

## **Multinational Corporation's Toxic Contamination in the Peruvian Amazon Harms Indigenous Communities with World Bank Support**

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(San Francisco, CA) – Today, two indigenous communities in the Peruvian Amazon filed a complaint demanding accountability for toxic oil contamination of their land and rivers by Maple Energy plc, a multinational oil corporation. Members of the Shipibo-Konibo indigenous communities of Canaán de Cachiyacu and Nuevo Sucre have endured years of Maple's contamination, including five oil spills in the past 15 months alone. Villagers have died after exposure to oil-contaminated food and water, and sickness in the communities is widespread.

In addition to the five recent spills, Maple has regularly released oil residues into the communities' tributaries and onto agricultural land. "We want Maple to consider us as human beings, who think, feel pain, and need real medical diagnosis and treatment. Our health is not a game", said Joaquín Sanancino Rodríguez of Canaán. In one case, Maple forced Shipibo community members to clean up a particularly severe spill, exposing the workers to toxic materials as they waded in the river up to their chests without protective gear or proper equipment.

"We want Maple to pay for the harm they have caused", said Walter Tuesta Lomas of Nuevo Sucre, whose father died after exposure to contamination in December, 2009. "We want Maple to comply with its promises to the community." In the complaint filed today, the communities demand that Maple make good on promises to provide clean water and comprehensive medical attention to each community member.

Maple, a U.K.-traded company with corporate leadership predominantly from the United States, expanded its operations in these indigenous communities in 2007 with private-sector financing from the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC). The IFC invested USD \$40 million into Maple's operations in Peru without properly investigating Maple's human rights and environmental record or practices.

"Maple has been polluting with impunity in the Peruvian Amazon for years", said Molly Clinehens of International Accountability Project (IAP), a U.S. based environmental justice advocacy organization. "The IFC's involvement corresponds with the five recent spills, even though the IFC's policies require protection of the environment and the rights of local indigenous communities."

The communities brought today's complaint to the IFC's Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO) with the goal of reaching an agreement with the company that the CAO will monitor.

"Communities demand the CAO's involvement because years of negotiations with Maple have resulted in broken promises and further human rights and environmental abuses," explains attorney Natalie Bridgeman, Executive Director of Accountability Counsel, an organization in San Francisco that assisted the Shipibo communities in filing the complaint. "The IFC and Maple are aware that this project has caused harm but have failed to stop it. The communities hope this CAO complaint will hold Maple to its promises to protect Shipibo health and their environment, and that it will raise awareness about their situation." ###