This report is dedicated to the more than 281 human rights defenders murdered in 2017 for lack of protection by their own governments.
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FOREWORD

After 30 years of meetings and discussions, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in September 2007.

The Declaration affirms the minimum standards for survival, dignity, security, and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples around the world.

Ten years later, in 2017, Indigenous Peoples still face huge challenges for lack of implementation of the Declaration in too many countries.

For all those who support the Indigenous Peoples of the world’s rainforests, the time has come to demand that States put words into action to end discrimination, exclusion, invasion of Indigenous lands, and lack of protection of human rights defenders illustrated by the murder rate in 2017 and beginning of 2018.

Celebration shall not be an end in itself, but a tool to expose all the governments who fail to comply with their commitments, as the lack of implementation of the Declaration is blatant in too many countries.

As our report illustrates, too many Indigenous Peoples are increasingly drawn into conflicts over their land, resources, and rights.

At Rainforest Fund, we have kept in mind and implemented the original idea of the Founders. The primal connection to a particular place and people, the direct contact with them without intermediary organisations, the link between the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the need to defend their way of life and conserve their homeland have kept us rooted into reality.

The areas where Rainforest Fund works are filled not with mere symbol of ecology, but with real people with their needs and their rights. This reality has forced us to face many difficult issues, to make painful choices and realise the scale of the problems confronting Indigenous Peoples.

The following pages illustrate our partners’ work and their commitment to make the lives of their communities better by learning their rights and acting against illegal invasion of their territories.

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank all our donors who allow us to continue the support to our partners, the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

Dr. Franca Sciuto
Executive Director/Chair of the Board
OUR MISSION

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.

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

The Rainforest Fund bears in mind the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, and carries out its mission by:

Funding programs and projects aimed at supporting Indigenous Peoples and traditional populations of the rainforests to assert their rights, to promote a sustainable development of their communities and to challenge governmental practises that have a damaging effect on their environment.
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The situation of the Pygmies Indigenous Peoples in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) remains of great concern. Their ancestral lands and natural resources are facing increasing external pressure; they are being forced to relinquish their traditional economy and live on the margin of society in extreme poverty. Indigenous Peoples are not represented in decision-making at all levels of government and their access to basic services, including health and education, remains below the national-level.

Provinces of North Kivu and Maniema
Pygmy Project - Alliance Nationale d’Appui et de Promotion des Aires du Patrimoine Autochtone (ANAPAC)

2017
In 2017, the project was extended to more provinces in North Kivu and Maniema Provinces to support the Pygmy Indigenous Peoples in their quest for the respect of their rights by governmental agencies in charge of the national REDD+ program. The communities have learnt that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) gives them the right to be consulted and make their own decisions about their land.

Project funding for 2017: US $63,200

2018
In 2018, the work continues and other communities have asked to be included in the project, expanding to Yalombe and Walikali, close to Lomami National Park. Strengthening the Pygmies' capacities will ensure that their environment is protected by supporting the construction of a school for their children and a medical outpost for the only doctor who provides healthcare.

These simple, low-cost activities help the Pygmies understand that their rights are being taken care of, bringing cohesion in the communities.

Project funding for 2018: US $60,000

THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO

According to different available sources, Indigenous Peoples make up 10% of the Republic of Congo’s population. It is the poorest and most marginalised sector of the society. In 2011, the government had been the first in Africa to enact a specific law on Indigenous populations. However, due to a lack of implementing regulations, there has been virtually no enforcement of this law, which is much needed in terms of overcoming the marginalisation and discrimination suffered by Indigenous populations.

Congo Basin
Securing Forest Communities’ Rights - Observatoire congolais des droits de l’Homme (OCDH)

2017
In 2017, the focus of work in the Congo Basin was to substantially involve local communities in issues pertinent to them, the understanding of their rights, and the tracking of abuses through a series of indicators and methods that can then be referred to the courts.

Project funding for 2017: US $115,436
2018
In 2018, in existing protected areas in the region, forest communities will keep up their efforts to maintain access and control over their traditional lands, seek remedy for past abuses, and play a central role in protecting their traditional forests.
Project funding for 2018: US $87,700

KENYA

Kenya has no specific legislation on Indigenous Peoples and has yet to adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), or ratify the ILO Convention 169.

Indigenous Peoples in Kenya all face land and resource tenure insecurity, poor services delivery, poor political representation, discrimination, and exclusion. The situation seems to get worse each year, with increasing competition for resources in their areas. Chapter 4 of the Kenyan Constitution contains a progressive Bill of Rights that makes international law a key component of the country’s laws, and guarantees protection of minorities and marginalised groups. However, in 2016, six years after the new Constitution of 2010, Indigenous Peoples have witnessed interesting interplays between their interests as members of communities whose lands fall within the constitutional “community land” enacted in 2016, and the interests of other external actors.

The Ogiek community is taking advantage of this law by reclaiming land formalisation and implementation of the Community Land Act.

Kenya Project
Securing Chepkitale Ogiek Community Ancestral Lands - Chepkitale Indigenous Peoples’ Development Project (CIPDP)

2017
2017 was Rainforest Fund’s first year partnering with Chepkitale Indigenous Peoples’ Development Project (CIPDP). This project focuses on training the community to be more self-reliant and eventually independent enough to manage their work without oversight by the monitoring organisation. This has strengthened the capacities of local communities through targeted actions, giving them the tools to claim their rights on self-governance, management, compensation, and relocation for those who are forced to leave.
Project funding for 2017: US $44,000

2018
In 2018, the Ogiek communities will increase their participation in the policy-making process, two court cases in defense of their territory, and developing a community resource centre to aid the transmission of traditional knowledge.

The first beneficiaries of the project are the entire Ogiek community in Chepkitale (about 6,000 peoples) as they increase their capacity to protect their forest and fauna, and will progressively move toward the recognition of their rights to their ancestral land. If successful, this project will also benefit millions of people now and in the future off Mt. Elgon.

One interesting feature of this project is the investment in childhood. Children now go to formal schools, but Indigenous knowledge needs to be disseminated in school by teachers trained through the resource centre. A specific program has been planned with appropriate training materials to be distributed both directly and through the schools.
Project funding for 2018: US $50,000
The Indigenous territory in Costa Rica accounts for 6.7% of the national territory. Eight different Indigenous Peoples, among them the Bribri, live in the country’s 24 Indigenous territories. However, Indigenous territorial rights are constantly violated in the country, and more than half the area of some territories are now occupied by non-Indigenous settlers, with the State doing nothing to rectify this theft. Although the ILO Convention 169 was ratified more than two decades ago, this did not result in recognition of Indigenous rights in the county.

Costa Rica Project
The Bribri of Saltire and the Defense of their Ancestral and Legal Rights - The Bribri People and the Consejo Ditsö Irixia Ajkönuk Wakpa

2018
The Bribri saw much success in their work from 2017. The community alerted the UN Special Rapporteur on their situation, in asking for the application of national laws and for non-Indigenous Peoples to be expelled from their territory. There was also follow-up on legal cases—more than 50—through initiatives at the courts, asking the State to implement the ILO Convention 169; presenting their cases to the Inter-American Court on Human Rights.
Project funding for 2018: US $26,500

PANAMA

The Indigenous population in Panama counts for 12% of the total Panamanian population. Five regions, called Comarcas, are recognised by independent laws and are based on the Indigenous Peoples’ constitutional rights. Unfortunately, since then, other laws were introduced and a number of protected areas have been superimposed on these territories, many without consulting with or having gained consent from the Indigenous Peoples. The issue of the titling of 25 outstanding territories is of great importance for Indigenous Peoples as it has been shown to be an effective way of preserving Panama’s forests which have been cleared at an alarming rate over the last 10 years.

Panama Project
Titling Tagarkunyal Ancestral Lands - Congreso General del Territorio Ancestral Tule de Tagarkunyal

2018
The Tagarkunyal land (about 150,000 hectares) is located in the Darién on the Colombian border. It is the ancestral homeland of the Guna’s most sacred sites, and has not been recognised or titled by the Panamanian government as collective land because it is part of the Darién National Park, titled in 1980.
Brazil is home to about 1 million Indigenous Peoples, the majority of which live in the Amazon. Most of them live on 704 collective lands, known as Indigenous lands, in the Amazon region. It is also home to the largest number of Indigenous Peoples living in isolation in South America. Unfortunately, territorial demarcation and legislative changes are undermining all the laws benefitting Indigenous Peoples, such as demarcation of their land.

There is at the moment a clear backtracking in legislation for Indigenous Peoples, the measures taken by the new Brazilian government are distorting and denying the spirit of the Constitution (Articles 231 and 232) and all of the international agreements signed. The State’s initiatives demonstrate an authoritarian attitude and a lack of respect for the rights acquired by Indigenous Peoples. It is up to Indigenous movements, national and international NGOs, and civil society to expose these authoritarian acts and demand respect for and compliance with their acquired rights.

2017

Building on the past years, the Tembé community’s overall goal to protect and maintain their ancestral territory has successfully been implemented through the complete recovery of their land. This was achieved after a long process in court, securing their rights, and encouraging community involvement and sustainability. Working with related partners, the project goals were to strengthen Tembé associations and implement their vigilance and management plans as well as develop a free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) process for the design of an Indigenous-led REDD+ project. The Tembé communities are truly taking their future in their own hands using the tools and knowledge our funding provided.

Pará State
Strengthening of the Wai Wai People of the Trombetas Indigenous Lands – Equipe de Conservação da Amazônia (ECAM)

2017

With monitoring support by ECAM, this project focused on strengthening the Wai Wai people of the Trombetas Indigenous land within the context of the National Policy for Environmental Management on Indigenous Territories (PNGATI). This shows how big and complex the work is on implementation of the key components of the territorial management plan which was started the previous year.

The protection of their borders requires a corridor strategy and the strengthening of the ability of the Wai Wai to liaise and create closer ties to the Quilombola (Maroon) communities to their south, who already serve as a buffer zone against expansion of mining and infrastructure projects in the region. One of the most challenging areas is the
strengthening of the Wai Wai association and the new approach to strengthen the role of women by encouraging them to hold leadership positions within the community.

**Project funding for 2017: US $91,500**

**Pará State**

**Indigenous Rights Defenders in Support of Traditional Rights – Equipe de Conservação da Amazônia (ECAM)**

**2018**

In 2018, ECAM and its Indigenous partners are implementing an Indigenous Rights Defenders program, with a focus on strengthening Indigenous representatives from a diverse set of Indigenous communities in the Amazon to engage directly on the issues most important to them. These communities are participating in intense legal trainings to defend and advocate for the rights to their land and safe environment. The Brazilian Amazon program involves four Indigenous communities with which the Rainforest Fund has long-standing relations: the Tembé, the Wai Wai, the Suruí, and Cinta Larga communities, and a fifth, the neighbouring Afro-descendant communities, the Quilombolas from the southwestern Amazon. Rainforest Fund considers that this is a very important step as it is urgent for Indigenous Peoples to learn the law and be at the forefront of the national struggle for Indigenous and traditional rights.

**Project funding for 2018: US $154,600**

**ECUADOR**

The Indigenous population of Ecuador is about 1.1 million peoples out of a total country population of 16.5 million inhabitants. There are 14 Indigenous nationalities, of which 25% live in the Amazon divided into 10 nationalities. Apart from the Shuar, who are more than 100,000 people and have a strong presence in three provinces of the south central Amazon, the rest are spread in small groups across the country. In the Amazon, the Ai Cofan, the Shiwiar, the Siekopai, the Siona, and the Waorani are in highly vulnerable situations and are communities we support.

After more than eight years of a new constitution and 20 years of having ratified the ILO Convention 169, there are still no specific public policies in place to prevent and neutralise the risk of the disappearance of these peoples. They do not have full guarantees of civil, political, and cultural rights and are still facing a number of challenges in a country that has based its development on mining and oil exploitation in their territories.

**Ecuador’s Northern Amazon Ceibo Alliance Project – Alianza Ceibo (Ceibo Alliance)**

**2017**

Rainforest Fund’s pioneering support has made possible the creation of Alianza Ceibo, and its vision of building an Indigenous-led movement for clean water, cultural survival, and rainforest protection in Ecuador’s northern Amazon. In 2017, Rainforest Fund concentrated support on the Ceibo Indigenous Rights Defenders, environmental monitoring, and territorial mapping. The Indigenous Rights Defenders’ work initiated advanced and complex legal processes to denounce and halt socially and environmentally harmful industry practices, recover titles of hundreds of thousands of ancestral territories, and demand compensation from grave and systematic human rights violations.

**Project funding for 2017: US $155,000**

**2018**

In 2018, Indigenous communities are experiencing an increase in poaching, illegal gold mining, toxic fishing, and the pressure of colonisation in their homelands. More than ever, the work of the Indigenous Rights Defenders is important, and their work is expanding
outside of Ecuador to support cross-border communities and creating new groups of Indigenous Rights Defenders in Colombia and Peru.

**Project funding for 2018: US $290,000**

**GUYANA**

Guyana is a sovereign state in the northern mainland of South America; it is however, included in the Caribbean countries. Indigenous Peoples make up approximately 9.6% of the population today. They lack a voice in their community, and their standard of living is lower than much of the country. Guyana is not part of the ILO Convention 169; it has adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), but with no action. The issues facing Indigenous groups are all related to lack of empowerment, their marginal status within the overall society, and the effect this has on their self-determination as Indigenous Peoples. For the Amerindian population, land rights remain a major issue. Complaints persist that the government continues to allocate land to mining and logging interests, and to create protected reserves without proper consultation.

**North Pakaraimas**

North Pakaraimas District Council, Patamona/Macushi Territorial Claim - North Pakaraimas District Council

2018

This is a new project in Paramakatoi, located in North Pakaraimas—a mountain range in western Guyana that has been the land of the Patamona and Macushi peoples since immemorial times. The nine Amerindian communities of the region are vulnerable to a range of threats: expansion of gold and diamond mining, forestry concessions, mega-farms, and national parks expansion with dire consequences for the peoples, human rights abuses, and economic scarcity. Further problems include no territorial boundary protection and weak land rights legislation. The country’s new government seems more open to Indigenous issues, there is a window open that Amerindian peoples want to exploit, as there is a potential to title large-scale territories.

**Project funding for 2018: US $47,500**

**PERU**

Out of about 28 million inhabitants in Peru, there are more than 4 million Indigenous Peoples, divided between some 55 Indigenous groups. The political arena has always been hostile to Indigenous communities who live in the Andean and Amazon Regions. These regions are home to a huge variety of ecosystems and great wealth of natural resources. Currently, however, 21% of the national territory is covered by mining concessions, and these overlap with 47% of peasant and Indigenous community territory. Hydrocarbon concessions cover some 75% of the Peruvian Amazon.

The overlapping of rights in communal territories, the enormous pressure exerted by the extractive industries, and the lack of territorial cohesion and absence of effective prior consultation and consent are exacerbating territorial and socio-environmental conflicts. Peru signed and ratified the ILO Convention 169 and voted in favour of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), but does not respect either of them.

**Amarakaeri Communal Reserve**

Ejecutor del Contracto de Administración de la Reserva Communal Amarakaeiri (ECA-RCA)

2017

The goal of this project was to strengthen the capacity for the protection and management of the communal reserve, between the State and the Indigenous communities. It is fundamental that the project becomes a
locally administered one, ensuring community members’ leadership, a critical step to ensure that community leaders play a role at the local and regional-level.  
**Project funding for 2017: US $94,042**

**Madre de Dios and Loreto**

**Forestlink - Indigenous communities of the Madre de Dios and Loreto, Peru**

**2017**
In 2017, the Indigenous communities of the Madre de Dios and Loreto, Peru utilised the real-time monitoring system, Forestlink. The program’s focus is to empower local Indigenous Peoples to take control of their ancestral land through territorial monitoring and community training.  
**Project funding for 2017: US $114,200**

**2018**
In 2018, the improvement of the technical development of the platform continues. If properly utilised, it can be an asset for the communities to monitor what is happening on their land.  
**Project funding for 2018: US $77,000**

**Alto Tamaya Saweto and the Abujao Tamaya Reserve**

**Territorial Security and Access to Justice - Native Community of Alto Tamaya Saweto**

**2017**
This project aimed at protecting the Ashéninka people’s environment by mapping their land and creating management plans. 2017 continued to provide technical and financial support to the Ashéninka community of Alto Tamaya and the Abujao Tamaya Reserve in the Brazilian border region. In its last year, it worked to ensure an effective and participatory implementation of the plan and benefit all of the communities.  
**Project funding for 2017: US $82,800**

**Loreto Project**

**Strengthening the Loreto Community to Face Threats to Territorial Rights - Indigenous Communities in Madre Dios and Loreto, Peru**

**2018**
In 2018, Rainforest Fund supports the Regional Organisation of the People for the Eastern Amazon (ORPIO) in their fights against the threats they are facing to their territorial rights. ORPIO brings technical and legal support to the communities for the recognition of their rights.  
**Project funding for 2018: US $84,000**
INDONESIA

While Indonesia is a signatory of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), government officials argue that the concept of Indigenous Peoples is not applicable as almost all Indonesians are Indigenous, and thus entitled to the same rights. Consequently, the government has rejected calls for specific needs from groups identifying themselves as Indigenous.

Over the last decades, Indonesia has based its economic development on the exploitation of natural resources. This development has been accompanied by serious human rights violations and the further marginalisation of its Indigenous Peoples.

Upper Mahakam
Territorial Security and Access to Justice for the Indigenous Bahau Dayak Peoples of the Upper Mahakam – Perkumpulan Nurani Perempuan (PNP)

2017
This Indigenous women’s organization, Perkumpulan Nurani Perempuan (PNP), works to promote the rights and welfare of the Indigenous Peoples on the Mahakam River in Borneo, Indonesia.

In 2017, Rainforest Fund supported the Dayak communities in defense of their lands and forests from the invasion of logging and palm oil industry without free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC). The activities designed for this project support the local Indigenous communities to gain a leadership role at the local, regional, and national-levels. The communities are fully involved in the achievement of these goals.
Project funding for 2017: US $36,954

2018
In 2018, PNP is building upon the great success from the first year. Through a complaint brought by the group, the timber company, PT KBT, has seen its logging certificates revoked on the Long Isun Dayak community land. There has been a freeze on the expansion of company operations into Long Isun land, and the local government has started to engage in dialogue with the communities’ representatives after years of silence. These victories have encouraged Dayak communities to speak out against similar human rights abuses.

The project expanded to the communities of Long Lunak and Long Tuyoq, two Indigenous villages who experienced parallel violations to those felt in Long Isun. The project will provide capacity-building on land and community rights, community land use planning, environmental monitoring, and paralegal support to secure Indigenous land titles.
Project funding for 2018: US $44,920

Mentawai Islands
Strengthen the Participation of the Mentawai People – Yayasan Citra Mandiri Mentawai (YCMM)

2017
In 2017, Rainforest Fund partnered with Yayasan Citra Mandiri Mentawai (YCMM) to strengthen the Mentawai people in the design and implementation of public policies and in the management of their natural resources in a fair and sustainable way.

The project has been successful and strengthened the protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples.
Worth noting among the activities are three jungle schools which are operational and legally delivering education services to the Mentawai children. We can say that the Mentawai people, through their Indigenous-led organisation, have accomplished a lot in these three years by leading the project entirely from its conception to the project implementation.

Project funding for 2017: US $71,414

**West Papua**

Preventing the Destruction of Pristine Tropical Forest and Safeguarding Indigenous Land Rights - Papuan People’s Movement for Sustainability Institute (GEMAPALA)

2018

This project has the potential to save half a million hectares of tropical forest from destruction. As easily accessible land for commercial use becomes scarce in Indonesia, corporate enterprises are targeting increasingly remote areas in West Papua where most of the area is the customary domain of Indigenous communities such as Irarutu, Mor, Baham, and Buruwai.

GEMAPALA is well established locally, with the experience in engaging government institutions at the national-level and they possess the necessary partner connections.

Project funding for 2018: US $80,000

**MYANMAR**

Since the election of Aung San Suu Kyi, the situation in Myanmar has not seen many improvements for the Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples were referred to as “ethnic nationalities” by the military government, which retains 25% of unelected seats in the House of Representatives, allowing it to veto proposed constitutional changes.

Key steps for national reconciliation include the establishment of a new Ministry for Ethnic Affairs, but human rights violations affecting Indigenous and ethnic minorities are still taking place, and the situation is dire for them.

**Tanintharyi Region**

Strengthening Indigenous People for Community Driven Natural Resources Management in Tanintharyi Region - Tenasserim River & Indigenous Peoples’ Networks (Trip-Net)

2017

In 2017, Rainforest Fund supported our first ever project in Myanmar. In partnership with Trip-Net, this project works to protect the forest and secure land rights of the forest-dependent Karen communities living along the Tenasserim River Basin in southern Myanmar. This land, which is fertile for rubber and palm oil plantations, is being confiscated through recent investments in the area—dislocating the people from their ancestral homes. The project also directly represents all Karen people and provides a viable model for local development and protection of their lands.

Project funding for 2017: US $121,068

2018

Our partnership with Trip-Net continues into 2018, still working to fully engage Myanmar’s Karen people in the sustainable development of their communities through the creation of a strong community-driven institution for natural resources and the empowerment of local people, particularly women, who are practising sustainable systems of land and forest management.

Project funding for 2018: US $80,000
THE PHILIPPINES

There are no official figures on Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines, but it is estimated they make up between 10% and 20% of the overall population. They generally live in geographically isolated areas with a lack of access to basic social services and few opportunities for mainstream economic activities, education, or political participation. In contrast, commercially valuable natural resources such as minerals, forests, and rivers can be found mainly in their areas; making them continuously vulnerable to development aggressions and land grabbing.

The Philippines voted in favour of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), but has not yet ratified the ILO Convention 169.

Pala’wan
Supporting Indigenous Peoples’ Rights in Pala’wan - Group Coalition Against Land Grabbing (CALG)

2017
In 2017, the goal of the project was to secure land, forest, and natural resources in order to counter ongoing land grabbing. Strengthening Indigenous communities’ capacities on conflict resolution and assisting them in the design of medium and long-term measures to protect their environment has proved to be successful.

Project funding for 2017: US $51,420

2018
In 2018, the project continues to be successful in its struggle against land grabbing in certain areas of Pala’wan, only to see it expanding in others. The project invests considerable efforts in providing paralegal assistance and advocacy training, especially to communities being impacted by oil palm plantations and other types of agribusinesses. They have also learned that it is difficult to sustain advocacy work at the grass-root level when the impacted communities are facing food deficiency and malnutrition, thus adding this component to the program.

Project funding for 2018: US $55,058
NEWS FROM THE FIELD

During the year, we receive news and letters from our partners acknowledging the importance of our support. Below are some extracts of letters and mail we have received. Some are in their original language, English, others have been translated from French or Spanish.

COSTA RICA
The Bribri People and the Consejo Ditsö Iriria Ajkönuk Wakpa –

What is encouraging is that Rainforest Fund has seen and taken the time to understand the gravity of what is transpiring with Indigenous Peoples in Costa Rica. So many funders look past Costa Rica because it is believed to be a leader on human rights and rule of law in the hemisphere. When it comes to Indigenous People, however, it is clearly lagging behind significantly on all fronts: law to protect property rights, non-discriminatory access to justice, being consulted on matters that affect them etc. The situation of the Bribri highlights what so many other Indigenous Peoples have been experiencing in their territories throughout Costa Rica.

-Vanessa Jimenez

ECUADOR
Alianza Ceibo –

We want to thank you for your courage and vision to support the struggles of Indigenous Peoples across the world in the defense of our lands, lives, and cultures. As the threats to our peoples continue to grow, your steadfast commitment to partnership, your conviction in our people’s rights to self-determination and your belief in our values and our way of life, gives us strength.

You have taught us that in the 21st century, with all of the threats that Indigenous Peoples face, true partnership is not only possible, but necessary. Thank you for being our partner in our struggle to defend our lands, lives, and cultures.

-The Alianza Ceibo Board

BRAZIL
Equipe de Conservação da Amazônia (ECAM) –

Rainforest Fund support has continued to change the lives of our communities through its strong commitment, close relationships and willingness to listen and work closely with us. All of these qualities are united within Rainforest Fund, its board, staff, and partners. We continue to be extremely grateful for your willingness to stay with this proven strategy of strengthening Indigenous communities around the world.

-Vasco van Roosmalen

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
Alliance Nationale d’Appui et de Promotion des Aires du Patrimoine Autochtone (ANAPAC) –

The Rainforest Fund support is really very unique as the funding you provide goes to the Pygmy communities living in isolated
zones of the rainforest where neither the government nor other partners want to invest. You are giving to the Pygmy communities the tools to understand their rights, to build local capacities, and make them the main actors in the defense and protection of their human rights, and the right to their traditional lands.”

- Frere Joseph

The PHILLIPPINES
Group Coalition Against Land Grabbing (CALG) -

“For those like us who are engaged in ‘front-line advocacy’, donors’ support goes far and beyond ‘financial matters’ and indeed, it is part of a growing relationship of reciprocal learning and critical exchange. In this respect, we really appreciate your comments and in depth assessment of the report we sent. There have been times in the past, when foreign organisations did support our work, but we sensed that—behind bureaucratic procedures—there was limited concern on their part to engage with us in a proactive dialogue. Your message, indeed, shows exactly the opposite trend.’

-The CALG Board

INDONESIA
Perkumpulan Nurani Perempuan (PNP) -

“Thanks to the support of Rainforest Fund we have already started to see the fruits of our labors. The violating timber company PT KBT has had their logging certificates revoked due to a complaint brought on behalf of the community by PNP. This success has encouraged other neighbouring communities to seek our help and to speak against similar human rights abuses.”

-Martha Doq

UNITED STATES
The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe -

Our readers will certainly remember the outcry and the many demonstrations that took place to halt the Dakota Access Pipeline and support the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s unequivocal opposition to the project as violating the Fort Laramie Treaties signed in 1851 and 1868; hence jeopardising the Tribe’s water, resources, sacred places, and the whole environment.

The Rainforest Fund, alerted by one of its board members, Mickey Sumner, made the decision to take an exceptional measure and grant US $50,000 for a full environmental impact study by a team of experts; experienced oil and gas pipeline engineers, construction managers, cultural resource experts, biologists, scientists, and attorneys to assist with the Tribe’s role in the preparation of the environmental impact statement for the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Unfortunately, the Trump Administration gave the green light for the project, but the battle is continuing in court.

We hope and wish that the laws protecting the rights of the Sioux Tribe will be upheld and their environment protected.

The Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe wrote:

“Our ongoing effort to protect the Tribe’s water and Reservation treaty resources from the operation of the Dakota Access Pipeline has been greatly augmented by the funding [Rainforest Fund] provided.”
PERU

Niños de la Amazonia -

Furthermore, we also want to share with you the successful end of the project, “Niños de la Amazonia”, which started in 2011 and was made possible by the funding we received from our generous donors.

The goal of the project was to give six young children from an Amazonian village in Peru the opportunity to study and follow their own dreams.

Rainforest Fund gave them the funding to go to Iquitos and study, provided they would go back to their village each year and help other kids and the elders, which they did.

All these years have been full of growth, opportunity, development, and maturation for each “Niño”.

One child, Mueller, decided to join the National Police in Lima. Liz has become an executive secretary, Edil decided to return to his village and help his people there, Jesmarly has graduated in economics and followed with an English course, and Roy graduated in business administration and is following with an English course as well.

As the Niños followed their own dreams, their choices have led them in somewhat different directions from each other, and even from their initial thoughts about their futures. In fact, one of the girls decided to go back to their village and get married.

This project was not only about supporting them in their wishes to study, but it was about forging independent, autonomous individuals who are responsible and informed citizens.

We are happy to have supported these now young adults, and we want to acknowledge the contribution of Firmenich Company at the beginning of this project.

AFTERWORD

At the end of this report, I would like to thank all those who have taken the time to read it and become aware of the work undertaken by so many Indigenous Peoples in Africa, Asia, and the Americas to defend their human rights, the rights to their land, their culture, and environment.

As an organisation that has been on the scene for 29 years, we continue to believe that our support is crucial to Indigenous Peoples’ and tribal communities’ survival.

But we have also learned that despite the work of our partners, the Indigenous communities, the threats to the rainforests and violations of their human rights continue just as they did in the late eighties.

From the pages in this report, one can measure the extent of the threats and the unrelenting work to try to counteract the bad practises and decisions made by companies and governments.

To some, it might seem that we have achieved little in the face of the immense environmental problems our friends and the whole world encounter every day. Others, who are aware of the complexity and the depth of these problems, may view these achievements as a necessary contribution toward the protection of the rainforests of the world and their inhabitants.

If after 29 years we are still on the scene at a time when so many critical issues are emerging, we owe it to the dedication of Sting and Trudie, and our many supporters who have accompanied us all these years.

To all, we say thank you for the support you give us.

Dr. Franca Sciuto
Executive Director/Chair of the Board
RAINFOREST FUND OPERATIONS

The Rainforest Fund was created to guarantee the continuation of the projects of its partners in the field and to respond to their needs by securing funding, with awareness that projects presented by the Indigenous communities are tailored to their needs and bring positive changes to their lives.

To avoid dependency and ensure responsibility, the Rainforest Fund, in principle, allocates 80% of projects’ total budgets, with the remaining 20% to be covered by our partners.

Following the same philosophy, projects, in general, are eligible to be funded for three years. However, this period can be extended to five years depending upon the evaluation of the project, its importance as a model for other areas, its impact, and the pressing needs of the Indigenous community involved.

Projects are evaluated on an annual basis, including mid-term and final reporting by our partners in the field. Proposals are evaluated according to strict criteria and include the following three main principles:

The 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.

Emphasis is placed on those activities that relate specifically to the rights of Indigenous Peoples, to ensure their lives and environments are protected.

Generally, it will support local Indigenous communities that show potential to play a key role at the local, regional, and national-level and will benefit from limited input to achieve their goal.

The Rainforest Fund has kept a light organisational structure. It is convinced that there is no need for overstaffed structures when the primary actors are Indigenous Peoples and tribal populations who are in need of strong structures and leadership in the field. It is within this realm that we must transfer our funding, competence, and technology.

The Rainforest Fund has always been careful in keeping its running costs at a minimum, with a part-time Financial Director, a full-time Program and Development Officer, and a volunteer Executive Director. Project screening, assessment process, and project evaluation are undertaken amongst these three individuals with the review and approval of the Board of Directors, along with all final decisions.

**Please refer to our website for a copy of our full, audited financial statements and 990s. The 2017 records will be available in mid-2018.