

**An Approach to Nature-Based Solutions from Indigenous Peoples Major Group
POLICY BRIEF
May 2023**

Submitted to UNEA

1. Introduction

Indigenous Peoples have a long-standing relationship with nature, where actions are carried out within the framework of their lands, territories, waters, coastal seas and other resources, and which have the objective of maintaining good living and well-being. Indigenous Peoples have lived in natural environments, where through their knowledge and indigenous wisdom, they have sought answers relating to sustainable livelihoods, food sovereignty, maintaining biodiversity, and fighting climate change. There are multiple examples of natural ecosystems that overlap with the lands and territories of Indigenous Peoples, and yet the experiences and forms of management of these areas are not recognized by different actors.

The term “nature-based solution (NBS)” is being projected by some actors as States, private companies and even UN systems, as a new and innovative way to put people and nature together. As the nature is a pristine space, without include the Peoples that since centuries has been living in harmony with nature, the Indigenous Peoples around the world. Indigenous community has their wisdom and way of living that protects the environment, restores ecosystems, provides food and economies while respecting nature.

2. Nature Base Solution Approach

For Indigenous Peoples, this approach has major weaknesses in its approaches, one of the first aspects that come to light in the discussion of the groups that support the NBS is that they refer as nature is a space without intervention, and we know that Indigenous Peoples since immemorial time have lived in these natural ecosystems and have made controlled and respectful changes to these environments for their cultural survival. For Indigenous Peoples, their territories and nature are seen as living spaces, where there is a series of social, cultural, production, and spiritual interrelationships, which together constitute the basis for cultural survival and identity and above all, form a vision of harmonious and respectful interaction.

A first failure of the concept of NBS is that non- integration, or not understanding that these natural areas are so important to generate solutions for humanity and are inhabited by people who have a holistic vision of solutions and their environment.

The proponents of the NBS see nature as an economic "asset", which means that it will generate future benefits. They speak of benefits for humanity, but at the same time they prioritize the partitioning of those actors who can invest in these territories, especially those in the private sector. This is a worrisome vision, since we have seen in different parts of the world experiences of "sustainable development" and "green economy" (different names: green washing/ clean energy/ false solutions) where the States undermined and violated the rights of Indigenous Peoples under the concept of national interest, and if there are no recognized rights to security and legal tenure of lands and territories for Indigenous Peoples, the development of actions of NBS in their territories could have more serious human rights implications in the future.

In relation to activities that cover the NBS approach, there is a strong emphasis of being related to carbon market offsetting instruments. Therefore, it can be seen that many of the investments and actions are focused on forest areas. They also talking about integrated solutions, can even include construction and infrastructure that may violate the rights of Indigenous Peoples, such as large dams and reservoirs that in many regions of the world have had negative impacts on people and communities.

Many Beyond organizations, even governments have integrated NBS as a national concept. early, different organizations have different understanding of actions that they refer to as NBS and that is creating confusion even at the national level.

This approach includes the participation of different actors who talk about false solutions, which are not giving real answers to climate change only exaggerate the problems and rights violations at the local level. Many initiatives are taking place around nature-based solutions, and beyond organization, even governments have integrated NBS as a national concept. early, different organizations have different understanding of actions that they refer to as NBS and that is creating confusion even at the national level.

This initiative are seeing as false solutions, which are not giving real answers to climate change only exaggerate the problems and rights violations at the local level.

3. The Vision of Indigenous Peoples

- NBS should not be a substitute to real climate solutions to phase out fossil fuels.
- One of the main points that should be clear is that Indigenous Peoples are not against actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change, nor against actions that seek sustainable development and the well-being of humanity.

Indigenous Peoples have repeatedly said that actions for sustainable management and living in harmony with the environment are for present and future generations in general, and not only for indigenous people's generations.

- We also consider that this new terminology (NBS), will not solve global problems that are mostly reliant on indigenous territories, if they do not integrate Indigenous Peoples in the entire decision-making process. The global negotiations on NBS must integrate Indigenous Peoples as key actors for the successful implementation of this idea, above all because these actions will be developed in our territories. It is therefore important that these processes are built from the local base, and where the basic right of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples is respected and implemented.
- Any approach that wants to integrate nature as a solution to global problems, should be updated and to integrate cultural, spiritual aspects and identities. Indigenous Peoples are referring to Culture-Based Solutions, since all actions that take place in our lands and territories are based on traditional knowledge/Indigenous Peoples that has been developed through centuries of testing and passed down through generations. And should include active and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, in actions, policies, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in a transparent and culturally appropriate manner with necessary safeguards in place.
- Respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples is of the utmost importance. All actions of NBS should have as a basic precept a human rights-based approach and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples should be the minimum standard for compliance with these actions.
- There is also a need for strengthening synergies among the different mechanisms (i.e., UNFCCC, CBD, SDGs, UNCCD) in terms of [looking at and collectively defining/conceptualization] what NBS means. A gray-scale NBS at this point in time may be potentially more dangerous than having no NBS at all.

FINALLY

- It is crucial that in any action in the territories of Indigenous Peoples, the self-determination of the nations takes place to define their participation or not in processes that they want to be implemented in their territories.