Mujeres Indígenas
y Cambio Climático Global
Tercer Seminario Internacional

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Auditorio Virginia Gutiérrez
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Organizadores:

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE COLOMBIA
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Departamento de Antropología
Departamento de Trabajo Social

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The Third International Seminar “Indigenous Women and World Climate Change” took place on September 3 to 5, 2007, thanks to the sponsorship of the Mitsubishi International Corporation Foundation.

This version of the Seminar was organized by the Natura Foundation, the Geography and Social Work Departments of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, and the Culture and Environment Group.

The event focused on the core objective of assembling researchers of diverse academic disciplines, as well as leaders and indigenous and non-indigenous activists, and indigenous women from communities, in order to think about the complex relationships that indigenous women maintain with their environment and with the different situations that affect them, including political, cultural, social, and other situations. Also, this event was projected in order to offer an intercultural space for the encounter of indigenous and non indigenous Latin American women, allowing them to share on their relations with the policies, programs, and strategies for the control and mitigation of climate change.

This meeting permitted to continue the deliberation on these topics, identifying the strategies, proposals, alternatives, and perspectives that indigenous women have in respect to these matters.

Accordingly, the participation of indigenous women was structured around four main subjects:

1. Introduction to the problem of climate change;
2. Effects of global and local policies on global climate change.
3. Traditional knowledge on climate and climate change.
4. Issues related with the access to resources and to consequences for sovereignty and food security.

1. Introduction to the problem of climate change.

The following works were presented:

- Kyoto Protocol and Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).
- Environmental and cultural implications of climate change for the indigenous peoples.
  Astrid Ulloa. Colomia. Geography Department. UNAL-UNODC

It was introduced a frame of reference on climate change and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), both in the international and Colombian contexts. Besides, from a critical perspective, were presented the implications of related regulation for indigenous communities, and especially for women.
Next, a round table took place to discuss the indigenous perspective on climate change, in which the following guests intervened:

**Deysi Cierra.** Nahuat-Pipil. El Salvador. Moderator.
**Leonor Zalabata.** Arhuaca. Colombia.
**Patricia Gualinga.** Kichua. Ecuador.
**Bertha Blanco.** Aymara. Bolivia.
**Melina Hernández.** Zapoteca. Mexico.

A debate followed on the lack of participation of indigenous peoples in the scenarios in which decisions affecting climate change are made. The necessity of establishing a more transparent dialogue between the indigenous peoples and the Colombian governmental bodies was discussed, so as to review how the related policies affect indigenous territories.

The assistants analyzed problems caused by oil drilling in indigenous territories (case of Ecuador) and by policies promoting the production of biofuels from corn and other food crops (case of Mexico).

Finally, it was highlighted the role that the political organization of indigenous peoples can play in the decision-making processes linked with their home lands and their resources.

2. **Effects of global and local policies on global climate change.**

The following works were presented:

- From development to underdevelopment, from economic development to wealth, and from wealth to environmental damage.
  **Melina Hernández.** Zapoteca. México.
- Impacts from oil firms in East Ecuador.
  **Patricia Gualinga.** Kichua. Ecuador.
- Analysis of climate change impacts on the Mapuche women in the Araucania.
  **Karin Treulen.** Mapuche. Chile.
- Impacts from fumigations in the Putumayo region.
  **Blanca Cecilia Muñoz.** Kofan. Colombia.

The debate turned around how indigenous communities, especially women, are exposed to threats against their territory and culture.

A big part of the effects associated with climate change result from a developmental model which expected benefits are not pointed toward sustainability and equity. Hence, it was important to gather the experiences of indigenous communities facing the oil exploitation of indigenous territories in Ecuador’s Amazonian basin, or the illicit crops fumigation in the Colombian-Ecuadorian border. Also, it was examined the impact of big timber and forest projects in the Chilean Araucania have had for indigenous women.
It was shown how the indigenous territories have gained significance because of their function as climate regulators and specifically, as a carbon capture instrument.

Also, examples of resistance strategies used by indigenous women and their alternative development proposals were presented.

3. **Traditional knowledge on climate and climate change.**

On this topic the following works were presented:

- Gender differences in the perception of climate indicators in the Bolivian High Plains.  
  *Olga Yana.* Aymara. Bolivia.
- Traditional knowledge on climate.  
  *Yolanda De León de Santiago.* Hñáhñú. México.
- Guatemala’s indigenous women and their perceptions of climate change.  
  *Ana Perez Conquache.* Maya-Poqoman. Guatemala.
- Climate change, environment and biodiversity detriment.  
  *Clotilde Márquez.* Aymara. Bolivia.

The Seminar built up on the general conceptualization on the traditional knowledge, its importance and its relation with climate change. The presentation of results from these researches contributed to verify and to value the perception and knowledge that women have as particular means to grasp reality. It was shown how women’s wisdom facilitate the forecast of future scenarios and of the development of strategies to adjust to climatic changes.

It was shown how men and women acquire and build knowledge in different ways and thus make diverse contributions to the construction of alternatives.

4. **Issues related with the access to resources and to consequences for sovereignty and food security.**

The following researches were presented:

- Water-access problems in Northeastern Brazil.  
  *Cristiane Gomes Juliao.* Pankararu. Brazil.
- Biodiversity guardians in the Colombian Amazonian basin.  
  *Bernardita Remuy.* Murui. Colombia.
- Nahuat-Pipil people’s experience on the access to natural resources.  
  *Deysi Cierra.* Nahuat-Pipil. El Salvador.
- Mayan Nut: Ancient food for a better future.  
- Embera indigenous women and climate change effects on their food sovereignty.  
  *Brisa Otagri.* Embera-Chami. Colombia.
- Climate change effects on the relations of reciprocity between indigenous peoples and the Pachamama.  
  *Bertha Blanco.* Aymara. Bolivia.
In this session were presented the problems and conflicts faced by indigenous communities, specially by women, in order to access their natural resources, mainly water and forests, which creates problems for the communities to access their territories and therefore, to sustain their cultural permanence.

It was discussed the significant role played by indigenous women in the management of seeds, crops, and food.

Results of the Seminar:

The following results of the Seminar must be highlighted:

- A space was opened for a productive discussion on the relation between indigenous women and the effects of global climate change.
- The knowledge and perceptions of indigenous women from nine countries and thirteen indigenous peoples were shared.
- Alliances and nets between indigenous women from the region were strengthened. For instance, it was presented the experience of building the Indigenous Women and Biodiversity Net of Guatemala, created after the participation of Guatemalan women in this Seminar in 2006.
- It was started a research project on indigenous women and global climate change, which will be carried out by a new research group of Social Science students of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia.
- The records of the Seminar are being edited. There, the presentations and the more significant debates will be collected, and documents of special interest on the topic of indigenous women and global climate change will be annexed.
- The Natura Foundation Web Site www.natura.org.co will soon be improved with a tool that will allow participants to the three versions of this Seminar to share information and comments on the topics of their greater interest.