

Blessed are those who mourn: *they shall be comforted.*

## Davi Yanomami *Brazil*



FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS, CAFOD has been helping the Hutukara Yanomami Association (HAY) in Brazil to protect indigenous land from mining and raise awareness of climate change. Both are severely affecting the environment and the livelihoods of indigenous communities in the Amazon region. HAY's President Davi Kopenawa Yanomami has been an important spokesperson for the rights of indigenous communities for the past 25 years.

*At an assembly of indigenous people in Brazil, Davi Kopenawa Yanomami talks about the dangers of illegal mining and climate change.*



We indigenous communities are saying look at the sky – it's changing. The sun is changing. The rain is changing. The men in the cities, we want them to listen and believe us, to look to the future and the past, to see what is happening and to see the pollution, destruction, poverty, illness.

Climate change for us Yanomami has meant that the rains have changed. We get rain filling the rivers and not much sun in summer. With all this rain we can't work. We have to wait until the sun arrives to dry the crops.

We are seeing lots of chopping down of the forest. Men are chopping down trees to plant soya and sugarcane. The earth is cracking.

We the Yanomami people think that mining will not bring any benefits to anyone. It will only destroy nature and bring in diseases that never existed in our land. Our land has to be respected. Our land is our heritage, a heritage that protects us.

My message is this: think from the heart and the head. Change your thinking. Think of the earth. It is life. The forest is life. Water is life. It is not money. Money makes you crazy. It makes you destroy nature, water and rivers. It makes you take gold and minerals. To think in favour of the land and nature is to find an urgent solution.



### FACT

Gold mining heavily affected the Yanomami communities in the 1980s and 1990s. Twenty per cent of the tribe – around 4,000 people – died in seven years due to disease and conflict with miners.

*Right: Davi Kopenawa Yanomami is a Brazilian activist who speaks out on behalf of indigenous people. Helping poor communities stay in control of their land is a vital part of CAFOD's work.*



