### **Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform**

## **Summary Report of Activity 1 Annual Gathering of Knowledge Holders**

(held on 6 November 9:00-17:00 GMT, and 8 November, 10:00-13:00 GMT, 2021)

version 29 January 2021

#### I. Background

#### Purpose of Activity 1

This event was mandated under activity 1 of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) initial two-year workplan. Under the LCIPP knowledge function, the activity is mandated to organize annual meetings in conjunction with the sessions of the COP, with the participation of indigenous peoples, on traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples, and local knowledge systems on cross-cutting themes related to addressing and responding to climate change.

#### II. Executive Summary

The first annual gathering of knowledge holders was held in-session with the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP 26) in Glasgow, on the sixth and eighth of November 2021. The first part of the gathering on 6 November featured a day-long program of roundtables with expert indigenous knowledge holders on key areas related to indigenous knowledge and climate change. These areas included:

- (i) The impacts of climate change on indigenous knowledge and livelihoods;
- (ii) Indigenous food systems and healing practices in the context of climate change;
- (iii) Indigenous biodiversity stewardship as related to climate mitigation and adaptation;
- (iv) Perspectives from indigenous youth on the continuation of their knowledge systems despite significant climate impacts.

The second part of the gathering on 8 November featured a participatory dialogue with Parties, constituted bodies, and knowledge holders, to share best practices and ways forward in further integrating and enhancing the use of indigenous knowledge in climate policies and actions.

Twenty-eight knowledge holders, four from each of the seven UN indigenous socio-cultural regions, were nominated within their regions to serve as expert knowledge holders during the gathering in Glasgow. FWG members recommended that at minimum, one indigenous woman and one indigenous youth representative were selected per region. Twenty-four knowledge holders joined physically in person and four knowledge holders participated virtually through the COP 26 online platform. This activity was implemented by co-lead by three Facilitative Working Group (FWG) members, Dr. Pasang Dolma Sherpa, Ms. Andrea Carmen, and Mr. Clement Yow Mulalap. The co-lead's note on the significance of the gathering can be found in Annex 2 of this report. The annual gathering highlighted the vital significance of indigenous knowledge in informing Parties on how to reach the Paris Agreement mitigation and adaptation goals, through reorienting society's relationship with nature.

#### III. Cross-cutting themes

Representing diverse ecosystems and areas across the globe, several key themes emerged across the knowledge holders' roundtable discussions. Knowledge holders from all regions underscored the value of indigenous knowledge as distinct from other ways of knowing. Indigenous knowledge is

characterized by indigenous values, practices and world views that are collective and intergenerational, based on respect, listening, reciprocal responsibilities and oral traditions. Indigenous knowledge is time-tested, ensuring the survival of indigenous communities in the face of many challenges over the millennia. It is also characterized by the understanding that a community's health and survival is inextricably linked to the health and wellbeing of the ecosystems they inhabit; therefore, restoring and protecting nature is vital for the wellbeing of both current and future generations.

Knowledge holders further highlighted that to preserve indigenous knowledge for future generations, indigenous peoples must have unqualified control over their knowledge, with free prior and informed consent over if and how it is shared and used outside of indigenous communities. For indigenous peoples to be able to utilize their knowledge appropriately, to continue to steward nature in sustainable ways, and pass on their knowledge and sustainable practices to new generations, it is important that indigenous governance systems are respected and customary land titles are recognize. Knowledge holders also illustrated the importance of indigenous-led research, based on understandings, values, scientific knowledge, rights and realities, being respected by outside scientists and UN bodies on an equal par and standing as scientific knowledge. Through sharing their indigenous knowledge, indigenous peoples have the potential to inform Parties on how societies can reorient their relationship with nature and successfully protect and steward biodiverse ecosystems. In the context of climate change, indigenous knowledge systems are necessary to informing solutions to the challenges of mitigating increased global temperature rise, adapting to climate impacts, and reversing biodiversity decline.

However, knowledge holders emphasized that to be able to ethically and equitably share their knowledge, avenues for direct participation within the UNFCCC process are needed to appropriately inform Parties on ways forward on both mitigation and adaptation. Many highlighted that existing procedures, formats, rules and agendas may need to be adjusted to accommodate the meaningful and effective participation of knowledge holders.

# IV. Key takeaways from roundtable 1: Impacts of climate change on livelihoods and knowledge systems

The first roundtable dialogue between knowledge holders highlighted the immense impacts climate change is currently having on indigenous livelihoods and knowledge systems. Knowledge holders outlined that indigenous peoples all over the world have historically been adapting to their climates and ecosystems for thousands of years. Yet, due to climate change, indigenous knowledge is changing. As the seasons and ecosystems change, indigenous knowledge changes; indigenous livelihoods and knowledge linked to climate and historically tied to dates, and each week of the year. Knowledge holders underscored the resilience of indigenous peoples in the ability of indigenous communities to adapt; yet, the impacts of climate change are outpacing the rate that communities and knowledge systems can adapt. Many stated that due to the changing climate, they are seeing new animals, insects, fish, plants and birds coming into our areas. Some are invasive, push out the native species, destroy original biodiversity and forests, and carry disease. At the same time, many species that indigenous communities have always depended upon are threatened. Indigenous peoples are experiencing droughts, flooding, forest fires, rising sea levels and melting ice, threatening the productivity and life cycles of indigenous lands, waters and food sources.

Many knowledge holders further illustrated that the loss and damage being felt by the impacts of climate change is already extreme, and directly affects knowledge systems and ways of life. While no price can be put upon what has already been lost, some knowledge holders mentioned that adequate,

direct financial resources would greatly assist indigenous communities to adapt to these losses, and also restore, protect and strengthen the resiliency of what remains. In light of these changes, knowledge holder also shared that indigenous transnationalism and knowledge sharing are vital to supporting indigenous communities in adapting to climate change. As species migrate North, new knowledge systems are needed to inform sustainable interactions with new species, and this can be greater enhanced through indigenous knowledge sharing between indigenous peoples of each region.

Lastly, knowledge holders noted that indigenous women play a crucial role in the utilization and continuation of indigenous knowledge. Indigenous women were recognized as witnessing the forefront of the impacts of climate change in their homelands, especially the losses of traditional foods and medicinal plants. Yet, indigenous women are also in the forefront of leading the way to protect these vital elements of intergenerational knowledge transfer, and community survival in adapting to the impacts of climate change based on their role and knowledge as life givers, healers and food producers as well as water.

#### V. Key takeaways from roundtable 2: Indigenous food systems and healing practices

The second roundtable dialogue focused on two key facets of indigenous knowledge impacted by climate change: indigenous food systems and healing practices. On food systems, knowledge holders demonstrated that indigenous ways of knowing are the foundation for the sustainable, respectful ways that indigenous peoples produce traditional foods by hunting, fishing, gathering, herding and farming. Speakers emphasized that for indigenous peoples, food systems are essential for the continuation of indigenous language, culture, trade, safety, and stewardship of nature. Despite their sustainable nature, knowledge holders highlighted that indigenous systems of sustainable food production, including including pastoralism, rotational agriculture and traditional forms of hunting and fishing, are often prohibited or in some cases, accused of contributing to environmental degradation. Some knowledge holders underscored that in addition to this, the commodification, commercialization, and genetic modification indigenous knowledge systems and cultural heritage, including traditional plants, animals, seeds and medicines, is increasing and undermines the ability of indigenous peoples to depend on ecosystem services to adapt and survive.

Knowledge holders emphasized how the impacts of climate change have a significant and visible impact, threatening indigenous food systems and altering indigenous agricultural calendars. Climate change threatens the capacity of indigenous communities to hunt, fish and harvest plants as they have for millennia. Yet, promoting and enhancing indigenous food systems serves as a valuable tool in mitigating climate change. Indigenous knowledge informs indigenous food systems, which are based on a family-based nature, where food is not wasted, but shared. Food systems of indigenous peoples are both and can be revived through intergenerational transfer of indigenous knowledge.

As an additional knowledge area impacted by climate change, knowledge holders demonstrated how traditional healing practices are also impacted by climate change. Indigenous healing practices are centered in indigenous knowledge, yet climate change threatens the growth of medicinal herbs, access to fish and wildlife to provide medicinal ingredients, and also increases the rate of diseases entering indigenous lands through invasive species. Knowledge holders used these examples to underscore that the health of the climate and the health of indigenous peoples is inextricably interlinked; climate change is producing new challenges for the intergenerational sharing of indigenous knowledge of which indigenous food systems and healing practices are based.

#### VI. Key takeaways from roundtable 3: Indigenous biodiversity stewardship

The third roundtable discussion featured knowledge holders with expertise in biodiversity stewardship. Speakers illustrated how indigenous knowledge informs a type of biodiversity stewardship that is regenerative and reciprocal by its nature, recognizing humans as part of the ecosystem and not separate from it. Therefore, knowledge holders elucidated how the health of ecosystems are intricately and inseparably linked to human health. One knowledge holder outlined how in his community, stewardship of nature has a customary governance system based on the principle of non-violence towards both humans and nature. Indigenous knowledge informs indigenous communities on how to adapt to population dynamics, acknowledging and mitigating the risks of biodiversity decline. Knowledge holders emphasized that in order to continue to steward nature sustainably, indigenous peoples need the opportunity to participate in land and resource management. They also highlighted the need to speak about an effective system of co-management, so that sustainable management practices are included in the management system of both indigenous and non-indigenous territories. Some speakers outlined concern with some types of conservation policies that separate people from nature, including the creation of national parks, "conserved "and "protected" areas, in the traditional territories of indigenous peoples. They expressed that separation between indigenous peoples and their ancestral, biodiverse lands can undermine indigenous livelihoods and fail to recognize the longstanding and ongoing role of indigenous peoples as successful stewards of the biodiversity in their traditional homelands.

Looking forward to the future of biodiversity conservation, a knowledge holder shared an example of a way forward for conservation models. The speaker noted that her region, the Arctic, saw the first indigenous-led conservation area in the world. Across the Arctic, she stated that there is a trend towards a rise of indigenous-led protected areas. She illustrated that these indigenous-led examples are critically important to help shape modern conservation models globally and successfully reverse biodiversity decline. Indigenous-led conservation initiatives, she continued, present a model to restore and safeguard natural ecosystems, through utilizing indigenous knowledge. Many joined to express that there is a need for conservation organizations to further support the role of indigenous peoples as stewards of nature and experts in biodiversity conservation through the development of indigenous-led or co-managed conservation areas.

#### VII. Key takeaways from roundtable 4: Indigenous youth perspectives

The final roundtable featured the perspectives of indigenous youth knowledge holders, who outlined the support needed for intergenerational knowledge sharing, ensuring that indigenous youth can continue to be knowledge holders and utilize this knowledge to continue indigenous practices including the stewardship of nature. The first area needed for support is the conservation of indigenous language. Youth knowledge holders stressed that the protection and revitalization of indigenous languages are essential for the continuation of indigenous knowledge systems, food systems, identities, livelihoods, and stewardship of nature. These understandings, based on the ongoing use of indigenous languages, need to be transferred to our younger generations through formal and informal education and outreach initiatives, including on climate change. One youth knowledge holder stated, "Language revitalization is a climate solution. It allows indigenous peoples to continue to build on already existing resilient and sustainable livelihoods and food systems". Alongside language revitalization, youth knowledge holders underscored the need to create parallel educational systems that are designed to preserve indigenous knowledge and ensure that indigenous knowledge is transmitted intergenerationally. Indigenous youth speakers elucidated the need for increased financial support directed towards indigenous communities, specifically to help revive and share indigenous knowledge with younger generations.

Additionally, one knowledge holder demonstrated the need for increase mental health support for indigenous youth, as climate impacts have had a direct effect on the mental health of indigenous youth. He explained, "Indigenous youth experience highest rates of suicide, depression, addiction – direct link to the health of our climate." Finally, as an overarching takeaway, the youth knowledge holders amplified the need that indigenous youth should be provided with avenues for direct, meaningful, and continue participation in decision-making spaces. The knowledge holders emphasized that indigenous youth must be taken seriously and respected for their knowledge, wisdom and profound insights, and included in decision-making that affects their lives now and, in the future,, especially in decision-making regarding climate actions and policies on all levels.

#### VIII. Summary of oral contributions from Parties

During part 2 of the annual gathering, knowledge holders and Parties joined together to share perspectives and experiences on utilizing indigenous knowledge to inform climate policies and actions. Several Parties contributed via oral interventions during the discussion, including: Bolivia, Canada, New Zealand, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Norway. Canada stated its support of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)<sup>1</sup> being at the forefront of all climate actions, emphasizing the importance of full and effective participation of indigenous peoples across climate policies and actions. The delegation further highlighted some domestic examples of the Party engaging with indigenous peoples, including the development of a law that entered into force to ensure all laws of Canada are consistent with UNDRIP. The delegation also shared that Canada has recognized the contributions of indigenous leadership in its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and supports climate leadership that is self-directed by indigenous peoples. New Zealand echoed in support of Canada's comments, and reiterated its goal of further supporting indigenous peoples of the Pacific in the face of adverse climate impacts.

A person from the Bolivian delegation highlighted that going forward, there is a need to ensure the land sovereignty of indigenous peoples and knowledge holders. Bolivia expressed that it stood in agreement with the knowledge holders' statement on the adverse impacts of the commodification of natural resources such as water. Bolivia also underscored the need for increased access to nature-based solutions to climate change. Finally, Ecuador echoed the perspective of the knowledge holders, reinstating that climate change poses a threat to humanity as it does a threat to nature, because humans are inextricably linked to the ecosystems they inhabit.

#### IX. Conclusion

In sum, the first annual gathering of knowledge holders held under the LCIPP outlined the vital importance of harnessing the power of diverse knowledge systems to inform climate policies and actions, in all areas including mitigation, adaptation, and reversing biodiversity decline. Knowledge holders shared how indigenous knowledge systems can inform Parties on how to protect and steward nature in the context of climate change, illuminating that human health and survival is inextricably linked to ecosystem health and a stable climate system. Yet, knowledge holders also acknowledged the immense impact climate change is having today on indigenous livelihoods and knowledge systems, as a result of global temperatures increase. The gathering also illuminated how indigenous knowledge informs sustainable practices embedded in indigenous food systems and healing practices, which are both adversely affected by climate change. Additionally, the gathering elucidated how and why indigenous knowledge informs indigenous expertise on biodiversity stewardship, with

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) text available here: https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html

indigenous peoples protecting over 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity.<sup>2</sup> Speakers illustrated how indigenous knowledge informs a type of biodiversity stewardship that is regenerative and reciprocal by its nature. To further enhance the ability of indigenous peoples to utilize their knowledge systems and reverse biodiversity decline, knowledge holders stressed that both conservation organizations and Parties should recognize and support indigenous-led conservation areas and enhance effective systems of co-management. Lastly, youth knowledge holders outlined that to ensure the continuation of indigenous knowledge for future generations to mitigate and adapt to climate change, Parties and stakeholders should support indigenous education and language revitalization which are essential to intergenerational knowledge sharing between indigenous youth and elders.

Ultimately, the gathering marked a significant milestone under the LCIPP, producing a wealth of information on how indigenous knowledge can inform climate policies and actions and reverse biodiversity decline. To cultivate this engagement, knowledge holders recommended that Parties enhance indigenous peoples' access to decision-making spaces, so that indigenous knowledge systems may increasingly, ethically and equitably inform climate policies and actions.

#### Annex 1: Agenda and List of Participants of the first Annual Gathering

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) report "Protected Planet Report 2016", available here: <a href="https://www.unep.org/zh-hans/node/477">https://www.unep.org/zh-hans/node/477</a>

PART 1: CLOSED INFORMAL MEETING WITH KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS		
Saturday 6 November 2021 • 8:00 AM – 18:00 PM GMT Meeting Room 4, Blue Zone SEC COP26		
8:30 – 8:45	Welcome	
	Informal meet and greet for knowledge holders	
8:45- 9:15	Opening	
	<ul> <li>Opening invocation by Rosalina Tuyuc, Mayan Cakchiquel knowledge holder</li> <li>Welcome remarks, activity 1 co-leads</li> </ul>	
9:15-10:45	Round table 1: Impacts of climate change on the livelihoods, knowledge systems and cultural practices of indigenous peoples	
	Moderation by Andrea Carmen, FWG Member and Executive Director, International Indian Treaty Council (IITC)	
	Discussion topic: How have you been experiencing climate change-related impacts on the ways of life of your peoples, traditional livelihoods, knowledge systems and cultural practices?	
	<ul> <li>Knowledge holder from each region responds to framing questions         <ul> <li>North America region: Casey Camp, North America Region (Ponca Nation, USA)</li> <li>Africa region: Aissatou Dicko (Pullo, Burkina Faso)</li> <li>Central and Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia, and Transcaucasia: Gennady Schukin (Dolgan community, Russia)</li> <li>Arctic region: Piita Irniq (Inuit, Canada)</li> <li>Central and South American and the Caribbean: Onel Inanadinia Masardule, (Kuna, Panama)</li> <li>Asia region: Noraeri Thungmueangthong (Thailand) virtual participation</li> <li>Pacific region: Erity Teave, (Rapanui) virtual participation</li> <li>Asia region: Ronaldo Ambangan (Philippines) virtual participation</li> </ul> </li> <li>Open dialogue featuring comments and questions from other knowledgeholders</li> </ul>	
10:45–12:15	Round table 2: Indigenous food systems and healing practices in the context of climate change	
	Moderation by Dr. Pasang Dolma Sherpa, FWG Member and Executive Director of Center for Indigenous Peoples Research & Development (CIPRED)	
	Discussion topic: How can the food systems and healing practices/medicines of your peoples help to mitigate and adapt to climate change? How can food systems and healing practices/medicines be protected?	
	<ul> <li>Knowledge holder from each region responds to framing questions</li> <li>Asia region: Raja Devashish Roy (Chakma, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh)</li> <li>Africa region: Nailejileji Tipap (Massai, Tanzania)</li> </ul>	

	<ul> <li>Central and Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia, and Transcaucasia: Olga Kostrova (Chulym, Tomsk region)</li> <li>Arctic region: Anders Oskal (Sami, Norway)</li> <li>Pacific region: Virginia Marshall (Wiradjuri Nyemba, Australia)</li> <li>Central and South American and the Caribbean: Rosalina Tuyuc (Mayan Cakchiquel, Guatemala)</li> <li>Open dialogue featuring comments and questions from other knowledgeholders</li> </ul>
12:15 – 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 – 15:00	<b>Round table 3:</b> Indigenous biodiversity stewardship in the context of climate change
	Moderation by Dr. Dalee Sambo Dorough, FWG Member and International Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)
	Discussion topic:
	What practices do you have which may serve to steward, restore, or safeguard your natural ecosystems, biodiversity, and other parts of nature?
	How may your practices help to restore and protect natural systems and enhance the ability of your peoples to respond to and prevent adverse climate impacts like floods, fires, drought, and sea-level rise?
	<ul> <li>Knowledge holder from each region responds to framing questions</li> <li>North America region: Mandee McDonald (Dene Nation, Canada)</li> <li>Asia region: Nima Lama (Nepal)</li> <li>Africa region: Gakemotho Satau (Koi San, Botswana)</li> <li>Central and Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia, and Transcaucasia: Vyacheslav Shadrin (Yukagir, Sakha Yakutia Republic)</li> <li>Arctic region: Victoria Qutuuq Buschman (Iñupiaq-Alaska)</li> <li>Pacific region: Petero Qaloibau (Fiji)</li> <li>Central and South American and the Caribbean: Benito Calixto Guzman (Quechua, Perú)</li> <li>Open dialogue featuring comments and questions from other knowledgeholders</li> </ul>
15:00 – 16:30	Round table 4: Perspectives from indigenous youth
	Moderation by Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, FWG Member and founder of Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad (AFPAT)
	Discussion topic: What do you need as indigenous youth to keep practicing the ways of life of your peoples, and to pass them on to the next generation?
	<ul> <li>Knowledge holder from each region responds to framing questions</li> <li>Arctic region: Áslat Holmberg (Sami, Finland)</li> <li>Central and Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia, and Transcaucasia: Dilbara Sharipova (Udege, Primorsky region)</li> <li>Central and South American and the Caribbean: Jhanira Sensu (Shuar, Morona Santiago, Ecuador)</li> <li>North America region: Chris Honahnie (Hopi/Dine, USA)</li> </ul>

	<ul> <li>North America region: Quinn Miawasige, (Serpent River First Nation, Canada)</li> <li>Open dialogue featuring comments and questions from other knowledgeholders</li> </ul>
16:30 – 16:40	Break
16:40 – 17:55	Discussion among knowledge holders
	Moderation by Clement Yow Mulalap, FWG Member and delegate of the Federated States of Micronesia
	Discussion topic:
	• What collective progress would you like to see Parties make towards restoring and protecting nature in efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change?
	<ul> <li>What would you like to see in the next three years to deepen the exchange of experiences for restoring and protecting nature with Parties? (the LCIPP workplan in the next three years)</li> </ul>
	• What efforts would strengthen the contribution of indigenous expertise, knowledge systems and cultural values to achieving the objectives of the Convention and the Paris Agreement?
	Reflections by Andrea Carmen, FWG Member and Executive Director, International Indian Treaty Council (IITC)
17:55 – 18:00	Closing
	Closing invocation by Chris Honahnie, Hopi/Dine knowledge holder

#### PART 2: DIALOGUE WITH KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS AND PARTIES

Monday 8 November 2021 • 10:00 AM – 13:00 PM GMT Meeting Room 3, Blue Zone SEC COP26		
10:00-10:50	Opening	
	<ul> <li>Indigenous invocation by knowledge holder</li> <li>Opening remarks by UK COP Presidency representative, Ambassador Ken O'Flaherty</li> <li>Opening remarks by activity 1 FWG activity co-leads</li> <li>Purpose of activity 1 by Dr. Pasang Dolma Sherpa</li> <li>Significance for Parties, addressing how key takeaways can inform national and international climate policy by Clement Yow Mulalap</li> <li>Summary of key messages by Andrea Carmen</li> </ul>	
10:50-12:45	Guided discussion and open dialogue	
	Moderation by Clement Yow Mulalap, FWG Member and delegate of the Federated States of Micronesia	
	<ul> <li>Perspectives of knowledge holders summarizing key messages from each of the following round tables (voluntary):         <ul> <li>Indigenous perspectives on climate change</li> <li>Indigenous food systems and healing practices/medicines informing climate change mitigation and adaptation</li> <li>Indigenous knowledge and biodiversity stewardship</li> <li>Perspectives from indigenous youth</li> </ul> </li> <li>Dialogue with Parties and constituted bodies         <ul> <li>Exchange of examples of best practice among Parties in engaging with indigenous and local knowledge systems in the context of climate change</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
12:45 – 13:00	Closing	
	<ul> <li>Summary of discussion, next steps and closing by activity 1 co-leads</li> <li>Closing remarks by indigenous knowledge holder from Arctic, Inuit elder, Piita Irniq</li> </ul>	