



International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change

**DISCUSSION PAPER ON OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE LOCAL
COMMUNITIES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' PLATFORM**

1. INTRODUCTION

- a. The Conference of the Parties (COP), at its twenty-second session, requested a report on the operationalization of the “Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples’ Platform” (Platform) at SBSTA 47, with a view to SBSTA forwarding recommendations for operationalization of the platform to COP 23.
- b. This document builds on the SBSTA 46 Report and outlines current priorities of the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) as we prepare for COP23 and the operationalization of the Platform established by paragraph 135 of the Paris Decision.
- c. In the spirit of *Talanoa*¹ we offer the insight and guidance of Indigenous Peoples to guide the dialog between Indigenous Peoples and Parties at COP23. The human-induced climate crisis requires that the Platform and an innovative and creative work programme be expeditiously established through the joint efforts of Parties and Indigenous Peoples.

2. PURPOSES OF THE PLATFORM

The Platform should serve several overarching goals:

- a. To facilitate the exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices and lessons learned on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner.
- b. To strengthen the role of Indigenous Peoples in the implementation of the Paris Agreement, by contributing to decision-making and improving actions to address climate change, consistent with the interrelated, interdependent and indivisible rights affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) and General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/232, and in particular Articles 3, 18, 19, and 31.²

¹ Talanoa is a process of inclusivity, participation and transparency that allows free, and open discussion that the COP Presidency of Fiji will bring to COP23.

² Article 3 regarding their right to self-determination and to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development; Article 18 recognizing their right to participate in decision-making which affects them; Article 31 affirming their right to own, control access, and apply their cultural heritage.

- c. To be part of a larger UNFCCC process of strengthening knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of Indigenous Peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change.
- d. To serve as a mechanism through which Indigenous Peoples, including traditional knowledge-holders, interface directly with Parties to the UNFCCC, and assist them to uphold their obligations with respect to the rights of Indigenous Peoples. This will be accomplished by *inter alia*, providing high-level policy recommendations on relevant issues that support the implementation of the Paris Agreement, including through implementation and monitoring of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), development of common policies, and agreement on appropriate actions.
- e. Subject to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and consistent with Article 31 of the UN Declaration, to ensure the meaningful inclusion and participation of Indigenous Peoples (including youth, women, elders and disabled), in the integration of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge systems, innovations and practices in order to enhance coordination among international processes and organizations addressing these issues.

3. FUNCTIONS OF THE PLATFORM

Consistent with Articles 3, 18, 19, 31 and 41 of the UN Declaration, and the objectives of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, strengthen the integration of Indigenous Peoples' rights, interests, and perspectives in developing policies to implement the Paris Agreement through the following means.

a. Cultivate exchange that respects the unique nature of Indigenous knowledge.

- i. Enable Parties and non-Party stakeholders to learn more from the knowledge systems and practices and experiences of Indigenous Peoples and gain from the sharing of best practices, experiences, and lessons learned on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner.
- ii. Recognize and uphold Indigenous Peoples' own priorities as well as their rights as affirmed in the UN Declaration, including, *inter alia*, Articles 3, 18, 19, and 31.

b. Foster dialogue and understanding to inform climate change policies and actions.

- i. Create a space for Indigenous Peoples to fully and effectively participate in the UNFCCC process on issues affecting them and their rights.
- ii. Facilitate and enable the integration of Indigenous Peoples' diverse knowledge systems, practices, innovations, experiences, rights, interests, and perspectives into all climate change related decisions and interventions, actions, programs, and policies while improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the work of Parties.
- iii. Develop linkages with other UN bodies and processes to ensure complementarity in taking action at the national, regional and global levels to address climate change, while respecting, upholding and promoting the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- iv. Explore creating a mechanism or process to provide for the ongoing input, advice and guidance of Indigenous elders, traditional knowledge holders and practitioners, taking into account regional and gender balance.
- c. Strengthen and build capacity for Indigenous Peoples to participate in the UNFCCC process, including the implementation of the Paris Agreement and other climate change related processes.**
- i. Foster dialogue among Indigenous Peoples (including youth, elders, women and disabled), Parties and non-Party Stakeholders and promote their understanding of Indigenous Knowledge and other knowledge systems as well as sharing of knowledge, practices and methods between and among Indigenous Peoples in accordance with the right to FPIC and Article 31 of the UN Declaration.
 - ii. Create a mechanism within the UNFCCC Secretariat to ensure that activities undertaken through the Platform are appropriately supported and resourced.
 - iii. Develop an explicit linkage between the Platform and decision-making, to ensure that Indigenous Peoples may interact with Parties on decision-making under the Convention.
 - iv. Subject to FPIC and Article 31 of the UN Declaration, provide support to Parties for integrating traditional, Indigenous, and local knowledge systems into, as well as engaging Indigenous Peoples and local communities in, where appropriate, mitigation and adaptation actions and sustainable development policies at the international, national, and subnational levels, including when designing and implementing NDCs, National Adaptation Plans, and other relevant policies which might affect the rights or interests of Indigenous Peoples.
 - v. Provide support to the UNFCCC Secretariat and Parties in building their capacity in working with Indigenous Peoples in implementing the Platform.
 - vi. Engage in and support a larger process, including development of strategies to support good practice and innovations, to strengthen traditional knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and in Indigenous Peoples' homelands related to addressing and responding to climate change in accordance with the first section of OP 135 of the Paris Decision.

4. STRUCTURE OF THE PLATFORM

In accordance with Article 39 and 41 of the UNDRIP³, we suggest the following structure for the Platform:

- a. Membership – Balanced representation from Parties as well as Indigenous Peoples from the 7 regions of the world, recognising that Indigenous Peoples are not homogenous.

³ Article 39 ensures the right of IPs to have access to financial and technical assistance from the States and through international cooperation, for the enjoyment of the rights contained in the Declaration. Article 41 provides that “The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations shall contribute to the full realization of the provisions of this Declaration through the mobilization, inter alia, of financial cooperation and technical assistance”.

Indigenous Peoples' representatives could be chosen by themselves in accordance with their own laws and procedures, in accordance with Article 18 of the UN Declaration. All participants should have equal status within the Platform, including decision making.

- b. Leadership – Co-Champions will be selected by Indigenous Peoples and State Parties with a broad mandate to lead the work on the Platform. Co-Champions should reflect a balance between State Parties and Indigenous Peoples, as well as regional and gender balance. Co-chairs should also rotate through the seven regions, to the extent possible.
- c. Secretariat – A designated Focal Point for Indigenous Peoples in the UNFCCC process; supports the Platform's work as requested by the Co-Champions.
- d. Annual Meeting – Annual meeting to be convened for the Platform with open participation of States and Indigenous Peoples.
- e. Regional and National Programmes – Support the development of regional and national workshops that give effect to the Platform.

5. FUNDING

A principle which should guide operationalization of the Platform, consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Declaration, is that resources should be equally available to Indigenous Peoples from all regions.⁴ Further, in accordance with Articles 39 and 41 of the UN Declaration, we request that:

- a. The Secretariat be invited to produce a needs-assessment in terms of resourcing for Parties, as the incremental process to operationalize the Platform unfolds.
- b. A fully funded program on Indigenous Peoples to be established within the UNFCCC Secretariat.
- c. Parties should be invited to immediately make voluntary contributions to support three initiatives:
 - i. Capacity building within the UNFCCC Secretariat.
 - ii. Travel support for Indigenous representatives to participate in operationalizing the Platform.
 - iii. Funding support for intersessional meetings of the Open-Ended Working Group (OWG) (see operationalization), including the participation of elders, traditional knowledge holders and practitioners.
- d. The work programme developed under the Platform should be funded under the UNFCCC.

6. OPERATIONALIZING THE PLATFORM AT COP23

⁴ If some funders or Parties allocate resources out of Official Development Assistance envelopes, then Parties should coordinate to ensure that equivalent resources are available to Indigenous Peoples in 'developed' countries and regions.

The Platform must be operationalized with the full and equal participation of Indigenous Peoples. To do this, we suggest:

- a. The creation of an OWG vested with the responsibility to develop the structure, modalities, and procedures of the Platform.
- b. Identification of resources within the Secretariat to support the OWG.
- c. The OWG would also be responsible to develop a Thematic agenda of work with annual or biennial priorities (Indigenous Peoples' Platform Work Plan) for the next five years.
- d. In this time, there would be the possibility to create a potential Expert/Advisory group to intervene in the Global Stocktake.
- e. Developing "Decision Text" to support this proposal. Proposed Decision Text is attached to this Discussion Paper for review.

7. GOING FORWARD

- a. A road map and a timeline need to be developed with an aligned work programme. We encourage periodic reviews of progress by Indigenous Peoples and States (every 5 years), including the ability for the Platform to review its work undertaken and to make recommendations for further enhancements to its mandate, in a report to be considered by the COP in conjunction with the 2023 Global Stocktake.
- b. The structure of the Platform will be expected to evolve over time, as directed by its participants. This will include the inclusion of entry points for self-representation of Indigenous Peoples in the Platform, as well as the modernization of the UNFCCC to adapt its criteria to provide Indigenous Peoples a consultative and participatory status.

ANNEX: DECISION TEXT

A [Facilitative Group] be established to address the operationalization of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform and related provisions of the Convention. The mandate of this working group should be:

- a. To provide advice, as a priority, on the development of an Indigenous Peoples' Platform action plan in order to support the implementation of Indigenous Peoples' Platform decisions and mandates under the UNFCCC process, which may include priority areas, key activities and indicators, timelines for implementation, the responsible and key actors and indicative resource requirements for each activity, and further elaborate its process of review and monitoring.
- b. To provide the Conference of the Parties with advice relating to the implementation / operationalization of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform and related provisions, in particular on the development and implementation of a program of work at national and international levels. This will include both short- and medium-term activities in the programme of work to facilitate the work of the Parties in the implementation of Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform.
- c. To recommend which of the work-plan objectives and activities should be referred to other international bodies or processes; to identify opportunities for collaboration and coordination with other international bodies or processes with the aim of fostering synergy and avoiding duplication of work

The [Facilitative Group] shall be led by four Co-Champions, including two Indigenous Peoples' representatives, and shall be composed of Parties and observers, including, in particular, representation from Indigenous Peoples with participation to the widest possible extent in its deliberations in accordance with the rules of procedure.

The [Facilitative Group] shall request, and be provided, the support and participation of the UNFCCC Secretariat.

The costs of servicing the meetings of the working group shall be funded in accordance with the relevant provisions of decision IV/17, as related to the budget.