

# MAYA LEADERS ALLIANCE

V.O.A Rd., Punta Gorda Town, Toledo, Belize C.A.

Telephone: (501) 662.1663

Email: [mayaleadersbelize@gmail.com](mailto:mayaleadersbelize@gmail.com)

December 10 2013

Ms. Ellysar Baroudy  
Coordinator, Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)  
World Bank Headquarters  
Washington DC, USA

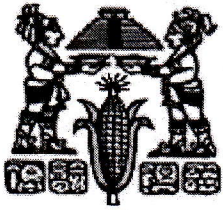
Dear Ms. Baroudy,

The Maya Leaders Alliance (MLA) and the Toledo Alcaldes Association (TAA) submitted a communication to your office dated October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013 bringing to your attention concerns that the Maya people of southern Belize have on Belize's R-PP submission. A response from you dated December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013 was received by the MLA and TAA.

The Government of Belize submitted the final R-PP to the FCPF on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The MLA and TAA on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 convened the traditional leaders from the 38 Maya villages to provide them with an update on the final submission and to draw from the leaders their final position on the R-PP.

We take this opportunity to communicate to you the final position of the Maya Leaders on Belize's final R-PP submission. We congratulate the REDD+ Coordinating Unit for making much improvement on the final submission. However, we collectively find that the R-PP did not adequately address the issue of Maya Customary Land Tenure. There is no clear indication of a commitment to address Maya land tenure an issue that has been lingering for decades. The R-PP did not demonstrate any roadmap towards addressing this critical matter. While the R-PP indicated some engagement with the Maya Leaders through the Alcaldes, this level of engagement will not suffice to any positive result when Central Government continues to set aside or manoeuvre its actions and decisions around the issue. Our concern on this issue becomes more heightened given that at a separate consultation for the Universal Periodic Review adoption of recommendation held on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the government stated that Central Government is yet to determine the 'nomenclature indigenous' as it pertains to the Maya of southern Belize. This for use demonstrates that our existence with our land and forest will not be respected in any initiative such as REDD+ in Belize.

We impress upon the FCPF to give special attention to the ongoing violations and discrimination that the Maya people have consistently suffered under the guise of development actions. We state that the approval of resources for Belize's R-PP will only serve to continue the violations and discrimination against the Maya people's right to their land at the hands of the government.



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Before any REDD+ activity, the government must clarify the status of the Maya Q'eqchi and Mopan of southern Belize as the Indigenous Peoples of Belize. Furthermore, the government must address the lingering Maya Customary Land Tenure before REDD+. Lastly, a clear process of engagement must be established and agreed upon in consultation with the Maya people.

Sincerely,

Mr. Alfonso Cal  
President  
Toledo Alcaldes Association



Mr. Martin Chen  
Chairman  
Maya Leaders Alliance



"Thought deeply, understood  
each other and united their  
words and thought" Popol Vuk

cc.

Minister Lisel Alamilla, Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development

Mrs. Tanya Santo-Neal, Coordinator, REDD+ Coordinating Unit

Ms. Antoinette Moore, MLA Legal Team

Mr. Onel Masardule, IP Focal Point, Central America Region