

March 31, 2017

UNFCCC Secretariat
secretariat@unfccc.int.

Re: Views on the Purpose, Content, and Structure of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform

In support of the decision adopted by the COP ([1/CP.21 paragraph 135](#)) to ensure effective operationalization of the new Platform, on behalf of The Rockies Institute, I respectfully submit views on the purpose, content and structure of the platform to the Secretariat.

1. Communicating

Preface: Our recommendations are derived from our experience working with indigenous communities in Canada and South Africa. There also exists numerous scholarly evidence on this topic. We'd be happy to provide a comprehensive literature review if that is of interest to the committee.

As Dr. LeRoy Little Bear, an Elder with the Kainai First Nation (Blood Tribe) of the Blackfoot people eloquently suggested during a multi-stakeholder meeting – before we can solve these problems, we must find common ground in the way we communicate. This brings up a very important point. Beyond the language barriers there are of course cultural differences, but perhaps even more relevant is how the Earth and all its animate and inanimate features are viewed, valued, and thus communicated about. For example: if a Blackfoot person values trees, attributes rights to animals, and considers it important to act as guardians – this is a very different starting point for communicating about problem solving when it comes to climate change. The UNFCCC (and its treaties) are bound in anthropocentric narrative; if we are to truly invite traditional knowledge we must make space for different ways of knowing and different understandings of the world to be heard and to truly influence future instruments of change. This would be aligned with “transformative.”

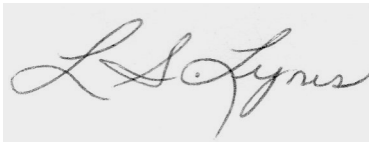
2. Sharing

An outcome of our first pilot project is the creation of a comparative project with the Nama Tribe in South Africa. Through this journey, it became apparent that key to learning is to bring tribal members of two very different, but similar geographic landscapes together. We found multiple points of intersection that could provide rich learning experiences such as: water risks and security; agriculture and food security; stakeholder relations with extractive industry and national parks; and consequences of changing wind and rain patterns. By bringing tribal members from Canada tribe to South Africa, and visa versa, we will help foster deep engagement opportunities where members can learn from one another, in the landscape and in practice.

We offer for consideration, that the structure of the new Platform include mechanisms for funding a number of opportunities for in-person engagement between two communities at a time: A) Global North and Global South indigenous community members, and B) between Global South indigenous communities. These opportunities should not necessarily be aligned with UNFCCC events, and in fact should not be because that would necessarily limit the diversity of participants, particularly in gender and age. A sponsored pilot program under the UNFCCC IPP, however, could take place a mutually agreed upon times in the year. This program need not be high in human capacity to manage either. If co-lead by community members, the UNFCCC could play a facilitative role – supporting the logistics and the method, for example.

We would be pleased to explore these ideas further if either are of interest to the committee.

Warmly,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "L.S. Lynes".

Laura S. Lynes