

STOCKHOLM + 50 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DECLARATION

We, Indigenous Peoples attending the Stockholm+50 that commemorates the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and that marks 50 years of global environmental action, after listening to the contributions in the program, present the following Declaration.

We acknowledge that since the first Stockholm Human Environment conference in June 1972 50 years ago, there has been some progress. However, humanity has failed to comply with many commitments regarding the environment. States has not yet delivered fully on the promise of the first Stockholm conference. We cannot afford to not deliver at this one. We all face climate change, loss of biodiversity, hunger, land degradations, soil erosion, water scarcity and pollution, among other issues troubling humanity. The degradation of our environment is threatening our lives, our well-being and our safety. And it is threatening the lives, well-being and safety of our children.

Over centuries Indigenous Peoples have endured many difficulties including hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, wildfires, diseases, and droughts. We know about resistance and creativity. We keep our cultures, knowledge and food systems alive. We, Indigenous Peoples, are not inherently vulnerable people. We are strong people. But the systemic lack of recognition and respect of our rights, our culture and the discounting of our knowledge have placed us in situations of vulnerability.

Our Indigenous Peoples' institutions and scientific knowledge systems are based on our worldview that values the inextricable link between humans and nature. This has been the main safeguard of the environment and biodiversity for future generations. The passage of knowledge to new generations using our own language allows the transfer of complex concepts and creates conditions for continuous innovation. Our governance systems, anchored in participation, collective rights, social justice, equity, and inclusiveness, have kept conditions of social peace that is much needed for the evolution and innovation in our societies.

Based on these livelihoods and way of life, we, Indigenous Peoples in our territories, manage and sustain approximately 80% of the world remaining biodiversity, occupying 25% of the global surface. We still have sustainable food systems in parts of the world where we have developed technology, knowledge and expertise to successfully deal with climate change. We know how to regenerate our soil, restore ecosystems and how to help the water cycle. We are delivering on our promise for living in harmony with nature. Now it is your turn.

Our own knowledge systems are often excluded from the design and implementation of conservation and climate change measures and programs. Conservation is often done for us and around us, not with us. It is about time to move in new directions. In Stockholm+50 the recognition of Indigenous Peoples and our role in the human environment is encouraging, but it remains just the beginning of a promising process. We must keep the momentum.

In the last fifty years, the centrality of institutionalized scientific knowledge alone to solve our myriad of environmental challenges has failed humanity. Scientific knowledge and Indigenous Peoples' knowledge can work and grow side by side. They are peers. Our scientific knowledge has been useful in addressing the issues of climate change and biodiversity loss in the various ecosystems over hundreds of years. We call for an effective and immediate mainstreaming of our scientific knowledge into all relevant decisions and actions to address climate change, biodiversity loss and land restorations.

We, Indigenous Peoples, are ready to be full partners in the journey ahead. It is, therefore, essential that you engage us as full participants in climate change, biodiversity and fight against desertification decision making.

We, Indigenous Women, have played a fundamental role as holders of collective scientific knowledge and technical skills for agriculture, sustainable food production, conservation, and restoration and the transfer of these knowledges over generations. It is, therefore, essential to promote concrete steps that directly support and empower our commitment.

We, Indigenous Youth, represent the present and future of our Indigenous Peoples. We play a key role in ensuring the continuity of our cosmogonic systems, scientific knowledge, languages, practices and ways of living. It is, therefore, essential that you hear our voices and support our meaningful participation in decision-making processes that affect our future.

We, Indigenous Peoples, uphold that there is a correlation between respect for our collective rights and the protection of the environment that is well documented. This includes the right to land, territory, natural resources and effective conservation outcomes. However, despite international commitments to protect our rights, our rights continue to be denied in practice. In denying our rights you are putting the continuation of successful conservation at risk. In many places, too many of those of us who dare to fight for these rights and for the conservation of the natural resources on land and sea suffer increasing intimidation, harassment, stigmatization and criminalization. This is wrong. This is unacceptable. We demand an immediate stop to such abuses. We demand an immediate stop to the murder of Indigenous Peoples and environment defenders.

We welcome the \$1.7 billion pledge in support of Indigenous Peoples made by governments and private funders at COP 26 of the UNFCCC in Glasgow. However, we are concerned that this pledge does not go far enough to adequately address the effects of climate change. Effective responses to the challenges presented by global climate change requires a concerted effort that recognizes the interconnectedness of all life and encompasses all ecosystems impacted in the seven socio-cultural regions of the world.

We reaffirm that Indigenous Peoples are game-changers and guards of biodiversity around the world. We are ready to participate with our practice, knowledge, expertise and wisdom. We simply demand equity, equality, and inclusiveness in the process. We will continue to do our part and to deliver on the promise of a truly sustainable planet.

We stand in solidarity with our Indigenous Peoples and Nations to call upon States, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental development organizations, international financial institutions including public and private and civil society partners to:

1. Recognize the existence of Indigenous Peoples within their borders and in the national legislation with respect to their collective rights to lands, territories and natural resources in accordance with the UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples.
2. Ensure that Indigenous Peoples participate in consultations to give their free, prior and informed consent when formulating, adopting, implementing and monitoring legislative, administrative measures, policy, programs, trade and investment decisions and projects involving their lands, territories, and resources including the right to say NO.
3. Take urgent measures to guarantee adequate and effective participation by Indigenous Peoples in the design and implementation of national plans for the transition to clean and green energy.
4. Stop the imposition of “protected areas” on Indigenous Peoples’ lands without their Free, Prior, and Informed Consent in the name of environmental protection. Therefore, ensure a human rights-based approach to Indigenous Peoples’ rights to land, waters, territories and resources, governance, and secure customary tenure is essential for their continued contribution and significant role in achieving the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Indigenous Peoples’ land, waters, and territories need to be recognized directly and as a category separate from Protected Areas or “Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures”, including recognition of the land rights of Indigenous women.
5. Call for protection and a halt to criminalization and killings of Indigenous environmental rights defenders.
6. Respect the crucial role of languages, knowledge and cultural heritage in the economic development of Indigenous Peoples, as well as our entrepreneurship role for the enjoyment of our rights to culture, language and scientific knowledge.
7. Give attention to the role of Indigenous Peoples’ languages in the preservation of food and knowledge systems that are important to climate change adaptation and conservation strategies.
8. Request that the pledge-givers from COP 26 include Indigenous Peoples from all seven sociocultural regions as recipients, and redefine the scope of their commitment so that the funding is not only for forests and land tenure, but also reflects Indigenous Peoples’ self-determination, building of alliances and the strengthening of Indigenous Peoples’ local economies, governance systems and resource management strategies and serve all the ecosystems.

9. We urge for more funding mobilization for the direct access to Indigenous Peoples seven sociocultural regions to protect the biodiversity, fight climate change and restore land and its various ecosystems to keep the Paris Agreement Goal of 1.5, stop loss of our world's biodiversity species and restore the land for food security and nutrition in accordance with the 2030 agenda.

We acknowledge the collaborative nature of the work we must do to save our planet and to save our present and our future. Humanity has not delivered on the promise of a sustainable future for all. Humanity is not living in harmony with nature. We call upon Member States, UN Agencies, civil society and NGOs, the scientific community and the private sector for better coordination and much greater action. We call upon you to stand in solidarity with us and to respect and value us as essential partners, as we will value and respect you.

Stockholm, Sweden, June 3rd, 2022.