



INTERNATIONAL
**INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES'**
FORUM ON
CLIMATE CHANGE

Yá'át'ééh Shik'éeí dóó shi dine'é. Shi ei Michael Charles yineshyeh. Bilagaana Nishíí Áshííhii Báshíshchíín. Bilagaana Dashicheii. Nakai Dine'e da shináíí.
Díí at'áo T'áá Diné nishíí

Hello friends and relatives. My name is Michael Charles.
I am sharing my language, Dine, with you today because our language is power.

Our language is our culture, our history, and an accumulation of the knowledge of our ancestors - rooted in the relationship between our people and our keyah, our land.

Colonialism has tried, time and time again, to bury these languages with our ancestors.

As Dine, we were sent to boarding schools by our colonizers and beaten for speaking our language and living out our cultural practices.

These schools adopted the motto “kill the Indian, save the man.”

It is where my last name Charles was imposed on my grandfather.

Yet, here I am, standing in front of you today, on behalf of the global indigenous community, sharing my language and sharing my culture over the past two weeks of COP24.

Because we're still here.

Resilience is in our blood,
it's in our language,
and it's in our relationship with our Mother Earth.

Our indigenous ways of knowing, rooted in the experiences of our ancestors, is the medicine that this sick world needs right now.

Our prayers, ceremonies, and stories provide wisdom, balance, and connection between our spirit and all our relations - those that are two-legged and those that aren't.

The protection of our peoples, knowledge, and language must be centered at every scale of decision-making, to promote and uphold, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the rights of women, non-binary genders, all sexual orientations, people with disabilities, youth, migrants, and other marginalised minorities.

We are deeply disappointed to see the language of human rights missing from the outcome of the Rulebook text. We believe that a rights-based approach is necessary to guide an implementation that protects us. This text is incomplete without human rights, and specifically indigenous rights.

We do appreciate the commitment of the parties, the SBSTA chair, and the UNFCCC Secretariat to the operationalization of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform. We will now embark on a process to breathe life into the Platform using our resilience, knowledge, and rights with equal representation between states and Indigenous Peoples.

However, our millennia of experience in ecological guardianship should not be restricted to one Platform.

We therefore look forward to continuing to work with you across all streams of climate action, both inside these negotiations and beyond these walls.

The resilience of my people has enabled my existence. Listen to indigenous peoples voices and humbly accept our wisdom and knowledge as solutions moving forward, so it can also enable yours.

Ahéhee'