

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 30, 2015

President
JUAN MANUEL SANTOS
Palacio de Nariño
Carrera 8 # 7 - 26
Bogota, Colombia
South America

Dear President Santos:

Colombia is home to two unique indigenous communities, the Kamentsa and Inga, with extraordinary history in the Sibundoy Valley in Putumayo. Their land was bestowed to them by their ancestor *Taita* (Elder) Carlos Tamabiyo in the 1700s, and they now seek legal recognition and protection of six Inga and Kamentsa *resguardos* (reservations). We urge you to abide by Article 7 of the Colombian Constitution and the 2009 Colombian Constitutional Court ruling, which ordered the Colombian government to protect 32 indigenous communities, including the Inga and Kamentsa, and recognize their ancestral and constitutional right to this land.

Without this legal recognition, these sacred lands are vulnerable to destruction due to invasive mining and infrastructure projects. The preservation of the Sibundoy Valley is vital to the existence of these unique indigenous communities and to the survival of one of the most important ecosystems in the world. These lands are home to important rivers such as the Mocoa, the San Pedro, and the Putumayo, which are vital to irrigating the Amazon region and maintaining its extraordinary biodiversity.

We understand the INCODER (Colombian Institute for Rural Development) has entered into an agreement with the communities to execute sociological, legal, and topographic studies of the areas and land holdings to be incorporated into these six *resguardos*. These studies are now completed, and should be ready for validation and approval by the INCODER Board of Directors in July 2015. We urge you to ensure the INCODER fulfills its commitments and approves the legalization of the six Inga and Kamentsa *resguardos* of the Sibundoy Valley.

Sincerely yours,



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Raúl Orijalva
Member of Congress



Mike Honda
Member of Congress