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WORLD SUMMIT OF
**INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES**
AND NATURE


Global Indigenous Agenda for the Governance of Indigenous Lands, Territories, Waters, Coastal Seas and Natural Resources

Introduction

Indigenous Peoples across the globe manage significant areas of the Earth's most biodiverse regions. The profound relationships that we have with the whole of the natural world are a hallmark of our worldviews and values. Our holistic perspectives and centuries old sustainable development have contributed to the conservation of our lands, territories, waters and natural resources and they also form the core of our distinct cultural identity and spiritual practices.

Significant international progress has been made to affirm the distinct status, rights and role of Indigenous Peoples as reflected in the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, *International Labor Organization Convention No. 169*, the *American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and other human rights instruments. Yet, due to lack of implementation, we persist in securing comprehensive recognition of and respect for our ways of life, our rights to lands, waters, coastal seas, territories and natural resources and our traditional knowledge, all of which underpin our substantial contributions to nature conservation. Although there is extraordinary cultural diversity among the 470 million Indigenous Peoples across the globe, we are united by our intrinsic relationship with Mother Earth and the common challenges we face.

While the high rate of biodiversity in Indigenous ancestral lands is well established, the contribution of Indigenous Peoples to conservation has yet to be fully recognised and supported. Conservation and Indigenous organisations could be powerful allies in their shared goals to safeguard biodiversity and protect nature from threats such as unsustainable resource exploitation and climate change. Full recognition of Indigenous land and resource rights, leadership and effective participation are key enabling conditions for conservation.



The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is a significant platform for advancing recognition and support for the contributions of Indigenous Peoples to conservation. *The Durban Action Plan* and the *Sydney Vision* are powerful commitments of the conservation community. In 2016, the IUCN Members' Assembly adopted a historic decision to create a new IUCN membership category for Indigenous Peoples' Organisations (IPOs), strengthening recognition of our rights, participation, voice and role in IUCN. Since then, IUCN IPO Members have worked collectively to develop and implement a *Self-determined Strategy*¹ of joint priorities for advancing indigenous rights and issues in IUCN and more widely in conservation.

At this 2021 IUCN World Conservation Congress, we are participating for the first time as Indigenous Peoples' Organisation Members of IUCN. We acknowledge the mandate of the IUCN Congress to set the direction of our collective work toward global conservation initiatives through our combined efforts to conserve nature and accelerate the transition to sustainable development. Consistent with this objective and our contributions, we have discussed and agreed upon by consensus this *Global Indigenous Agenda for the Governance of Indigenous Lands, Territories, Waters, Coastal Seas and Natural Resources* as an outcomes document for the World Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nature at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2021.

1 | As a distinct and mobilised constituency within IUCN, IPO Members met as a group for the first time in 2018. At this meeting, the IPO's developed a self-determined strategy identifying joint priorities for advancing Indigenous rights and issues in conservation and within IUCN. These priorities focus particularly on leveraging IUCN's convening power, knowledge generation, standard setting and policy engagement in regard to Indigenous issues.

Indigenous Agenda: High-level Outcomes and Action Plan

This *Global Indigenous Agenda* presents the priority outcomes and actions that we have identified and will contribute towards as IPO Members of IUCN, working in collaboration with wider networks of Indigenous Peoples' organisations and through engagement with the wider IUCN Membership (government and non-government) and other relevant actors.

1. Secure recognition and respect for collective Indigenous rights and governance of lands, territories, waters, coastal seas and natural resources

Enhance recognition and support for Indigenous rights to lands, territories, waters and resources in conservation:

- a. Advance recognition of the linkages between Indigenous Peoples' rights to lands, territories, waters and resources and nature conservation and secure active support for these rights from all conservation actors;
- b. In the CBD's *Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework*, the *UNFCCC Paris Agreement*, and IUCN's *Nature 2030 Agenda*, promote the adoption and implementation of rights-based approaches and safeguards that ensure the recognition, respect and enforcement of Indigenous rights related to lands, territories, waters and collective resources; and
- c. Promote the development and implementation of State laws and policies that recognise, respect and secure the rights of Indigenous Peoples over their lands, territories and resources and uphold the right to free, prior and informed consent, in keeping with UNDRIP.

Enhance recognition and support for Indigenous governance systems for the use, management and conservation of natural resources and Mother Earth:

- a. Strengthen equitable and collaborative governance systems that ensure respect for Indigenous rights, cultures, knowledge and livelihoods;
- b. Promote recognition and respect for rights to sustainable management and use of the diverse and numerous species that Indigenous Peoples traditionally and otherwise rely upon through hunting, fishing, harvesting, agriculture, pastoralism and herding;
- c. End the criminalisation of customary livelihoods practices of Indigenous Peoples; and
- d. Work to eliminate the "nature-culture divide" or the separation between cultural and natural values, including in the context of the World Heritage Convention.



Strengthen measures to guard against threats to Indigenous environments and environmental defenders:

- a. Ensure respect for declarations by Indigenous Peoples of their territories as “no-go zones” for activities of extractive industries; and
- b. Develop and implement systems of protection and support for Indigenous environmental human rights defenders.

2. Promote and implement Indigenous solutions to conservation of biodiversity

Ensure recognition of the rights and leadership of Indigenous Peoples in protected and conserved areas:

- a. Promote and support the development and implementation of Indigenous systems of protected and conserved areas and their integration within national biodiversity strategies and budget, based on free, prior and informed consent;
- b. Strengthen knowledge and capacities for governance and management of Indigenous protected and conserved areas;
- c. Promote articulation with the “territories of life” initiative for Indigenous and community conserved areas (ICCAs);
- d. Work to ensure that actions and decisions concerning existing or proposed terrestrial and marine protected and conserved areas, including to meet CBD targets or for World Heritage nominations, take a rights-based approach and not undermine, diminish or violate the human rights of Indigenous Peoples; and
- e. Promote enhance access to conflict resolution and grievance mechanisms that address rights violations in relation to conservation activities.

Recover, strengthen and revalue Indigenous knowledge, cultural and spiritual practices and innovations, including appropriate mechanisms to preserve, maintain and transmit them:

- a. Strengthen the CBD 8J working group and *Nagoya Protocol*, the UNFCCC Platform of Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples, and WIPO intellectual property group, to advocate for enhanced recognition and support for the knowledge, technologies, practices and innovations of Indigenous Peoples;
- b. Promote the recognition and inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in global knowledge platforms such as IPBES, IPCC and the IUCN Red List; and

- c. Support the intergenerational transfer of Indigenous traditional knowledge and Indigenous scientific research for management of lands, territories and resources.

Influence biodiversity-related agendas, including bioprospecting, biosafety, synthetic biology, genetic sequencing, invasive species and monocultures:

- a. Influence the agendas of the CBD and IUCN, and legal frameworks at national levels on invasive alien species management to ensure that diverse Indigenous values, visions and social and cultural proposals are taken into account;
- b. Develop Indigenous protocols on access to indigenous knowledge and biological and genetic resources; and
- c. Build and strengthen local, national and regional capacities of IPOs in bioprospecting, biosafety and genetic sequencing through the implementation of training and knowledge exchange among IUCN IPO Members and strategic partners and allies.

3. Promote and implement Indigenous solutions to the climate crisis

Lead development and implementation of Indigenous climate solutions:

- a. Mobilise partnerships and support for the *Global Call* to protect 80% of the Amazon, safeguarding forests and people;
- b. Advance the design and implementation of community-led nature-based solutions; and
- c. Secure direct access to climate finance for Indigenous climate initiatives.

Ensure full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in climate decision-making at all levels:

- a. Advocate for the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, including youth and women, in the decision making of the UNFCCC, in the areas of adaptation and mitigation; and
- b. Promote affirmative actions that take account of Indigenous rights, roles and knowledge in national and regional strategies for climate mitigation, adaptation, nature-based solutions, climate safeguards and benefit sharing associated with REDD+.



4. Influence post COVID-19 recovery and food security agendas to improve the livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples

Ensure the recognition and inclusion of Indigenous food systems in the global biodiversity and climate agendas, in order to achieve food security outcomes, we will:

1. Promote Indigenous food systems in the agendas and strategies of the FAO, IUCN, CBD and UNFCCC, in order to increase the recognition of Indigenous agricultural and coastal marine management systems as alternatives that guarantee food sovereignty for Indigenous Peoples and society in general; and
2. Promote Indigenous knowledge and worldview as vital contributions to food security and protection against natural disasters through the implementation of community and nature-based solutions.

Establish inclusive mechanisms for dialogue between Indigenous Peoples and national authorities related to pandemics:

- a. To promote culturally appropriate responses to the current and future impacts of COVID-19 ;
- b. Establish economic and social recovery plans, involving Indigenous Peoples (particularly youth and women) in the prevention and mitigation of future threats; and
- c. Strengthen Indigenous food production systems as resilient measures to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indigenous territories.

5. Increase and strengthen Indigenous leadership in decision-making processes and access to resources related climate and nature conservation

Strengthen the relationship between IPOs and IUCN by increasing IPO participation and engagement with all constituent parts of IUCN including:

- a. IUCN Membership, by growing and diversifying the group of IUCN IPO Members and engaging with the wider IUCN Membership through participation in IUCN Member platforms, policy-setting and collaborations;
- b. Strengthening the integration of Indigenous membership, issues and priorities in IUCN Commissions;
- c. Increasing engagement and collaboration with IUCN Secretariat Programmes and projects working on issues of concern to Indigenous Peoples;

- d. Working closely with the IUCN Global Programme on Governance and Rights to continue strengthening and increasing the human and financial resources of the work program on Indigenous Peoples and conservation; and
- e. Contributing to Union-wide efforts to implement IUCN resolutions on Indigenous issues.

Strengthen Indigenous organisations, networks and alliances by:

- a. Promoting spaces for dialogue, information exchange and joint advocacy among Indigenous networks, such as through meetings prior to international forums and events;
- b. Developing a global training programme to increase the capacity of Indigenous Peoples, including youth and Indigenous women, to participate in international dialogues and decision-making processes on conservation; and
- c. Networking with other social sectors and raise their awareness on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the importance of their knowledge for conservation and sustainable development agendas.

Increase Indigenous Peoples' direct access to public and private funding by:

- a. Developing and implementing a joint fundraising strategy between IUCN and IPO Members for the implementation of this *Global Indigenous Agenda*;
- b. Promote and support the involvement of Indigenous Peoples in the development of national and international financing initiatives related to nature conservation;
- c. Increase access to financing to co-manage protected areas;
- d. Promote dialogue between Indigenous Peoples and funders in order to break down barriers to access financial resources.

This *Action Plan* will require concrete actions to be implemented in the coming years. IPO Members will work with IUCN to strengthen the IPO Member coordination mechanism, including through strengthening of regional focal points, and create a monitoring plan. Follow-up on the commitments to the agenda will also be pursued through the formation of alliances and synergies with other indigenous organisations, networks, coordination platforms after the celebration of the Indigenous Summit in September 2021.



Call to Action

As Indigenous Peoples around the world, we call for an equitable environment for the recognition of Indigenous Peoples to thrive as leaders, innovators and key contributors to nature conservation. We seek to engage and open opportunities for a joint effort to advance the implementation of this *Global Indigenous Agenda* and its *Action Plan*. We call on all constituencies to dedicate support for this *Global Indigenous Agenda*, including through specific actions relevant to different constituencies.

States: As Parties to international conventions, ensure integration of Indigenous priorities in global environmental agreements we call on States, including IUCN Member States, to:

- a. Undertake all necessary measures for the full and effective implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)* and ratification of the *ILO Convention 169*;
- b. Create permanent spaces for the full and effective participation of Indigenous organisations in the development and implementation of public policies that affect their traditional relationship to nature;
- c. Promote and respect Indigenous Peoples' participation as recognition of their Indigenous rights in the creation of protected areas; and
- d. Promote, develop and implement affirmative measures that protect Indigenous Peoples as environmental defenders.

Private sector:

- a. Establish internal commitments to ensure that all actions respect international and national frameworks regarding the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including rights to free, prior and informed consent;
- b. Ensure that their investments do not lead to damage to or dispossession of Indigenous communities off their lands, territories and resources;
- c. Invest in programmes that develop skills and opportunities to foster mutually beneficial relationships, initiatives and synergies between its business activities and the well-being of Indigenous communities; and
- d. Identify co-investment opportunities with Indigenous communities and IPOs to strengthen sustainable local economies, respecting their inherent rights.

International donor community:

- a. Commit funds and open opportunities for the implementation of this *Global Indigenous Agenda*;
- b. Jointly design and establish financial mechanisms and instruments that facilitate IPOs' direct access to funds for their own conservation and climate initiatives;
- c. Require that conservation organisations adopt human rights policies and monitor the application of human rights-based conservation programmes, notably in relation to Indigenous Peoples' rights;
- d. Provide financial support for measures to ensure that Indigenous Peoples' rights and agendas are integrated in the implementation of the CBD's *Post 2020 Agenda*, the *UNFCCC Paris Agreement*, *FAO food security initiatives* and *World Heritage processes*.

NGO conservation community:

- a. Promote initiatives and affirmative actions that contribute to securing Indigenous land and resource rights, strengthening Indigenous organisations, ensuring and the full and effective participation of Indigenous representatives, especially youth and women, in conservation policies and programmes;
- b. Shift the new paradigm for protected and conserved areas from paper to practice;
- c. Support Indigenous Peoples to develop and sustain their own conservation initiatives;
- d. Improve monitoring of social policy commitments and include Indigenous Peoples in regular project assessments;
- e. Develop mechanisms for regular and continuous engagement with Indigenous Peoples; and
- f. Ensure that culturally appropriate complaints mechanisms are available for Indigenous Peoples to voice their concerns over conservation initiatives.

Academic institutions: recognise and value the contributions of: traditional knowledge; Indigenous science and philosophy; and Indigenous practices in relation to the environmental challenges currently facing the world; and create space for enhancing Indigenous capacities and skills development in relation to environmental issues, including but not limited to biodiversity and climate change.



This *Global Indigenous Agenda for the Governance of Indigenous Lands, Territories, Waters, Coastal Seas and Natural Resources* was developed by:

