We, the Ashaninka people of the lowland Amazon rainforest have united to confront the challenges of climate change, extractive development, invasive infrastructure, and other threats to our culture and identity. The consequences of climate change are more evident every day. All people must come together to confront this menace to the present and future of humans on this planet. As one of the most numerous indigenous peoples in the Amazon basin, an organized Ashaninka people have great potential to reach sustainability and social justice in our Amazonian forests, rivers, and homelands. Without the Amazon’s huge rivers dry, the animals disappear, the oxygen diminishes, the air is fouled, and the plants dwindle. This is the very reason we must share our concerns in a rapidly changing world characterized by climate change and extractive development. We hope you will join us in protecting our forests and rivers for our children and yours.

**People**

The Ashaninka people represent one of the most numerous Amazonian Indigenous groups with an official population of 98,768: 97,477 in Peru (INEI 2007) and 1,291 in Brazil (Sias/Sias 2012). This Arawak speaking people includes both the Ashaninka and Ashaninka subgroups who live throughout eight departments in Peru and the state of Acre in Brazil. The majority of Ashaninka are found in the departments of Huánuco, Pasco, and Ucayali. Lima contains less than two thousand Ashaninka living in the District of Chosco and Anta. Ashaninka include un titled communities along the Javari River, Sarayacu District, and Alto Nane District. (INEI 2010; IBC 2015). The remainder live in Aparum, Ayacucho.

The Ashaninka live in 357 titled indigenous communities in Peru (155) and Brazil (4) (Figure 1). Together these titled communities cover 28,209 square kilometers of territory, an area larger than the country of Haiti. In 338 of these territories the Ashaninka (362) or Ashaninka (36) are the most numerous ethnicity in their community managing 25,983 square kilometers of territory. While the average size of the territories managed by the Ashaninka is 7,687 hectares, the size of the community territories vary from the tiny 14 hectare Peruvian community of Acompañarini in Ayacucho to the enormous 232,795 hectare Brazilian territory of Kampá Jurua in the state of Amazonas. The median community size is 2,062 hectares.

As the number of Ashaninka communities also differ substantially in their characteristics. In the Selva Central of Peru, many Ashaninka communities fall within a network of roads and colonist settlement projects, and have lost much of their forest cover and fauna. For example, in 2015 residents of the 170 hectare, 60 family community of San Miguel Centro Marañonians say, “In San Miguel, the only thing to cut are eggs and canned tuna. There is no forest.” Many other Ashaninka communities, such as those in the borderlands, have organized to reforest their ancestral lands in the Amazon rainforest and clean waters that favors improved health of all generations.

**Place**

The Ashaninka Territory in the southwestern Amazon (Figure 2). The Ashaninka of the Amazon have organized in part to see how the Ashaninka of different regions can learn from each other to obtain a sustainable forest and a sustainable future for the Ashaninka. The Ashaninka Territory in the Southwestern Amazon. The Ashaninka youth learn to care for tree seedlings in order to reforest their ancestral lands in the Amazon rainforest. Apureño Francisco Pyiako and Samente’s Joaquín Bagüe wrote 2517 representatives from 50 communities participating in the First Binational Congress of the Ashaninka.

**History and Diaspora**

The Ashaninka have lived in the Selva Central of Peru since before colonial times. The history of the Ashaninka and Ashaninka subgroups is often understood through the narratives of resistance to outsiders or to development (Veber 2014). This is due in part to the Ashaninka’s success in maintaining their identity despite repeated attempts to penetrate their homelands (Varese 1968; Veber 1975). More recently, the Ashaninka faced multiple waves of terrorism which led them to form self-defense committees in the 1990s to bring peace to their homelands and Peru. Within the last century the Ashaninka have been squeezed by two development plans and conservation history that led to a Brazilian Development Grant of 1.8 million US$. We hope that other Ashaninka people will join us in protecting our forests and rivers for our children and yours.

**STATEMENT OF THE ASHENINKA / ASHANINKA PEOPLE OF PERU AND BRAZIL**

We, the Ashaninka, are committed to a sustainable and just future. To achieve our goals we have decided to organize across Peru and Brazil, and our disparate communities and territories to learn from each other and better face the challenges of climate change and uncontrolled development. We want to show that it is possible to create a development model that provides quality of life without planetary destruction. The union of the Ashaninka people is an opportunity to unite knowledges without discrimination. We hope that other people will unite with us to improve the Amazon and the world.

**References**

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BNDES assina contrato de R$ 6,6 milhões com Índios Ashaninka do Acre.


**Climate Change**

The Ashaninka of the Yurúa made the following observations about local climate variation (Han et al. 2013):

• Climate and weather increasingly unpredictable with abrupt changes: rain in the dry season and drought in the wet season.
• Increased temperatures and sun intensity.

When asked to identify the three most important objectives to overcome the future challenges brought by climate change, the Ashaninka shared the following:

• Environmental education and climate adaptation training in every community.
• Integrated sustainable natural resource management projects.
• Management of communal reserves (conservation and their accessibility) in the Yurúa region.
• The entire workshop of six indigenous ethnicities (Asháninka, Ashená, Amahuaca, Chontabao, Shipibo, and Yaminahua) and mestizo residents proposed the following priorities:
  - Training and education on the conservation of flora and fauna.
  - Projects focused on the sustainable use of natural resources.
  - Transboundary interchange of technical training between indigenous peoples.

**Livelhoods**

The Ashaninka historically lived in relatively isolated mobile family homesteads in the uplands to best pursue hunting, gathering, fishing, and farming before relocating once resources diminished (Varese 1968; Veber 1975). Asháninka villagers provide agricultural products for sale, supply workers for wage labor in extractive pursuits (logging, resource collection), or create handicrafts in addition to subsistence farming, hunting, and gathering. Asháninka located closer to road networks and urban centers rely less on their natural resources, which have often been overexploited, than the more remote Ashaninka who still have extensive forests and fauna. The Ashaninka have organized in part to see how the Ashaninka of different regions can learn from each other to obtain a better future. For example, the Ashaninka of Apuwa in Brazil have demonstrated a successful development plan (Hansen’s 2008) and received a Development Grant of 1.8 million US$ to promote agroforestry management in the upper Yurúa basin as a sustainable alternative to deforestation while strengthening territorial monitoring and control (BINDES 2015).

**First Binational Congress of the Ashaninka People**

137 Ashaninka representatives from 54 communities and 24 federations from Peru and Brazil held the First Binational Congress of the Ashaninka People on September 22-23, 2015. The congress resulted in 138 handwritten declarations (one global and one Peruvian) stating the importance of the Ashaninka people to preserve the environment while identifying the principal threats to the Ashaninka culture, territory, and livelihoods as well as the forests and rivers of Amazonia. The workshop was led by representatives of the Brazilian community of Apuwa and the Peruvian organization ACONAMAC along with leaders from other organizations.

**Future**

We, the Ashaninka, are committed to a sustainable and just future. To achieve our goals we have decided to organize across Peru and Brazil, and our disparate communities and territories to learn from each other and better face the challenges of climate change and uncontrolled development. We want to show that it is possible to create a development model that provides quality of life without planetary destruction. The union of the Ashaninka people is an opportunity to unite knowledges without discrimination. We hope that other people will unite with us to improve the Amazon and the world.