It was a golden opportunity to look back at the work achieved in supporting indigenous peoples and traditional populations of the world’s rainforests. Over the past 20 years we have made a substantial effort to assist these communities obtain and protect their ancestral lands, gain education and expertise to counteract forest destruction, advocate for basic rights, and build their organizational capacity by training indigenous rights lawyers and representatives in international-policy negotiations.

We have contributed to the emergence of a strong indigenous leadership to interface with their own governments, and the modern world in general, but the road to the real empowerment of local communities and to the universal respect of their rights and cultural diversity is still very long.

In 2007, we applauded the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as an important political, moral and legal imperative for governments and indigenous peoples to advance towards a common understanding and respect of their duties and rights.

Today, while some progress has been made in recognizing indigenous rights at an international level and in many countries at a national level, the challenge of the real application of the provisions contained in the Declaration is huge. The Declaration is not an end in itself but the beginning of a new stage in the fight for indigenous rights. Indigenous peoples continue to suffer serious abuses of their human rights on a daily basis, including the pilfering of their natural resources, the denial of their land rights, and their forced removal or relocation. Reports of brutality are heard from all corners of the world; most often from governments who make promises at an international level and disregard them at home. They should be called upon to honor their word.

Two-thousand eleven was the Year of the Forests, a 12-month celebration launched by the United Nations. “Forests for Peoples” emphasized the benefits that can accrue when forests are managed by local people in a sustainable and innovative way. It was a much-needed collaboration at a time when negotiations to see eye-to-eye on a comprehensive, globally acceptable climate-change agreement are still in process, and forests are the centerpiece of these negotiations through the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD).

In the past three years the Fund has committed resources to support the capacity of indigenous peoples and tribal populations to engage in national and international REDD processes. Yet the idea that deforestation can be stopped by simply putting a price on forest is essentially flawed, with forest communities warning that it will encourage further land grabs by large companies. They point to evidence that the real drivers of deforestation are the major construction, mining, logging and plantation developments whose owners stand to be rewarded by REDD funds. Let’s remember that old Cree prophecy, “Only after the last tree has been cut down... only then will you find that money cannot be water.”

In order to prevent this from happening, it is essential for indigenous peoples to learn the complexities of these programs, and it is our role to give them all the necessary tools to be in a position to understand and shape climate change and REDD policies in their own countries. But for REDD initiatives to effectively halt deforestation while supporting the rights of indigenous peoples they must be transparent, participatory and based on the free and informed consent of the communities whose lands and resources are affected. Any top-down model for forest protection without proper consultation with indigenous peoples will lead to conflicts over forest ownership and establish an unfair distribution of incentives.

The risks are high and efforts to reduce emission from deforestation and forest degradation will only succeed with the meaningful engagement of indigenous peoples. Free and informed consent is an ongoing process, and adequate time needs to be allowed for the careful management of awareness-raising and engagement with local peoples.

Sustainable development, climate change, water scarcity, loss of plants and animals, stratospheric ozone depletion, population growth, poverty, and other issues that need to be tackled with urgency. They are integral links in a single chain, a single effort to save the Earth. No nation or group of nations can avoid responsibility. The past and the future are connected through the decisions we take in the present. The next UN International Conferences on Sustainable Development and on Climate Change will reveal whether the political will to deal with the degradation of the planet truly exists.

The Rainforest Fund would like to stress the importance of the effective presence and participation of indigenous peoples to these conferences. Sustainable development and climate change are issues of great concern to them. It is a bitter irony that they are suffering the worst impact on climate change, even though they contribute little to it. They are integral to the solution. They are the major construction, mining, logging and plantation developments whose owners stand to be rewarded by REDD funds. Let’s remember that old Cree prophecy, “Only after the last tree has been cut down... only then will you find that money cannot be water.”

In Ecuador, the Amazon Rainforest is probably the most biologically diverse ecosystem on the planet, but it also home to one of the worst cases of oil pollution ever. A visit to the oil fields around the town of Lago Agrio bears witness to the problem of the people of the Ecuadorean rainforest who have to live with contaminated soil and groundwater. These rivers are the only source of water for these communities. This horrible situation has brought diseases and sickness, including many children born with deformities, teenagers developing tumors, and many others dying from stomach cancer and skin cancer, among others.

From the humanitarian point of view, it is one of the worst cases of soil pollution on record.

That is why the Rainforest Fund, in cooperation with UNICEF Ecuador, is behind a project aimed at giving clean and safe water to more than 30,000 people. The instalment of rainwater tanks has already changed the lives of 4,000 families. Furthermore, it has started a smaller project in the Ayoreo community in Bolivia, where waters are contaminated by the indiscriminate use of agricultural pesticides. These two projects offer some relief to communities suffering from the devastating effects of outside factors. But much more ought to be done. We hope that the parties concerned coordinate activities for the protection and sustainable management of land and water resources of the Amazon River Basin in the face of ongoing climate change and destructive projects such as the building of dams, mining, and oil extraction. The goal is to reach a shared vision for the sustainable development of the Amazon, without ever forgetting the involvement of indigenous peoples and their cultural and spiritual understanding of water.

The Rainforest Fund will continue to raise its voice and demand meaningful changes on behalf of its partners whose voices are misunderstood or ignored.

We thank all those who help us to help them.
THE WORLD’S TROPICAL RAINFORESTS

Tropical rainforests are located near the equator. They are found in 85 countries around the world. Fifty-seven percent of all tropical rainforests are found in South and Central America, 25 percent in southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands, and 18 percent in Africa.

The largest rainforests are in the Amazon River Basin in South America, the Congo River Basin in Western Africa, and in Southeast Asia.

Although tropical rainforests cover just seven percent of the Earth’s surface, they provide habitat for more than 50 percent of its plants and animal species. Rainforests control climate by influencing wind, rainfall, humidity and temperature. They are also the most threatened habitats of indigenous peoples and tribal communities.

There are over one million forest-dwelling Indians in South America, several hundred thousand Pygmies in the Africa Forests, and hundreds of different indigenous communities living in the forests of Papua New Guinea, Burma, The Philippines, Malaysia, Burma and Thailand.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS

As you will see from the following pages our programs cover a whole range of issues from protection of the civil and political rights of indigenous peoples, to the promotion and defense of their social, economic and cultural rights, such as the right to their land, its recognition and protection from the destructive use of their territories, community development, natural resources management, institutional strengthening, legal defense, public awareness, policy and advocacy activities, and last but not least, climate change.

Our partner organizations — including Rainforest Foundation Norway, Rainforest Foundation UK, and Rainforest Foundation US, Amazon Conservation Team (Brazil), Etnobotanica (Bolivia), Frente de Defense de Amazonia (Ecuador) — are the first filters of the programs which come to us. Our assessment is based on stringent criteria and the final decision is made by the Rainforest Fund board. The most important Fund criteria are the empowerment and ownership of the beneficiaries. It is our belief that any activities should strengthen the target group, the measures taken ought to be planned and implemented primarily by the beneficiaries themselves and based on local knowledge and expertise. Because the very nature of the work takes time and is fraught with obstacles, many projects that began in previous years are continuing. With the outcomes and benefits of these projects often taking years to be realized, one of the main obstacles is to continue to secure funding when immediate results cannot be reported and strategies need to be adapted to new realities. Everything in the field depends not only on the powerful forces that indigenous and tribal communities confront in their daily work but also upon each community’s commitment to internal democracy and consensus within the community itself.

2011 was the Year of the Forests.
The Rainforests of Central Africa’s Congo Basin, the second largest in the world after the Amazon, are under threat. Today the governments of rainforest-countries are torn between the duty to protect their endangered rainforests and the need for money brought in by foreign logging companies.

Growing populations, settled by war refugees, are destroying the forest and transforming it into farmland; gorillas and chimpanzees are slaughtered and sold to the bushmeat trade.

But African civil society has started raising its voice and asking for support. Thanks to the support of many organizations, they are acquiring the skills needed to challenge bad practices by their governments and sometimes by international donors.

The Rainforest Fund has been financing projects in several African countries. Rainforest Foundation UK follows and monitors the following projects in:

AFRICA

The goal of the project is to support forest communities to articulate their needs in the management of national parks and surrounding areas. We are also seeking to facilitate a dialogue between forest communities and the government in order to give the latter a better understanding of the issues being faced by forest communities and to secure protected area legislation that safeguards the rights of indigenous peoples.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

Capacity building for the rights of indigenous peoples:

This project relates to the situation of forest people who are marginalized and living in extreme poverty with little or no access to the forest resources on which they depend, and almost no political voice to fight for their rights. There is a real need for intensive investment in strengthening the capacity of communities to assert their rights and in enabling civil society, groups and government agencies to understand and respond positively to the communities.

Fifteen forest groups, both Bantu and Pygmy, are the beneficiaries of this support.

GABON

Enabling forest communities in the management of national parks:

The aim of the project is to support forest communities to articulate their needs in the management of national parks and surrounding areas. We are also seeking to facilitate a dialogue between forest communities and the government in order to give the latter a better understanding of the issues being faced by forest communities and to secure protected area legislation that safeguards the rights of indigenous peoples.

2010 PROGRAMS

The capitalization of participatory mapping work in the DRC to influence local and national forest policy development:

The goal of the project is to ensure the recognition of customary lands in forest planning processes as a means of alleviating poverty and mitigating the impacts of climate change. This project is extremely relevant in the adoption of community forestry legislation, and in ongoing national processes to redefine how national parks and protected areas are designed and managed, to the benefit of four forest communities, including three indigenous “Pygmy” groups.

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

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INDONESIA

Safeguarding the rights and interests of forest peoples in the fight against climate change:

The role of this climate-change and forest program is to ensure the deployment of measures to avoid and reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation of tropical forests (REDD) as a means of preventing climate change; to respect the rights of forest communities; to prioritize forest governance; and address the underlying causes of forest destruction. Furthermore, it works with its partners to influence negotiations at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change talks.

In its work in Africa, RFUK has worked closely with partner NGOs from the Congo Basin such as Maison de l’Enfant et de la Famille Pygmées in Central Africa, Réseau Ressources Naturelles in Democratic Republic of Congo, Centre for Environment and Development in Cameroon, and Centre for Environmental Cooperation in Gabon.

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE ARE CONNECTED THROUGH THE DECISIONS WE TAKE IN THE PRESENT.
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Forest law enforcement and governance:

Papua New Guinea is experiencing increasing pressure on its natural resources. This project continues the funding from the past two years of two Constitutional challenges seeking the immediate prevention of any new logging and the declaration that the current forestry laws are unconstitutional and void.

As the battle is far from over, we will continue financing the two court cases.

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN ON CLIMATE CHANGE

This global initiative is a joint effort with Rainforest Foundation UK. Last year we began funding this campaign with support for a UN meeting on climate change that took place in Accra, Ghana. This year, we continue the support to ensure that the voices of African and Asian indigenous groups are heard and that measures are in place to avoid the degradation of tropical forests.

LATIN AND CENTRAL AMERICA

The vast Amazon rainforest is the largest in the world. It spans across much of South America, including Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela. At least 30 percent of all plants and animal species are found in the Amazon. It is also home to hundreds of thousands of indigenous peoples. Unfortunately, many of them have been forced into extinction. Today there are fewer than 200,000 Indians in the Americas, which once existed prior to colonization.

In recent years forest destruction has been steadily increasing. The greatest threats to the forests are logging, oil and gas projects, as well as the building of dams, mining, cattle ranching, and the resettlement of populations. The fund has been backing projects in almost all the countries where indigenous peoples live through its partner organization Rainforest Foundation US, local organizations on site and the Amazon Conservation Team.

Rainforest Foundation US monitors and follows the work in:

ECUADOR

Guaranteeing the territorial rights and territorial management of the Shuar people of the Kukumi region.

The Rainforest Fund has been supporting the Shuar for six years as they go through a process of land titling, land management planning, and organizational strengthening. In last year of support, project activities focused on the organizational weakness of their concern, and on concrete economic development projects in sight of the construction of a road through the Shuar’s land. This year is the last of funding. We have achieved our goals and the Shuar people are on better footing.

Empowerment of the communities living in the rainforest areas polluted by oil exploitation for the defense of their rights:

This initiative is the continuation of a pilot project started in 2009. The communities involved in the area of Sucumbios and Dravila have learned to monitor abuses of their human rights through legal training, and use all legal recourse to seek remedies.

This project will continue with the training of more community leaders.

It is undertaken by the Frente de Defensa de Amazonas, followed and monitored directly by Rainforest Fund.

Rainforest Action Network (RAN)

In addition to the project of the project mentioned above, we supported Rainforest Action Network in their efforts to back the initiatives of the Frente de Defensa de Amazonas at an international level.

GUYANA

Ensuring indigenous participation in climate-change projects.

This project is the continuation of long-standing work to support the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA) and is monitored by Rainforest Foundation US.

There is an urgent need in Guyana to help indigenous peoples to understand the complexities of the international discussions on climate change in order to be able to participate and protect their interests.

PANAMA

Protecting the rights and interests of indigenous peoples in climate change initiatives.

This project promotes the informed engagement of the Kuna people with national and international policy makers and donors to help with potential opportunities and challenges that REDD programs will represent to their lives and livelihoods. It is the continuation of a 2009 project. It is followed and monitored by Rainforest Foundation US.

Wounaan Land Titles Project (Fundacion para el Desarrollo del Pueblo Wounaan)

This project has been supported for the past year. The Wounaan are asking for legal recognition of their land and have undertaken a collective land-demarcation process in order to gain territorial protection and the guarantee of their natural resources, culture, and traditions.

PERU

AIDESp Emergency Funding

In 2009 and 2010 the Peruvian government disregarded all binding international agreements and systematically violated the rights of indigenous peoples by criminalizing the indigenous movement. In 2009 we supported the legal defense of arrested indigenous leaders.

This emergency funding will continue in order to give the imprisoned leaders the legal representation they deserve.

BRAZIL

Defending Cultural Indigenous Rights in Public Policies in North Eastern Brazil

Executed by Instituto de Pesquisa e Formação em Educação Indígena (IEPE) and monitored by Rainforest Norway, the aim of the project is to make the indigenous Wapis, Timix and Kaxinawa groups central actors in the definition and implementation of public policies, including the creation of alternative development programs that are sensitive to local cultural differences and based on the sustainable management of their territories. This project has been funded for two years and is consolidating its success.

Building community understanding of the impact of Belo Monte Dam in the state of Para.

Executed by Xingu Vivo (Forever Movement) and monitored by Rainforest Foundation US; this project provides communities with information about the impact of dams and the mechanisms available to assert their rights, and promote their active participation in the decisions that affect them.

Supporting Yanomami Advocacy / Roraima,

Northern Brazil.

This project has been funded for four years and helped to create a strong Yanomami association by training the new generation of young Yanomami leaders in all fields needed to run the registered HUTAKARA organization. This project is monitored by Rainforest Foundation US.

Strengthening Indigenous Women And Their Community / Roraima, Northern Brazil.

This project, now in its third year and monitored by Rainforest Foundation US, provides income-generating opportunities for indigenous women and their communities by undertaking craft training and marketing programs.

Special grant to Raoni

During a visit to Brazil, Sting met up with Raoni, the chief of the Kayapo people whom he had not seen for 20 years, and promised him and his community a grant to fund the moving of his village.

WATER IS OF GREAT CONCERN TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.
2011 PROGRAMS

IN 2011 THE RAINFOREST FUND CONTINUED ITS SUPPORT OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF AFRICA, ASIA AND THE AMERICAS, THROUGH ITS PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS, RAINFOREST FOUNDATIONS NORWAY, UK, AND USA, AND THROUGH ON-SITE ORGANIZATIONS.

AFRICA

In Africa we continued our funding of Rainforest Foundation UK and its partners in the Central African Republic – La Maison de l’Enfant et de la Famme Pygmées – on the participatory mapping and advocacy for national parks and community forestry, which started in 2009 and has achieved solid results.

A new important project is being funded this year, following the ratification by the government of the Central African Republic of the ILO Convention 169, which ensures the systematic consultation with indigenous peoples on matters that concern them. The project ensures respect for the rights of indigenous peoples — through the implementation of ILO Convention 169 — and intends to work with indigenous groups, training them on the contents of the Convention and helping to bring forward their requests to the government, which is the first administration in Africa to ratify the Convention.

Furthermore, we continued to fund the 2010 project on Climate Change, which mobilizes the countries of the Congo Basin, and aims to ensure their full participation and the respect of the rights of forest peoples in national REDD processes.

LATIN & CENTRAL AMERICAS

The Rainforest Fund is continuing its financial support of projects which started some years ago through the Rainforest Foundation US and its partners in the field.

One project in Brazil, in collaboration with the Wapao and Kauyana indigenous communities, concerns cultural rights in public policies in North-Eastern Brazil and is producing very good results. Now in its last year of funding, the project is focused on crucial questions of sustainability and long-term planning.

The other project, in Peru, is followed and monitored by Rainforest Foundation UK and aims at supporting partners in their efforts to halt the construction of the Pakitpapango hydroelectric dam in the Rio Ene.

We will continue the funding of projects monitored by Rainforest Foundation US in:

ASIA

Through Rainforest Norway and its partners in the field we are funding in:

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Land in Reform

A new project which will last three years and is carried out by The Biobark Ramu Group, the organization on site, exposes the unsuitable and unlawful logging that is destroying PNG’s forest estate. This project focuses on a constitutional-challenge case seeking an immediate injunction stopping any new logging operation and a declaration that the current forestry laws are unconstitutional. It is a long and difficult process, which we hope will save the remaining forests in Papua New Guinea.

This year we added a new country to our portfolio of projects:

MALAYSIA

This project, aimed at augmenting indigenous rights in Malaysia, will span three years and is undertaken by the local organization, Joas.

The focus of the first year is on strengthening the organization and its programs. It will enhance networking and advocacy through broader engagement with civil society and government, in the process strengthening the development of craft and empowerment of women in the Orang Asli communities and building the capacity of community leaders to advocate for indigenous peoples’ rights in a country where the rights to their land and resources are denied. Joas works in a difficult context against strong forces.

PERU

We continue to provide emergency funding to the legal defense of indigenous people jailed for advocating their rights. However, we hope that the new government will take appropriate measures to free all of them. Also, in Peru, the Kandozi and Shapra people are facing eviction from a rising Hepatitis B epidemic. Our support through Rainforest Foundation US and the local partner, ORKAMAUADIP, will provide indigenous peoples the means to fight for their right to health services provided by the State. Two legal cases filed against the government are being pursued by the program’s lawyers.

The following projects are followed and implemented directly by Rainforest Fund through its on-site partners in:

BRASIL

Working with Equipe de Conservação de Amazônia, the Rainforest Fund supports the protection of the Sairu reserve through its REDD Project. The goal is to halt the Sairu people’s protest on their highly biodiverse land in the Central Amazon and advance their groundbreaking Carbon Project by funding the implementation of a border-vigilance plan.

ECUADOR

This project is in its third year of funding and relates to the empowerment of the communities of Sucumbíos and Orellana provinces affected by oil exploitation. This year three more communities were trained to protect their rights and expose abuses committed on their land. Linked to this education is our continued funding of the RAIN project which aims to give an international voice to the peoples affected by the oil pollution.

Water Project, another important initiative, is undertaken to scale up a 2009 project and give more families the use of clean and drinkable water in the provinces of Sucumbíos and Orellana.

BOLIVIA

This is the continuation of a multi-development initiative implemented by the Aymara organization Comunidad Viva, which we have supported in previous years, and was very successful at helping the Aymara Community of Puesto Paq to reclaim its land. It has also been instrumental in developing a women’s craft project, an agricultural project to provide food to the community, a plant nursery and a reforestation project. In 2011 we worked to guarantee access to sustainable use of clean water in the Aymara community by installing water tanks and training the community on the sustainable use of the water system.

PERU

During 2011, we received a request from the Ninos de La Amazonia organization to fund the travel of five indigenous children from the remote village of San Martin de Tipishca in the Peruvian Amazon who were看来 the USA for the first time last year. Ninos de la Amazonia gave the children a camera, taught them how to use it and asked them to take photos of their daily life. Their photographs have been on show at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC, and in New York at the American Museum of Natural History, where Rainforest Fund, in partnership with the Fermnich Foundation, organized a fundraiser for future education programs. The board of Rainforest Fund is passionate about continuing to support the education of these children through a grant.
In Asia, the activities planned for 2012 by the Bismarck Ramu Group in Papua New Guinea build upon activities conducted in 2011, with an upscaling of The Information, Communication Education program.

One of the biggest disappointments in 2011 was the constitutional challenge, which was rejected on technical grounds. The same can be said for the Indigenous Peoples Network of Malaysia (JOAS), which is in its second year of funding and continues to represent the voices of indigenous peoples in a country that denies their inherent rights to land territories and resources.

In Africa, a new project aimed at improving the capacities of local organizations and forest communities in the Central African Republic and in Gabon, is training Community Legal Fieldworkers to understand, analyze and use national laws related to forest management, land resources, human rights.

Furthermore, in Cameroon, Central African Republic, and Democratic Republic of Congo, we continue to fund the third year of a climate-change project in the hopes of strengthening the capacity of local indigenous communities through informational workshops.

In the Ivory Coast we are supporting the third-year of an environmental-education scholarship for an African student.

The fight also continues in the Americas.

In Brazil, we are funding a project related to the Yanomami indigenous people and their organization, HUTAKARA, which needs support to guarantee the surveillance of the Eastern border of their territory.

The same project will be supported through the Equipe de Conservaçao da Amazonia (ECAM) in the Suci Reserve within the context of their Indigenous Community Territorial Management and the REDD project on climate change.

Elsewhere, a new project carried out by the Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas en Bolivia (CIDOB) relates to their land territories and natural resources.

Also in Bolivia, we will continue to fund the Comunidad Viva organization in scaling up the access to clean water for the Ayoreo Communities of Puesto Paz and Pionervin.

In Guyana, we are committed for the third year running to a climate-change project, with the Amerindian Peoples Association, aimed at educating trainees on the issues at stake, advocacy work and land-assessment study in order to identify and document the land-rights problems faced by indigenous communities.

In Panama, the third year of this project aims to finally obtain land titles for eight collective lands of the Wounaan peoples in the Darien.

In Peru, we have been supporting AIDESP since 2007 on a human-rights project aimed at providing legal defense to indigenous leaders who were jailed after riots erupted in Bagua. Another, new project in Peru aims at strengthening the environmental monitoring of theQuechua of the Pastaza River; for the defense and vigilance of their territories through the FEDIQUEP organization.

In Ecuador, we are offering one-off assistance to E-Tch International to conduct an assessment on water quality and deal with legal issues related to mining in the Cordillera Del Condor. Also in Ecuador, from April we are scaling up our pilot water project in the regions of Succumbios and Orellana to provide safe water to the indigenous communities suffering from the oil pollution of their sources.
The Rainforest Fund (formerly known as Rainforest Foundation International) was created to guarantee the continuation of programs and projects started by its partners in the field and to respond to their needs by securing funding and ensuring that projects presented by indigenous communities are tailored to their needs in order to bring positive changes to their lives.

To avoid dependency, the Rainforest Fund covers 80 percent of the total budget of a project, leaving our partners responsible for the remaining 20 percent.

Using the same philosophy, projects are funded for three years. However, it is essential to remain flexible and evaluate each project case by case, therefore this period can be extended depending on the evolution of the project, its importance as a model for other areas, and the pressing needs of the indigenous communities involved.

Projects are evaluated on an annual basis with mid-term reporting by our partners.

The Rainforest Fund does not have a heavy administrative structure. We focus instead on providing structure and leadership to the primary actors in the field. It is there that we have to transfer our funding, competence and technology.

That is why the Rainforest Fund has always been careful in keeping its running costs at a minimum, working only with a part-time financial director. Project screening, assessment process, monitoring and evaluation are undertaken by one individual on a voluntary basis.

Final decisions are made by the Rainforest Fund board.

For more information please visit www.rainforestfund.org

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The Afterword

We would like to conclude by stating once again that without the continued support, dedication and open minds of Sting and Trudie, we could not achieve everything that we have done over these twenty-three years.

But whatever success we have is due in large measure to the achievements of those who are at the forefront of the struggle to protect their land, their environment and their lives, the indigenous peoples and tribal populations of the world to whom we renew our commitment, because by fighting for their environment they are fighting for ours as well.

We thank all our supporters, donors and partners. A particular word of thanks must go to the FIRMENICH Foundation for their ongoing support of our work. Your continued assistance as concerned people committed to bringing about change is crucial at a time when so many critical issues are emerging.

We would like to continue giving our small contribution to change, working for an evolution from dominance of the rich over the poor to partnership, from fragmentation to connection, from insecurity to interdependence.

These issues are the challenges each one of us will have to confront and to solve in the near future.

Whatever success we achieve in our work is in large measure a tribute to the work of people whose names do not appear in this report and to all those who have been supporting us for so many years.

We rely on you all.
MISSION STATEMENT

THE RAINFOREST FUND IS A CHARITABLE FOUNDATION DEDICATED TO THE SUPPORT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND TRADITIONAL POPULATIONS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO PROTECT THEIR ENVIRONMENT AND FULFILL THEIR RIGHTS.

Convinced that accepted environmental and human-rights principles embody the right of everyone and that environmental degradation leads to human-rights violations such as the right to life, health and culture, the Fund aims to secure a healthy and ecologically sound environment.

The Fund, bearing in mind the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, carries out its mission by funding programs and projects aimed at supporting indigenous peoples and traditional populations of the rainforest to assert and defend their rights; promoting a sustainable development of their communities; and challenging practices which have a damaging effect on their environment and their lives.

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