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Amazon Watch

Headquarters:	San Francisco, USA
Established:	1997
Web site:	www.amazonwatch.org
Number of employees:	7
Number of members:	Not a member organization, but many supporters, principally in California
Area of activity:	Protection of the environment and the rights of indigenous peoples in the Amazon basin
Main objectives:	Cooperation with other non-governmental organizations in the Amazon basin, with the goal of protecting the environment and strengthening the rights of indigenous peoples against large-scale oil and gas pipelines, power lines, roads and other mega-projects.

Summary

Amazon Watch is conducting a successful campaign entitled "Clean Up Ecuador Campaign" against the U.S. energy giant Chevron. The campaign demands that Chevron accept responsibility for the immense damages caused by ChevronTexaco (now Chevron Corp.) in the northern Ecuadorian Amazon. The campaign has succeeded in mobilizing leading representatives of the California city of San Ramon (home of Chevron headquarters) as well as principal Chevron shareholders, celebrities and other NGOs.

Reasons for the submission

According to Amazon Watch, the "Clean Up Ecuador Campaign" is a perfect example of a campaign whose goal is to call a multinational corporation to account. This particular case deals with ChevronTexaco, today Chevron Corp., and the enormous environmental damage it caused in the Amazon rain forest in Ecuador.

Between 1964 and 1992, ChevronTexaco was responsible for one of the world's worst oil disasters in the region of the northern Ecuadorian Amazon rain forest known as "Oriente." During this period, the corporation created over 600 highly toxic waste pits, for cost-cutting reasons. Pipeline ruptures were also common. Since then, the health of the local population has been seriously harmed (higher rates of cancer, infant mortality, etc.). In 2003, organizations in Ecuador started legal proceedings to force Chevron to take responsibility for its actions, to clean up the contaminated areas, and to compensate the population. The "Clean Up Ecuador Campaign" supports the people of Ecuador in their struggle.

The campaign's activities include support of the partners in Ecuador in their legal proceedings against Chevron, the mobilization of the people of the California city of San Ramon (headquarters of Chevron), the coordination of legal teams in the U.S. and Ecuador, and the collaboration with

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other NGOs, celebrities, shareholders, etc. A photo exhibition of the consequences of ChevronTexaco's environmental damage was also created. Amazon Watch supports the indigenous peoples of Ecuador financially and in media relations as well.

Results of the campaign

Since the start of the campaign, Amazon Watch has entered into successful partnerships with other organizations such as the "Amazon Defense Coalition" (Frente de Defensa de la Amazonia) in Ecuador, various organizations of the indigenous peoples, and "Accion Ecologica." The campaign is backed by the residents of the San Ramon Valley, political exponents in California, influential shareholders and NGOs such as Amnesty International. Amazon Watch was also able to win Bianca Jagger as a prominent human rights advocate for the campaign.

In May 2003, a delegation of twelve indigenous leaders from the Amazon region traveled to Chevron headquarters in San Ramon. This generated interest in the campaign amongst the people of San Ramon. Thousands of signatures were collected for a petition to Chevron's CEO. A delegation from the San Ramon Valley also traveled to Ecuador. After its return, the delegation organized various meetings with residents, the media, and Chevron representatives and shareholders. In 2004 and 2005, Amazon Watch accompanied interested shareholders to Ecuador. In the last two years, the NGO was also present at shareholder meetings, with campaigns that received considerable media attention.

Amazon Watch attributes its success in particular to the use of strategies that have brought various stakeholders into a coalition. Each stakeholder can make his special contribution on various levels. The collaboration of representatives of the people of San Ramon was also important. They want to bring Chevron to assume its social responsibility.

What happens next?

The "Clean Up Ecuador Campaign" will continue. Amazon Watch wants to form additional alliances and increase the pressure on Chevron. It also wants to organize further protests and campaigns together with Amnesty International and the Rainforest Action Network. The collaboration with shareholders and political decision-makers will continue as well. Amazon Watch hopes to send medical and technical experts to Ecuador to help with fact-finding for the legal proceedings. The photo exhibition of the environmental damage will be shown at multiple locations in the U.S. and Ecuador.

Detailed submission: www.publiceye.ch/nominierungen

Further information and links:

- www.amazonwatch.org
- www.chevrontoxico.com