can confirm. We are killing the planet, and we need to stop. You know the numbers.” *IIPFCC, AWG-KP Durban, 2 December, 2011*

“Our peoples’ lives are on the line. Without Kyoto, we face the real prospect of climate ethnocide. This is no time for empty words. We want real commitments.” We need real action. *IIPFCC, AWG-KP Durban, 2 December, 2011*





Indigenous peoples and local communities should be involved in Monitoring, Reporting and Verification in all stages of all climate related initiatives. *IIPFCC High Level Statement – Copenhagen 18 December 2009*

Current climate change measures and actions are resulting in serious and massive human rights violations of indigenous peoples in addition to the worsening impacts of climate change. *IIPFCC, AWG-KP Durban, 6 December, 2011*





“... we, the indigenous peoples of the world, shall continue to strengthen our ranks from the local to the global levels to push for effective solutions to climate change.”
IIPFCC, Urgent Appeal, 6 December, 2011



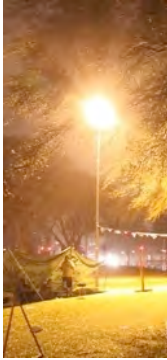


The constructive engagement of indigenous peoples in UNFCCC sessions is crucial if comprehensive and effective responses to climate change are to be achieved. *IIPFCC, AWG-KP Durban, 2 December, 2011*





International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change joined in unity as the Climate Change talks in Durban, Kwazulu drew to an end – December 2011



Archbishop Desmond Tutu joined in support of the cause of Indigenous peoples.

“We do take note of advances in the decisions relative to REDD+ and agriculture affirming respect for traditional knowledge and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. However, these references are omitted from all other COP outcome documents. These human rights must be protected through clear and unequivocal language recognizing our rights to land, territories and resources, our full and effective participation including our right of free, prior and informed consent, and protection for our traditional knowledge. In order to protect our forests, biodiversity, the air, and the water that sustains us all, we need a binding commitment to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

IIPFCC High Level Statement – Copenhagen 18 December 2009

Any decision or indication undertaken by the Parties will have to be founded on a strong rights-based approach and framework – specifically including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Indigenous Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO169), and other international human rights obligations and instruments - and on the recognition of historical responsibility and ecological debt. Proper consideration should be given to the indigenous peoples' Anchorage Declaration and to the indigenous peoples' declaration adopted at the Cochabamba Peoples' Summit, April 2010.

... the Shared Vision ... should recognize the role and contribution of indigenous peoples' knowledge, innovations and practices in playing a stewardship role and in contributing solutions to the climate crisis. The crucial role of indigenous women in the transmission of knowledge and preservation of culture and environment should also be acknowledged. *IIPFCC Inter-Sessional, Statement, Bonn, Germany, June 2010.*

[Editor: We have incorporated submissions by the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change from the Durban Climate Change Conference and from earlier intergovernmental meetings extending back to 2009. The Powless Photo Essay depicts meetings, demonstrations, and incidents (i.e., efforts to remove Africans from a campsite near the conference in Durban). An estimated 200 indigenous peoples from neighboring communities and from around the world in Kwazulu directly contributed the development of submissions to the Durban Conference. For each participant on-site and individual contributors via Internet communications many hundreds more made

their views known. We at FWJ wish to express our appreciation for the skills, and professional care taken by indigenous participants who never forget who they represent.]

References:

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- IIPFCC. (2011). INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' FORUM ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IIPFCC) Intervention to the AWG-KP Durban, Wednesday, December 6, 2011
- IIPFC, (2011). Urgent Appeal of Indigenous Peoples to State Parties. Statement of Indigenous Peoples forum on Climate change (IIPFCC), Durban December 6, 2011.

About the author

Ben Powless is Mohawk from Six Nations in Ontario, Canada. He is currently studying Human Rights, Indigenous and Environmental Studies at Carleton University in Ottawa after spending a year in an international exchange program

studying sustainable rural development between Alberta and Mexico. He has been involved with the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition since its inception, working at both the national level and with the Ottawa Chapter. He is also seriously involved with the Indigenous Environmental Network. He also sits on the board of the National Council for the Canadian Environmental Network, and he sits as a member of the Youth Advisory Group to the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, and is deeply involved in the local Aboriginal community.

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Powless Photo collections:

<http://bit.ly/powless>

General photos from Durban/COP17 -

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/powless/sets/72157628385853737/> Photos from the Durban Climate

Justice action (Friday, December 9) -

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/powless/sets/72157628347288997/>

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