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## [An inspiring response from an indigenous woman](#)

Last March –on International Women's Day- the WRM paid homage to women's struggles in forests and plantations. We then said that, in spite of all the difficulties, "women continue resisting both in the forest and in the tree plantations. They are speaking loud telling the world about their knowledge, their wisdom, their own definition of what development is and how it should be undertaken."

In response, we received the following message from an indigenous woman called Telquaa, which we would like to share with all of you. After thanking us for the statement she said:

"It is such a good story to share with other women of the world. I am an indigenous sovereign Bear Clan mother and grandmother of the western hemisphere, now called British Columbia, Canada. I have been fighting to protect our sacred home lands of Maxan Lake, without any headway. All I have received is brutal beatings from the band councillors and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who are supposed to protect us. So I now have brutal scars to my body, that will forever remind me of the ugly life I have lived here.

My sacred land is the headwaters of many of the main rivers of this province. Today this area is clear cut logged and there is many mines opened up. In the olden days the leaders were indigenous women such as my mother and grandmother. Since this government came into power, the indigenous women's positions were taken over by men, whom the governments have put into power. So they are now government elected officials and not a peoples' leaders.

Now they are trying to force an illegal treaty process, onto our sacred lands. These treaties are illegal because we do not want treaties in our territories. The men leaders are trying to make these treaties with the government, so they can clear cut log our territories and open up new mines. So they are railroading this illegal treaty process. As women we now have no say or no voice. I have been a very outspoken indigenous woman, on many of these issues. So I have become a target for the men leaders and for the police and the justice system.

Over the years I have been made disabled by these men, and today I am forced to live in a wheelchair. Even though I have a loud voice, I still use my voice, and get around in my wheelchair. Lately the police have been trying to keep me quiet, by taking away my vehicles and laying trumped up charges against my husband. My husband was also very badly beaten up by the police, and charged for assaulting the police.

Even though we are still getting beaten up we still stand up and speak out. I know our sacred Mother Earth is taking a beating and no one is standing up to protect her. We try our best to speak out for her. Our watersheds are disappearing at an alarming rate. Our weather has changed drastically. More hot weather, no water, no rain, no snow, no animals. Too many human beings taking over too many sacred lands, and not caring for the sacred lands.

I liked your email, very much, as it has inspired me, to stand up and fight more, even though I feel as if I cannot do anything, anymore. Thank you."

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Thank YOU Telquaa, both as a person and as an inspiring example of the countless forest women who are standing up to protect the Earth and the future of Humanity.