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# The Voice of the Taíno People®

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## Indigenous Leaders Summit held in Panama

*Panama City, Panama (UCTP Taíno News)* - The **3rd Indigenous Leaders Summit of the Americas** was held from the Third Indigenous Leaders' Summit of the Americas (3rd ILSA), was held in Panama City, Republic of Panama, on April 14-15, 2009 under the theme "Implementing the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas for Present and Future Generations".

The 3rd ILSA was part of the activities held within the framework of the Fifth Summit of the Americas and was aimed at providing an enhanced opportunity for representatives of the indigenous peoples of the hemisphere to participate in and contribute to the Summits of the Americas Process.

This meeting brought together around 120 participants from throughout the Americas, making a special effort to include full participation by women, youth and elder indigenous leaders, to deliberate on and articulate indigenous perspectives on a range of policy topics related to the work of the OAS and the themes of the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

The event was organized by the 3rd ILSA Planning Committee, composed

of representatives from South, Central and North America and the Caribbean led by the **Assembly of First Nations (AFN)** and the **Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)**, with the support of the OAS Summits of the Americas Secretariat and financial support provided by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the U.S. State Department, and the Government of Spain.



Caribbean indigenous delegates at the 3rd Indigenous Leaders Summit of the Americas being hosted in Panama. From left to right: **Roberto Borrero** (Taíno), **Chief Allan Leow** (Lokono), **Margaret Williams** (Kalinago), **Chief Charles Williams** (Kalinago), and **Roger Guayakan Hernandez** (Taíno). *UCTP Photo.*

The Summit opened with a blessing from **Gilberto Arias**, a traditional leader of the **Kuna** Peoples of Panama. Arias asked the Great Spirit,

*Baba and Nana*, Mother Earth, to assist the delegates who arrived for the meeting from South, Central, and North America as well as from the Caribbean.

Caribbean delegates to the 3<sup>rd</sup> ILSA included representatives of the **Kalinago Carib Nation of Dominica**, the **Santa Rosa Carib Community**, the **Guyanese Organization of Indigenous Peoples** (Guyana), the **Eagle Clan Arawaks** of Barbados and Guyana, the **United Confederation of Taíno People**, as well as representatives from Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent.

The results of the 3rd ILSA were shared with the Governments of the 34 OAS Member States and the **Declaration of the 3rd ILSA** and **Plan of Action** were presented by a delegation of six indigenous leaders during the Fifth Summit of the Americas held in Trinidad, in the Dialogue held between Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Indigenous Peoples. ●



**Taino Observe 8000 Drum Ceremony in Georgia**



Taino delegates Mildred Mukara Torres Speeg, Mildred Karaira Gandia, and Miguel Sobaoko Koromo Sague attend the 8000 Drum ceremony in Georgia.

*Ellijay, GA (UCTP Taino News)* - In solidarity with the **Otomi Nation** of Mexico, **Monika Ponton-Arrington**, a Boriken Taino organized an "8000 Drum Ceremony" from March 20-22, 2009 in Ellijay, Georgia. The ceremony coincided with the Spring Equinox and was held at the Old Cherokee Ball Field.

Over 250 persons attended the ceremony including many local and other Indigenous Peoples as well as supporters. Among the participants, the Taino People were represented with a delegation of community members including two Liaison Officers of the United Confederation of Taino People, **Mildred Karaira Gandia** and elder **Mildred Mukara Torres Speeg**.

The Taino representatives including Arrington had the honor to address the gathering that was held on a historic and picturesque Appalachian mountaintop near the boarder of Tennessee.

In conjunction 8000 Drum ceremony being held in Mexico, additional ceremonies were also organized by Taino People in New York, Florida, and Boriken (Puerto Rico). •

**Global Indigenous Climate Summit Concludes in Alaska**

*Anchorage, Alaska (UCTP Taino News)* - The **Global Indigenous Peoples' Summit on Climate Change** being held in Alaska concluded on Friday.

The Summit was held at the *Dena-Ina Center* in the city of Anchorage over a span of five days; from April 20th-24th 2009. Over 400 Indigenous Peoples representatives from over 80 countries around the world participated - including a very visible Caribbean delegation.

Many statistics were presented at the Summit such as the fact that there are approximately 400 million Indigenous People on Earth, which translates to 1 out of every 15 human beings on the planet today as being an Indigenous person.

There were 2 guest speakers of particular note, the first was the famous Catholic Priest turned leftist Guerrilla turned President of the United Nations General Assembly - **Miguel d'Escoto Brockman**; who was enthusiastically applauded when he stated unapologetically "Now is not the time to pull any punches, we must call a spade a spade, the Third World *cannot* afford to subsidize the First World any more through unjust debt repayments - while developed countries portray themselves as the 'Charitable donors' coming to the financial rescue & relief of the 'pitiable beggars' - which is how they portray the developing countries".

Bolivia's energetic Foreign Minister Mr. **David Choquehuanca** received a standing ovation after he declared "We Indigenous Peoples are not the ones responsible for this human induced Climate change, but we are the ones suffering from it first and most severely so far, life is at risk, the

non-indigenous have to realize and accept the fact that the Earth is our mother, and all living things are her children - and are sustained by her milk; which is called water. Water is precious, it is sacred, and it is the source of life for everything on this planet. The world has to take a Pro-Life stance now, not just for human life but for all life, for man is not separate from the natural world - he is an inseparable part of it!"

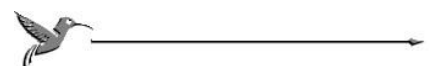


**Naniki Reyes Ocasio** (Boriken Taino), UN General Assembly President **Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann**, and **Hariette Vreedzaam** - Joeroeja (Galibi - Suriname) express their solidarity at the **Global Indigenous Peoples' Summit on Climate Change** in Alaska.

Another important fact revealed at the summit was that the average temperature of the world has already increased by one degree Celsius - and this has caused a world-wide depletion of soil fertility, aquifers, ocean fisheries, and bio-diversity in general - not to mention created severe weather phenomena.

If the global temperature increases by only one degree more (and more than that is projected) - this will mean the collapse of ecosystems from coral reefs to polar ice caps, at 3-4 degrees Celsius in increase we will witness massive loss of species (and extinction is forever) and food crops.

Story continues on pg. 3



## Indigenous Climate Summit (Continued from pg. 2)

Rising temperature is already causing an increase in vector borne diseases such as Malaria and West Nile virus.

Medical research has also shown that Indigenous communities that no longer produce the food they require to feed themselves - but instead rely on an imported purchased diet of processed foods and carbonated beverages - now suffer from Diabetes and a host of preventable diseases hitherto unknown in their communities.



Kalinago Chief Charles Williams of Dominica attends the Alaska Summit. (UCTP Photo)

The concerns of the Caribbean region were vigorously represented by 9 delegates including **Bartolo Teul** and **Vincent Palacio** (Belize), **Naniki Reyes Ocasio** (Puerto Rico), Chief **Charles Williams** and **Pearl Williams** (Dominica), **Melford Pompei** (St. Vincent and the Grenadines), **Damon Corrie** (Barbados), and **Cyrlene Francis** and **Hariette Vreedzaam - Joeroeja** (Suriname). Chief Damon Corrie of the *Eagle Clan Aramaks* noted that "9 is a sacred number for the Lokono and other Indigenous People in the region".

The Summit's executive committee was comprised of **Patricia Cochran**

(Arctic) - Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, **Andrea Carmen** (North America) - Executive Director of the International Indian Treaty Council, **Ben Namakin** (Pacific) - Program Manager of the Environmental Education & Awareness Program Conservation Society of Pohnpei, **Joseph Ole Simel** (Africa) - National Coordinator of the Mainyito Pastoralist Integrated Development Organization of the Massai, **Victoria Tauli-Corpuz** (Asia) - Chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Executive Director of Tebtebba, and Convener of the Asia Indigenous Women's Network, **Tarcila Rivera Zea** (Latin America) - Executive Director of the Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú, and **Cletus Springer** (Caribbean) - Director of the Department of Sustainable Development of the Organization of American States.

A Declaration from the Summit will be presented to the United Nations General Assembly by President Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann on behalf of the Indigenous Peoples of the World.

The Indigenous Peoples' Global Summit on Climate Change was sponsored by the monetary donations of the Christensen Fund, the Ford Foundation, the Oak Foundation, the Government of Denmark, the John D. and Catherine J. MacArthur Foundation, the Government of Sweden - and 16 other sponsors. ●

## Caribbean Indigenous Peoples attend UN Forum in NY

*United Nations (UCTP Taino News)* – Caribbean Indigenous delegates joined over one thousand Indigenous Peoples representatives from around the world at the **United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous**

**Issues (PFII)**. Representatives from Dominica, Barbados, and Puerto Rico attended the Forum's eighth session which took place from 18-29 May, 2009 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. ●

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CALENDER OF EVENTS

### • **Presencia Taina TV**

**Date:** Saturday nights through 2009 • **Place:** <http://www.MNN.org>

*Presencia Taina.TV is televised weekly throughout the worldwide web this season on Saturday night at 9 PM (EST) by viewing it locally on Channel 67 (cableTV) in the New York City area or you can listen in online at <http://www.MNN.org>*

### • **Exhibición: 50 aniversario en las Artes - Miguel Ángel Guzmán**

**Fecha:** 2 Julio 2009 • **Hora:** 6:00pm - 8:00pm • **Lugar:** Galería Maboití, Museo del Cemi en Cedetra, Jayuya, Boriken

*Celebrado artista y un miembro mayor de la comunidad, Miguel Ángel Guzmán estará siendo presentado en una exhibición especial honrando sus 50 aniversario en las Artes. La exhibición se ha llevar a cabo en la Galería Maboití, Museo del Cemi en Cedetra, Jayuya. La exhibición abre el 2 de Julio a las 6pm con una presentación musical de Guzman y una recepción. El honorable Georgie Gonzalez, el alcalde de Jayuya es el presentador del evento. Contacto: 787.828.1241*

### • **5th Annual Indigenous Taino Gathering / 5to Jornada Indigena**

**Date:** 14 – 16 August 2009 • **Place:** Centro de Arte y Cultura Elpidio Collazo González (Maboití), antiguamente llamado CEDETRA, Jayuya, Boriken

*Jayuya, Puerto Rico – The Artisan Cooperative of the High Land (CATTÁ-COOP, INC.) and the Autonomous Municipality of Jayuya invite you to the 5th Taíno-Indigenous athering, “GUATEKE TAÍNO.” The purpose for this event is “Healing the Heart of the arth on the Way to 2012.” Contact: [cattacoop@prw.net](mailto:cattacoop@prw.net)*

**Editor's Note:** *The staff at 'the Voice' looks forward to hearing from all of you, and we thank you for your comments, suggestions, and inquires. To submit items to the **Community Bulletin Board**, please email your request to [mukaro@uctp.org](mailto:mukaro@uctp.org)*

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