

WE ARE MOTHER EARTH'S RED LINE

FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES LEAD THE CLIMATE JUSTICE
FIGHT BEYOND THE PARIS AGREEMENT



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**IT TAKES
ROOTS
TO
WEATHER
THE
STORM**



DEDICATION

We dedicate this report to the life of Berta Cáceres and all frontline, grassroots environmental justice activists and organizers whose lives have been taken in this struggle.

We also honor the lives lost in the attacks in Paris, Beirut, Nigeria, and Syria in November of 2015, and the hundreds of thousands of war and climate refugees around the world.





“The ground we walk on is literally melting beneath us. Indigenous peoples of the world are being affected by this climate chaos first, and our issues are compounded by the assault on our traditional territories by the fossil fuel extractive industries....No more business as usual—we don’t have the luxury of time. Humanity’s survival is on the line. We need a just transition to sustainable energy, economies and communities.”

—Faith Gemmill, Executive Director REDOIL (Resisting Environmental Destruction On Indigenous Lands), Alaska Native regional network

The Paris Climate Agreement of December 2015 is a dangerous distraction that threatens all of us. Marked by the heavy influence of the fossil fuel industry, the deal reached at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) never mentions the need to curb extractive energy, and sets goals far below those needed to avert a global catastrophe. The agreement signed by 196 countries does acknowledge the global urgency of the climate crisis, and reflects the strength of the climate movement. But the accord ignores the roots of the crisis, and the very people who have the experience and determination to solve it.

Around the world, negotiators use the term “red line” to signify a figurative point of no return or a limit past which safety can no longer be guaranteed.¹ Our communities, whose very survival is most directly impacted by climate change, have become a living red line. We have been facing the reality of the climate crisis for decades. Our air and water are being poisoned by fossil fuel extraction, our livelihoods are

threatened by floods and drought, our communities are the hardest hit and the least protected in extreme weather events—and our demands for our survival and for the rights of future generations are pushing local, national, and global leaders towards real solutions to the climate crisis.

We brought these demands to the UNFCCC 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) as members of the delegation called “It Takes Roots to Weather the Storm.” Grassroots Global Justice Alliance (GGJ), the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), and the Climate Justice Alliance (CJA) organized the delegation, which included leaders and organizers from more than 100 US and Canadian grassroots and Indigenous groups. We helped to mobilize the thousands of people who took to the streets of Paris during the COP21, despite a ban on public protest—and amplified the pressure that Indigenous Peoples, civil society, and grassroots movements have built throughout the 21 years of UN climate talks.

THE PARIS AGREEMENT

“The harsh reality we face is that the very people who have already been experiencing the most frequent and severe climate impacts to date—Indigenous Peoples, small-scale farmers/peasants, women and low-income communities of color, especially in the Global South—will now face even more difficult life-or-death struggles as their lands, territories, waters, and forests could be increasingly privatized and taken away under the mechanisms of the Paris Agreement.”

—Chung-Wiha Hong and Sara Mersha, Grassroots International

“The Paris Agreement is a trade agreement, nothing more. It promises to privatize, commodify and sell forested lands as carbon offsets in fraudulent schemes such as REDD+ projects. These offset schemes provide a financial laundering mechanism for developed countries to launder their carbon pollution on the backs of the global south. Case-in-point, the United States’ climate change plan includes 250 million megatons to be absorbed by oceans and forest offset markets. Essentially, those responsible for the climate crisis not only get to buy their way out of compliance but they also get to profit from it as well.”

—Alberto Saldamando, Human and Indigenous Rights Expert & Attorney

The Paris Agreement tails the process of global alignment that environmental justice groups, Indigenous Peoples, and social movements have been leading for more than two decades. Following the failure of the UNFCCC COP 15 in Copenhagen in 2009, IEN and GGJ began to strengthen our ties with social movements and frontline communities of the Global South. In 2010, environmental justice movements in

the US and Indigenous Peoples started to organize a climate justice space within the World Social Forums. We sent delegations from frontline communities to Cochabamba, Bolivia to participate in the writing and support for adoption of the People’s Agreement, also known as the Cochabamba Agreement, including the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth. These documents provided a shared vision for



cooperative action geared toward addressing the root causes of the climate crisis.²

By contrast, the Paris Agreement coming out of the COP21 allows emissions from fossil fuels to continue at levels that endanger life on the planet, demonstrating just how strongly world leaders are tied to the fossil fuel industry and policies of economic globalization. The emphasis within the UNFCCC process on the strategies of carbon markets consisting of offsets and pollution trading created an atmosphere within the COP21 of business more than regulation. The result is a Paris Agreement that lets developed countries continue to emit dangerously high levels of

greenhouse gasses; relies on imaginary technofixes and pollution cap-and-trade schemes that allow big polluters to continue polluting at the source, and results in land grabs and violations of human rights and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Our analysis of the Paris Agreement echoes critiques from social movements around the world, led by those most impacted by both climate disruption and the false promises that governments and corporate interests promote in its wake. In order to effectively develop and support the next steps that are necessary, we must have a clear and honest understanding of the challenges and conditions we are facing.

We have five core concerns with the content of the Paris Agreement:

- 1. The Agreement relies on voluntary versus mandatory emission cuts that do not meet targets scientists say are necessary to avoid climate catastrophe.** The Paris Agreement is not based on what is scientifically necessary to address the climate crisis. The accord contains no binding mandatory emissions reductions—only voluntary pledges from each country, called “Intended Nationally-Determined Contributions.” Taken together, all these pledges would still allow an average global temperature increase of between 3 – 4 °C above pre-industrial levels. Scientists warn that this level of warming would be catastrophic.³ In fact, the agreement allows emissions to continue to increase without setting a date by which they need to begin to decrease. The actual language states, “Parties aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible.”
- 2. The Agreement advances pollution trading mechanisms that allow polluters to purchase “offsets” and continue extremely dangerous levels of emissions.** The agreement allows countries to claim reductions through pollution trading schemes written in the agreement as “results-based payments,” rather than requiring actual reductions of pollution emissions *at the source*. The underlying approach of these trading schemes is to create a market for emission credits that allows polluters to continue releasing greenhouse gasses if they can produce a certificate attesting that they have contributed toward preventing a similar amount of emissions elsewhere, and thus avoid taking action against burning fossil fuels. An example of what is being traded is a mechanism called “Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation”⁴ (REDD+). Within climate negotiations, deforestation has become a global issue. Forests provide vast amounts of carbon sinks that when destroyed emit CO₂ into the atmosphere. The loss of these forests, especially in the Global South, is a major driver of climate change, accounting for roughly a fifth of global GHG emissions. The Paris agreement approved REDD+ for implementation despite continued debates on how to make forests fit into a financial carbon market regime with no real guarantee there would be progress in reducing the underlying causes of forest loss. These carbon market regimes allow for the privatization of the carbon in the forests, and tree plantations, wetlands, agriculture and soils to be used as sponges for mitigating greenhouse gases. This allows governments and polluting corporations to offset their carbon and other GHGs, to meet emission reduction targets rather than cut emissions at the source.

Offsets and pollution trading have a double-edged impact: They give polluters in the industrialized countries of the North cover so they can continue to poison the air and water in the communities alongside refineries, coal mines and fracking wells, and at the same time in the global South,



including Mexico, these projects can fail to secure the rights of local forest-dependent communities, peasants and Indigenous Peoples to their lands. Even where land titles might be recognized on paper, implementation of REDD+ projects that generate carbon credits is likely to lead to these people losing control of their lands, land evictions, and restrictions on entering forested areas. Current safeguard mechanisms developed have no guarantees for being implemented at the national or subnational areas of developing countries. Tradable REDD credits are a form of property title—privatization. Those who own the credit do not need to own the land nor the trees, but they do own the right to decide how that land will be used. They also usually have the contractual right to monitor what is happening on the land and request access to the territory at any time they choose as long as they own the carbon credit.

- 3. The Agreement relies on dirty energies and false promises including hydraulic fracturing (fracking), nuclear power, agro-fuels, carbon capture and sequestration and other technological proposals that pose serious ecological risks.** While the fossil fuel industry has tried to position natural gas as a “transitional fuel” and nuclear energy as a green energy alternative, both of these industries carry tremendous risk to surrounding communities. In 2015, the state of Oklahoma was forced to impose a ban on fracking, due to more than 5000 earthquakes in one year, sometimes more than 20 in a single day, directly resulting from extensive fracking operations. The nuclear power industry has seen similar disasters, such as the Fukushima meltdown of 2011. The Paris Agreement focuses on national voluntary pledges of emissions reductions, but not reductions in the extraction of fossil fuels, allowing contradictory practices such as the Obama administration on the one hand pledging net emissions reductions, and on the other proposing a five-year expansion of offshore oil drilling across the Arctic and Gulf of Mexico. A genuine Just Transition requires rejecting dirty energy and investing in clean and renewable energy sources.

- 4. The operating text of the Agreement omits any mention of human rights or the rights of Indigenous Peoples and women.** Despite vocal objections from Indigenous Peoples, allies and human rights NGOs, the operative text of the Paris Agreement is void of any language on the recognition of human rights, with limited language in the preambular and addendum text. The language on human rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights within the preamble is purely aspirational text and not legally binding or enforceable in any way. The preamble text has no mention of the rights of women. The US, Norway, the UK and the EU have been key players in this removal of language around human rights and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- 5. The Agreement weakens or strips the rights of reparations owed to the Global South by the Global North.** The Paris Agreement dilutes the language that until now has been critical for establishing the expectation that countries that have greater historical responsibility for causing climate change must be held to higher standards for reducing emissions and addressing impacts. Furthermore, the Paris Agreement denies the possibility for compensation or liability for loss and damage done, thus limiting rights of countries or communities impacted by climate change to use legal methods to hold entities accountable for causing their suffering.

The leadership of social movements of Indigenous Peoples, Black, Latina, Asian and Pacific Islander communities, small-scale farmers/peasants and women, and all communities on the frontlines of extraction who have been defending lands, territories, water, forests, the health of their communities and Mother Earth⁵ as a whole, is more critical than ever.





IT TAKES ROOTS TO WEATHER THE STORM

“The prosperity of fossil-fueled societies has been built on the backs of historically marginalized communities: Indigenous Peoples, coal miners, fisherfolk, working class communities across the world—all of whom have paid the price of our “cheap fuels” and will suffer the consequences of global climate chaos disproportionately. Solutions that protect the welfare and rights of these communities will prove more durable, more equitable, and safer—for all of us.”

—Dallas Goldtooth, Indigenous Environmental Network, Keep it in the Ground organizer

“Frontline communities” are the peoples living directly alongside fossil-fuel pollution and extraction—overwhelmingly Indigenous Peoples, Black, Latino, Asian and Pacific Islander peoples in working class, poor, and peasant communities in the US and around the world. In climate disruption and extreme weather events, we are hit first and worst.

We are Mother Earth’s red line. We don’t have the luxury of settling for industry or politicians’ hype or half measures. We know it takes roots to weather the storm and that’s why we are building a people’s climate movement rooted in our communities. We are the frontlines of the solution: keeping fossil fuels in the ground and transforming the economy with innovative, community-led solutions.

From the popular movements in Bolivia that defeated the privatization of water, to the grassroots movements that secured El Salvador’s historic mining ban to defend their nation’s water rights, to the Peruvian communities that halted a multinational gold and copper mine, public pressure and direct action by frontline communities has been the most successful

strategy to confront the extractive industries. North American Indigenous Peoples played a key leadership in aligning a broad front including 350.org, local ranchers, and other key allies to achieve one of the most important recent climate victories: securing President Obama’s rejection of the Keystone XL pipeline. Indigenous Peoples continue to advance the critical fight against tar sands extraction.

In Paris, and before that in the massive 2014 People’s Climate March, frontline communities helped build huge popular outpourings demanding climate action. In these efforts, frontline leadership from Grassroots Global Justice, the Indigenous Environmental Network, and the Climate Justice Alliance played a key role in aligning the broader forces in the climate movement. We recognize that the urgency of the moment makes broad cooperation a strategic necessity—and that climate justice must be central to the work. When applying a social and racial justice frame in the climate movement, with the active participation and leadership of frontline impacted communities, we call this climate justice.



ROSSMERY ZAYAS CJA and GGJ Member
COMMUNITIES FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT
SOUTHEAST LOS ANGELES, CA

The Red Line action—where thousands of people from around the world flooded the streets of Paris to create a literal red line with red fabric, red umbrellas, and with our hearts—reminded me of my roots. To me, the red line represents the need for system change and the bloodlines of those most impacted by climate change. The reality is that Indigenous Peoples, people of color, and womyn are most impacted by pollution. These are also the same people who are confronting

our global leaders who have been promising a new climate agreement, which primarily is a failure. My generation is going to live with the consequences of these compromises that are being made to protect the interests of the fossil fuel companies. We are the red lines, and although we have been crossed, we are resilient.

We are challenging the normalization of our neighborhoods that are overburdened with toxicity creating dirty air, water, and soil. Wilmington alone has three major oil refineries, not including the ones bordering the community. Los Angeles is also impacted by pollution coming from the Harbor Area. My community and surrounding communities deal with diesel truck pollution, and one major source is 710 freeway (which physically connects Wilmington to Southeast Los Angeles) carrying commercial goods from the ports into our neighborhoods. Although overwhelmed with environmental injustices, young people are taking a stand. Youth in Wilmington recently sued the city of Los Angeles for rubber-stamping oil drill plans. Young people in Southeast Los Angeles not only shut down a multibillion-dollar battery-recycling plant that contaminated thousands of homes; they are also holding our state legislators and government accountable. We are the ones with the solutions. It is in our blood. We had them to begin with and that was taken away from us.





OUR STRATEGY IN PARIS

“Our delegation is more than 25 years in the making. From the People of Color Environmental Justice Summit, through the Kyoto Agreements, and the entire COP process, we have been the voice of urgency and clarity at every turn, because protecting our communities, our families and the planet has been our only true interest. We know, just as these negotiators do, that real reductions require a fundamental shift from the extractive economy and stopping climate pollution at the source.”

—Jose Bravo of the Just Transition Alliance & Grassroots Global Justice Alliance

More than 100 leaders and organizers from US and Canadian grassroots and Indigenous communities formed the historic It Takes Roots to Weather the Storm delegation to Paris for the UNFCCC COP21 and parallel social movement actions. Our multi-racial, inter-generational group represented 35 organizations leading struggles against extraction from Jackson, Mississippi to the mountains of Kentucky and the outer cities of Southeast Los Angeles and Richmond, California. It Takes Roots delegates are leaders from communities living directly alongside fracking wells, oil refineries, coal mines, tar sands and waste incinerators.

In the months leading up to the Paris negotiations, Grassroots Global Justice Alliance led a process to align the joint It Takes Roots delegation and our membership organizations around a set of core demands that spoke to the local conditions our delegates were facing. Through weekly intensives we studied the core elements of the draft agreement and the implications

for frontline communities. We developed teams to prepare our direct action strategy, communications plans, logistics and security, and inside strategy, prioritizing our key points of intervention. In Paris these teams continued, with little rest and long days of high-impact actions, panels, workshops, media events, and art and chant preparation. In addition to our internal delegation coordination, several It Takes Roots delegates also played leadership roles in within the broad movement, including the international facilitation body of the Coalition Climat 21 (CC21), and other global climate justice alliances.

The intensity of the leadership opportunities, political exposure, and movement relationship-building through this kind of deliberate and collective preparation, assessment, evaluation and debriefing is often deeply transformative for the individuals and organizations involved. Movement veterans alongside newer frontline leaders and youth, we multiplied our capacities, carried the messages from our home

communities, and played leadership roles throughout the mass mobilizations in Paris.

It Takes Roots unified around five core demands, calling on the United States government to:

1. Establish mandatory—not voluntary—emissions cuts at the source.
2. Keep fossil fuels in the ground.
3. Reject fracking, nuclear power, carbon markets, and other dangerous technologies and false promises.
4. Strengthen the inclusion of human rights and particularly the rights of Indigenous Peoples.
5. Advocate for community-rooted solutions, including regional and local economic structures that support the production of renewable energy and a just transition away from a fossil fuel economy.

We were well aware that the text of the Agreement was so deeply pre-negotiated that the COP21 mobilizations were not a political moment when we could win these demands. The demands served more as a platform that would extend beyond Paris and mark the core priorities and direction for frontline communities in the climate movement. Door-to-door and in membership meetings across the US, It Takes Roots delegates gathered thousands of signatures from impacted communities, and we brought these voices of support with us to the Paris mobilizations.

DIRECT ACTION STRATEGY

Whether fighting polluters at the point of extraction, or bringing our demands to the UNFCCC, one of the most effective tactics for grassroots movement to exert our collective power is strategic direct action. Direct action allows us to amplify our message, bring demands directly to decision makers, use our bodies to make critical interventions, and to open opportunities for impacted people to feel and understand their own power in changing the conditions in their own lives. Veteran direct action strategists from the Ruckus Society and the Indigenous People Power Project (IP3) facilitated the action plans for both the It Takes Roots Delegation and Indigenous Rising. They led the delegation through a process rooted in our goals where we assessed our targets, messages, timing, tone, and tactics. (*See sidebar on key It Takes Roots actions in Paris.*)

The French government ban on public protest just two weeks before the COP clearly impacted our action plans. Our tactical team was continually assessing and adapting our response to these challenging and shifting conditions. Our delegation denounced the protest ban before the COP began, and remained committed throughout the mobilizations to defending our right to express our public dissent, especially in a moment when key decisions were being made that directly impact our lives.

Despite the failures of the Paris Agreement, we found great hope and strength in the streets of Paris where movements from around the world came together to raise our voices. The mass protests continuing even past the signing of the COP21 Agreement signified a growing recognition that true climate solutions are coming not from a formal UN negotiation process, but from the growing pressure and power of our collective struggle.

INSIDE STRATEGY

While access to accreditation for civil society participation in the official UNFCCC negotiations has been shrinking and difficult to obtain, the It Takes Roots delegation did have an inside team of about 10 delegates, led mainly by the Indigenous Environmental Network. The It Takes Roots inside team focused on our demand that human rights, in particular the rights of Indigenous Peoples, be upheld in the final negotiated operating text of the Agreement.

The UN climate negotiations have always struggled with the incorporation of language in the UNFCCC platform documents that addresses the ways the impacts of climate change interfere with the protection of human rights. Disadvantaged, marginalized, excluded and vulnerable individuals and groups, including those whose ways of life are inextricably linked to the environment, the land and waters, all experience disproportionate effects, and in many cases, are the most vulnerable. This includes gender and climate change concerns as well. Twenty-seven million people are displaced by climate- and weather-related disasters each year, with many experiencing social and economic consequences. Although the broader UN system has recognized the existence of environmental and climate refugees, they are not protected by international law, human rights laws, or asylum systems.

The previous UN COP20 meeting in Lima, Peru witnessed the push by governmental entities to not only weaken the language on human rights that was current at the time, but to eliminate any language at all—whether it becomes part of the preamble or the operative text of the draft climate agreement.

In Paris, the It Takes Roots delegation, with IEN’s leadership inside the UN negotiations, connected with human rights NGOs, along with the Indigenous Caucus, the Women’s Caucus, the Youth Caucus and the NGO Caucus, including Climate Justice Now and the International Climate Action Network, to push for the inclusion of human rights language in the operative text.

Ultimately, human rights were cut from the operative section of the Paris Agreement. There is limited language in the preamble and addendum text. The human rights language in the preamble is purely aspirational and not binding or enforceable in any way. The Preambular Paragraph 8 (PP8) on page 1, states “Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind. Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of

indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.” It is noted that the word “consider” in the preambular text does not require governments to fulfill their obligations on human rights.

The European Union, particularly the United Kingdom, as well as the United States⁶ and Canada, have forcefully taken the position at other UN bodies, such as the Human Rights Council, that Indigenous Peoples’ collective rights are not human rights. The It Takes Roots delegation inside team stood with IEN in demanding that full collective Indigenous rights have to be recognized and respected both in the Part 1 Preamble, Part 2 of the operative section, Part C (REDD) and Annex I (safeguards). General human rights language effectively does not include Indigenous rights as described in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It does not include the right of Free Prior and Informed Consent, the right to lands, territories and resources, or the right to the protection of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge. Coming away from the Paris Agreement, it is more imperative than ever that the climate





**KANDI MOSSETT, GGJ and CJA member
INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL
NETWORK
FORT BERTHOLD, MANDAN, HIDATSA,
AND ARIKARA NATIONS, NORTH DAKOTA**

The Paris Agreement is a death sentence because it is not fighting pollution at the source—which in my case in North Dakota is where they are fracking. We are the Red Line for so many symbolic reasons. We are the bloodlines. We are going to carry on the future generations. We are the ones getting bloodied in the battles. We are dying slow deaths from cancer and illness.

People try to put themselves outside of the problem. We educate people, through non-violent direct action, through media. We go into these negotiations so they see that there are people fighting back—not sitting idly by.

We are winning. So many people are talking about climate change. In my own personal experience, I have seen the change in my family who used to work in the oil fields. People are seeing it is the problem. The ban on fracking in Oklahoma was a huge victory, built by women leaders like Casey Camp. We are the ones that have the power to make those choices and those changes. People are waking up and realizing that we have to take things into our own hands.

I went to Paris to push the envelope. To show that we are here, we are fighting back, and we don't agree with the false promises. We are the ones on the frontlines and red line who are seeing people sick. I am a real living person with family and friends, not just a statistic of climate-related illness and deaths. I wanted to them to see my face and hear my story, the human impact that pollution through fossil fuel extraction is having.

I went to Paris to bring solutions. We are not just saying “stop” to complain. Every day the wind that blows on our face, the sun that shines that on the corner—that is not going to poison us. Why would you not want that for yourself and your future generations? I went to talk to these negotiators who have gotten so far from this earth and life system, to make them realize what their decisions mean. If I reached even one person there, and I think I did, it was worth it.

movement as a whole continue to stand with the Indigenous Peoples movement in pushing UN bodies and nation states to make specific binding commitments to respecting Indigenous rights.

CC21: LEADING IN THE BIG TENT

In addition to preparing and coordinating frontline and Indigenous leaders and organizers from North America, Grassroots Global Justice, the Indigenous Environmental Network, and the Climate Justice

Alliance have also been intentionally investing in cohering and aligning the broader climate movement. In 2014, we dedicated staff and organizational resources to play leadership and facilitative roles in both the People's Climate March in New York and the international section of the French-initiated Coalition Climat 21 in Paris.

The CC21 brought together more than 130 civil society organizations including labor unions,



international solidarity associations, religious organizations, human rights, Indigenous and environmental NGOs, as well as the European direct action community and other social movements. Part of the explicit intention of building this broader collective table was to draw together forces who have at times been in adversarial relationships to one another in previous COP mobilizations. The CC21 was an effort to build alignment among these diverse forces on an arc of action beginning the day before the opening of the COP and carrying through the two weeks of mobilization to a massive “Red Line” action on the closing day, which would represent the social movement having the last word and continuing the struggle beyond Paris. Our goal in investing in and strengthening the CC21 was to both cohere the climate movement as a whole, and to integrate the leadership of the communities most directly impacted by the climate crisis within this broader popular front.

There is a long history of frontline communities being talked about and talked to by broader NGOs and “Big Green” environmental groups, rather than being talked with. In the US there is a long history of environmental inequity based on race and class being a point of tension between grassroots social movements and broader environmental organizations. The relative scale and financial capacity of larger

environmental organizations can also create organizational cultures and behavior that are dismissive of leadership coming from frontline communities. More recently, some of these dynamics are beginning to shift as some key leaders within larger NGOs have come to understand that none of our forces alone can win at the scale we need. Working together and aligning our movements requires a deeper commitment to mutual respect, honesty, meaningful participation and communication, especially when challenges and differences arise in the work.

In the CC21 process, the cohesion of the broader coalition was challenged a number of times. One of the sharper tensions arose around differences in response to the protest ban imposed by the French Government in response to the attacks in Paris. The protest ban threw into question the entire unified arc of the CC21 strategy. French leadership within the coalition went into almost daily negotiations with police and elected officials, defending the right to public dissent during the COP. Unfortunately, the threat of risk from the protest ban also began to disrupt the cohesion between the social movements and larger environmental NGOs. Some NGOs broke from the collective process and began to act individually, prioritizing organizational media exposure. Differences in response to the content of the

agreement itself also created tension. The unity within the CC21 was challenged and some of these different political conclusions on the success or failure of the agreement may remain unresolved until there are opportunities for evaluation and deeper communication.

Ultimately the goal of a broader popular front like the CC21 is not to erase differences, nor to drop to the lowest common place of agreement. We are continually seeking the highest possible alignment—tactically and if possible strategically—and working to maintain our communication and integrity in order to deepen trust and support the voices of individual organizations as well as the collective voice of the coalition as a whole.

In our assessment, a key weakness of the CC21 was a discomfort with allowing disagreements and points of difference to surface and be openly discussed and debated. Fear of divisive or disruptive forms of disagreement and struggle led to a practice of avoiding dialogue around differences of opinion. Inevitably a culture of avoiding difference leads towards the lowest rather than the highest possible unity. This avoidance of disagreement and dialogue also impacted our ability to cohere around a unified strategy coming out of Paris. We are seeing the impacts now, as most

organizations are advancing their own plans, rather than operating with a unified vision.

In spite of the challenges of leading in this broader context, we recognize that frontline communities have an important role to play in leading and organizing a broad alignment of forces within our movement. Broader movement building is an important part of our strategy, however only when the table that we create to work together includes leadership from grassroots movements, room for honest dialogue, and a practice of maintaining group agreements and decisions with integrity. As we evaluate and develop a shared assessment of the lessons from the CC21, we will continue to participate in opportunities for joint tactical engagement with broader forces. At the same time, we will keep building the strength and coherence of the frontline grassroots sector within the climate movement.

FRONTLINE-TO-FRONTLINE MOVEMENT BUILDING

In the It Takes Roots organizing process we practiced a deeper level of frontline-to-frontline relationship building that provides an important model for the kind of global solidarity and movement building that is essential to our global vision of Just Transition. More than a year before the Paris mobilizations, our delegation of grassroots organizers began to build relationships with grassroots racial justice and frontline communities in Paris. Like many of the organizations represented in the It Takes Roots delegation, the strongest Black and migrant rights mass social movements in Paris are waging struggles around housing, the rights of migrant communities, and police brutality.

In October 2015, Grassroots Global Justice brought a small delegation of frontline organizers from Cooperation Jackson in Mississippi, the Southwest Workers Union in Texas, the Indigenous People Power Project (IP3) in Canada, and national GGJ staff to Paris. We went directly to the encampments of displaced migrant families who were demanding housing rights, as well youth centers and community meetings of racial justice activists and organizers. We shared about the similar struggles in Black, Latino, and Indigenous communities in North America, and began to bridge relationships of solidarity across our



struggles. Many of the migrant families in Paris come from Africa, often from from Indigenous Tribes. In France, they lack mechanisms for the recognition of their human and Indigenous rights. We also shared our assessment of the relevance of climate justice for migrant and working-class communities, and the goals of COP21 mobilizations.

Through these deeper exchanges we were able to engage and mobilize a new set of forces in Paris who were not represented in the Coalition Climat 21. While the CC21 was overwhelmingly white and middle class, there were a few key staff and coalition members who understood the critical role of front-line communities. Several local organizers with 350.org in Paris also played a key role in supporting the local relationship building with racial justice and migrant justice movements inside Paris. During the COP21, we supported these local movements in a demonstration at a migrant detention center, drawing the connection between climate migration and the struggles of refugees and immigrant communities in Paris and in North America. The joint practice of our work together throughout the planning, exchanges and mobilization developed a much deeper trust and

connection between our struggles that is extending beyond the COP with on-going joint strategy development and exchanges between our movements.

In addition to bringing forward the voices of migrant communities on the frontlines of the climate struggle, there were several other manifestations of the critical intersection between climate, environmentally related migration, and militarism. Under the banner of our core slogan “No War, No Warming,” It Takes Roots delegates from Iraq Veterans Against the War drove home the connection between dwindling energy resources and expanding wars. They challenged the climate movement to sharpen the critique of militarism in our vision of Just Transition. Black Lives Matter activists within It Takes Roots connected with a delegation of students from the Historically Black Colleges and Universities and organized a demonstration inside the civil society space within the COP21 negotiations. The students covered their faces with masks and chanted “We Can’t Breathe,” drawing the link between disproportionate violence that Black communities face from police brutality and the disproportionate health impacts Black communities face due to environmental and climate racism.



IT TAKES ROOTS DIRECT ACTIONS IN PARIS

The It Takes Roots delegation brought its demands to life in the streets of Paris through an intense and creative series of direct actions, including:

▲ Frontline Contingent in the Human Chain

On November 29, in response to the ban on mobilizations a day before COP21 was set to begin, more than 10,000 people took to the streets of Paris, participating in a creative action called a “human chain.” The chain stretched the length of the intended march route in a powerful display of the voices of popular movements who have been shut out of the COP process. We participated in the frontline contingent of the Human Chain, along with local migrant communities.



▲ Canoes to Paris, led by the Indigenous Environmental Network



On December 6, Indigenous leaders from the Sarayaku and Sapara Tribes in the Amazon of Ecuador and the Lummi Nation in the Pacific Northwest led a flotilla of canoes and kayaks through the canals of Paris honoring the sacredness of water and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples from around the world took to the waterways of Paris with a strong call to keep fossil fuels in the ground and counter devastating impacts that REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) is having on Indigenous Peoples.

▲ Migrant Justice Solidarity Action

On December 9, nearly 200 grassroots activists converged outside the Vincennes detention center in Paris, which was the site of an historic uprising after a Tunisian man died in custody there in 2008, bringing national attention to the inhumane treatment of migrants and refugees in detention. It Takes Roots delegates participated in this march in solidarity with thousands of refugees and migrants detained by the French government. The action demonstrated solidarity with refugees fleeing situations of grave conflict, and made vital connections between migrant rights, Indigenous rights, gender equality, and climate change.





▲ Human Rights Day Action at the Paris Peace Wall

On December 10, grassroots leaders from climate-impacted communities in the US rallied at the Paris Peace Wall, a venue chosen to symbolically challenge the grave and violent implications of the current COP21 Agreement. More than 350 people participated with massive banners, signs, fierce chanting, singing, and powerful street theatre. Members of frontline communities testified to the impact of climate change on their lives, and denounced the US delegation for its legacy of environmental racism and for undermining the possibility for genuine climate justice coming out of the COP21 Agreement. International speakers addressed the role of the US violating their human rights.

▲ Indigenous Rising Water Ceremony

On December 11, Indigenous Rising convened a water ceremony. The Indigenous Women of the Americas Defenders of the Earth Treaty Initiative led this prayer action in defense of water, the lifeblood of Mother Earth. Frontline women from around the world were invited to this event and brought small volumes of water from their homelands as well.

▲ Red Line Action

On December 12, thousands of people took to the streets of Paris in an action demonstrating that the “red line” of our communities’ survival was being crossed, even with the Paris Agreement. Communities carried huge red banners representing the many core struggles ignored by the Agreement, including those for the rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Global South, and Nature/Mother Earth, and for global system change. The Red Line Action offered a vivid statement of Climate Justice Movement’s commitment to continue building pressure beyond the Agreement in order to protect our communities, and ensure the survival of future generations. The It Takes Roots delegation joined with La Vía Campesina and the World March of Women, and led a spontaneous march all the way from the Arc de Triomphe to the Eiffel Tower; this was one of the routes planned for the opening march that was cancelled by French authorities in the aftermath of the Paris attacks. IEN, with global Indigenous participation, organized an Indigenous Red Line Action on the famous “Love Lock” Pont des Arts bridge over the Seine River, starting out from the Notre Dame cathedral. Many of the other red line activists joined behind our march, which became one of the most powerful displays of the social movement presence in Paris during the COP21. The delegation ended the day at an action led by our allies Alternatibas, a strong and growing French movement showcasing alternatives to climate change and the energy crisis.



SYSTEM CHANGE, NOT CLIMATE CHANGE

“Climate Change is a symptom of a broken system that requires addressing the root causes to heal ourselves and Mother Earth.”

—Sacajawea Hall, GGJ and CJA member, Cooperation Jackson, Mississippi

The slogan “System Change, Not Climate Change” united our social movements coming out of Copenhagen, and led us through the COP21 mobilizations. This reflects the growing understanding that even Pope Francis pointed to in his 2015 Encyclical on the environment: Climate catastrophe does not result from a few policies, but grows out of the larger capitalist economic system that drives over-consumption in the wealthy nations, and under-develops the Global South. Any truly effective environmental justice strategy must go beyond the question of pollution and emission. We must tackle the fundamental nature of the extractive economy as a whole.

System change requires us to reject the corporate-driven free trade and investment agreements and how those are linked to also harmonizing the trading regimes, and investment regimes, and trade, and nature itself. We will continue to resist extraction at

the local level in all frontline communities, and we are building new alternative economic models based on an internationalist strategy of Just Transition toward democratized, equitable, clean and 100% renewable energy for all. System change includes the struggle to end public funding and subsidization of fossil fuel exploration, extraction and infrastructure. We are working with partners on a campaign to simultaneously divest from fossil fuels and reinvest the resources necessary for a just transition in our frontline communities through a financial cooperative.

It Takes Roots delegates face three core tasks on our return from Paris: defending the interests of frontline communities in the Paris Agreement implementation, advancing campaigns for a Just Transition to a regenerative economy, and building out intersectional organizing that connects climate justice to both gender justice and anti-militarism.







JUST TRANSITION: TAKING THE FUTURE IN OUR HANDS

“The future of the planet is in the hands of the people...We, the peasants of the world, will now return to our territories and farms all the more determined to continue our struggle for food sovereignty for all the peoples of the world.”

—Antolin Huascar, La Vía Campesina, Peru

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At this historic moment when world leaders, especially those from the US, acknowledge the urgency of taking action to address the climate crisis, our movements must make clear what that commitment will actually require, and advance demands that move towards real action and solutions.

Achieving the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions of the Paris Agreement in the US will require a combined strategy of keeping extractive energy in the ground and pursuing a Just Transition to invest in regional and local economic structures that support the production of renewable energy and jobs.

KEEP IT IN THE GROUND

Extractive energy includes nuclear, coal, oil and gas, waste incinerators, biomass energy, and other forms of energy and fuels that pose extreme risks to human and ecosystem health, community resilience, economic certainty, and climate stability. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projects that in order to reverse the trend towards abrupt and catastrophic change, deep cuts in carbon emissions by the most industrialized nations are essential. We must reduce greenhouse gas

emissions (GHGs) by 80% of 1990 levels by 2050. We believe this challenge can be met, but we can only do it by addressing the economic crisis and creating meaningful work and livelihoods for the millions of unemployed and underemployed people. This will require a radical transformation of the economy with a push towards energy democracy. But the solutions can be implemented today.

JUST TRANSITION TOWARD A REGENERATIVE ECONOMY

Just Transition is a framework for making fair and sustainable shifts away from the violent extractive economy towards more democratic, ecologically rooted economies. Across the US, frontline communities are beginning to advance Just Transition strategies, including CJA’s Our Power Campaign,⁷ a national effort to shift economic priorities away from extractive, dirty energy. With key Just Transition demonstration sites in Detroit, MI; Black Mesa, AZ; Richmond, CA; San Francisco, CA; across the state of Kentucky; in Jackson, MS, and in San Antonio, TX, the Our Power Campaign is fighting to redirect resources toward local living communities through the Reinvest in Our Power



**SACAJAWEA HALL, GGJ and CJA member
COOPERATION JACKSON
JACKSON, MS**

Standing in solidarity at a detention center outside of Paris brought home for me why a human rights intersectional framework is critical to our call for Systems Change. Like poor, working class, African and immigrant communities in Paris' suburbs, the black community here in Jackson, Mississippi experiences systemic human rights violations that not only include environmental racism, including illnesses directly related to environmental toxins, but also low

wage jobs, inadequate health care or none at all, inadequate and unaffordable housing, defunded public schools, police and state terror, and food deserts.

The Paris Agreement is a continuation the global status quo based on gross inequity and inequality . Although it is meant to address climate change, it allows for the continued expansion of our current petrochemical- based global economy that has an unending need for growth and ruthless exploitation of both our planet's natural and biological resources and the human resources of our communities.

Through statewide coalition work we are currently in a struggle with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality to challenge the Coal plants across the state and their refusal to implement the federal Clean Power Plan. While policy work to protect our communities from extractive digging, burning and dumping is crucial, in Jackson we are also developing our contribution to a Just Transition that holistically connects our employment, housing, food, energy, and other needs. This transition is towards cooperative, equitable, sustainable living with wealth generated to stay in our communities to benefit us all.

campaign to build a financial cooperative for sharing services, learning and capital.

The Our Power Campaign is rooted in the Just Transition strategy of directly taking on some of the worst manifestations of the extractive economy, such as mountaintop removal, coal mining, toxic waste and coal incineration, and oil refineries, while at the same time building local alternatives and advancing demands that redirect state and tribal resources toward zero waste; regional food systems based upon the principles of food sovereignty; public transportation; clean community energy, efficient, affordable and durable housing; and ecosystem restoration; stewardship; and building economies based upon interdependence with and responsibility towards Mother Earth and the ecological limits of Nature.

As the It Takes Roots delegation, we are grounding our approach to the implementation of the Paris Agreement in this orientation of Just Transition toward a regenerative economy, and advancing real and long-term strategies that shift our energy and economic policies toward global well-being and respect for the rights of Nature/Mother Earth.

OUR POWER PLAN

In the US, the first steps in the implementation of the Paris Agreement will be integrated into the implementation of the Clean Power Plan (CPP), which was announced by President Obama and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on August 3, 2015, in advance of the COP21. The Clean Power Plan is the first rule the US Environmental Protection Agency has ever made to regulate emissions of carbon dioxide from coal-fired power plants and other

fossil fuel-fired electric generating facilities. Coal-fired plants are the largest source of carbon emissions in the United States.

In October 2015, just after the Clean Power Plan was officially published, 24 states⁸ and the coal company Murray Energy filed a lawsuit in the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals to stop the implementation of the plan. Following this initial lawsuit, a number of other suits were filed mainly by utility, coal and mining industry forces. In February 2016, the US Supreme Court issued a temporary stay on the implementation of the Clean Power Plan while this lawsuit makes its way through the courts. If the Clean Power Plan makes it through the courts, states will develop State Implementation Plans (SIPs) over the next one to three years, outlining their strategies to comply with the CPP. Those states that do not develop their own SIPs will default to being regulated by the EPA through a Federal Implementation Plan (FIP). Some states are still developing their SIPs despite the

Supreme Court stay.

In January 2016, the Climate Justice Alliance released the *Our Power Plan*, lifting up the importance of EPA action at the national, regional, state, and local levels, and putting forward the vision coming from frontline communities around the implementation of the plan.⁹ Similar to the core content of the Paris Agreement, the central dangers in the Clean Power Plan are the embedded requirement of states to participate in Cap-and-Trade and other pollution trading mechanisms, as well as an emphasis on expansion of natural gas and nuclear energy, which have serious environmental impacts on frontline communities. The goal of CJA's *Our Power Plan* is to empower communities working for a Just Transition to a clean energy future by organizing to protect the integrity of the CPP and ensuring Federal and State Implementation Plans (and potentially Tribal Plans) adhere to principles of environmental justice.



ELIZABETH SANDERS, CJA Member
KENTUCKIANS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH, KY

What we do to the land, we do to the people. In my home in southeast Kentucky, that's meant the destruction of our mountains to extract coal, the pollution of our land and water to put money in the pockets of politicians and coal executives,

and the poisoning and killing of our people by elites who eschew safety and refuse to even reinvest in the communities they are taking resources from. Kentuckians are working hard on realizing the just transition we want to see. We are gathering public input through a participatory process to create our own Clean Power Plan—The Empower Kentucky Plan—because our elected officials refuse to do so. They are trying to build a federal prison here in my county on top of a strip mine and are calling it economic development and are promising jobs that will never materialize. We know this is a false solution—we refuse to have our economic futures built upon the backs of other frontline communities.

This is our red line. The Paris Agreement is not enough to protect the land and the people here, in Kentucky, or across the globe. We don't have time or lives to waste while the rich get richer. Our future can't afford to wait for any of our political leaders who pay lip service to a bright future with both feet planted firmly in the past. This is why we in Kentucky unite behind the red lines of other communities to demand and build the just transition we want to see.



CLIMATE JUSTICE DEMANDS GENDER JUSTICE

“Women are suffering either by being refugees or by being affected by the situation that forces people to migrating for other countries. The system that forces people to migrate is the same system that is exploiting women’s bodies, women’s labor.... They keep forcing us into wars in the name of borders, and in the name of controlling natural resources.”

—Graça Samo, World March of Women International Secretariat in Mozambique

“As Indigenous Women of the Americas, we understand the responsibilities toward the sacred system of life given to us by the Creator to protect the territorial integrity of Mother Earth and Indigenous Peoples. These responsibilities include the safety, health and well being of our children and those yet to come, as well as the children of all of our non-human relatives, the seeds of the plants and those unseen. These responsibilities demand that we act to ensure healthy air, water, soil, seeds and a safe climate so that life may continue.”

—Indigenous Women of the Americas, Defenders of Mother Earth Treaty Compact 2015¹⁰

Women’s leadership was central in the It Takes Roots delegation, as it is in frontline climate struggles around the world. We organized Women’s Assemblies and actions drawing forward the connection between climate justice and the relationship that women have to struggles over land, water, and food sovereignty. In frontline communities, particularly

in the Global South, women experience some of the most extreme negative impacts of climate change and of the false solutions. Women are disproportionately impacted by environmental destruction and extractive industries, and are at the forefront of organizing for real solutions. Violence against women has hit crisis levels near fracking wells and dam projects.

Violence and militarism threaten the lives of women who defend the human rights of their communities, like Honduran feminist, Indigenous and environmental leader Berta Cáceres, who was assassinated in March 2016.¹¹

From our perspective, there cannot be climate justice without gender justice. The struggles for water and land rights, food sovereignty, and an end to extractivism are feminist struggles, and must also lift up the essential demands around women's autonomy over their bodies, their lives, their livelihoods, and their right to live free of violence. Through this deepening consciousness in our movement, we are fundamentally orienting our demands for a Just Transition towards a vision of a feminist economy.

One of the leading examples of this vision is the

Indigenous Women's Treaty that was originally signed on September 27, 2015 in traditional Lanape Territory, now called New York.¹² Representatives from the North and the South came together in sacred ceremony to, in the words of Ponca elder Casey Camp-Horinek, "honor the ancestors who brought us to this point where we could stand strong in unified love of our Mother the Earth, our Father the Sky and the undying duty to protect the air, water, earth and all of our relatives for the future generations."

The Indigenous Women of the Americas Protecting Mother Earth Treaty is a living document that is being signed by Indigenous women around the world who are committing themselves to defend Mother Earth and address the climate crisis through a consistent program of action.



**SARRA TEKOLA, GGJ Member
GOT GREEN IN SEATTLE, WA**

I live in the most diverse area of a very segregated City. Got Green works in South Seattle to make sure people of color have access to the new green economy. I'm also involved with Black Lives Matter and do Black organizing. Our lives are discounted. We are literally breathing different air than North Seattle. In fact, people who live in the Duwamish Valley have their lives shortened by as much as 13 years from the toxic pollution. Black people make up only 7% of the City but 60% of the homeless population. In this City, Black survival is resistance.

I went to Paris because I knew the Big Greens wouldn't carry our message, but rather compromise. Communities of color can't afford to compromise, we need 1.5 degrees to stay alive. Going to Paris put my first world privilege in perspective. Not only was the Global South largely under-represented, but I watched how they treated us better only after they found out we were Americans. But I used that American privilege to challenge the system. I worked with the HBCU delegation and the NAACP to push what was originally going to be a silent vigil inside, but we made it a protest (during a protest ban) in the UN Green space. We put on face masks to represent the dirty air Black communities worldwide are subjugated into breathing and chanted "We can't breathe" and "Black Lives Matter." When we got in the middle of the Green space we did a die-in, to represent those who have died because of climate change and also to show solidarity with Mike Brown, an unarmed Black male shot dead by the police. Many people don't see the connections between police brutality and climate change, but with increased natural disasters we will see more police in those situations and we saw how they treated us in Hurricane Katrina. That is why Black folx are part of the Red Line of resistance to the fossil fuel empire.



NO WAR, NO WARMING

“The US military is the largest polluter in the world, and so I think it’s difficult to have an agreement, the COP21 agreement, that excludes US military’s pollution. The US military, and militaries across the world, help enforce extractive economies. When people in local communities and frontline communities are trying to build movements to keep extractive corporations from taking the resources out of their lands, it is the military, the police and militarism, in general, that is stopping that from happening.”

—Derek Mathews, GGJ member, Iraq Veterans Against the War

“We are here to show that when the Northern countries do all they can to raise physical and mental borders, we the people from all over the world, from Jackson, Mississippi to Fresnes in Ile-de-France, we stand for climate and social justice and against xenophobia, islamophobia and negrophobia.”

—Almamy Kanouté, French grassroots activist

In frontline communities our daily survival struggles are not confined to a single arena. We live at the intersection of multiple struggles around land and water, policing and militarism, national sovereignty, human rights, and the rights of nature. Our collective strength grows from our ability to draw together different movements who share a common vision and values. Increasingly we are seeing the anti-war movement, racial justice struggles, feminist movements, and the climate movement coming together to say climate change is not just about emissions. Climate change is about the entire economy based on militarism and extractivism that has to be changed to a just and regenerative system.

The fossil fuel economy contributes to this multi-faceted crisis facing the world, causing resource wars; polluting our air, water, and land; bringing illness and death to people and ecosystems; privatizing nature; economically exploiting Indigenous communities, communities of color, and the working poor; forcing mass migrations; and depriving millions of access to adequate food and water, housing, healthcare, and healthy and safe employment.

The combination of economic crises, demands for energy and water, and climate crises in turn leads to further militarization and massive increases in global migration and displacement. Whole families are being forced to leave their homelands—though often

it is also the case that women stay behind and have a lot at stake in defending their land and homes. In some regions of the world, women must defend their lands and families from military aggression.

As part of a global climate justice movement, we understand that in moments like those following the November 2015 attacks in Paris, we need to raise our voices against militarism abroad as well as an increasingly militarized police force at home, with its over-policing and racial targeting of our own communities. The It Takes Roots delegation is made up of grassroots leaders from Indigenous, Black, Latino, Asian and working-class white communities. We know first-hand the violence and repression of state racism that exploits tragic moments like those after the Paris attacks. We reject rising Islamophobia and racism across Europe and North America, as well as the scapegoating of migrants and refugees. The

global community has a human rights responsibility to refugees fleeing violence and fleeing for their lives. The roots of the refugee crisis are linked to climate change, and those seeking refuge because of drought, repeated bombing, and the lack of humanitarian support from world governments.

Taking action on climate is a essential to global stability and peace, which includes peace with Mother Earth. We must continue to build a climate justice movement that is aligned across issues of migration, anti-militarism at home and abroad, human rights and rights of Indigenous peoples, Earth jurisprudence, jobs and housing. We call on world leaders, and President Obama in particular, to move toward inclusion over exclusion, renewable clean energy over pollution profiteering, cutting emissions at source over carbon trading and offset regimes, and peace over militarism.



PAM TAU LEE, GGJ member
CHINESE PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION,
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

From the streets of San Francisco Chinatown to the streets of Paris, Flora Luo and I were proud to represent the Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) and participate with frontline leaders from around the world to make visible our collective outrage at the false promises in the Paris Agreement. Chinese families in our community are struggling from the polluted air they are breathing alongside industrial facilities in the

Bay Area, like the Chevron facility in Richmond and brownfields and superfund sites like the Bayview Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. Our families are facing hunger and food security impacts where subsistence crabbing was wiped out due to abnormal ocean temperatures. We have heightened respiratory problems from the California fires and drought. Our members are also concerned about issues of mining and oil extraction in Asia and the threat of escalating U.S. military action in the Pacific Rim, as well as mushrooming industrial pollution in China.

In California, we are on the frontlines of the struggle against green-washing and pollution trading. In Paris, we confronted California Governor Jerry Brown for expanding fracking across the state, and pollution trading through California Cap-and-Trade. Cap-and-Trade not only creates loopholes that allow polluters like Chevron to continue to contaminate the air our families are breathing; it also threatened the livelihood of frontline communities in places like Brazil and Chiapas, where California polluters are looking to establish offsets and pollution credits to cover their dangerous emissions. I returned to Chinatown only more impassioned to continue the fight against California REDDs and the fight to keep fossil fuels in the ground!



WE ARE MOTHER EARTH'S RED LINE

"We, Indigenous Peoples, are the red line. We have drawn that line with our bodies against the privatization of nature, to dirty fossil fuels and to climate change. We are the defenders of the world's most biologically and culturally diverse regions. We will protect our sacred lands. Our knowledge has much of the solutions to climate change that humanity seeks. It's only when they listen to our message that ecosystems of the world will be renewed."

—Tom Goldtooth, Executive Director of Indigenous Environmental Network, and member leader of both GGJ and CJA

A red line is a point of no return or a limit past which safety can no longer be guaranteed. Frontline communities are not only waging fights to stop extraction at the source. We are holding the uncompromising line of collective survival, and demonstrating real solutions that are within our grasp.

We join the call for System Change, Not Climate Change because we know that the fundamental driving force behind the climate crisis is capitalism, and the very nature of the extractive economy as a whole. Climate justice is not only about the environment. It is tied to peace, jobs, housing, poverty, migration, food sovereignty, gender equality, and access to health care. System Change requires fundamental respect for human rights, particularly the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the rights of future generations and Mother Earth.

In our growing movements, we are building on the

foundation of campaigns directly challenging some of the worst impacts of the extractive economy in frontline communities—including mountaintop removal, oil refineries, and toxic waste incinerators—and beginning to develop alternative economic models based on a strategy of Just Transition toward renewable energy, cooperative economies, and community control. We are taking action to hold world leaders and corporations accountable beyond the COP as we return home to our communities. We are standing with frontline communities across the globe in the demands to make mandatory emission cuts at the source, to leave fossil fuels in the ground, reject false promises and carbon markets, respect human rights and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and to support community-rooted solutions.

Together we are building our power to not only weather the storm, but to change the course of history.



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IT TAKES ROOTS DELEGATION

It Takes Roots to Weather the Storm joins together three powerful alliances: Grassroots Global Justice Alliance (GGJ), the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), and the Climate Justice Alliance (CJA), and organized a delegation of over 100 leaders and organizers from US and Canadian grassroots and indigenous communities to the UNCOP21 in Paris. It Takes Roots delegates comprise a mix of youth organizers and veteran community leaders, from Indigenous, Black, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander and rural white communities in the frontlines of movements for economic, racial, gender, and climate justice, including:

AfroEco
 Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN)
 Black Mesa Water Coalition
 Chinese Progressive Association (CPA-SF)
 Cooperation Jackson
 Communities for a Better Environment (CBE)
 Community to Community Development (C2C)
 El Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas (CATA)
 East Michigan Environmental Action Coalition (EMEAC)
 Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island
 Fuerza Unida

Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA)
 Got Green
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 Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN)
 Institute for Policy Studies (IPS)
 Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW)
 Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC)
 Just Transition Alliance
 Kentuckians for the Commonwealth
 National American Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
 National People's Action
 Portland Central America Solidarity Committee (PCASC)
 People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Justice (PODER)
 Right to Survive
 Ruckus Society
 Southern Maine Workers Center
 Southwest Workers Organizing Project (SWOP)
 Southwest Worker's Union (SWU)
 Vermont Workers Center
 WE ACT for Environmental Justice
 Worcester Roots Project
 Youth members of the Lummi Nation and their chaperones

ENDNOTES

- 1 Ben Zimmer, "The Long History of the Phrase 'Red Line,'" *Wall Street Journal*, July 19, 2013. Retrieved April 11, 2016.
- 2 The People's Agreement of Cochabamba, World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth. <https://pwccc.wordpress.com/2010/04/24/peoples-agreement/>
- 3 <http://www.climatecodered.org/2010/09/what-would-3-degrees-mean.html>
- 4 REDD is a global initiative to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests to compensate governments and companies or owners of forests in developing countries not to cut their carbon-rich forests or to reduce their rate of deforestation and forest degradation as a market mechanism to avoid GHG emissions. REDD+ expands REDD to develop methods for carbon sequestration through conservation of forest (and wetlands, agricultural systems) carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.
- 5 We use "Mother Earth" throughout this report as the preferred term used by Indigenous Peoples' movements to talk about our planet and ecosystem in a way that also expresses an interrelationship and connection with all living beings. Our choice to lift up this important political frame extends from the leadership role of the Indigenous Environmental Network as a key anchor alliance of the It Takes Roots delegation.
- 6 In 2007, the United States was one of only four nations that voted against the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, along with Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Each of these countries eventually reversed their votes. The United States was the last country to do so in 2010, finally making this declaration universally adopted by all member states.
- 7 <http://www.ourpowercampaign.org/>
- 8 The lawsuit was filed by West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, who is joined by the Attorney Generals of Texas, Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Arizona and North Carolina.
- 9 <http://www.ourpowercampaign.org/ourpowerplan/>
- 10 <http://www.ienearth.org/indigenous-women-of-the-americas-defenders-of-mother-earth-treaty-compact-2015/>
- 11 Honduran indigenous and environmental organizer Berta Cáceres was assassinated in her home on March 3, 2016. http://www.democracynow.org/2016/3/4/remembering_berta_caceres_assassinated_honduras_indigenous
- 12 http://indigenusrising.org/womens_treaty/

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It Takes Roots to Weather the Storm joins together three powerful alliances:
Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, the Indigenous Environmental Network, and the Climate Justice Alliance.
ittakesroots.org / indigenusrising.org / ggjalliance.org / iearth.org / ourpowercampaign.org



**GRASSROOTS
GLOBAL JUSTICE
ALLIANCE**



**CLIMATE
JUSTICE
ALLIANCE**