

Terry – Hello, this is Terry Odendahl, the Executive Director of The Global Greengrants Fund and welcome to our conference call, “Fighting for Climate Justice: COP 16 from the Grassroots Perspective.” Let me begin with some housekeeping items; the call is being recorded and so if you miss any portion of it or have to leave early, you can go to our website and hear it later. We’re expecting about 15 participants but at the moment nobody is muted because of some technical difficulties because we want to be sure that our special speaker, Samuel Nnah Ndobe can be heard by you. So, if I can ask everyone who is currently on the call to mute their line – and you can do that by pressing \*6. The call will last approximately 1 hour – If you could please keep your lines muted until the question and answer portion just to limit background noise, we would be most appreciative. And I also want to encourage you to send questions for the speaker to [Jennifer@greengrants.org](mailto:Jennifer@greengrants.org) . We have already received one question which we will be answering shortly.

So I hope that most of you are on the line at this point and let me begin with just a little bit of background. COP 16 - that is the Conference of Parties, the UN Climate Summit – this is the 16<sup>th</sup> climate summit and it is taking place in Cancun as we speak. I was privileged to be there for about a week, returning to the office yesterday and our guest Samuel Nnah Ndobe is returning to Cameroon At the moment he is in London en route to Cameroon. Basically what we have found so far is that there is no agreement whatsoever in this international summit. This will be the second in a row where agreement has not been reached. So the question is: when you have two years in a row without result, is the process working? And this is why we want to look particularly at climate justice as compared to the international negotiations. As most of you know, the world’s poorest 1 billion people contribute only 3 % of our total carbon footprint yet they are unduly burdened with the responsibility of dealing with the effects. The world’s poorest communities will be and already are the first to suffer from inaction because climate change is already here with us. And Samuel may want to say a few things about that.

Climate justice means lifting the unequal burdens from those who are least at fault where climate change is concerned. One of the greatest concerns at the moment is that three countries, Japan, Russia and Canada are saying that they will not sign an extension of the Kyoto Protocol, which means that we will be moving backwards instead of forwards in trying to mitigate some of the issues around climate change. Iva Morales, the Bolivian President, said that if we let the Kyoto Protocol fail, we are responsible for ecocide and genocide. Tonight, Friday night, is the deadline; so there is only one day of negotiations left. Having said this, it is my great pleasure to introduce Samuel Nnah Ndobe, who I met in Cancun. We had the pleasure of spending some time together while there. Samuel is an advisor to GGF on our International Financial Institutions board. He received his university training in agricultural engineering, and I am not going to go into this in any great detail because I think you have his bio on the introduction to the conference call. His specialization is in economics and rural sociology. Sam works with the Center for the Environment and Development in Cameroon. His focus is on forestry, livelihoods and indigenous people – especially the people that westerners call “the pygmies.” He is responsible for trying to work on multi-national logging efforts in Central Africa and also responding to World Bank policies which he will tell us a bit more about.

We are going to ask Samuel to speak for 20 minutes, and if I can ask you to keep your phones muted during that time then at the end of that period we will open them up and will welcome questions.

Samuel is going to talk about his experience at Copenhagen and perhaps – Copenhagen and Cancun – because he was at both negotiations and he is going to focus on where was progress made if any? He's going to particularly talk to us about REDD, capital letters REDD, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation. He'll begin with a brief explanation of what that policy is. He's also going to talk to us about how the grassroots has been participating to try and make an impact and his personal views on our success there. And then he'll talk a bit about what next in the fight for climate justice. So thank you so much Sam for joining us after many hours without sleep and please begin your presentation.

Samuel – Thank you very much Terry and I don't know, but good morning to you all in the US and good evening to you in London where I am presently. My voice may not be very audible because I have been traveling for the past two days; I just got here early this morning. I will try to do my best to make sure that the information is audible and explicable. Thanks again Terry for that good presentation of me and I'm happy that you didn't say that I'm an expert on climate change which I'm definitely not, but I'm looking at climate change under social justice and the environmental perspective. You asked me to talk about the experience at Copenhagen, but for the experience at Copenhagen I just want to give a little background about where the UNFCCC, the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change, under which discussions culminated for the 15 Conference of Parties in Copenhagen last year and the 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties which are rounding up this evening in Cancun. These conventions, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change came up as one of the series of conventions in 1992 after the World Summit on sustainable development. The world is addressing problems of climate change and as history has shown us, climate change is the worst problem affecting the whole world.

In the course of the discussions that lead to the Kyoto Protocol which was the commitment for developed countries excluding the United States of course, who did not sign the Protocol – who made commitments to reduce drastically, their emissions. Emissions that are released into the atmosphere are the main concern, resulting in climate change. These countries were supposed to end their commitment period in 2012, which is the last year. So this tells you the importance of the discussions that we are to have here and the importance of the discussions that we had last year that are taking place this year. I want to introduce what happened in Copenhagen, the capital city of Denmark. They were expecting a very binding deal on climate change; expecting to have commitments about how countries, how governments are going to address the issues of climate change, but as most have heard, this has not happened. It has been quite short of expectations. Many of those following the discussions have been very disappointed. The little town; they got 45 thousand people into that town, including 194 government dignitaries, including presidents of countries, like the President of the United States of America. We are very disappointed with what happened because all that was going on with the negotiations were completely cast aside and a separate decision was written by a few countries, a few governments and that decision gave rise to the accord, a non-binding agreement, a very small agreement which did not give countries obligations to act on this issue of climate change.

With that suspicion from Copenhagen, people expected significant progress to happen here in Cancun. Even though people became very discouraged, including activists who attended conferences, the congregation that came to Cancun from the 29<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup>; today. What I expected initially; we were expecting about 25,000 people, but have between 10,000 and 15,000, which was not something very

expected. It is strange because people are really getting discouraged. Some of us who are following the discussions feel that it is almost a waste of time because nothing significant is happening. Right now it is not clear if we are going to come out with an agreement or any significant decisions from this COP. I overheard one delegate who was close to me saying that it is likely that if any decision is made, it will be made in 2012. This brings up the question: how long are we going to keep postponing this type of very important thing? Why do they keep postponing a deal while the planet keeps burning and the people keep polluting, releasing emissions into the atmosphere? So I thought that something very significant would happen.

Terry – Sam, can I ask you to talk specifically about REDD, as I know that you...

Samuel – Yes, I'm just introducing REDD now. I'm not an expert in climate. I mostly got involved with this conference because of discussions involving the forests - the forest as a low-cost solution to solving the problems of climate change. These discussions evolved in 2005 at the 13<sup>th</sup> conference of parties held in Montreal, Canada. During this Conference of Parties, two countries, that is Costa Rica and Papua New Guinea, presented a proposal to the conference on how countries with tropical forest can be compensated for the role that forests play in solving climate change, what we now know as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation, which initially was Reducing Emissions from Degradation. This has moved towards Deforestation and Degradation, and now we hear about Reducing Emissions for Deforestation and forest Degradation, including a clause which includes sustainable forest management, and conservation.

What is REDD and why is REDD important? Studies have shown that cutting down forests, through deforestation and degradation, contributes to between 15 and 25% of global emissions, which means that the forest itself contributes to the tune of 15 to 25%. But also, the forest plays a very important role in the sense that the forest itself absorbs carbon, which is emitted in the atmosphere. So the forest is a double edged sword. On the one hand, it is a significant cause of climate change and on the other hand it is a solution that can help in solving the problems of climate change. This has made the forests very, very, very important. So, as I said, from 2005 when REDD was submitted, it has evolved in 2007 with the drawing up of a valid action plan. It was expected that, in 2009, there was supposed to be an agreement on REDD including forests into the whole negotiations.

I want to make the differences very clear between REDD and what was discussed under the Kyoto Protocol which is a Clean Development Mechanism, CDM. There are a lot of forest issues in the CDM like deforestation, planting trees and reforestation. Forests got involved with the CDM because of the problem of leakage. How do we account for carbon stops in areas where deforestation is taking place and for where they are managing forests sustainably elsewhere. I'm not going to explain that much...

Terry- Maybe you could just briefly tell them what leakage is.

Samuel – Leakage just means; why would we protect the forest in one part if we continue cutting down trees in another part of the forest? It means that there is no justice in carbon stops. We are protecting and cutting in that place so there is leakage. Leakage from where you are protecting to the area where you are cutting. But why is this important for these communities? It has become an important solution

for the cause to the problems of climate change. Like that of Stern, Nicholas Stern. Stern has admitted that forests can be a very cheap solution to the problems of climate change. He has drawn a lot of attention to the problems and to forests in general. We think that this is a good forum to bring the problems of local communities and indigenous peoples who have lived in the forests for thousands and thousands of years. Most often, their activities do not contribute in any significant way to the destruction of the forests. Particularly in the forest areas where I come from, that is the Congo Basin in Central Africa, which is the second largest forest after the Amazon. We have this particular, very specific indigenous people, the Ba-Mbenga, who westerners call the "Pygmies," whose activities involving the forest are collecting food and carrying out subsistence hunting, have nothing to do with cutting down the trees.

These communities will be impacted by REDD with more attention on the forests, especially when people want to buy the carbon which is found there. There is the risk that it will be exported from their lands. Their land and their rights to this land is recognized and we are sending these people away from the forest, because collecting for traditional agriculture, it curbs the problem of deforestation. Traditional, I'm sorry. These proposals from governments indicate that the key drivers of deforestation are the local communities and traditional agriculture. So we are coming to these negotiations to see that, whatever discussions are taking place, will take into consideration the rights of these communities that have been living in the forests.

And now to talk specifically about the REDD negotiations that have taken place so far. We know very well that at the negotiations in Copenhagen, there was a good inclusion of the issues of rights, inclusions for biodiversity, for governments, but that the language was not well presented. The way that it comes out of the convention is important so that the agreement could be respected by the countries and parties at the convention. So we have been pushing to see that there is strong language, for example, regarding the rights of indigenous and local communities are protected under the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and also of the Convention of the UN Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, Convention 169.

Terry – Keep going and we'll open it up for questions in about 5 minutes.

Samuel – So presently there is consent on an agreement on having strong safeguards so that governments not only monitor and report carbon but should also report the safeguards; the social and environmental safeguards. These social safeguards include the rights of the people who are living in the forests for thousands of years. The environmental safeguards include taking into consideration biodiversity, not converting natural forest into monocultures. Because, if you convert natural forests into monocultures, tree plantations, they are releasing carbon that is not taken into consideration and the biodiversity that exists in the natural forests and also they are thinking about governance. They should treat their governance issues, if there is not good governance, they will not respect the rights of their people. Then there's also this issue of what mechanism should we use to fund them. Is there any mechanism whereby tropical forest countries are compensated for keeping their forests standing? There is a full discussion on marketing; should we be funding market-based polluting and buying, you know, they can do some sort of compensating while the fund based means that there is a specific amount

generated that allows countries, in a more sustainable manner, to keep managing their forests in a very sustainable manner. There is a whole discussion on market or fund based –

Terry – Samuel, may I interrupt for a moment?

Samuel – these countries cannot agree on this, but it was good because it was decided that the market mechanisms should be suspended or should not be decided as of now.

Terry- And that proposal that the market mechanisms should be suspended came from where?

Samuel – That the market mechanisms should be suspended? This was proposed by the EU following a lot of disagreement between the different parties that have been very strong on the market mechanism including the United States and most countries from the south. Our position has been that the market is not sustainable or predictable mechanism climate. And offsetting is not an answer to the problem of reducing emissions the whole problem is reducing emissions.

Terry – And let me interrupt you just once more I'm going to ask you to speak for a few more minutes, but there's a bit of noise in the background, so it's possible that some participants joined the call, we're asking that you would please mute your line by pressing \*6 and we'll extend the presentation by just about 5 minutes. I wanted to add in a few things if I might, Samuel.

We want to hear from you about participation from the grassroots and what's next in the fight for climate justice. In terms of the role of GGF at COP16 at Cancun we did give about \$60,000 in grants to grassroots organizations for COP16 related expenses. This money went to 15 different groups primarily in Central and South America although we had a number of advisors such as Samuel who obtained funding from other sources so that they could go and participate in the negotiations. Most of the groups that GGF funded are working for indigenous organizations, around women's rights, around environmental equity, social justice and sustainability, more generally.

So now, Samuel, as we wrap the presentation part up and forgive me, if there were a few other things that you wanted to say, go ahead. How do you think the participation of the grassroots; did it have an impact this year? And what's next in the fight for climate justice?

Samuel – I think that participation had the grassroots had a very, very significant impact. You and I just watched the Campesina demonstration where the local people who are more vulnerable, more impacted by decisions or by climate change itself. It's very important. And also, I also came from the Congo Basin along with grassroots groups from the Congo Basin. They can give testimonies; these are testimonies and this is very important. These are the people that will be impacted. They come and they are not technicians or intellectuals to put out their intellectual positions, they are the people who are living in their communities. So it is very, very important and it's a very good initiative to bring them and grassroots people to these discussions and negotiations.

For the way forward, concerning REDD, it is going to happen, there are fast-track programs in different countries on the project level.

Terry – Where are those fast-track programs right now?

Samuel – You have the World Bank, Carbon Partnership Facility which is preserving biodiversity in countries like Cameroon, Central African Republic, Gabon and a host of other countries in Africa, in Latin America and in Asia. And then you also have the United Nations REDD, which is also supporting countries for residents in them. In all of these programs, participation of the different communities. The goal of the people on the ground is that these indigenous people actually affect their communities and help form strategies on how they are going to reduce emissions and to prepare options on how they are going to share the benefits. If these people are not consulted, it is very likely that, as usual in benefit sharing, mechanisms and decision making, their decisions will not be taken into consideration. And also, there are no small projects. People are expected to know about what happened in Liberia where a carbon dealer went in and wanted to buy several hectares of the forest for the markets. All these things that are taking place are detrimental for the rights of the peoples that are living in the forests. So the next step would be, we are discouraged by the way that the negotiations are going, it is not very clear that, even in 2012, we are going to have an agreement. You have this type of macro / micro project that is taking place in different countries. And because there is no plain agreement that will be carried out in any way, it will impact people in different ways, including loss of territory rights to forest and land, including no benefits at all because, somebody, as we already said, with climate debt and political debt, that the north or the west owes to the south.

So the benefits should be paid. They should be paid to the communities that have been in the forests. So, what do we have to do to follow-up what is happening on the ground, to inform as many people as possible about the process so that we make sure that their preoccupations are taken into consideration for the development plans. So we will continue our campaign for social justice at the level of negotiations. The Accra Caucus, which is a coalition of over 100 organizations from the south politically that, with a few supporting organizations from the north, within the framework of the negotiations have come up with a plan for next year that will be carried out next year to inform different grassroots organizations of what is happening and for the need to organize at local, national and global levels. Also, we will be monitoring all of the different projects that are happening on the ground and trying to find out where things are not happening well.

So that is the short term plan for between now and the next 3 years. We are committed to bringing a big delegation to Durban, South Africa in order to see what will be taking place in 2012 and to take into consideration all of these issues that are on the table.

Terry – So most of the hope now is focused on the COP 17 which will take place in Durban, South Africa. I understand that it is possible that a 100 billion dollar climate fund for adaptation might be established out of these Cancun negotiations, but we won't know that until later this evening. On the table are REDD, REDD monitoring emissions, proposals that there is very little hope for compromise. Another thing that is happening is that the World Bank has been very actively advocating that it would like to create a \$100 billion fund around carbon trading, which would help countries to create carbon trading markets. If, I might speak for some of those that I talked with while in Cancun, the whole idea of the idea of the carbon trading markets, is part of what indigenous people are working against. So I can invite

people to unmute their lines if you have a question. And I wanted to pose the first question to Samuel that came across to us. Sam, were the Twa or Pygmy people represented at COP 16 and if they were, what issues did they raise?

Samuel – Okay, yes, yea they were. I'm sure that you met Venant Messe from the Baka community in Cameroon and others would have come, but they could not have visas, so the problem of getting visas for these discussions is a problem because they are not able to show that they have this amount in their accounts. I think that they made a very significant contribution not only within the framework of the indigenous caucus, but it was highly represented by indigenous peoples coming from South America or Latin America in general. The fact that he was coming from the Congo Basin and presenting the situation of the Congo Basin where community rights are not recognized; where revenues and forest management and groups have not reached down to these communities. I think that the announcement at COP16 was very, very important.

Terry – So, by the way, while I was in Cancun, I interviewed about 15 of our advisors and grantees and I did interview Venant Messe whom Samuel was just referring to. And, although he is, a French speaker so we have a little bit of trouble understanding each other, but some short remarks from him will be up on our website soon and some of the initial interviews are already up there. When they're in English, you can actually hear them on the website. That's [www.greengrants.org](http://www.greengrants.org). And also, continuing coverage of what's happening at COP16 in Cancun. I wanted to invite anyone on the line who asks a question to introduce yourself and ask your questions. For the next 20 minutes or so we'll be trying to have a conversation.

And while we're waiting for someone to ask the second question, if you prefer to send your question to [Jennifer@greengrants.org](mailto:Jennifer@greengrants.org), you can do it that way as well. Any questions for Samuel or me, or comments that you would like to make?

There's always that pregnant pause while waiting for that first question. Anything you would like for Samuel to clarify that he did speak about?

Samuel – Yea, why we are there and what we do. It's something that many people don't understand. It's very busy when we get there. You get to the conference and get the daily information, look at the different texts that have come out, analyze the texts that are to be taken into consideration; issues of social justice and environmental justice and we strategize – who are the most powerful delegates, who are the delegates there and who are the delegates for? So we organize meetings with these delegates either with the delegates or with the regional bodies. For example, we met with the Central African Delegation, from Cameroon, the Congo, and other countries that form the Congo Basin: they have a delegation which is negotiating; the ALBA delegation also, from Latin American and Central American countries. We spoke with the Brazilian delegation who was writing against REDD – we happened to talk to them and they are trying to change the language to make sure that it's very strong.

Throughout the start of the conference we usually have a strategy / planning meeting which outlines what the stakes are of the particular conference and we prepare a day-to-day strategy; where we are going to have meetings, where we are going to have side events. We have very important side events

highlighting different subjects: on indigenous peoples, local communities and civil society; on REDD – so we have these events and many people attend and they have some sense of the position that we are presenting at the negotiations. And at certain moments you can actually create attention within the conference area for people to look at our proposals. It's always very, very busy. We end up looking for intelligence on issues from the negotiations.

I should mention that we don't negotiate, we are observers. Those who negotiate are parties, delegations of governments.

Terry – So once again, if you want to ask a question and you have been muted, you can press \*6 and just speak up please. Say your name and ask the question. I was going to try and give you all a sense of the layout in Cancun. Many of you know that the venue was switched from Mexico City to Cancun and most of the activists present believe that part of the reason for the switch in venue was so that the Mexican government could have tighter control of the activities, especially of the grassroots and NGO representatives and with regards to the marches that often take place around these kinds of international meetings. A large march, for example, was organized by Navia Campesina. There were three marches while Sam and I were in Cancun. In fact, he wasn't able to meet me at forest day, which was a special meeting focusing just on these issues around forests and REDD because he was blocked by a march. There were two places – the Cancun Messe where the NGO groups met and have what we call – what I think Samuel called earlier the inside- side meetings – and at the Moon Palace, which you also ... could you explain how you get from Cancun Messe to the Moon Palace.

Samuel – Yes, the whole problem of logistics, where the hotels were found, especially for activists who could not be at sea-side hotels and the shuttle-bus would take about an hour, an hour and a half to get you to the conference and the Cancun Messe where most of the side events took place. And then you have to take another bus from the Cancun Messe to the Moon Palace Hotel – that was where the alternative negotiation was taking place. So the shuttle in between was about 20 minutes – 10 to 20 minutes – between where you have the events and where you get registered. Where you pass the initial checks or control. So the Moon Palace, unfortunately by Tuesday when the ministers had their meeting, access to the Moon Palace was already very difficult, very restricted.

Terry – Well even to get to the Cancun Messe, you had to either take a long bus ride from hotels that were as far as an hour away for some people and you had to go through security checkpoints – at least two of them – with heavily armed Federales. So there was just an attempt to control everything and sort of, in my estimation, this is sort of my own view point, to keep people especially people representing the grassroots – to deter them from having the access that they had, on the whole, more of in Copenhagen last year.

Samuel – What's also surprising is the fact that we had these restrictions as observers. Not everybody had access to the official ministerial meeting at the Cancun Messe on Tuesday. And people actually had their access suspended. A friend of mine from Dalmatia who didn't understand why. They took his badge – they deactivated it at the control and said that he did not have access and that his badge had

been deactivated. We had these types of problems – they restricted accredited observers, which was not good, during the conference.

Terry - A staff member has just asked me to check my email which I assume means some questions have come through, but as is typical in situations such as this, there is nothing new in my email since 10:29 this morning. So Jennifer Adams Kurr, I will invite you to propose any questions that were asked.

Jennifer – Can you hear me now? One moment – Okay, the first one was about the REDD controversy. Samuel, if you could explain what the controversy is around the REDD policy.

Terry – Perhaps I could start and then Samuel could add to that. There are, for example, some indigenous groups who are totally opposed to REDD at all and are also opposed to the idea of creating a carbon market; who are opposed to the idea that, in a sense, the North, the more polluting practices in the North, especially in the United States and China, that there would be some way that they could buy their way out of this pollution. So, there are a range of opinions that begin with those who are totally opposed to REDD, and for those, not to speak for Samuel, but to ask him to clarify, those such as himself who feel that if there were certain safeguards and certain language within the agreement then the forest peoples who continue to preserve their forest land would gain some benefits. Do you want to continue?

Samuel – Exactly, I think that Terry had a good explanation there. Within the negotiations, there is a lot of controversy. While we are talking about reducing emissions from forests there are two extreme positions – at the one extreme, you have Bolivia which has this progressive proposal, this position on Mother Earth and looking at the rights of Mother Earth – that is the environment and the people who are living here and Saudi Arabia, that came up with other solutions such as carbon capture and storage. These two positions almost mimic discussions in China in October or November.

Also, there is controversy from indigenous peoples – why should we care about something we don't see. You know, carbon is air; it is not ethical to start talking about selling carbon. And also there are other people who feel that interests are being moving from a solution to climate change to a financial investment. We have a lot of huge investors coming into the business of forest carbon. You have bankers; you have big carbon developers who are now positioning themselves to make huge fortunes on something like this. And these communities who have lived in the forest, nature which has to benefit from any concrete action that is taken on the forest. Strong people are positioning themselves for financial interest. There is all of this controversy that is surrounding the discussion of REDD. And even at the level of countries – most of the developed countries especially those that are proposing market-based mechanisms, they want to reduce their contribution to the problem. Some are diverting original development assistance to REDD without asking developing countries, tropical forest countries we are also not looking at how we are going to protect the forests. So the discussions are completely diverting from the interests of the forest and the climate and are now looking at the money – where will it come from, how will we do it, who will profit, who will not profit – these are some of the controversies.

Terry – If I might add also, for our listeners and participants – and I do encourage you to participate. If you'll unmute by pressing \*6 you can ask a question directly but at the Global Greengrants Fund, we're

in the unusual situation of funding on both sides of the REDD issue. This is because of our strong commitment to giving authority to our advisory board in different parts of the world to build their own strategies around what they believe will be most useful in terms of environmental sustainability and human rights in their part of the world. So we have, for example, our Central American Board which is very interested in how the proper type of language and financing mechanisms around REDD might help indigenous and peasant people in Central America and who were very actively doing the same sort of thing that Samuel was just talking about at the COP 16 meeting. They were in favor of getting the right language around REDD which would include getting the recognition of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People which is very important and is still in brackets. And then we have other advisory boards such as our India Advisory Board which is totally opposed to REDD. Are there any questions – does anyone want to pose a question?

Johanna – Yes – it's Johanna and I would like to ask Samuel if there was any talk about the lack of forest, about desertification – if that was addressed.

Samuel – Yes, that was addressed under what is under the Kyoto Protocol called the Clean Development Mechanism. Under the Clean Development Mechanism, you can develop the project to put forests where there are no forests through what they call afforestation or reforestation or in areas that used to be forest but are not forest any more. So you could create projects of planting trees and get payment for the carbon that would be generated – this is from the Clean Development Mechanism that, unfortunately, as Terry has already said, this protocol is already threatened because, among the countries including Japan itself where the protocol was signed, they are trying to scrap the protocol agreement. This scrapping is going to be a very huge problem for any agreement on climate.

Johanna – Thank you.

Terry – Is there another question? – Please state your name and ask a question.

Mary – High, my name is Mary T'Kach and I'm wondering what's next. What can we do to move the US delegation or even the international delegation to action for the next meeting in Africa?

Samuel – Could you repeat the question?

Terry – Yes, the question is: what is next and what the participants on the call and potentially – I'm interpreting here – the Global Greengrants Fund do with the US delegation or with other delegations of other countries – What can we do to move these negotiations forward so that in Durban, South Africa there are actually results?

Samuel – Very good question. It's very clear that we need to bring back the focus to the issues. We have a problem, which is climate, and we have to solve the problem. We are going to need finances; we are going to need technology; we have to protect the rights of the most vulnerable people; we have to see that they get the benefits as well. I think that if people come back to this focus then we will have a very good agreement that is going to change the world.

But how do we do it? We need to bring people who are convincing delegates to the meetings. We need to bring the grassroots people. We are living in this situation, and if you see a person who is living the situation and he tells you about it we tend to believe him more. Because most of the delegates who are negotiating are government bureaucrats in air-conditioned offices and, most often, they don't know what is happening in the real world. And so many delegates have confessed to the fact they are learning more from meeting groups like ours and also the grassroots people who we bring. So, I think that it's very, very important, especially for delegates from diverse countries like yours, like the US and the EU, who don't know what is actually happening on the ground. So that is one thing.

On the other hand, it is providing some support so that the groups on the ground can start working on these issues. They can have their voice heard not only on the international level but from their own countries. It becomes very difficult in certain countries like where I come from, but it would be great if we could continue this social movement that will encourage these communities to make their voices heard and start changing policy from the bottom. Of course, a lot of the problem with these conventions is that we are not working on integrating international policies and the more people from the grassroots and the more people from the international level who are there and who are aware – it becomes easier to make adequate policies that will make the world a better place to live.

Terry – If I might add something. A year ago, following our bi-annual advisor's retreat, which Samuel attended, the decision was made that the GGF would establish a climate fund. The purpose of this climate fund is to fund projects at the most local level or the regional level having to do with adaptation and mitigation around climate. These are projects that grassroots people know will make a difference in their own lives. They can be sustainable agriculture projects; they can be alternative energy projects; they can be protests against the types of mining and extractive industries that actually create more emissions. So, our view is that, since these international negotiations, so far are not getting us what is needed for the world, we need to be funding activities at a different level at the level closest to the ground. And I know many of you have actually contributed to our climate fund – we have asked all of our donors this year to add 10% to their usual contribution and if you haven't done that already, this will be the only solicitation on the call. I just want to urge you to do that.

Also, we hope over the next 5 years to more than double the grantmaking of GGF through our regional advisors so that we are able to have greater impact on the ground. I think time for one more question or comment if anyone would like to make it.

Alright. I would like to thank all of you for having joined the call today. I want to especially thank Samuel for sharing with us his experience and if I could just say that, a year ago, when I first met Samuel, he and I had a conversation about why he was doing this work, why he was travelling several thousands of miles to these international meetings – and Sam, I thought that maybe you would like to make a few closing comments about that. About your own personal involvement and about how funders can best support climate justice policy.

Samuel – Thank you Terry for that. I think that is quite a long story, but I will try to make it short.

Working on the ground, with the grassroots, with the most vulnerable people is not something which everybody wants to do. They do not want to go to the forests where you have mosquitoes and have malaria and swampy roads. They don't want to talk to you about people, especially a minority like the Pygmies. Even though minority numbers, the impact on views is very significant. Very few people want to do that. When I started doing that for my post-graduate research, being a Cameroonian who has been discriminated on, on a political basis, because I come from a minority area that speaks English, I search so hard. How can the first inhabitants of the forest, the indigenous people be discriminated against by the neighbors, the farmers and by most of the north of the country? It was something that moved me a lot. Over the past 12 years, I have tried to bring the attention of many people to these people; I have been working with these people. And it is still very, very difficult to reach people with these issues because there are very few people who are attracted to this type of work. Not only in terms of seeking their energy and time but also in terms of giving money because of how people look at it. How many people will benefit? At times, it is not a number that matters. It is the vulnerable people and how we happen to change their lives.

I will bring this long story to a close by thanking you all for supporting my tired, breaking voice and thank you Terry. We had a very nice time with what was happening in Cancun and I pray that you supporters of GGF continue to support the grassroots on the ground. Supporting this work is making a good contribution to humanity, social justice and to the environment as well.

Terry – Thank you Samuel. I hadn't actually talked to Samuel about repeating this story that he told me a year ago, but he told me that when he started trying to talk to international delegations, he felt that it might not make a difference, but that he has found that by, bringing the voice of the grassroots to the official delegations, that he has actually been able to change people's minds. So that if we can get more grassroots voices talking to the official delegates and as Samuel himself said, "if we could get some indigenous people into the delegations, and some of the people most affected by climate change into the delegations, then we might actually see some real change in Durban next year.

I think our time is over now. Jennifer will be sending all of you who are participating a follow-up email on which there will be a link to the recording of this. I want to repeat that there are going to be a number of interviews with grassroots people that the GGF supported to go to Cancun on our website, so I encourage you to check that out over the next few days. I wish very happy holidays. Thank you very much for joining us. And thank you Samuel, especially after such a long – Samuel doesn't have his luggage at the moment.

Johanna – Thank you Samuel, that was great. Thank you Terry.

Samuel – Thank you very much.