



# INDIGENOUS WOMEN, THE KEY TO SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Position of PEREMPUAN AMAN for UNFCCC COP 21, PARIS

12 November 2015

Jakarta, 12 November 2015. PEREMPUAN AMAN organized the "National Workshop and Dialogue of Indigenous Women with Indonesian Delegation on Climate Change towards Negotiation Process of COP 21, Paris" on 11-12 November 2015 in Jakarta. The workshop was attended by representatives of indigenous women from Indonesia with the support of GEF-SGP, a program that supports local initiatives.

Indigenous women are witnessing a drastic change over the management area and their livelihood resources in a big scale. Fields, farms, forests are quickly turned into monoculture plantations and mining concessions. Fires happening currently have damaged the sources of livelihood for women, and indigenous women has been blamed as one of the actors causing the fire.

The role of indigenous women as the owner of knowledge and wisdom in managing land and the sources of life such as; seeds and crops, woven cloth, wicker and knowledge of traditional medicinal plants, is currently marginalized. Indigenous women are no longer able to read the signs of nature to find out the shifting of seasons and respond to changes of extreme weather.

We, **the indigenous women believe that the State has mismanaged in the management of livelihood resources and indigenous territories** that contributed to the acceleration of climate change. The state has entrusted the management of natural resources in indigenous territories and in the territories of

indigenous women to corporates through the issuance of large-scale concessions, both for plantations, minings, industrial timber estates (HTI), and the National Park. Although the court ruling of Constitutional Court No. 35/2012 has stated that indigenous forests are no longer state forests, but concessions still operate in indigenous territories.

We **recognize that indigenous women must establish a firm position** to place the special needs of indigenous women in the negotiation process of the COP 21 in Paris wholeheartedly.

We, **the indigenous women demand the acknowledgement of indigenous territories and management territories of** indigenous women. This acknowledgement ensures the utilization governance of the indigenous territories through traditional wisdom becomes inherent. Indigenous women are vulnerable to be excluded from their management territories which were assigned as mining concessions, oil palm plantations, industrial timber estates and others. In those area, they can not perform their role as the guardian of livelihood resilience for their family and community.

Contrary to the verdict of Constitutional Court No. 35/PUU/X /2012, concessions keep on going in indigenous territories. Indigenous women lost management territories where they practice and knowledge reproduction on natural resource management. The knowledge of indigenous women will cease and the

passing on of the knowledge to the younger generation no longer occurs. This process has excluded women from the public space within their community.

We demand the **acknowledgement of the indigenous women's knowledge over natural resource management in climate change policy**. Knowledge of indigenous women in managing resources is local and is about fulfilling the needs of family and community life. The technology being used is simple and has low emissions. This knowledge must continue to be developed by indigenous women to respond to various changes happening in their management territories. It can contribute to the adaptation and mitigation strategies at the local level and can even be expanded on a national scale.

We call on the Indonesian government and other parties **to stop the accusations and attempts to discredit the knowledge and practice of shifting cultivation** that have been practiced over generations for hundreds of years in indigenous communities. This accusation has underestimated the knowledge of indigenous women and indigenous peoples, whereas the practice of shifting cultivation of indigenous peoples has lasted for hundreds of years. We testify that the farming systems and practices of indigenous peoples has never caused such an extensive forest fires, like what has happened recently. The knowledge of indigenous women is equipped with the timing, the method of burning, the indigenous, ritualistic conducts, strict supervision of fire, and customary laws that emphasize on social sanctions.

**We emphasize that the position of indigenous women at various levels of strategic decision making in climate change policy needs to be strengthened.** Various developmental and climate change projects have marginalized the voices of indigenous women. The situation has discriminated indigenous women, especially in the strategic decision making process. Although, in fact, the rights of indigenous women at the international level have been acknowledged and protected in particular in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and in the Law 7 of 1984 on Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

We emphasize that the whole developmental or climate change projects implemented in indigenous territories **incorporate the principle of Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC)** as the main pre-requisite. This principle emphasizes that indigenous women along with the community are entitled to have a balanced information related to the project plan. This principle also ensures the plans and implementation of projects are carried out without coercion, violence, intimidation, and discrimination. It provides a space for indigenous women to determine developmental or climate change projects coming in into their indigenous territories.

We urge **the halt of the criminalization toward indigenous women who fight for and manage natural resources within their traditional territories that are still happening in various parts of the world.** Experience teaches that indigenous women's access over natural resources is limited by concessions in the form of National Parks within indigenous areas. In the name of protection of endemic flora and fauna, we were arrested and prosecuted when accessing natural products in National Parks. Therefore, we oppose the process of COP 21, Paris that perpetuates the criminalization of indigenous women and indigenous peoples -- who strive and manage natural resources within their traditional territories -- in the name of climate change.

In response to climate change, indigenous women have been doing a range of initiatives at various levels. At the community level, indigenous women have diversified plants from crops to perennial plants, have refused to practice monocultures and concessions within indigenous territories, as well as monopoly of water resources facilitated by the State. Indigenous women also become a motor for the adoption of Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC) principle into a Governor Regulation. Those aforementioned initiatives are based on the traditional knowledge of indigenous women in the management of the sources of livelihood.

Hopefully the position of indigenous women, the universe and the ancestral spirits continue to bless and assist the struggle of indigenous women.



**PEREMPUAN AMAN**  
**PERSEKUTUAN PEREMPUAN ADAT NUSANTARA**  
**ALIANSI MASYARAKAT ADAT NUSANTARA**



*"Women are very important in climate change, because women know better of the environmental situation, the climate and their respective regions."*

Wilhelmina, Ende Flores,  
the cadre of Perempuan  
AMAN

PEREMPUAN AMAN is an autonomous wing of the organization of AMAN (Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago) to facilitate indigenous women. PEREMPUAN AMAN facilitates indigenous women to organize themselves, their knowledge and also their rights. It was declared on April 16, 2012 in the first National Meeting of Perempuan AMAN in Tobelo, North Halmahera in Maluku province. Members of the organization are individual indigenous women from the community members of AMAN.

The vision of PEREMPUAN AMAN is indigenous woman having sovereignty over herself, her life and her area of life in order to manifest a sovereign, independent and dignified indigenous community.

*"Women are the most vulnerable to climate change, because of its' impact on the health, economy, education and food security of the family."*

Afrida, North Maluku, the  
cadre of Perempuan AMAN





# Community Action Global Impact



[www.sgp-indonesia.org](http://www.sgp-indonesia.org)  
[www.terasmitra.com](http://www.terasmitra.com)

Launched in 1992, SGP Indonesia supports activities of non-governmental and community-based organizations in throughout Indonesia towards climate change abatement, conservation of biodiversity, protection of international waters, reduction of the impact of persistent organic pollutants and prevention of land degradation while generating sustainable livelihoods. The organization through SGP Indonesia has actively provided support for community livelihood management based on local agenda for local partners. In Indonesia, SGP has already work with more than 350 projects and disbursed more than USD 9 million.

At the moment, SGP Indonesia develops the tailored exit strategy for partners based on their circumstances; where one of them is an online free trade shop namely Teras Mitra ([www.terasmitra.com](http://www.terasmitra.com)). Teras Mitra, which literally translated as partner's terrace, is an initiative from SGP to bridge partners' products to wider customers as one of the ways to sustain their production.



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