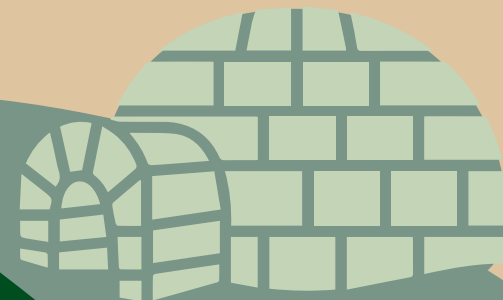




INTERNATIONAL  
INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLES'  
FORUM ON  
CLIMATE CHANGE

# Indigenous Peoples' Engagement at UNFCCC COP23

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# Introduction

Indigenous peoples are among the most impacted by the effects of climate change around the world. Their livelihoods, cultures, and very survival depend on intact ecosystems – from low lying coastal areas to Sahel and deserts to tropical forests and high mountain plateaus – that are often the hardest hit by increasing variability in climate. Nevertheless, recent analytical work shows that indigenous peoples play a critically important role in climate change mitigation and adaptation through their historic and effective role as stewards of much of the world's remaining natural resources.

Indigenous peoples' initiatives at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP21), resulted in five specific references in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change to the contributions through the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples in climate change adaptations and mitigation as well as the need to respect the rights of indigenous peoples in implementing climate solutions. After those incredible results, indigenous peoples' engagement in the COP22 negotiations achieved three notable outcomes: i) strengthened relationships with key governments, ii) strengthened relationships with the COP Presidencies, and iii) a COP Decision in favor of advancing work on the "Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities Platform." This platform is a significant step forward in indigenous peoples' ability to position themselves as innovators, partners and essential to the UNFCCC process at the COP23.

Building on the achievements at COP22, the Germany's Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety committed to support for the engagement and advocacy of indigenous peoples at UNFCCC COP23 to be held in Bonn, Germany, in November 2017. To this end, the European Climate Foundation (ECF) and the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC), the organizing body of indigenous peoples engaging in the global climate negotiations, partnered to develop and manage a program of work to ensure indigenous peoples from the 7 regions (Africa, Asia, Arctic, Pacific, Latin American & Caribbean, North America and Russian) to remain strongly positioned in the UNFCCC process and advance their influence on the climate change agenda. The activities carried out included preparatory meetings of the IIPFCC, an Indigenous Peoples-Government Dialogue, an Indigenous Peoples' Pavilion, and Indigenous Peoples Day, and global communications engagement.

This report highlights the outcomes of this initiative at COP23 and extracts lessons to inform ongoing activities of indigenous peoples in their engagement in the climate context.

IIPFCC's program of work ensures indigenous peoples from these 7 regions engage with and influence UNFCCC agenda:

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# COP23 Outcomes





## VISIBILITY ACHIEVED

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This initiative aimed to raise the profile of indigenous peoples in the context of the climate change agenda to ensure their contributions, rights, knowledge and aspirations are recognized and linked to stronger climate outcomes under the Paris Agreement implementation. Through travel support, hosting a pavilion in the civil society area “Bonn zone” as action area at COP23, and communications efforts and media engagement, indigenous peoples positioned themselves strongly and effectively as key stakeholders in global decision-making on climate change.

The visible and active participation of indigenous peoples was made possible by travel support for 22 indigenous peoples’ representatives community members from Canada, Chad, Ecuador, Fiji, Guatemala, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Kenya, New Zealand, Tanzania, Thailand, Russia, USA, Tuvalu, Suede. By their engagement in global caucus, indigenous peoples Government-Dialogues, media engagement, the negotiations, and side events at the Pavilion and elsewhere in Bonn, they ensured the voices of their peoples and communities were heard at COP23 negotiation.

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## Indigenous Peoples Pavilion at the COP23

The Indigenous Peoples’ Pavilion at COP23 (IP Pavilion), located in the civil society space or “Bonn Zone” at Rheinaue Park in Bonn, Germany, served as dedicated gathering space for indigenous peoples allowing them to coordinate, advocate and convene events, presentations, policy dialogues, panel discussions, cultural performances and films screenings that advanced the discourse on indigenous peoples’ solutions to climate change. As central pillar of this strategy was the highly-visible platform, the pavilion was planned and programmed by a team of indigenous representatives from the seven regions of the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IPFCC) - Africa, the Arctic, Asia, Latin America & the Caribbean, North America, the Pacific, and Russia & Eastern Europe - and focused, primarily, on **showcasing indigenous peoples’ initiatives on climate change adaptation and mitigation through their own traditional knowledge.**

The pavilion drew substantial public attention and attracted a steady flow of **visitors including policymakers, high-level officials, members of the public, global media, NGOs and partners coming from around the world.**

**Events in the pavilion were ensured through interpretation and documents translated between English, Spanish and French.** In this context pavilion activities facilitated the exchange of knowledge and experiences among indigenous peoples from different regions of the world and contributed to enhance their visibility at COP23.

During twelve days of the COP, the Pavilion hosted over 40 side events, representing 100 distinct indigenous peoples' groups, organizations and networks. In addition, for the first time, indigenous peoples pavilion hosted 17 official side events requested kindly by the UNFCCC. Among the events hosted there were presentations, dialogues, panel discussions, film screenings, press conferences and a range of indigenous cultural presentations from chanting, dance, drumming and music, film, photography, as well as artisanal and handicraft displays.

**The pavilion hosted government members and other public figures** including Minister of Fishery and champion of Ocean from Fiji, Minister of Environment of Sudan; Eva Kracht, Director for European and international policy; Laurence Tubiana, Climate Champion of COP21, Climate Ambassador of France and CEO of European Climate Foundation; among many others.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Activities at the COP23 IIPFCC Pavilion:

over **40** side events hosted

**100** distinct indigenous peoples' groups, organizations and networks represented

**17** official UNFCCC side events hosted

All the materials translated in **3** languages: English, Spanish and French





## INFLUENCE ON THE NEGOTIATIONS

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This initiative supported indigenous peoples to maintain a strong advocacy presence to ensure their interests and rights are protected as the recently-adopted the key references to indigenous peoples in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Through travel and logistical support, indigenous peoples self-organized to engage meaningfully and effectively between them self and with governments at COP 23. **These efforts raised awareness among negotiators of the impacts of climate change on indigenous peoples, while highlighting their solutions, which has since enabled and strengthened indigenous peoples' leadership role in the UNFCCC process.**

Leading up to the COP, the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) organized preparatory activities to coordinate around strategy development and advocacy planning for global indigenous peoples' representatives attending COP23 inside (Bula zone) and outside (Bonn zone) the negotiations.

## 2 Indigenous Peoples Global Caucus

The global Indigenous Peoples' caucus is the preparatory meeting before COP23 official negotiation start. The caucus was organized over the span of two days in Cologne, kindly hosted by the Mayor of Cologne in the city hall. Over 80 indigenous peoples around the world gathered and strategized around their participation to the COP23 and the organisation of ritual ceremonies for bless deliberations, got updated on roles and procedures of negotiation procedures for new upcoming negotiation groups, team leaders' forming training, statements preparation of statements, priorities and common position.

Held in French, Arabic, English, Spanish and Russian, the meeting provided an orientation to the UNFCCC processes, reviewed regional priorities for the COP, and facilitated exchange and agreement around the larger political agenda for the negotiations. The meeting also allowed the formation of thematic working groups for various components of the negotiations, including for the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA), Green Climate Fund (GCF), etc.

### 3 Indigenous Peoples Global-Government Dialogue

A Global-Government Dialogue is critical platform for indigenous peoples to engage in direct dialogue with government negotiators and policy makers, was held on the 5 of November, days before COP23 at the UNFCCC secretariat with the support of Fiji Presidency of COP23.

**The dialogue was attended by 21 government representatives from 15 countries** (Fiji and Morocco COP Presidencies, France, EU, New Zealand, Indonesia, Australia, Costa Rica, Canada, Germany, Peru, Ecuador, Tuvalu, Finland, Norway and USA), including His Excellency, Mr. Salaheddine Mezouar, President of COP22, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Morocco; His Excellency, Ambassador Deo Saran, of Fiji; and Ms. Rojina Manandhar and Ms. Koko Warner from the UNFCCC secretariat.

Co-chaired by indigenous peoples' representatives and the COP22 President from Morocco and COP23 Ambassador from Fiji, **The dialogue helped raise awareness and understanding among both, indigenous peoples and governments, of the need of a new structure of participation for indigenous peoples under the UNFCCC process.**

The dialogue resulted in concrete commitments towards a strengthened participation of indigenous peoples in processes related to climate change. The dialogue also strengthened relationships with participating member states, resulting in attendees receiving repeat invitations to engage with the indigenous peoples' Caucus at their daily caucus meetings during the COP and indigenous peoples leveraging their support during the negotiations.



## NEGOTIATIONS DURING THE COP

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### 4 Indigenous Peoples day

For the first time at the UNFCCC at his 23st year of COP negotiations, the **7th of November is especially nominated “Indigenous Peoples day”** (IPs day). During this whole day, indigenous peoples events took place with various activities including a **high level opening attended by Madame Patricia Espinosa, General Secretary of the UNFCCC, His Excellency M. Salahedine Mezour, President of COP22, Minister of Foreign Affaires of Kingdom of Morocco, His Excellency Ambassador Deo Saran, Ambassador of climate of the COP23, Fiji.**

IPs day was honored by special ritual opening from pacific indigenous peoples’ music and dance, followed by all the rest of the 6 regions’ presentations, demands and priorities as well as various speeches, panels discussions and video projections on climate change impact and solutions by indigenous peoples’ organizations, NGOs, Government representatives and UN agencies. The day helped to highlight the expectation of indigenous peoples for the COP23 through the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples platform.

IPs attended many high-level profiles events and advocated for them causes and priorities where their voices influence the negotiation by passing messages directly to the ministers, chiefs of negotiations and decision makers. Gender day included indigenous women voice and also the high-level breakfast on rural women and indigenous women as well the Climate Justice and Human Rights Day with President of Marshall Island, Mary Robinson, former President and President of Mary Robinson Foundation, champion of climate justice, the Prime Minister of Fiji, President of COP23, and also Climate Summit of Local and Regional Leaders.

### 5 Daily caucus

Each day during the twelve days of the COP, indigenous peoples held daily caucus meetings in the Bula Zone 3 of COP23. The morning caucus is a daily meeting for critical coordination among accredited indigenous peoples to track negotiations, prepare daily interventions, and to plan government engagement strategies and bilateral meetings. Special guests were regularly invited to make presentations and to dialogue and interact with caucus attendees. Guests included state negotiators, UN agencies, and NGOs working on supporting indigenous peoples’ engagement in the climate arena. Indigenous peoples’ representatives were also invited to attend meetings of other UNFCCC constituencies to share positions and collaborate on negotiation strategies.

A key focus of indigenous peoples’ advocacy at COP23 was the **operationalization of an “Indigenous Peoples’ and Local Communities Platform,” to formalize indigenous peoples’ engagement in the UNFCCC process and the implementation of the Paris Agreement.** The platform was advocated for in response to the Paris Decision 1/CP.21 Paragraph 135, which states the 21st Conference of the Parties:



*Recognizes the need to strengthen knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change, and establishes a platform for the exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner.*



Following initial COP22 decision under SBSTA 47 agenda item 13 of COP23, 18 negotiations between “informal, informal-informal and informal-informal-informal” took place with guidance of two co-facilitators from Japan and Grenada and concluded by the SBSTA chair, which significant advances were made in the representation of indigenous peoples as integral stakeholders to the negotiation process as well as blockages from countries positions was showed.

Within nine days, purpose and function was agreed with an initiation of the operationalization of the platform. Owing to the efforts of the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change, a decision was adopted by the SBSTA and then COP23 with the full integration of the **four indigenous peoples’ principals**:

- I Full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples;
- II Equal status and representation of Indigenous Peoples and Parties, including in leadership roles;
- III Self-selection of Indigenous’ representatives in accordance with Indigenous Peoples’ own procedures;
- IV Adequate funding from the UNFCCC Secretariat and voluntary contributions to enable the aforementioned functions; to set next steps to advance the operationalization of the platform.

## 6 Outcomes from COP23

Indigenous peoples’ engagement in the COP23 negotiations achieved three notable outcomes: i) strengthened relationships with key governments, ii) strengthened relationships between indigenous peoples, and iii) a COP Decision in favor of advancing work on the “Indigenous Peoples’ and Local Communities Platform.”

The legacy of indigenous peoples’ engagement at COP23 is best illustrated by the language of the Decision taken by the COP Decision:



*This platform is a significant step forward in indigenous peoples’ ability to position themselves as innovators, partners and essential to the UNFCCC process.*

## 3 KEY COP23 OUTCOMES FOR IIPFCC:

- I strengthened relationships with key governments
- II strengthened relationships between indigenous peoples
- III a COP Decision in favor of advancing work on the “Indigenous Peoples’ and Local Communities Platform.”

## The decision is highlighted here:

[The Conference of the Parties] Decides that the overall purpose of the platform will be to strengthen the knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change, to facilitate the exchange of experience and the sharing of best practices and lessons learned on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner and to enhance the engagement of local communities and indigenous peoples in the UNFCCC process;

**6.** Also decides that the platform will deliver the following functions:

**(a)** Knowledge: the platform should promote the exchange of experience and best practices aiming at applying, strengthening, protecting and preserving traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples, and local knowledge systems as well as technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change, taking into account the free, prior and informed consent of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices;

**(b)** Capacity for engagement: the platform should build the capacities of indigenous peoples and local communities to enable their engagement in the UNFCCC process. The platform should also build the capacities of Parties and other relevant stakeholders to engage with the platform and with local communities and indigenous peoples, including in the context of the implementation of the Paris Agreement and other climate change related processes;

**(c)** Climate change policies and actions: the platform should facilitate the integration of diverse knowledge systems, practices and innovations in designing and implementing international and national actions, programmes and policies in a manner that respects and promotes the rights and interests of local communities and indigenous peoples. The platform should facilitate stronger and more ambitious climate action by indigenous peoples and local communities that could contribute to the achievement of the nationally determined contributions of the Parties concerned;

**7.** Further decides to continue to work towards the full operationalization of the platform;

**8.** Recommends that the processes under the platform, including its operationalization, take into account, inter alia, the interests and views of local communities and indigenous peoples, as well as the principles proposed by indigenous peoples organizations of full and effective participation of indigenous peoples; equal status of indigenous peoples and Parties, including in leadership roles; self-selection of indigenous peoples representatives in accordance with indigenous peoples' own procedures; and adequate funding from the secretariat and voluntary contributions to enable the functions referred to in paragraph 6 above;

**9.** Decides that the first activity of the platform will be a multi-stakeholder workshop on implementing the functions referred to in paragraph 6 above, which would be co-moderated by the Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and a representative of local communities and indigenous peoples organizations, and that these co-moderators would make an equal contribution to the design of the workshop;

**10.** Requests the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to consider at its forty-eighth session (April-May 2018) the further operationalization of the platform, including the establishment of a facilitative working group, which would not be a negotiating body under the Convention, and the modalities for the development of a workplan for the full implementation of the functions referred to in paragraph 6 above, with balanced representation of local communities and indigenous peoples and Parties, and to conclude its considerations by making recommendations to the Conference of the Parties at its twenty-fourth session (December 2018);

**11.** Takes note of the estimated budgetary implications of the activities to be undertaken by the secretariat referred to in paragraph 9 above;

**12.** Requests that the actions of the secretariat called for in this decision be undertaken subject to the availability of financial resources.

## COMMUNICATIONS OUTCOMES

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As part of this initiative, a communications strategy was implemented to ensure indigenous peoples are duly profiled as key stakeholders in global climate discourse.



### Website

[www.iipfcc.org](http://www.iipfcc.org):

The website, as the main official channel of communication, was used to issue the call for proposal, update all indigenous peoples on logistics, travel notes, as well as maps and key information on the COP23 and the city of Bonn. Between 1 and 19 November, the website had a reach of 4,170 views with 1,521 unique visitors. Based on analytics, the calendar of events (<http://www.iipfcc.org/cop-23-calendar/>) was the most visited subpage and the most searched content from search engines. Website traffic will continue to be sustained through COP23 reports and articles that will be published soon.



### UNFCCC Calendar:

In coordination with the UNFCCC Secretariat, the pavilion team periodically updated its schedule of events to the UNFCCC compiled calendar for broadcast and publicizing across all TV boards and media outlets at COP23. This ensured a high visibility of pavilion events side-by-side with the negotiations as well as all other pavilions.

## 7

## Social media



### Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/iipfcc/>

Appreciating social media, the Pavilion was equally busy on Facebook with great interactions from indigenous peoples present at the COP23 and those back at home. The Pavilion team also used Facebook Live (and twitter Live) to stream the daily IP caucus to the members without Bula zone accreditation and across the globe. The IIPFCC Facebook page reached 5,278 likes up to November 20th, with 1,124 Interactions (comments, likes and reactions). Facebook live proved to be a particularly effective tool as an increasing number of members present at COP23 utilized the feature to live stream the events they were attending



### Twitter

<https://twitter.com/iipfcc>

The Pavilion ensured active Twitter posting will all events being shared and publicized. The team also used the platform to cross share updates from the various official UNFCCC and COP23 handles. The handle @IIPFCC generated 13,000 impressions (views), 991 Profile views and 678 new followers in the month of November. The weekly calendar of event posting for week one (1) got 1,579 impressions as the top performing post.





### Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/iipfcc/>

Being the most colorful and culturally rich pavilion in the civil society space, the communication team interactively posted this richness to the Instagram world. This happened in the form of indigenous peoples quotes and individual pictures, event pictures and general COP23 postings.



**Interviews:** The IIPFCC helped connect various journalists for web, newspapers, TV and radio with indigenous peoples' representatives before and during the COP23.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Measuring IIPFCC social media impact (1st-20th Nov 2017):

**4170** website views

**1521** website unique visitors

**5278** facebook page likes

**1124** facebook interactions (comments, likes and reactions)

**13000** @IIPFCC twitter feed impressions

**991** @IIPFCC twitter profile views

**678** twitter new followers in the month of November

# Challenges and Improvements for Future Engagement

In the process of implementing this initiative, key takeaways were identified with regards to effective engagement and operations that could improve outcomes should future support be made available to carry this work forward.

**Operations:** Communications is essential to ensure effective engagement in any political process. To ensure sufficient outward facing support to develop key messages, press releases, and elicit interest from press at the national and global level, our experience has shown that a dedicated communications specialist is essential to ensure the strongest possible communications outcomes.

After three years of managing a Pavilion, it is evident that a great number of personnel are essential to the smooth operations of a public space where 4-6 events are held daily. Volunteers have been valuable contributions to this end, and can fill gaps in documentation, space management, reporting, technical troubleshooting, and liaising with event organizers, etc. However, volunteers need to be recruited, early a naught to be most useful and to ensure the best outcome.

**Access to funding** is for us key for the success of the initiative and for moving forward indigenous peoples' participation to the climate change negotiation. However, earlier access is very important in order to allow the organizational way and recruitment. **Management** is also key for a better functioning and reporting of the activities. Thanks to the European Climate Foundation (ECF) we managed to run all operations smoothly at COP23 but we recognise a need to be better organized in future years.

# Partnerships & Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the following organizations contributed with resources and in-kind to support IIPFCC at COP23.

**German Federal Ministry for the Environment,  
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**European Climate Foundation (ECF)**



**United Nations Foundation (UNF)**



*Indigenous Peoples' Engagement at UNFCCC COP23*

**International Work Group for  
Indigenous Affairs**



**IWGIA**

**Institut für Ökologie und  
Aktions-Ethnologie**



**Indigenous Peoples  
of Africa Co-ordinating  
Committee (IPACC)**

**Indigenous Peoples' Center for  
Documentation, Research and  
Information**



**City of Cologne**



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