



SAN MARTIN + PALMERAS IN BOGOTA

Since our last newsletter (March) there has been some Whatsapp and email communication between the National Land Agency (*Agencia Nacional de Tierras – ANT*) and San Martin de Amacayacu and Palmeras. Every time there was a similar letter from the ANT, indicating that they were indeed working steadily on the application to get their ancestral lands recognized as an indigenous reserve. It became known that Mrs Guilliana Arrieta (picture below on the next page) is now the lawyer who coordinates the application. The task that still has to be completed is to give a solid answer to all negative arguments.

It seems that such arguments keep coming from the Office of Indigenous Affairs of the Ministry of Interior Affairs and possibly also from other higher levels within the ANT. The people at the Ministry still need to write that positive concept. Last year's concept (Newsletter 74) was actually quite positive, but with requirements. Those have been met by the communities in the course of 2017.

Still there was some unrest in the communities. How possibly can Mrs. Arrieta, who is new to this case, know and understand the whole story correctly, and really come up with the right arguments that are also supported by the communities themselves? It was time for a personal visit!

On May 20th the community representatives (*curacas*) of San Martin (Ignacio Piñeros) and

Palmeras (Estanislao Jordán) took the plane to Bogotá, together with José Gregorio Vásquez (environmental coordinator in San Martin de Amacayacu), who gave life to the application and who has always pushed it forward.

The three were received at the office of the subdirector of Indigenous Affairs at the ANT, Mrs. Lisbeth Jacanemejoy (second person from the right on the above picture on the next page).



There was also an old friend at the meeting, Mrs. Maria Ines Palacios (only just visible, to the right on the upper picture on the next page), who is currently employed as a consultant at the ANT. She knows the application like no other, because she was the anthropologist present during the first INCODER visit to San Martin de Amacayacu and Palmeras in 2013 (Newsletter 50). After her boss Mr. Miguel Vásquez Luna passed away (Newsletter 52), Mrs. Palacios worked as hard as she possibly could for the application within the INCODER.



During this time, she was also present at the Wone Congress in the Tikuna Cocama and Yagua (TICOYA) reserve in October 2014 (Newsletter 58). Unfortunately, the INCODER disolution took the whole of 2015 and establishing the ANT the whole of 2016. Mrs. Palacios was then employed elsewhere. It was a great meeting again after 4 years. It certainly creates trust.

During the ANT meeting, it became clear that the application is developing step by step. The ANT has to work attentively, because it is a unique case in the history of Colombia. Never before has a reserved been established

without the communities being located within its borders. As you already know, San Martin and Palmeras are already located in the TICOYA reserve. The area that these communities want to get recognized, is located outside this reserve (Newsletter 50). It was also emphasized that the communities met all the requirements and there should certainly be no new meetings or gatherings about the application with Ministries or locally. This could create unexpected conditions.



The visit to Bogotá was also used to talk to the people behind the solar panel project in San Martin. In the 76th Newsletter we gave an update of this project. Back then none of the panels had fallen over. By now, a few community members have broken down and stored the bottom row of panels. Still, the ground (which was made higher with other soil at the beginning of the project two years ago) seems to continue breaking, which also endangers the second row of panels. The man who met with the three promised good developments soon...



And finally there was a meeting with a young student who will travel to San Martin at the end of June to help the community develop a spatial organisation plan: Who can build a house where? Where is the garbage dump going to be? Where can we allow loud parties in the weekend, etc. The idea is that he will work with a local committee for a whole month, meet with the community members, work with GPS and make maps. You will certainly hear more about this!



Would you like to support the Tikuna indigenous community of San Martin together with the Small World Foundation, and stay in touch about the local developments in this remote corner of Colombia?

Please transfer 15 euro yearly (or more!) to the following bank account in the Netherlands:

Account name: Stichting SMALL WORLD FOUNDATION
SWIFT/BIC Code: RABONL2U
IBAN code: NL28 RABO 0132 7262 03

Or check out the online contribution module on: www.smallworldfoundation.org/?page_id=68

Please DON'T FORGET TO INFORM US ABOUT YOUR NAME AND EMAIL ADDRESS!!
(heike_van_gils@hotmail.com)

The contributions will be spent exclusively on the development and realization of local initiatives in San Martin de Amacayacu in the Colombian Amazon. No wages are being paid to anyone. The expenses will be mentioned as much as possible in the newsletters. For alternative contributions, please contact Heike van Gils at: heike_van_gils@hotmail.com.

For more information about this initiative, please check the website:
www.smallworldfoundation.org.