

For Immediate Release: Embargoed until December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009, 11:00 AM:

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## **Canadian First Nations at COP 15 Roll Out the Welcome Mat for Stephen Harper in Rally at Canadian Embassy**

### **“Hey Harper: Climate Commitments = Shut Down Tar Sands”**

Photos and Video: Coming soon at <http://pitch.pe/37846>

**Copenhagen, Denmark** – Indigenous Peoples of Canada and their allies from around the world are in Copenhagen for the UN summit on climate change. Today they rolled out the “welcome mat” for Prime Minister Stephen Harper at the Canadian Embassy in Copenhagen. This action was part of a global day of action against the Canadian tar sands. The tar sands are the largest and most carbon intensive industrial project on the planet. Indigenous leaders of communities impacted by the tar sands and allied campaigners contend that Canada hasn’t kept Kyoto commitments and hasn’t ratified the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) because of the half-trillion dollar investments the massive tar sands development represents.

In a gesture of hospitality for the Prime Minister and an act of solidarity with communities directly impacted by the tar sands, Indigenous representatives and their allies delivered a gift basket full of Treaties for Prime Minister Harper to honor and/or sign in Copenhagen. These included important documents such as the Kyoto Protocol, First Nations Treaties and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

“As Indigenous People, we are here at the international climate negotiations to speak about threats to our cultural survival and the direct life-threatening impacts of climate change in our communities,” said Clayton Thomas Muller, Tar Sands Campaigner of the Indigenous Environmental Network. “Canada has been blocking the climate negotiations and hasn’t kept Kyoto commitments or ratified the UNDRIP because of the tar sands.”

“Fossil fuel extraction from the tar sands are killing our people with cancer, killing our culture by destroying our traditional lands, and killing our planet with CO<sub>2</sub>,” said Eriel Tchekwie Deranger, member of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and Tar Sands Campaigner for the Rainforest Action Network. “It seems that **Canada is more committed to fossil fuels than human rights or real action for the climate.** Mr. Harper – We welcome you to Copenhagen because we want real action on climate, and that means shutting down the tar sands and a moratorium on new fossil fuel development.”

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"The tar sands are a key reason why Canada has failed to take climate action. In the same timeframe that Harper promises to cut Canada's emissions a paltry 3 per cent, tar sands emissions are expected to triple," said Maude Barlow, national chairperson of the Council of Canadians.

Today's action is part of a global day of action organized by a coalition of groups including: Indigenous Environmental Network, Rainforest Action Network, Council of Canadians, Indigenous Peoples Power Project, and UK Tar Sands Group.

Actions are occurring in tandem with the Copenhagen events in London (UK), Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, Vancouver and all across North America.

About Indigenous Environmental Network: Indigenous Peoples empowering Indigenous Nations and communities towards sustainable livelihoods, demanding environmental justice and maintaining the Sacred Fire of our traditions.  
[www.ienearth.org/cits](http://www.ienearth.org/cits)

The Indigenous Environmental Network is in Copenhagen for the duration of COP 15.  
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