



# Cordillera Peoples Alliance

*For the Defense of Ancestral Domain and for Self Determination*

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## Cordillera leader tackles indigenous peoples' self-determination and critique of the Green Economy in World IP Conference

**RIO DE JANEIRO, 17 JUNE 2012** – “Defend our inherent right to self-determination!” was the resounding call of around 500 indigenous leaders and representatives, and advocates coming from different countries participating in the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Territories, Rights and Sustainable Development, also known as Kari-Oca II, taking place from June 14-22 in Jacarepagua, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

“Indigenous peoples all over the world share a common struggle and aspiration – self-determination or our inherent and collective right as distinct peoples to freely determine our economic and social development and freely determine our political status. Twenty years after the UN Conference on Environment in 1992, the indigenous peoples’ struggle for self-determined development is not only continuing but was worsened by the current global capitalist system that is gripping the world today,” said CPA Chairperson Windel Bolinget in addressing the conference today.



Kari-Oca II commenced on June 14 with a traditional Terena ritual to welcome participants and to pray for a productive exchange, learning and discourse for the 9-day gathering of indigenous peoples from all over the world. Following the opening program are daily exchanges and discourses



among the participants on indigenous peoples’ struggles; the worsening state of violations against indigenous peoples’ rights to land territories and resources; environmental destruction; commodification of nature; and indigenous peoples struggle for self-determination.

“As experienced by our fellow indigenous peoples here in Latin America and around the globe, corporate greed and State repression with impunity continue to heighten the violations of our right to self-determination in the Philippines and

the rest of Asia where I come from. We are struggling against widespread militarization; plunder of our resources through mining, geothermal projects, and large hydroelectric dams; and violations of our right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent,” added Bolinget.

Kari-Oca II is a global indigenous peoples’ activity held in parallel to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development taking place from June 19-21. From the sharing of experiences and discourses on global indigenous peoples’ issues and concerns, Kari-Oca II will draw up a declaration on the struggles of indigenous peoples, and the major themes of the UNCSO – Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication, and “Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development”. The declaration will be submitted to the UNCSO.

“I share the view of our fellow indigenous peoples from North America and Latin America that the Green Economy being promoted by the UNCSO is a market-based economy in disguise. It is a continuation of the sell-out of the air we breath, the water we drink, the land that we live in, and our lives. It extends the ‘brown economy’ by looking into the role of mining, nuclear energy and other fossil-fuel based energy sources whose practices are never sustainable. It does not have clear-cut policy proposals against destructive large-scale mining and is silent on phasing out nuclear plants or finding clean solutions to the perennial problem of nuclear waste disposal,” explained Bolinget.

Further, Bolinget discussed critical points in the Green Economy that aggravate the issues faced by indigenous peoples. According to him, “The Green Economy favors big businesses, and promises growth but not much poverty eradication. It considers sustainable development and poverty eradication as its highest priority, yet not one chapter is devoted to addressing the root causes of underdevelopment and poverty especially in developing countries.”

Bolinget also stressed that Green Economy does not avert disastrous climate change, which is the most serious environmental crises faced globally since it can trigger or worsen biodiversity loss, land degradation, ocean acidification, sea level rise and so on, which have dire economic and social implications; thus, it is not a viable pathway to sustainable development especially in developing countries most vulnerable to climate change.

“The Green Economy is flawed in a fundamental way because it puts capital above the environment and the people’s rights and needs. Greening strategies are framed in terms of capital, prices, cost-benefit analysis, profits and markets. Ecosystems are treated as ‘natural capital’ and as sources of marketable ‘ecosystems services’ as a ‘new engine of growth’ in the whole scheme of capitalist business and markets. Perversely, the environment is deemed valuable only as a form of capital. It is essentially the continued colonization of ecology by the market economy,” added Bolinget.

Bolinget also stressed that in the light of all these, it is important to strengthen the solidarity and support among indigenous peoples worldwide as they intensify the struggles for self-determination and movements in indigenous territories for self-determination and liberation.

A display of indigenous products, garments and musical instruments; and exhibition of indigenous games, songs and dances by the different nations or indigenous groups of Brazil added colour to the Kari-Oca II.

Kari-Oca II is co-organized by Land is Life, Indigenous Environment Network, Cordillera Peoples Alliance, and hosted by Inter Tribal Committee of Brazil. It is supported by the Ministry of Sports of the Government of Brazil. Among the participants are Igorots representing the



Reference:  
Windel Bolinget  
Chairperson

### ***Brief Background of Kari-Oca II***

*In May of 1992, in the days leading up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), over 700 indigenous leaders from around the world gathered in a forested valley outside of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil for the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territories, Environment and Development. At this historic meeting, also known as the Kari-Oca Conference, participants drafted and unanimously signed two landmark documents in the worldwide struggle for indigenous peoples rights – The Kari-Oca Declaration and the Indigenous Peoples Earth Charter. These documents set out indigenous peoples' demands and recommendations for environmental protection and sustainable development based on the principles of self-determination and respect for indigenous peoples' collective rights to their territories, knowledge and resources.*

*The Kari-Oca conference, and the mobilization of indigenous peoples around UNCED, marked a significant part in the history of the international movement of indigenous peoples.*

*This year, as the United Nations, political, business, and non-governmental leaders of the world will again meet in Rio de Janeiro for the United Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, also known as Rio+20, indigenous peoples are organizing the Kari-Oca II to review and assess the gains and losses of the last twenty years, discuss their sacred relationship with Mother Earth, finalize their policy recommendations and positions for UNCSD, and develop common strategies for the future.*

*Since 1992, indigenous peoples have continued to make important gains, including the creation of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; establishment of a UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples; establishment of the Expert Mechanism on Indigenous Peoples; and adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.#*