

**STATEMENT OF THE INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS OF THE STATE OF
AMAZONAS (COIAM) on the Mining Policy of the National Government
and State Plans that affect the Constitutional Rights of Indigenous
Peoples.**

On this day, 1 March 2013, we, indigenous peoples and communities of the Venezuelan Amazon, united in the Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of Amazonas (COIAM) and represented by **Organización Indígena Piaroa Unidos del Sipapo (OIPUS), Organización Ye'kuana del Alto Ventuari (KUYUNU), Organización Yanomami (HORONAMI), Organización Mujeres Indígenas de Amazonas (OMIDA), Asociación de Maestros Piaroa (Madoya Huarijja), Organización Piaroa del Cataniapo "Reyö Aje", Organización Indígena de Río Negro (UCIABYRN), Organización Yabarana del Parucito (OYAPAM), Organización Piaroa de Manapiare, Organización Ye'kuana del Alto Orinoco (KUYUJANI Originario) and Movimiento Político Pueblo Unido Multiétnico de Amazonas (PUAMA)**, invoking our constitutional rights (Art. 119 of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Art. 7 of the Organic Law on Indigenous Peoples and Communities), meeting in Puerto Ayacucho, Amazonas State, to **review and analyze the various aspects of the mining policy of the Venezuelan government and the state plans that affect our rights**, have prepared the following considerations by way of a statement:

1. Once again, we acknowledge the efforts of some institutions of the national government and the Venezuelan State to recognize and promote the specific rights of the indigenous peoples of Venezuela. In particular, we acknowledge the position in favor of indigenous rights expressed by the President of the Republic and the environmental rights set out in the second Socialist Plan of the Nation 2013-2019, which refers to *"dismantling and fighting international schemes that promote the commodification of nature, environmental services and ecosystems"* (5.2.2).

2. We express our deep concern regarding the various plans and projects for supposed mining development that have been announced by the national government and have been published in various public and private media, primarily concerning implementation the so-called **ORINOCO MINING ARC (2011)** and the agreement with the Chinese multinational corporation **"Citic Group" (2012)**.

3. We reject the plan to implement, without consultation, the so-called Orinoco Mining Arc, as a flagship policy that aims to promote the exploration and exploitation of minerals in the Guayana Region, which would affect our territories and socio-cultural integrity. This developmentalist and extractivist policy has a clear capitalist orientation and is contrary to our concept of life and of Mother Nature as a vital means of collective sustenance.

4. In particular, we have misgivings about the bilateral agreement entered into between the Venezuelan government and the Chinese multinational corporation "CITIC Group" with the aim of undertaking mining exploration activities in different parts of the country in order to produce a MINING MAP and prospect for minerals in large areas of indigenous lands in Amazonas State (Chinese camps in Ocamo, a Yanomami territory; Cacurí, a Ye'kuana territory; Solano, an Arawako territory; Santa Bárbara, a multi-ethnic territory; Puerto Ayacucho, a multi-ethnic territory), which could jeopardize future collective life in the event of the implementation of projects that affect those territories. We are especially concerned about the fact that there are plans to impose these projects, even though the national government has not effectively **DEMARCATED OUR HABITAT and LANDS**, as mandated by Article 119 of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

5. We consider that the implementation of these projects without proper **PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSULTATION** violates the provisions of Article 120 of the Constitution of the Republic and the Organic Law on Indigenous Peoples and Communities, which refer to the procedure for prior, informed consultation, in good faith, in addition to international treaties that protect indigenous rights, such as International Labour Organization Convention No. 169, which has been signed and ratified by Venezuela, as well as other rules.

6. We ask the national government to **urgently REVISE these projects** and not allow them in indigenous territories and communities given their potentially destructive environmental and socio-cultural impacts. The lives and the physical and cultural survival of future generations of indigenous peoples depend on the proper protection of their habitat and lands. Specifically, we request that the relevant State bodies comply with Presidential Decree No. 269 which prohibits all mining activities in Amazonas State, and the decrees creating the Alto Orinoco Biosphere Reserve and various national parks, as an expression of a

responsible public policy to ensure the environmental protection of the Venezuelan Amazon.

7. We propose that, through a thorough revision of their indigenous policy, the national government and other bodies of the Venezuelan State promote the implementation of sustainable projects in indigenous territories and communities in the south of the country, which respect and safeguard their ways of life and the environmental integrity of the Amazon, in line with the overall protection of the planet.

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Organización Yanomami (HORONAMI)

Organización Mujeres Indígenas de Amazonas (OMIDA)

Asociación de Maestros Piaroa (Madoya Huarijja)

Organización Yekuana del Alto Orinoco (KUYUJANI Originario)

Organización Piaroa del Cataniapo "Reyö Aje"

Organización Indígena de Río Negro (UCIABYRN)

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