

UNFCCC Constituencies¹ Joint submission on the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform

May 2017

This submission represents the views of the following constituencies recognised by the UNFCCC: Environmental NGOs (ENGOs), Farmers, Trade Unions (TUNGO), the Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) and the Youth Constituency (YOUNGO).

We welcome the opportunity to share our views on the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform in advance of the multi-stakeholder dialogue to be held during SBSTA 46 in May 2017.

As stewards of the land, Indigenous Peoples are uniquely situated to provide critical perspectives on climate governance. Parties to the UNFCCC should strengthen the integration of Indigenous Peoples' perspectives and rely on their traditional knowledge while developing policies to implement the Paris Agreement. As such the voice of Indigenous Peoples must be strengthened in the UNFCCC process. To ensure this, the development of the Indigenous Peoples Platform should be done with the full participation of indigenous peoples representatives.

We welcome the reference in the Paris Agreement to the need to respect and promote human rights, including the rights of indigenous peoples, and that it recognizes that adaptation action should be guided by traditional, indigenous and local knowledge. These provisions build on a history of the Parties to the UNFCCC recognizing the importance of protecting the rights of indigenous peoples in the context of climate action - including through references to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Cancun Agreement (Decision 1/CP.16, preamble to para. 88 and appendix I). In Paris, Parties also recognised that across the world women are key holders and safeguarders of traditional ecological knowledge (Decision 21/CP.22 on Gender, para. 24).

In this context, our constituencies welcome the adoption of paragraph 135 of Decision 1/CP.21 providing specific mandates in relation to indigenous peoples. We recognise the importance of both elements provided in this provision:

1. The recognition by Parties of the need to strengthen knowledge, technologies, practices, and efforts of local communities and Indigenous Peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change, and
2. The mandate to establish a platform for the exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner.

Many other intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) have considerable experience for including Indigenous Peoples in their processes and have developed good practices. For

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example, from its inception, the Arctic Council has included Indigenous Peoples as permanent participants, which allows them to provide critical knowledge in this forum. The importance of the experience and traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples is also recognised by the Convention on Biological Diversity and through the work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) as well as in the context of UNEP's Global Environmental Outlooks. It is imperative for the UNFCCC to learn from and to build upon these precedents.

In the Paris Agreement, Parties recognised the need to strengthen public participation and the importance of including a diverse range of stakeholders in the UNFCCC process. We look forward to working with Parties to identify ways to strengthen the participation of all segments of civil society, taking into account gender balance and the needs of women, in developing and implementing climate policies and in the UNFCCC process - including through the workshop that will be held by the SBI on the 9th of May 2017, as well as in November 2017 in line with paragraph 83 of decision 1/CP.21.

Our constituencies believe in the principle that all people, especially those most directly impacted, must have a voice and the ability to fully participate in international processes. As such we believe that processes and mechanisms providing for international access should facilitate the full participation of those constituencies that are most directly affected and must be designed to ensure that the voices of peoples and communities with fewer resources, less capacity to contribute to decision making, and in vulnerable situations is not only encouraged, but also guaranteed.

Indigenous peoples have come to the conclusion that the platform would help in sharing traditional knowledge and strengthening their voices in the UNFCCC context, and our constituencies strongly support their demand. Given the unique rights and position of Indigenous Peoples, we call for the establishment of a platform that promotes indigenous knowledge and the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the UNFCCC process in a manner that is specific only to this constituency.

We recognise the importance of making sure that this platform addresses the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including their Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) related to their land and territorial rights and any decisions affecting these. Indigenous Peoples' territories are particularly rich in natural resources and protected from depletion owing to their traditional knowledge on the sustainable use and management of natural resources as well as the conservation of biodiversity.

With regards to the purpose, content, and structure of the IPP, rather than offering specific recommendations, we support the proposals made by indigenous peoples organisations and, in particular, the proposals made by the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC).²

The establishment of an Indigenous Peoples Platform that both strengthens Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and traditional knowledge in matters related to climate change and enables indigenous people from all genders and from all regions of the world to participate fully and more meaningfully in the UNFCCC process. Their involvement would not only improve decision making at the UNFCCC, but also contribute to creating more effective responses to climate change. Indigenous peoples have long held strong values and beliefs that have helped in the protection of forest and water ecosystems. Creating such a platform

² http://unfccc.int/files/parties_observers/submissions_from_observers/application/pdf/865.pdf

will reinforce the strength of indigenous people in nature protection and sustainability, especially in areas where there are still rich natural ecosystems which are being protected by natives.

The establishment of an effective platform through an inclusive process is thus in the interest of everyone.