

ECUADOR

President of CONFENIAE Speaks to Maxus Shareholders

On April 27, Angel Zamarenda (Shuar), President of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE) addressed the annual shareholders' meeting of Maxus Energy Corp. in Amarillo, Texas. His speech was part of a protest against Maxus' Block 16 oil project, organized by Rainforest Action Network and the Campaña Amazonia por la Vida, a coalition of Ecuadorian environmental and human rights groups. Maxus is building a road into the Huaorani Indian Reserve and Yasuni National Park to extract heavy crude oil. The following is an excerpt from his statement.

Greetings to the press and the American public. I represent six Indigenous peoples of the Ecuadorian Amazon - the Shuar, Aohuar, Quichua, Huaorani, Cofan and Siona-Secoya nations - consisting of 300,000 Indian people, organized as CONFENIAE, which in turn is part of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, CONAIE.

With this political force, we have come to tell the oil companies, lumber companies, agribusiness companies, and mining companies of the U.S. that their activities in our

territory represent a massacre. This misuse of technology threatens the life of more than 300,000 Indigenous people, as well as farmers and city dwellers of the Amazon region.

These companies are responsible for the destruction of the wildlife in our territory, the destruction of our sacred sites, lakes and rivers, our fish and game, and the water and air, vital elements for all living things.

CONFENIAE has presented a negotiation plan to the Ecuadorian government, Petroecuador and Maxus, and CONAIE has made repeated efforts to negotiate, but all this has been rejected. The Indigenous people of the Ecuadorian Amazon are not saying "No" to oil extraction, but rather are seeking an alternative. This alternative is not difficult to understand nor to apply with current technology. But, Maxus is blind to this reality.

Maxus cleverly gave money to government officials, and isolated the Huaorani from CONFENIAE and CONAIE. For the second time Maxus signed a document that has no legal value; it tricked a few native Huaorani representatives by offering them things which mean nothing to Maxus and convinced them to sign the agreement.

Now Maxus is moving forward with its destruction. Maxus is responsible for spilling 15 tons of toxic chemicals into the Tiputini River this month, for spilling crude oil along the road, for pressuring the Cofan people in Dureno to leave their village to work transporting road construction materials, for the indiscriminate felling of trees, for the increasing disintegration of the Huaorani people and for the proliferation of contagious diseases, such as cholera, dengue, yellow fever and parasites.

I have come to say, 'Enough of this running over of our people, enough of this genocide'. We demand that the representatives of Maxus discuss with CONFENIAE and CONAIE the proposals that we have already presented. If they do not, we will do everything that remains possible to defend our existence.

We demand a moratorium to oil development and road construction in Huaorani territory until a complete investigation of their environmental and human rights impact can be completed. An environmental management plan must be presented which meets the requirements of the Indigenous peoples of the Amazon. Only in this way can oil activity continue!

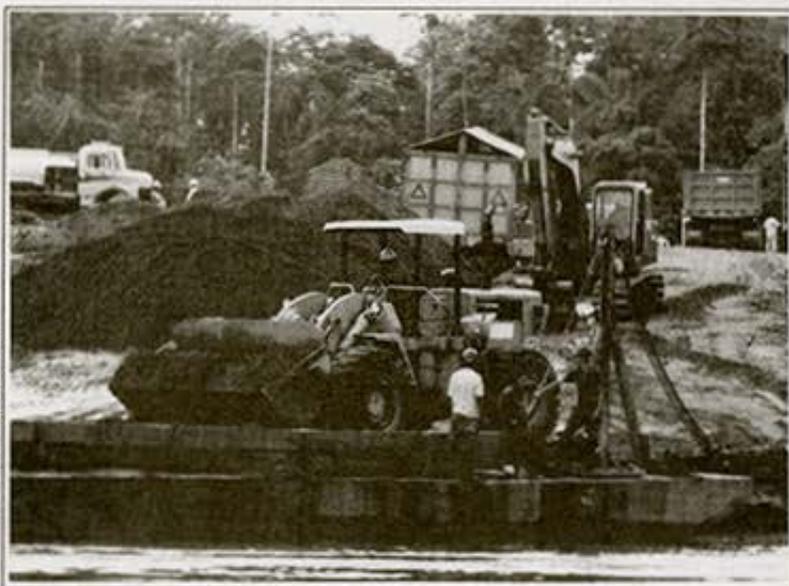


Photo Glen Switkes

Maxus roadhead in Huaorani territory