

TELEBRIEFING SERIES ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, HUMAN RIGHTS & PHILANTHROPY

MEGAPROJECTS, SUSTAINABILITY
AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS IN LATIN AMERICA

JULY 26, 2012

BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS



Atossa Soltani is the founder of Amazon Watch. Since 1991, Ms. Soltani has been leading international campaigns in defense of the world's tropical rainforests. Before Amazon Watch, Ms. Soltani directed campaigns at the Rainforest Action Network (RAN) to end logging in endangered ecosystems. Ms. Soltani began her environmental career in the late 1980s as Conservation Director for the City of Santa Monica, where she designed and directed an award-winning resource conservation program. She is fluent in Spanish.



Peter Kostishack is Director of Programs at Global Greengrants Fund. He has worked for many years supporting communities and indigenous organizations in defense of their rights, territories, and natural resources. Prior to coming to Greengrants, he coordinated the Amazon Alliance, a coalition of indigenous and non-governmental organizations protecting the Amazon Basin. He has also been a community mapper, researcher, blogger, activist against “megaprojects,” and consultant to funders and organizations on how to partner with indigenous peoples’ organizations. Peter has a Master’s of Environmental Science degree in Social Ecology and Community Development from Yale University and a Bachelor of Arts in Biology from Harvard University.



Karmen Ramirez Boscan (Wayuu) is an international Indigenous Peoples’ rights activist with a life time of experience working with Wayuu communities in Colombia, as well as national organizations, such as Sütsüin Jiyeyu Wayuu, (Wayuu Women's Force), the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia, and Andean Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations. She has advocated for indigenous issues internationally working as a representative and consultant for organizations such as the International Labor Organization (ILO), Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Unit at the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Organization of American States (OAS), and the U.N.

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Karmen is also a member of the board of Cultural Survival. She studied in Geneva as a beneficiary of the Scholarship Program for Indigenous Peoples at the OHCHR and has a background in social communication and journalism.

Azeen Salimi is the *Program Manager* to International Human Rights Funders Group. Prior to IHRFG, Azeen served as the manager of the Senior Fellows Program at the Synergos Institute, where she led programs for a global network of 100 civil society leaders from 34 countries. Azeen previously worked with Doctors Without Borders (MSF) in the United States, Sudan, Bangladesh, and Burma (Myanmar); the New York Legal Aid Society's Immigration Unit; and the Committee to Protect Journalists. Currently, Azeen is also an assistant editor with the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Rights Law*. Azeen holds a Bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana and a Master's degree with a concentration in human rights from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University in New York.

Evelyn Arce, Executive Director, International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP) Evelyn, of Chibcha descent (Colombian-American) has been leading IFIP since 2002. She obtained her Master's of Art in Teaching degree at Cornell University with a concentration in Agriculture and Adult Education, and was a high-school teacher of Science, Horticulture, and Independent Living for seven years. Evelyn was chosen to participate in the Donella Meadows Fellowship Leadership program, a systems think tank on creating sustainable ways to effectively make long term changes through leadership. Evelyn was a communications consultant for the Iewirokwas Program, a Native American Midwifery Program and coordinated the American Indian Millennium Conference held at Cornell University in 2001. She has also been a diversity consultant for Cornell's Empowering Family Development Program. Evelyn serves on the board of United Way for Franklin County in New York State.

As IFIP's Executive Director, Evelyn brings a vision of philanthropy that is in accord with Indigenous culture, values, and spiritual sensibilities. She leads IFIP into its second decade of educating funders about critical Indigenous issues and supporting the philanthropic community in its efforts to increase funding to Indigenous communities and causes around the world. A tireless networker, Evelyn has brought together culturally diverse individuals and organizations through IFIP's programs and events, helping to leverage vast reserves of resources.