

Brief Biographies of Panelists:

Luís Evelis Andrade Casama is President of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC). An Embera from the community of Riosucio (Chocó province), Luis Evelis has served as advisor with the Indigenous *Cabildo Mayor* of the Bajo Atrato Zone (CAMIZBA) and the Embera Wounaan Regional Organization (OREWA) in Chocó province. He completed his studies in theology and philosophy. Luis Evelis is currently a board member of the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a member of the National Indigenous Peace Council and the National Commission of Indigenous Territories.

Craig Benjamin works for Amnesty International Canada as the campaigner for the human rights of Indigenous peoples. He represented Amnesty International in the final sessions of the UN Working Group that finalized the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. He continues to work closely with Indigenous partners as part of a global campaign to promote the adoption of the Declaration.

Germán Burgos is a specialist in political science and a doctoral candidate in law at the University of Barcelona. He is a professor of political science at the National University of Colombia and a senior associate of the Bogota-based Latin American Institute for Alternative Legal Services (ILSA) where he focuses on issues related to the administration of justice.

Robin Buyers is the Colombia Team Support Coordinator for Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and teaches in the Community Worker program at George Brown College in Toronto. A specialist in community organizing and human rights activism, she has worked with a wide range of social justice organizations, including the Americas Policy Group of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, the Coalition for a Public Inquiry into Ipperwash, and the Aboriginal Rights Coalition (ARC).

José Santos Caicedo Cabezas, is a member of the human rights and national coordinating teams of the PCN – the Process of Black Communities of Colombia (*Proceso de Comunidades Negras*). Originally from the southern Pacific province of Nariño (region of Tumaco), José was obliged to flee his home province following a series of threats. Now living in Bogotá, José works with the PCN in providing accompaniment both to Afro-Colombian communities including those in the territory of Buenaventura, and organizational processes, among them the Inter-Ethnic Territorial Union of the Naya (UTINAYA).

Santiago A. Canton is the Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States (OAS). Previously he was the OAS Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression. Mr. Canton holds a law degree from the University of Buenos Aires and a Master degree in International Law from the Washington College of Law of the American University. During 1998 he was Director of Public Information for the OAS. From 1994 to 1998 Dr. Canton was Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), a democratic development institute based in Washington, D.C. Mr. Canton was a political assistant to Mr. Carter in the election processes in El Salvador and Dominican Republic.

Martha Cecilia Domicó is the daughter of renowned Embera Katio leader Kimy Pernia Domico. She came to Canada in 2003 to accept the prestigious John Humphrey Freedom Award (awarded to Kimy by the Canadian organization Rights & Democracy) on behalf of her father and undertook a speaking tour in several cities throughout the country. Martha is a former Governor of the Cabildo del Rio Sinú and a teacher.

Jorge Rojas is the director of CODHES, the Consultancy on Human Rights and Displacement – a non-governmental organization he founded in 1992. A social communicator and journalist by profession, Jorge has worked as a researcher and consultant with UNICEF on issues related to displacement including the impact on children. This work led to the publication of the books: “A Country in Flight” (Volumes I and II) and “This War is not ours”. Jorge has authored numerous reports on displacement, human rights and the armed conflict in Colombia and, in October 2001, appeared as a witness in hearings convened by the Sub-committee on Human Rights and International Development of the Canadian parliament’s Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Amanda Romero Medina is a founding member of the human rights movement in Colombia and a human rights teacher and researcher by profession since the end of the 70s. Amanda has worked with Latin American NGOs on issues of indigenous peoples, Afro descendants, prisons, legal services and popular education. Between 2000 and 2006 Amanda worked as the American Friends Service Committee’s Quaker International Affairs Representative for the Andean Region, based in Colombia. As an independent consultant, Amanda contributed to four case studies on the current situation of indigenous peoples in Arauca, Cauca, Cesar and Cordoba as preparation for the International Mission on the Human Rights situation of Indigenous Peoples in Colombia that was held in October 2006. She also drafted a document of analysis of the situation of Indigenous Peoples in Colombia and a comparative chart on the compliance by the Colombian government with the recommendations produced by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Indigenous Peoples and other UN bodies. In her capacity as popular educator, Amanda facilitated a national workshop on indigenous women participating in the Third National Table on Peace which four different indigenous organizations in Colombia established in 2001.

Marilyn Machado Mosquera is a member of the national coordinating team, and a founding member of the PCN – the Process of Black Communities of Colombia (*Proceso de Comunidades Negras*). She has a degree in sociology from the University of Cali and is a member of the Palenque of the Upper Cauca and of the organization Ku-mahaná. Marilyn was a representative of Colombia’s black communities to the High Level Consultative Commission established to implement Law 70. She also served as a representative before the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Development Bank – Plan Pacífico.

Blanca Cecilia Muñoz is a leader of the Kofán Nation and of the *Cabildos Indígenas del Valle del Guaméz y San Miguel* in the southern province of Putumayo. For the past fifteen years, she has played a key organizational role, serving as Governor of the *Cabildo Bocana de Luzón*, health monitor and as a member of the Permanent Commission of the Kofán People. She has taken part in numerous fora in Colombia and Ecuador related both to gender and equity issues as well as on the impact of aerial fumigations being conducted as part of the so-called war on drugs.

Guillermo Tascon is an Embera Chamí from the community of Cristianía in Antioquia province. He has worked for the Indigenous Organization of Antioquia (OIA) for over a decade in a variety of capacities including as its Secretary General (1996-2000); Vice President (2000-2004) and, currently, as the organization’s President. He has a university degree in ethno-education from the Universidad Pontificia Bolivarian and worked as a bilingual teacher in the Carmatarua Indigenous Educational Institution in the Cristianía reserve from 1981-1996.