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Historic Forum in Peru on Energy Development and Participation of Indigenous Peoples Convenes Diverse Stakeholders for Dialogue and Positive Change

Co-organized by Equitable Origin and indigenous group AIDSESEP with support from U.S. DOI and USAID, forum brings together indigenous leaders, government ministers, industry representatives, and a former OPEC Secretary General to foster dialogue for more inclusive and transparent energy development on indigenous lands.

LIMA, Peru and NEW YORK (October 27, 2015) – Last week, for the first time in Peru’s history, Indigenous Peoples led a multi-stakeholder dialogue on more equitable and responsible energy development in their territories. Co-hosted by Equitable Origin and the indigenous confederation Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Jungle (known by its Spanish acronym [AIDSESEP](#)), the forum brought indigenous leaders, government ministries, and energy companies together with international governmental and non-governmental organizations for an unprecedented exchange of ideas to pursue shared benefits of responsible oil and gas development on indigenous lands.

The forum, titled “Indigenous Communities and Extractive Industries: Standards for Quality and Creation of Opportunities Under Equitable Conditions,” took place in Lima on October 22 and 23. The event was funded and attended by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), under its [Initiative for Conservation in the Andean Amazon](#). Through USAID, the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) [International Technical Assistance Program](#) also contributed by organizing the participation of experts from the U.S. and providing workshop facilitation and logistical support.

With an [agenda](#) centered on social and environmental impacts of oil and gas projects on Indigenous Peoples and their lands, the objective of the forum was to identify best practices and community engagement frameworks that could help build a better future for indigenous communities in Peru. Indigenous Peoples in Peru have historically had few opportunities to participate in decision-making around oil and gas development, and the forum was a first step toward shifting that paradigm. “We indigenous communities are not enemies of development, but we want development that respects our culture, our customs, and our rights,” AIDSESEP President, Henderson Rengifo, explained during his opening remarks.

In pursuit of that goal, presenters at the event shared examples of effective practices and productive collaborations that deliver the benefits of oil and gas development to indigenous communities while minimizing negative impacts on people and the environment. Speakers included Peru’s Vice-Minister for Interculturalism, Patricia Balbuena; José Antonio Mansen of Peru’s oil and gas industry group, the Hydrocarbon Society; Dennis Bodenchuk of the DOI’s Bureau of Indian Affairs, [Division of Energy and Mineral Development](#), which provides assistance to Native American tribes in development of natural resources; Director of Oil, Gas, and Minerals for the Native American [Crow Nation](#) of Montana, Joanie Horn; and former Energy Minister of Ecuador, former Secretary general of OPEC, and current advisor to Equitable Origin, [René G. Ortiz](#), who delivered the event’s keynote address.

Ms. Horn's participation marked the continuation of a cultural exchange between Native Americans and Indigenous Peoples in Latin America focused on responsible resource development. Earlier this year, DOI welcomed indigenous leaders from South America to visit extractive projects on Native American lands for its program "US-Colombia-Peru Indigenous Groups Peer Exchange: Extractive Industries on Indigenous Lands." During her presentation, Ms. Horn articulated the similarities between the experiences of the Crow Nation and indigenous communities in Peru, telling a receptive audience of AIDSESEP representatives, "I sympathize with you and want to help in any way I can."

Manuel Pallares, Co-Founder of Equitable Origin and a lead organizer of the forum, emphasized the historical significance of the event. "For the first time, Indigenous Peoples in Peru are initiating and leading the discussion about how oil and gas development will proceed in their territories. It is just a first step in a long process, but a hugely important one that has the power to build a positive future for indigenous communities of Peru that departs from the conflict and disruption of the past," Pallares reflected. He added, "At Equitable Origin, we are extremely proud to be a part of that process and contribute our [EO100™ Standard](#) for responsible energy development as a tool for progress. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with AIDSESEP and other stakeholders in Peru as we pursue our mission for more equitable and responsible energy development in the region."

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About Equitable Origin

Equitable Origin (www.equitableorigin.org) is an innovative stakeholder-based certification system for the energy industry that promotes higher social and environmental standards, greater transparency, and more accountability in energy development projects. Equitable Origin is a nonprofit organization with roots in the Amazon Basin based in New York City.

About AIDSESEP

AIDSESEP (www.aidesep.org.pe) is the national spokesperson organization for the indigenous communities of the Peruvian Amazon. The organization represents 1,809 communities and 650,000 Indigenous Peoples.

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