

Amazon In Focus

FALL 2011



AMAZON WATCH



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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Photo : Eric Slomanson/Amazon Watch



Dear Friends of the Amazon,

This October marks Amazon Watch's 15th Anniversary. I am truly grateful to our network of indigenous and local partners in the Amazon, our staff, board, donors and allies around the world whose creativity and commitment have shaped Amazon Watch into a powerful force for tackling the root causes of rainforest destruction and advancing indigenous rights.

Amazon Watch has evolved into a savvy team who can operate in remote jungle communities, the halls of power, Hollywood and in the streets to mount pressure on companies, mobilize concern through the media and engage decision makers on alternative energy and sustainable development pathways. From field research and providing training to our partners, to strategic work with shareholders and hard-hitting media campaigns, I'm proud of our ability to leverage

relatively limited resources to have an extraordinary impact.

2012 will be a time of deep transformation on our planet. The 20th Anniversary of the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 will likely be a historic opportunity to scale up our work to safeguard the Amazon rainforest in defense of future generations and our global climate.

At current rates, 50 percent of the Amazon could be lost or severely degraded by 2020. With global deforestation contributing around 20 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions, our work and the work of our partners is more critical now than ever.

Defending the Amazon is a defining battle of our time and has the potential to shift the balance towards justice, ecological balance and the recognition of our interdependence on nature and living systems. We are counting on your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Atossa Soltani". The signature is stylized and fluid.

For the Earth and Future Generations,
Atossa Soltani, Founder and Executive Director

Photo: Caroline Bennett/Amazon Watch

SHEYLA JURUNA

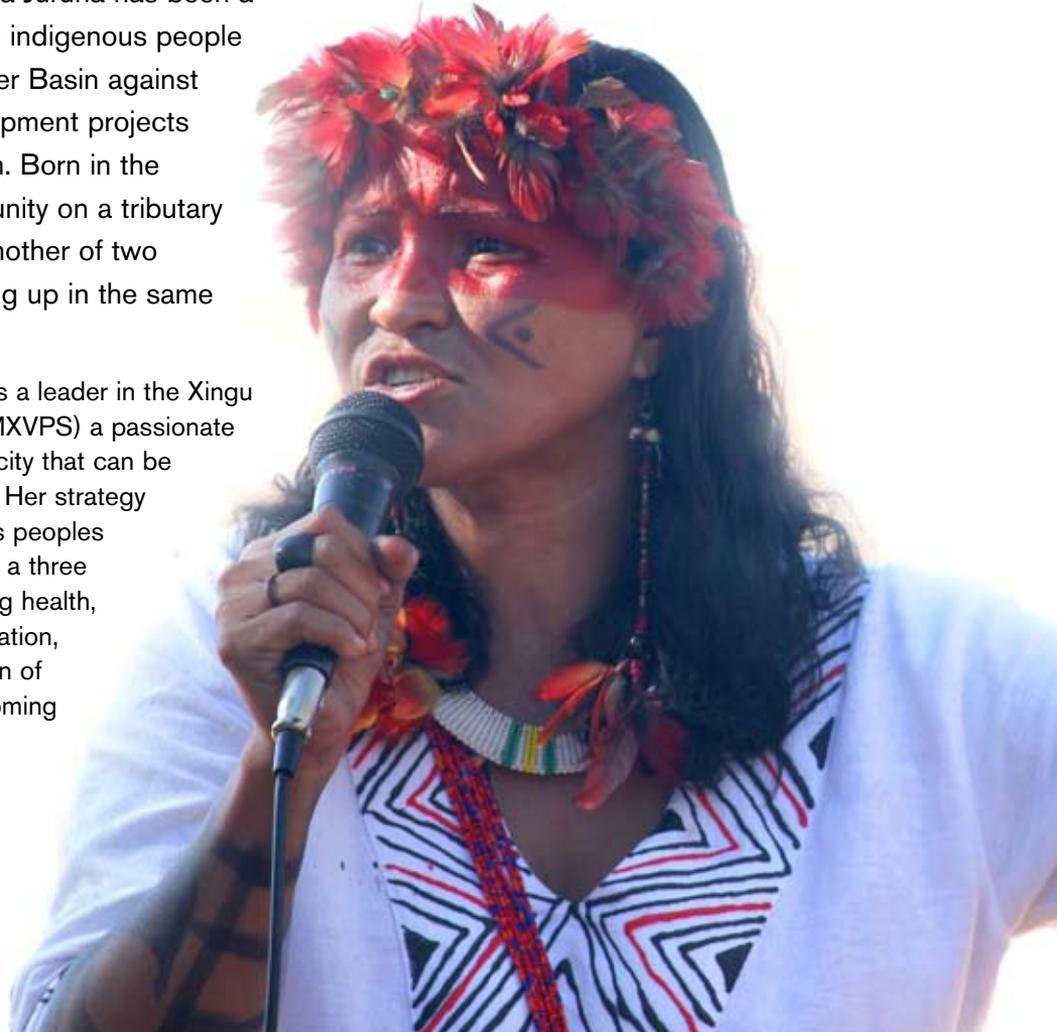
PEACEFUL WARRIOR OF THE AMAZON

"I cannot think of losing this battle.... I cannot imagine seeing our river turn to concrete, to imagine that our struggle has been in vain.... It is possible that one day we will succeed in conquering the powerful. I have given part of my life to change this history, to bring value to our voice and to our resistance."

Sheyla Juruna

For over 20 years, Sheyla Juruna has been a leading voice among the indigenous people defending the Xingu River Basin against destructive mega-development projects like the Belo Monte Dam. Born in the Boa Vista Juruna community on a tributary of the Xingu River and mother of two beautiful children growing up in the same community,

Sheyla brings to her role as a leader in the Xingu Alive Forever Movement (MXVPS) a passionate and sophisticated authenticity that can be heard anytime she speaks. Her strategy for empowering indigenous peoples of the Amazon is based on a three point platform for advancing health, culturally appropriate education, and widespread recognition of indigenous land rights. Looming over these aspirations for fundamental human rights is the threat of a literal inundation of her native community and many neighboring communities,



as well as of an irreplaceable Amazonian ecosystem evolved over millions of years, caused by a planned series of dams known collectively as the Belo Monte Dam, slated to become the world's third largest ever constructed.

Sheyla has become an outspoken leader in defense of the Amazon and indigenous peoples' rights throughout Brazil, as well as internationally. Earlier this year, Sheyla joined Amazon Watch, International Rivers and Rainforest Foundation UK on a delegation of indigenous peoples impacted by dams funded by BNDES (Brazil's National Development Bank). The delegation toured Europe meeting with officials in the European Union and the United Nations Human Rights Commission, as well as institutional investors in BNDES, the primary institution financing the Belo Monte Dam. Sheyla's eloquent and forceful appeals have inspired thousands to join her cause; her face marked

a worldwide petition campaign against the Belo Monte Dam that gathered more than 600,000 signatures.

By devoting her heart and voice to the movement to stop the Belo Monte Dam and protect the Xingu River, Sheyla is influencing global society's efforts to respond to climate change and seize opportunities for clean energy technology, environmentally sound global financial policies and preservation of still intact rainforest ecosystems and the indigenous communities living within them. She is a model of leadership who will have tremendous influence on the next generation of indigenous and environmental leaders, and it is a great honor for Amazon Watch to work by her side. We believe that with leaders like Sheyla Juruna, the Belo Monte Dam can be stopped and a new, wiser policy can be adopted by and for Brazil and its people.



Xingu Urgent Action Fund: *Join the Movement!*

The Xingu Urgent Action Fund provides emergency grants to support indigenous and traditional communities of the Xingu River Basin in the Brazilian Amazon to mobilize against destructive development plans of the Brazilian government to build the Belo Monte "Monster" Dam—the 3rd-largest dam in the world if built. Your help is needed NOW to support the last stand in defense of the Xingu River and its people! Please donate to the Xingu Urgent Action Fund today: <http://www.causes.com/campaigns/158177>

"For us the river means many things. For everything we do, we depend on the river. For us to go out, to take our parents around, to get medical attention, we need the river for all these things. If a dam is constructed on the river, how will we pass through it?... We don't want to see the river closed off, our parents dying in inactivity. For us the river is useful and we don't want it to wither away – that we not have a story to tell, that it become a legend for our children and grandchildren. We want them to see it with their own eyes."

**– Zé Carlos Arara,
a leader of the Arara people**



Photo: Amazon Watch

CURRENT CAMPAIGNS AND PROGRAMS

Stopping the Belo Monte Dam, Brazil – If constructed, the Belo Monte Dam would be the world’s 3rd largest and divert the flow of the Xingu River along a 62-mile stretch, an area of enormous biodiversity and home to over 25,000 indigenous peoples. Amazon Watch is working with a coalition of Brazilian and international organizations to stop the dam and promote renewable energy alternatives to mega-dams in the Amazon, providing direct support to affected indigenous and traditional communities, while serving as a bridge between alternative energy experts, celebrities, media, legal, and grassroots representatives in Brazil and around the world. Belo Monte is the gateway dam for over 60 proposed dams throughout the Amazon and is a critical battle in the fight for

the Amazon, the future of Latin America and the planet. Despite overwhelming opposition and failure by NESA—the dam building consortium—to meet dozens of social and environmental conditions, the Brazilian government issued the construction license for the dam on June 1, 2011. Local communities have vowed to resist until the ultimate consequence.

International Finance and the Amazon – BNDES

(Brazil's National Development Bank and the 2nd largest development bank in the world) is a central player in financing harmful “development” projects in Latin America. The portfolio of loan disbursement is now larger than those of the World Bank, IDB and US Ex-Im Bank combined, with disbursements totaling \$101 billion in 2010. While the majority of funding is concentrated in Brazil's construction, electricity and mining industries, including the Belo Monte Dam; the Bank is expanding lending throughout the Amazon and Latin America to include six hydroelectric dams planned for the Peruvian Amazon. Amazon Watch is supporting indigenous communities and coordinating with Brazilian civil society campaigns working to expose BNDES' role in Amazon destruction and pressure the bank to adopt reforms in the areas of transparency and environmental and social safeguards, and to rethink its current development model.

Climate Change and the Amazon – As the world's largest rainforest and the lungs of our planet, the Amazon plays a major role in maintaining the stability of the planet's climate. As the largest landowners in the Amazon, indigenous peoples play a central part in protecting this ecosystem. Based on this understanding, a major component of Amazon Watch's work around climate change is focused on supporting advocacy in defense of indigenous rights in the context of climate change mitigation efforts such as REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) and Ecuador's *Socio Bosque* program. Our work includes supporting initiatives of indigenous allies like AIDSESEP in Peru as they advance a broader rights agenda via *Indigenous REDD* within international fora like the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, Forest Investment Program and on the road to Rio+20 in June 2012.

Chevron: Clean Up Ecuador – Nearly 18 years ago, a group of indigenous and campesino communities representing 30,000 people from the Amazon rainforest in Ecuador filed a lawsuit demanding that Chevron take responsibility for the environmental and public health catastrophe it left in the Amazon. Despite Chevron's escalating legal, public relations, and lobbying tactics to evade responsibility, an Ecuadorian court ruled in favor of the Amazonian communities on February 14, 2011, ordering Chevron to pay \$18 billion for environmental cleanup, health care, clean water, and other restoration efforts. The verdict represents the first time indigenous people have sued a multinational corporation in the country where the crime was committed, and won. For a decade, Amazon Watch has been standing with the people of the Ecuadorian Amazon demanding justice in this case. Amazon Watch continues to mobilize awareness and pressure Chevron to finally do the right thing: fund a full-scale environmental remediation, health care facilities, and clean water for affected communities.

Protecting Ecuador's Remaining Rainforests – Amazon Watch promotes the vision of our indigenous partners to manage and protect their territories and the extraordinary biodiversity within them. We continue to support the Yasuni-ITT initiative, which would prevent exploitation of a one billion barrels of oil reserve beneath the Yasuni National Park in exchange for compensation from the international community. Amazon Watch is also monitoring the pristine southern region of the Ecuadorian Amazon, home to indigenous Achuar, Shuar and Kichwa peoples, where the government could lift a long-term moratorium on oil drilling. New threats—ranging from tar sands mining to transportation corridors through protected zones—require ongoing vigilance.

Defending Achuar Ancestral Territory, Peru – For time immemorial the Achuar indigenous people of the Pastaza and Morona river basins in the Northern Peruvian Amazon have lived in harmony with their natural environment, a region of exceptional biodiversity. Today, oil drilling and exploration pose a grave threat to their way of life and the health of their rivers and forests. The Peruvian government first auctioned the Achuar's territory to oil companies in 1995 but Amazon

Watch stood with the Achuar and forced first Arco, then Burlington Resources and Occidental Petroleum (Oxy) to withdraw from the area. Now Canadian Talisman Energy holds exploratory rights and has begun seismic testing and exploratory drilling in the middle of Achuar ancestral territory. Amazon Watch is working with the Achuar to campaign for Talisman Energy to cease operations and withdraw from its concessions in Achuar territory as part of a broader effort to shift the policies and practices of the oil and gas industry to respect indigenous rights.

Advancing Change in the Oil Industry: Northern Peru Program

— Much of the northern Peruvian Amazon is covered by oil concessions that overlap regions of extreme ecological and cultural sensitivity, including areas occupied by indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation. Amazon Watch is working with newly formed interethnic alliances, including the Arkana Alliance, and socially responsible investors to hold companies like Oxy and PlusPetrol accountable, stop new oil projects and change industry policies and practices. Amazon Watch is also supporting the Achuar's legal case aimed at forcing Oxy to clean up the toxic mess the company left after 30 years of drilling in the Corrientes River, causing severe health and social impacts.

Defending U'wa Sacred Lands, Colombia — The U'wa people of Colombia continue to face multiple threats including oil and gas exploration in their territory by Ecopetrol, a state-owned company. In 2002, the U'wa and supporters including Amazon Watch forced U.S. based Occidental Petroleum to abandon an oil and gas extraction project within U'wa territory. In recent years, Ecopetrol has again targeted the U'wa's home for development, carrying out exploratory drilling from the Gibraltar Platform and seeking regulatory approval to explore within the boundaries of U'wa sacred lands. Amazon Watch continues to partner with indigenous communities in mounting a domestic campaign in Colombia to establish U'wa territory as a "No Go Zone" for drilling, mining, and other forms of intrusive development, including a proposed bi-national highway and the expansion/privatization of El Cocuy National Park. By providing financial, capacity building and media support to the U'wa, Amazon Watch makes a vital contribution to the establishment of effective indigenous stewardship and preservation of sacred and ecologically vital regions of the Amazon rainforest.



Photo: Antoine Bonsorte/Amazon Watch



Photo: Atossa Soltani/Amazon Watch

A CALL FOR CLEAN RENEWABLE ENERGY IN BRAZIL

By Atossa Soltani,
Executive Director

The controversial Belo Monte Dam on the Xingu River has led to serious debate about Brazil's energy matrix. There is mounting evidence that Brazil does not need the ecologically and financially costly Belo Monte Dam, nor the other 60 large dams slated for the Brazilian Amazon over the next 20 years. Brazil could meet its power needs through less harmful energy alternatives and energy efficiency.

To address the looming threat from dozens of large dams planned for the Amazon, Amazon Watch is embarking on a new initiative to green Brazil's power sector together with a consortium of Brazilian and international NGOs and policy experts. The first product is a forthcoming compendium articulating more climate and biodiversity friendly alternatives for meeting the country's energy needs. The initiative will also enlist renewable energy champions from inside and outside Brazil, convene roundtables, and engage in media and advocacy campaigns to stir public debate. "Clean Energy Champions" will be invited to participate in a

high profile energy summit—timed with the 20th Anniversary of the Earth Summit in Rio next June—and to make specific commitments in the form of investments, technology, policy recommendation, and new thinking towards the goal of greening Brazil's power sector.

The Brazilian government is predicting a business as usual scenario of doubling of its energy demand by 2020 to sustain current rates of economic growth. With the country hosting the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Earth Summit in June 2012, the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics, this initiative is timelier now than ever.

Currently Brazil gets less than 1.3 percent of its electricity from wind and solar energy while 80 percent of its electricity comes from 450 hydroelectric dams. The Brazilian government plans to continue its reliance on hydropower by adding 60-70 new large dams on tributaries of the Amazon River in Brazil, Peru, and Bolivia over the next 20 years. This plan spells disaster for the rivers and forests of the Amazon.

It is a myth that large dams are “clean renewable energy.” In the tropics, large dams are methane factories generating significant global warming gas emissions produced by decomposing vegetation from their large reservoirs. Methane is 25-50 times more potent than CO₂, bringing emissions from large dams in some cases on par with those of a coal power plant!

Solar and wind energy production face obstacles of access and await grid-connectivity laws, currently pending adoption by the Brazilian congress. A shift from centralized



New hydroelectric dams proposed for the Brazilian Amazon

to distributed renewable power generation combined with efforts to promote new investments in solar and wind energy and energy efficiency, increase the efficiency of Brazil's network of existing power plants, reduce transmission losses, and implement smart grid technology have the potential to provide the clean reliable energy that Brazil needs to fuel its economic development without further harming the Amazon's rivers and rainforests. A low hanging fruit in energy efficiency would be to provide alternatives to individualized electric shower heaters. These systems consume 8% of all Brazil's electricity production and around 18% of the peak demand. Solving Brazil's energy dilemma is key for safeguarding the Amazon. The time is now. We welcome foundations, policy experts, investors and clean energy companies who want to join this exciting initiative.

Partners in Production of Clean Energy Compendium for Brazil: Electro-Technical Energy Institute at the University of São Paulo—IEE/USP, Greenpeace Brazil, Instituto Socio-Ambiental, International Rivers, National Institute for Amazon Research (INPE), Power Switch Program, World Wildlife Fund Brazil

Supporters of Renewable Energy Summit at Rio+20: AREDAY, Clean Energy Coalition, Renewables 100, Rocky Mountain Institute, The Avatar Alliance Foundation*

*The Avatar Alliance Foundation has provided funding to Amazon Watch, a portion of which towards the goals of this initiative.



Photo: Gregor MacLennan/Amazon Watch

IN DEFENSE OF ACHUAR TERRITORY IN NORTHERN PERU

Gregor MacLennan,
Peru Program Coordinator

The journey to Achuar territory from Peru's capital, Lima, takes over five days, first by flight to the tranquil jungle town of Tarapoto on the foothills of the Andes, then by car through steep forested valleys to the lowland jungle and bustling port of Yurimaguas. From Yurimaguas, a speedboat makes the eight hour journey to the trading outpost of San Lorenzo, from where you must find your own boat for the two day journey to the narrow headwaters of the River Huitoyacu, where trees tower overhead and branches reach over the river.

The Pastaza basin has been occupied by Achuar for generations and the rivers, streams, waterfalls, old farms, hunting camps and footpaths are brought to life by stories of past hunting adventures, wars, witchcraft, meetings with forest spirits and ritual ceremonies that recall the Achuar's ancestors and how they transformed the forest.



Photo: Luis Pilares

Achuar territory includes the Pastaza Alluvial Fan, an enormous wetlands area classified as a site of international importance under the RAMSAR Convention. Dozens of species of animals listed in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species are found in these wetlands, along with 17 species on the International Union of Concerned Scientists' "Red List of Threatened Species." The cumulative impact of oil activities in the coming years would likely contribute to the extinction of some of these species and a great loss of biodiversity.

Dozens of small Achuar villages are scattered throughout this remote region of the Amazon headwaters that supply the Achuar with everything they need to survive. The rivers and forests provide water for drinking and bathing; fish, animals, wild fruits, insects and mushrooms to eat; and all the materials needed to build and thatch their large oval

houses and to craft canoes, baskets, bowls, feather crowns and musical instruments.

Right now, however, the Achuar are locked in a struggle with Canadian oil company Talisman Energy to protect their territory from contamination and oil drilling. Amazon Watch has been supporting the Achuar in this struggle since 2001, successfully forcing oil companies Arco, Burlington and Oxy to leave, thanks to the Achuar's strong and unified resistance and to our support in helping their voices and opposition be heard in oil company boardrooms, by investors and shareholders and by the media.

The next six months are a crucial time in the Achuar's struggle to protect their rainforest home. Over the last five years Talisman has persuaded a handful

of communities to allow seismic testing and exploratory drilling; in 2012 the company plans to begin production in the heart of Achuar territory. Amazon Watch is supporting the Achuar in an international campaign to force Talisman to respect the majority wishes of the Achuar to stop drilling on their ancestral territory. We are also supporting the Achuar in building an interethnic alliance against oil drilling with neighboring Shapra, Wambisa, Kandoshi and Kichwa peoples.

In September 2011, the Achuar are presenting a petition to the Peruvian government for recognition of their ancestral territory and for their right to decide what happens there. If recognition is granted, this will be a great victory for indigenous rights in the Peruvian Amazon as titles only—not territories—are currently recognized.



Photo: Amazon Watch

**PERU'S
INDIGENOUS
PEOPLE PROPOSE
ALTERNATIVE TO
REDD**

Andrew E. Miller,
DC Advocacy Coordinator

Daysi Zapata is feeling cold. The Yine indigenous leader from the Peruvian Amazon isn't accustomed to Washington's fall weather. She's standing in front of the imposing fortress that is the World Bank on a crisp November day. Shortly, a representative of her government will tell the Bank that Peru has a solid plan for fighting climate change through forest protection. He will say that indigenous peoples have been consulted. Daysi will tell a different story.

In recent years, tropical forests have increasingly been seen as a frontline in the fight against global climate chaos. One-sixth of greenhouse gas emissions come from deforestation, primarily in Brazil and Indonesia. Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation—REDD—has been proposed and approved as a quick fix for slowing climate change.

Seeing REDD as the new source of green, multilateral banks, multinational corporations and non-governmental organizations have been out selling the



Antoine Bonsor/Amazon Watch

concept. One group of crucial and skeptical stakeholders are indigenous peoples who inhabit much of the tropical forest to be saved by REDD, but who have been by and large disadvantaged by the top-down models imposed by external institutions.

Daysi's skepticism is evident in her testimony before the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), which provides money for "REDD Readiness."

She counteracts her government's presentation, stating that indigenous proposals have not been properly taken into consideration. She insists that a law mandating prior consultation be enacted and that indigenous land claims be settled before any REDD is implemented in Peru.

Her organization, AIDSESEP, has emerged as a global leader in the struggle to ensure that indigenous rights are not further trampled in the rush to get climate projects up and running. They have proposed an alternative vision, an "Indigenous REDD" which prioritizes local territorial rights over investor rights, guarantees community-based management of the projects, and seeks to keep indigenous territories out of carbon markets. This vision diverges significantly from the current model favored by and beneficial to international institutions.

Daysi's advocacy within the heart of the World Bank is part of a broader international strategy supported by Amazon Watch and other allies. While the market-led REDD has caused divisions, AIDSESEP's proposal for "Indigenous REDD" has unified indigenous peoples of the Amazon who value ancestral knowledge and territory over the commodification of their resources.

In the concluding remarks of her intervention in Washington, Daysi refers to a World Bank official who emphasized the need for good faith in order for REDD to work. "It is precisely that good faith that we haven't seen from the Peruvian government," Daysi notes. "We are waiting for such a good faith not only for the well being of ourselves, the indigenous peoples, but also for Peru's tropical forests and ultimately for all humanity."

For more information, visit: www.aidesep.org/pe.



Photo: Andrew Miller/Amazon Watch

**COURTING
JUSTICE:
SARAYAKU V.
REPUBLIC OF
ECUADOR**

Andrew E. Miller,
DC Advocacy Coordinator

The case against Chevron isn't the only historic legal battle being fought in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Another international legal process, led by the Kichwa indigenous people of Sarayaku, is about to culminate within the Inter-American Court on Human Rights. The outcome, expected before the end of 2011, has implications for indigenous peoples throughout the hemisphere.

The Sarayaku case alleges that Ecuador violated the Kichwa's rights by allowing oil exploration with no prior consultation in 2003 and 2004. Social conflicts and state-sponsored violence ensued. The oil company also left explosives in Kichwa territory, which the state has refused to remove. As a result, some 20% of their territory is off-limits to them.

Amazon Watch's support for Sarayaku dates back nearly a decade. We helped build radio communications systems within the community, and brought representatives to Houston to confront ConocoPhillips, which in 2007 declared

that it wouldn't operate in Kichwa territory. And in July of 2011, Amazon Watch and other international allies escorted a group of Sarayaku community members to Costa Rica for a hearing before the Inter-American Court.

Accompanying the group in Costa Rica on behalf of Amazon Watch, I was impressed by the energy, sophistication, and cultural power they brought to bear in their multipronged strategy. Their presence at the Court was a microcosm of their community, totaling 18 leaders, spiritual elders, youth, mothers and infants. The 1,200 community members who couldn't physically be in attendance participated daily through Skype and live internet transmissions of the hearings.

The people of Sarayaku leveraged technology and communications savvy to rally supporters and get their message out. Prior to the trip, they produced a short video inviting friends around the globe to follow the hearings online (Amazon Watch helped distribute in English). Their actions at the Court were covered widely in Ecuadorian media, catalyzed by several press conferences in Quito and then in Costa Rica the day prior to the first hearing.

Bringing a powerful sense of Kichwa culture to the Court made a clear impression on lawyers and judges. Prior to

the first day of hearings, the Sarayaku delegation marched several blocks over to the Court. Over 40 onlookers watched as they performed a ceremony involving drums, flutes, and swirling dances and unfurled a banner illustrating the environmental damage caused by oil extraction in the jungle. Elder Sabino culminated the act with a song and an invitation for people to inhale tobacco juice.



Photo: Andrew Miller/Amazon Watch

On the second day of hearings James Anaya (Apache), UN Special Rapporteur for Indigenous Rights, was brought in as an expert witness. He gave a powerful review of the state of indigenous rights in international law and stated that most of the problems he sees stem from lack of consultation within indigenous territories, especially around natural resource extraction projects.

Legal experts anticipate the Court's ruling will strengthen previous judgments reinforcing

indigenous peoples' right to free, prior, and informed consent regarding extraction of natural resources within their territories. If so, the impact will be felt across the hemisphere where the Court's jurisdiction reaches most countries. Amazon Watch and other allies are monitoring the case closely, ready to push for full implementation of any ruling in favor of Sarayaku.



Photo: Caroline Bennett/Amazon Watch

CHEVRON GUILTY IN ECUADOR; \$18 BILLION OWED FOR RAINFOREST CLEANUP

Han Shan, Coordinator
Clean-up Ecuador Campaign

On February 14, 2011, a court verdict in the monumental legal case over Chevron's devastation in the Ecuadorian Amazon made headlines around the world.

Unknowingly, just minutes before the verdict was announced, I boarded a flight from the capital Quito to the jungle town of Coca on the edge of Ecuador's Amazon oil patch. As I crossed the airport's single grimy room, I saw my friend Donald, an activist who lost his own mother to sickness caused by oil pollution. He works tirelessly for the *Frente de la Defensa de la Amazonia*, the group that has spearheaded the fight to hold Chevron accountable since the beginning. Donald appeared anxious as I approached him and when I got close, I saw that there were tears in his eyes. "There is a verdict," he told me. In disbelief, I stared at him, and his face broke into a wide smile. We hugged as tears streaked his cheeks.

That afternoon, nearly 18 years after the first lawsuit was filed against Chevron's subsidiary Texaco, a judge in the oil boom-town of Lago Agrio found Chevron



Photo: Caroline Bennett/Amazon Watch

guilty of polluting the rainforest and causing a massive public health crisis for communities living in what was once pristine wilderness.

The judge ordered Chevron to pay more than \$9 billion to clean up the widespread oil contamination throughout the Ecuadorian rainforest, later adding nearly \$9 billion in punitive damages, noting in his court order the “severity of the effects of Texaco’s misconduct, the bad faith with which the defendant has acted in [this] litigation and the failure to publicly acknowledge the dignity and suffering of the victims of the defendant’s conduct.”

I called my Amazon Watch colleagues, and raced for Lago Agrio by taxi to be at the impromptu press conference the *Frente* was holding. My head was spinning, and it was hard to believe that this was the day that many believed would never come.

At the press conference in the sweaty little cinderblock office of the *Frente*, our partners in Ecuador hailed the

decision. “This is a great victory,” said Emergildo Criollo, a leader of the Cofán tribe who had himself traveled to New York in 1993 to help file the original lawsuit. But Emergildo cautioned against early celebrations: “Our fight won’t stop until Chevron is held accountable and pays for all the damage it left in the Amazon rainforest.”

The \$18 billion judgment against Chevron ranks only second in environmental damage cases after the \$20 billion fund established in the wake of BP’s oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and marks the first time an American company has been found liable in a foreign court for environmental crimes committed abroad.

The legal victory is a critical benchmark in a long struggle for justice, but true justice won’t be achieved until the affected communities get the cleanup, clean water, and critical health care they need. Unfortunately, Chevron has called the verdict “illegitimate and unenforceable” and continues to escalate its legal, political, and public relations campaign to escape enforcement of the judgment. The verdict itself is now being contested in legal venues from U.S. federal courts to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.

The Ecuadorian communities have shown that they have the will to fight for justice in this case, no matter how long it takes. But as the legal maxim says, “justice delayed is justice denied.” The indigenous people and poor farmers of the Ecuadorian Amazon have been denied justice for far too long already.



A NEW INITIATIVE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SAVING AN ANGEL

Chevron's toxic dumping has poisoned the rivers, streams, and groundwater that are the only sources of water for oil-ravaged communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon. For nearly 50 years, Lydia Aguinda and more than 30,000 other farmers and indigenous people of the region have been condemned by an American oil company to live without something almost every American takes for granted: clean water.

While we continue to support their heroic efforts to demand justice from Chevron, Amazon Watch is launching an effort—in partnership with musician Rea Garvey and his Saving an Angel Foundation—to bring

clean water to the people of the Amazon living amongst Chevron's toxic legacy.

In the fall of 2011, we are initiating a pilot project to procure and install rain catchment and filtering systems to provide clean, potable water for families throughout Cofán Dureno, an indigenous community that has been denied clean water for too long. Working with the Frente de la Defensa de la Amazonia, and with help from Engineers Without Borders, we will examine the lessons of this pilot in order to expand our initiative throughout the affected region. Because everyone deserves clean, clear water.



Photo: Amazon Watch

RIGHTS AND WRONGS IN ECUADOR'S AMAZON

Kevin Koenig,
Ecuador Program Coordinator

With the majority of the earth's ecosystems on the brink of collapse and paralysis of the world's industrial leaders to take real action on issues like climate change, deforestation, and biodiversity loss, an unlikely country has stepped into the leadership void with two precedent setting initiatives that—if put into practice—present real solutions to the major drivers of the today's environmental crisis.

Ecuador, a country roughly the size of Nevada and dependent on oil production for some 60% of its export earnings and almost half of its GDP, has made headlines around the world for becoming the first country to give mother nature rights and for its pioneer Yasuni-ITT proposal that would leave almost 800 million gallons of crude oil permanently underground.

The Rights of Nature, enshrined in the country's 2008 constitution, essentially makes mother nature a rights bearing entity—a subject of, rather than an object of, a lengthy list of guarantees that give nature the right to “exist, persist, maintain

and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions and its processes in evolution.” This is a world first, which in Ecuador will hopefully lead to greater environmental protections and accountability for the abuse of these rights. It also addresses perhaps the fundamental root of the environmental crisis—the false separation between mankind and the natural world, and unsustainable, unlimited growth at the expense of the natural limits of the world’s ecosystems. The United Nations is currently considering the adoption of a Universal Declaration on the Rights of Nature.

Equally historic is Ecuador’s Yasuni-ITT proposal to keep its largest crude oil reserve, beneath the Yasuni National Park— a United Nations Biosphere Reserve that boasts record levels of species diversity, much of which is endemic—permanently in the ground in exchange for half of its forgone revenues. The initiative was launched in June 2007 by President Rafael Correa and seeks some \$3.5 billion (or \$350 million per year over ten years) to forgo development of the Ishpingo, Tambococho, Tiputini (ITT) oil fields under the park (and half of the estimated \$7 billion revenue) if the international community matches its financial sacrifice through a variety of mechanisms, including debt cancellation, bilateral aid, and direct financial commitments. It remains to be seen whether the Correa administration has provided enough political and financial guarantees to court

potential donors by the December 2011 deadline.

But despite nature’s new rights and a plan to leave the country’s largest oil reserve underground, Ecuador is not willing to turn off the oil valves tomorrow. The government is preparing for the wholesale auction of 12 new oil blocks—some 6 million acres—of the largest, intact wild forest left in Ecuador, the majority of which is titled indigenous land.

For South America’s second smallest country, Ecuador is producing some big ideas, though they have yet to be fully realized. While new rights are being guaranteed (though there is no national legislation to enforce the rights of nature yet), others, like the right to consultation, continue to be violated, and some major environmental wrongs are underway that could threaten the credibility of the country’s flagship initiatives if the rest of its environmental policies and rights guarantees are nothing more than business as usual.



CONCH SHELLS & FEATHERS—THE U'WA IN CHUMASH TERRITORY

Andrew E. Miller, DC Advocacy Coordinator



Photo: Andrew Miller/Amazon Watch

“We see your culture is strong and we don’t want you to have to bring it back from almost nothing, as we have.” Chumash leader Luhui told Berito, an U’wa spiritual elder. We were eating a *posole* breakfast in a traditional Chumash hut in Malibu, CA, hosted by Mati and Luhui of the *Wishtoyo* Foundation, a Chumash organization dedicated to cultural recovery and environmental defense.

The previous night, a blessing ceremony revealed striking similarities between the U’wa and Chumash spiritual practices. 60 people gathered to hear about the U’wa struggle in Colombia, and were individually cleansed with the use of a large feather, first by Luhui and then by Berito. After an invocation to the Four Directions, Mati blew a large conch shell, which is also a sacred instrument for the U’wa. Berito travels with a small conch he received as a gift from Amazon Watch ten years ago. He says the shell has visited so many countries it should have its own passport.

Back at the Chumash village powerful stories were exchanged of resistance and loss, of rebirth and hope. Berito recounted the recent history of the U’wa struggle against colonization, evangelization, and theft of the very natural resources within their ancestral territory. Mati told of the first Chumash canoe trip between the islands and the mainland in 150 years, and the tears of joy that their elders wept when they first saw the Discovery Village. They realized their culture would not die with their passing.

The encounter ended with an exchange of gifts: the U’wa presented a hand-woven satchel, the Chumash the conch shell they had used the prior evening. A kinship was born.

AMAZON WATCH BY THE NUMBERS

20 percent: Amount of all fresh water on Earth that flows through the Amazon

4,080 miles: Length of the Amazon River, equal to the distance between New York and Berlin

3,000: Number of fish species found in the Amazon and its tributaries

33 percent: Proportion of all birds on the planet found in the Amazon

77 percent: Proportion of Amazon Watch's budget that was spent directly on program services and funds to groups in the Amazon in 2009

14 people: Amazon Watch's staff

\$1.5 million: Amazon Watch's total 2010 budget

60,000: Amazon Watch online activists in 2011

57,000: Causes.com members reached by Amazon Watch causes

18.5 billion: Number of gallons of toxic waste that Chevron (formerly Texaco) dumped into the Ecuadorian Amazon

\$18 billion: Amount of judgment against Chevron handed down in 2011 by an Ecuadorian Court for deliberately polluting the Amazon

74 percent: Proportion of the Peruvian Amazon currently zoned into oil and gas concessions

40,000: Number of people who would potentially be displaced if the Belo Monte Dam is built

50 percent: Proportion of the Amazon expected to be deforested or seriously degraded by 2020 given current trends

20 percent: Proportion of global warming gas emissions created by global deforestation

350: Number of parts per million of CO₂ that leading climate experts recommend as the safe upper limit in our atmosphere to avoid tipping points and irreversible impacts

390: Parts per million of CO₂ measured in our atmosphere now

AMAZON WATCH IN MOTION! RECENT MULTIMEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



1. Kayapo Assemble to Defend the Xingu:
amazonwatch.org/2324



2. Taking Ecuador to Human Rights Court:
amazonwatch.org/2293



3. Chevron in Ecuador: A Defining Moment:
amazonwatch.org/2221



4. An Open Letter to the People of the United States from the Ecuadorian Plaintiffs:
amazonwatch.org/2276



5. A Call for Renewable Energy in Brazil:
amazonwatch.org/2208



6. Life with the Achuar:
amazonwatch.org/2215

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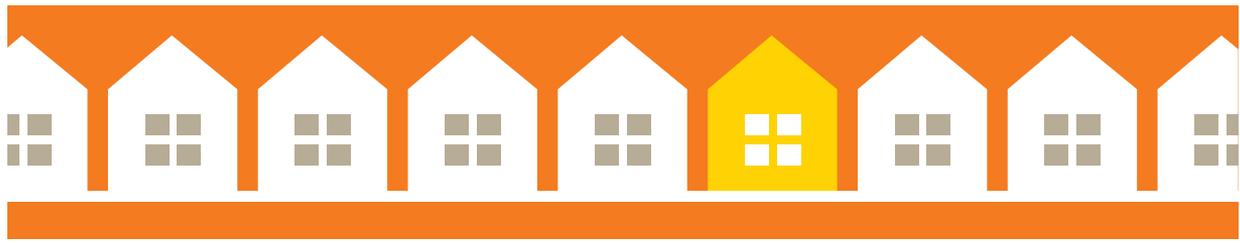
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