

Drilling drives a wedge at climate change summit

April 25 2009, By MARY PEMBERTON , Associated Press Writer



Ben Namaicin, representing the Kiribati and South Pacific Islands, explains why he refused to sign and support a plan drafted during the U.N. affiliated Indigenous Peoples' Global Summit on Climate Change in Anchorage, Alaska on Friday, April, 24, 2009 that did not include a moratorium on new drilling for oil and gas. The conference recommendations will be presented to the Conference of Parties at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen, Denmark, this December. Steering committee members, Andrea Carman, with the International Indian Treaty Council US-Alaska, left, and Patricia Cochran, chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, right, and Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, president of the United Nations General Assembly, second right listen. (AP Photo/Al Grillo)

(AP) -- To drill or not drill for new oil and gas.

That was the issue that drove a wedge Friday between young people and

many of the older delegates at the United Nations-affiliated Indigenous Peoples' Global Summit on [Climate Change](#).

The five-day summit ended Friday with Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, president of the United Nations General Assembly, describing it as "a rather successful gathering."

After hours of debate, a consensus of sorts was reached on a declaration to be presented to the Conference of Parties at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen, Denmark, this December.

The document says indigenous people are "deeply alarmed by the accelerating climate devastation brought about by unsustainable development."

"Mother [Earth](#) is no longer in a period of climate change, but in climate crisis," the declaration says.

The hang-up was whether to call for a moratorium on new oil and gas drilling and a phase-out of [fossil fuels](#).

The final document contains two options.

One calls for the moratorium where supported by indigenous people. The other says indigenous people would look to an eventual phase-out in the use of fossil fuels while at the same time respecting the rights of indigenous people to develop their resources.

"I think it is the best compromise we can reach," said Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the Asia representative.

Youth delegates were pushing for the total moratorium.

"We refuse to compromise our futures," said Kandi Mossett of Bismarck, N.D., a member of the youth caucus.

They had considered submitting a separate declaration to the Denmark conference if they couldn't get a moratorium, and Eriel Tchekwie Deranger, a 30-year-old member of the Athabasca Chipewyn First Nation in Canada, said that is still an option.

A difference of opinion was to be expected when nearly 400 indigenous people from 80 nations are brought together to discuss climate change, said Patricia Cochran, chairwoman of the summit and steering group member.

"The summit in our estimation is the beginning of the process, not the end," said Cochran, an Inupiaq Eskimo born and raised in Nome.

Youth caucus member Andrea Sanders of Bethel said some of the delegates representing areas dependent on oil for revenue and jobs were afraid to support a moratorium because of the criticism they would face when returning home.

"People think that is going to ruin all the jobs but people working in the oil field on the (North) Slope can be working on new renewable energy projects," she said.

On the Net:

<http://www.indigenoussummit.com>

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