

The proposal is framed within the national and international contexts based on the following considerations:

1. halt climate change
2. stop destruction of biodiversity
3. protect the huaorani people
4. economic transformation of the country

**1. Climate change:** Climate change has come to occupy a place on both the national and international agendas, and even in people's daily lives. It has moved beyond the realm of speculation or potential threat to become a reality that demands concrete and immediate action. The two main causes of global warming are the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation.

When it comes to this global problem, the world's countries have shared yet different responsibilities. The industrialized nations bear a greater share of responsibility for this problem, yet have failed to contemplate real solutions.

Climate change inflicts a double punishment on countries like Ecuador. On the one hand, the biophysical, social and economic impacts are exacerbated by increased interference in natural ecosystems, and these effects are felt even more acutely because of the lack of the conditions and resources needed to adapt to them. On the other hand, many of the so-called "solutions" based on the buying and selling of environmental services cause problems at the local level because they involve the ceding of rights over forests and territories.

**2. Destruction of biodiversity:** According to a report prepared by a group of experts in 2004, Yasuní National Park has levels of diversity of many taxonomic groups that are locally and globally outstanding. The Napo Moist Forest encompassed by the park has been declared by the World Wildlife Fund as one of the world's 200 most important regions to protect. Yasuní also conserves a large tract of the Amazonian rainforest, which is considered one of the world's 24 wilderness priority areas. In a single hectare of Yasuní's forests there are almost as many tree and shrub species as in all of the United States and Canada combined.

[1](#)

The extraction of crude oil would inevitably wreak destruction on this biodiversity. The most serious direct impact of oil activity would probably be the spilling of toxic "produced waters" that accompany crude oil when it is brought to the surface, along with other contaminating waste products.

Experience has shown that this is an undeniable reality in Ecuador. According to data from Petroecuador, there is an 80/20 water-to-crude oil ratio in its oil fields (80 barrels of produced water for every 20 barrels of oil). The usual “solution” is to re-inject this water into the subsoil, but it is now known that the geological strata are not able to absorb such large amounts of water. As a result, all or a large part of this water ends up in the area’s rivers.

The problem in the Amazon region, the world’s primary freshwater reserve, is that most freshwater organisms cannot withstand the high levels of salinity found in produced waters. These toxic waters constitute a threat to the region’s biodiversity and freshwater reserves.

In addition, the substances contained in oil industry wastes are bioaccumulative and have been directly linked to numerous diseases.

**3. Measures to protect the Huaorani people:** Both the ITT oil fields and exploration block 31 are the territory of the Huaorani indigenous people, as well as the hunting grounds of other indigenous groups that live in voluntary isolation.

When contracts were negotiated for oil activity in exploration block 16, forceful warnings were voiced about the threats this posed to the Huaorani people. Calls were made for strong measures to prevent negative impacts on this indigenous community, but the effects of oil industry activity have been dramatic: disease, growing poverty, violent conflicts...

The danger is even greater given that the area in question now is part of the territory used by three indigenous ethnic groups –the Tagaeri, Taromenani and Oñamenane peoples – who have voluntarily chosen to avoid all contact with the outside world and reject any attempts at interaction or occupation of their territory. These are the last free beings in Ecuador, who live in what are described as “societies of abundance” because they produce just enough to satisfy their needs.

On 10 May 2006 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered protective measures on the behalf of the Taromenani and Tagaeri, implying the implementation of measures to ensure the rights and safeguard the lives of these ethnic groups.

On 18 April 2007, President Correa announced the adoption of a governmental policy to safeguard the lives of these peoples, assuming responsibility for protecting their basic rights and pledging to make efforts aimed at confronting the threat of extermination and guaranteeing the defence of the collective and individual human rights of peoples who live in voluntary isolation.

**4. The economic transformation of the country:** Oil has constituted the cornerstone of Ecuador's economy for the last quarter of a century, and it continues to play a central role. However, it is also the economic sector in which the government has been forced to confront the greatest conflicts, due to the irregularities that have frequently emerged, contractual terms that undermine the state's interests, and serious environmental conflicts.

The national and international public should be informed of the use that will be given to the funds raised through the proposed mechanism, and the citizen oversight of this spending.

The funds should be allocated towards strategies that would contribute to freeing the country from its current state of dependence and to finding effective solutions to fight poverty. One possibility is the creation of a bond support family-based subsistence farming, considering that the foundation of energy sovereignty is in fact food sovereignty.