



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES MAJOR GROUP

Indigenous Peoples position during the Climate and Development Ministerial. 31 March 2021

Good morning, good afternoon Most excellent Co-President of the COP 26, Distinguished Ministers. On behalf of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change and the Indigenous Peoples' Major Group on Sustainable Development, we appreciate the space to participate in the Climate Change and Development Ministerial event.

It is essential that the voices, rights, and contributions of Indigenous Peoples are prioritized in not only the discussions today, but in all discussion leading up, and beyond, COP26 to advance solutions to address the climate crisis.

We firmly believe that it is not possible to talk about climate crises, biodiversity loss, health pandemic, sustainable development, and response measures without the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, including women, men, Elders, the differently-abled, those who are gender-diverse and youth.

Day by day, we see the effects of the climate crisis on our lands, territories and resources. Effects that continue to worsen. In November of last year, the Caribbean Coast region of Nicaragua, where I come from, was impacted by two extreme hurricanes in less than 15 days. We have seen forest fires in Brazil, Australia, Siberia, droughts and floods that have devastated our lives and ecosystems. Despite these disproportionate impacts, we continue to be leaders in adaptation, mitigation and reciprocal living with our lands, territories and resources, including oceans, ice, and water. These contributions have been confirmed by numerous studies and reports, highlighting the crucial role of Indigenous Peoples, the protection of our rights, and of our knowledge systems, science, and innovation have in contributing to the implementation of the Paris Agreement goals.

If efforts continue to the protection of our rights to lands, territories and resources, as well as the minimum standards contained with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we can increase the amount of carbon sequestered, expand agro-ecosystems for sustainable food production, improve capacities of communities to adapt and restore balance with nature and all forms of life. Clearly, we are uniquely positioned to lead transformational change in the face of a climate emergency.

To lead this change, we need to shift our thinking towards Indigenous-led and Indigenous-governed institutions that emphasize the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples. We reiterate here our call for establishment of a specially dedicated fund to be directly accessed and managed by Indigenous Peoples from developing and developed countries to enhance and further develop their adaptation capacities and to strengthen indigenous peoples' knowledge and livelihoods and customary land tenure systems. We are appreciative of the progress made by the Green Climate Fund, Global Environmental Facility, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and the Forest Investment Program's Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities but believe that much of the assistance is still too new and of insufficient amounts to address identified needs.

We stand ready to work with States and other key actors at all levels to support financially, politically and with policies the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples' long-term plan for Climate Action. In addition to these calls on finance, we, as Indigenous Peoples, want to reiterate our actions and commitments shared at the UN Secretary General's Climate Summit in 2019 to:

1. Implement holistic plans to protect our biocultural diversity.
2. Develop actions and activities related to climate change that ensure our rights to lands, territories and resources, to the right to self-determination and to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) to any action that affects our lands, territories or resources.
3. Implement and promote a rights-based approach to access and implementation of renewable energy development, for a just transition away from fossil fuels that respects our right to self-determination and Free Prior and Informed consent.

Indigenous Peoples have been consistently involved in international and national climate discussions for the last 2 decades, urging for urgent and transformative change to address the climate and biodiversity crisis. We remain willing to walk the path of solutions with States and other stakeholders.