

## **NFFPFW Open letter to President, Peru**

### **Forest people in Solidarity with the Indigenous peoples' struggle of Peru**

**12<sup>th</sup> June 2009**

**Dear Mr. President Alan García,**

We, the Forest People from 15 states of India representing several people's movements who have gathered under the banner of National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers' National Conference, being held at Dehradun, India from 10 to 12 June 2009; stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are protesting against the Amazon rainforest industrial development policies of your government. We will struggle, as the united forest and indigenous peoples' of the world, against the divisive, exploitative and false culture of capitalism. We reject the illusions you provide: a development that extracts, a freedom that chains our limbs, a culture that is for sale, a society of mistrust, a democracy of fear, a history of oppression, a language of servility, a justice that is false. And, this oppression and injustice has lit a fire of anger and tears. It will not die down, until the governments of the world recognize our natural, inalienable right to the forests.

Hence, we reject the Peruvian government's recent decrees, violating constitutionally guaranteed rights of indigenous peoples. Your government's declaration of State of Emergency is unacceptable. We also strongly condemn your government's use of Special Forces to suppress peaceful demonstrations in the Amazon. We stand in solidarity with the indefinite general strike called by the indigenous peoples of Peru.

It is unacceptable that your government has signed a Free Trade Agreement with the US against your peoples' will through an undemocratic, secret process. It is now using this agreement as a pretext to most aggressively roll back legal protections for indigenous peoples and to open the Amazon rainforest to permit oil, mineral and timber by multinational corporations. Your government's actions violate your mandate to represent the interests of your peoples.

Therefore, we believe that the people of Peru ought to have:

1. The fulfilment of the constitutionally guaranteed rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination, to their ancestral territories, and to free and prior consultation and consent over any policies and activities that affect them.
2. The series of contested Decrees associated with the Free Trade Agreement with the United States repealed.
3. The withdrawal of all such bilateral and multilateral negotiations which will lead to a similar undermining of the rights of indigenous peoples.

4. The suspension of the State of Emergency, and the withdrawal of your Special Forces and the decriminalisation of peaceful protest.

5. A meaningful process of dialogue, in good faith, in order to resolve this conflict.

We condemn your path of development, which sees nature as a commodity to be traded; we assert the right of forest and indigenous peoples over our land and forest; we assert our responsibility to protect and nurture these forests amidst which we live, and challenge your legitimacy to control what is ours.

Forest and indigenous peoples of the world are watching and awaiting a complete reversal of your draconian actions. And, the fire your actions have ignited, will continue till the dawn of a new day, when we as a people will live in communion with our forests in a society that realizes the ideals of freedom, justice and equality.

Truly,

**Participants at NFFPFW National Conference**

**Dehradun, India 10-12 June 2009**