

CO-LEADS SUMMARY

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Moderators: Mr. Chris Honahnie and Ms Dilbara Sharipova

Summary of Annual Youth Roundtable of Indigenous Youth and Youth from Local Communities

Background

On Tuesday November 8, 2022, Indigenous youth and knowledge holders from all seven UN-socio-cultural regions gathered during the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties (COP 27) in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, under Activity 8 of the second, three-year workplan of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP), marking the inauguration of the Annual Roundtable at COP 27. Activity 8 is mandated to “host an annual round table, in collaboration with Indigenous youth and youth from local communities, as well as with broad and gender-balanced youth representation from each of the United Nations indigenous sociocultural regions, to explore gender-responsive ways and means to strengthen the engagement of youth, and participation in intergenerational knowledge-sharing and continuing/strengthening practices on the ground, as well to contribute to climate policies and actions at the national and international level.”¹ The outcomes focus on the development of concrete ways to advance the engagement of youth in designing and implementing climate policies and actions at all levels, including the UNFCCC process.

The design of the annual youth roundtable was based on inputs gathered during Informal Virtual Youth Consultations. To enable wider participation from different time zones, two sessions at different times with interpretation in different languages were organized: the first session was conducted in English and Spanish, and the second session was conducted in English, French and Russian. The session began with an overview of the LCIPP and Activity 8 and transitioned into an open discussion focused on the design of the annual Roundtable at COP 27, actions to support Indigenous youth participate fully, and prospective topics to be discussed. A full summary of the informal consultations can be found on the LCIPP Resource Hub.²

Overview

During the roundtable, Indigenous youth and knowledge holders shared and exchanged their knowledge, teachings, understandings, and solutions to the causes and impacts of climate that they are confronting in their homelands.

It was designed to feature two sessions:

- Part I: Exchange amongst Indigenous youth and youth from local communities: This served as a meeting for Indigenous youth and youth from local communities to discuss enhancement of meaningful participation of indigenous youth and youth from local

¹Second three-year workplan of the LCIPP (2022 – 2024), see <https://lcipp.unfccc.int/sites/default/files/2022-05/LCIPP%20second%20three%20year%20workplan.pdf>

² <https://lcipp.unfccc.int/information-hub/information-record-detail?source=896&typeresource=918&id=584>

communities in climate policies and action, focusing on sharing examples of climate change adaptation and mitigation in their regions; opportunities to enhance youth participating in the activities of the FWG through the entirety of the workplan, and discussion about how and what information and recommendations will be shared in part two; Part I of the event was well attended by over 100 Indigenous youth and youth from local communities

- Part II: Dialogue with Parties: The second part of the gathering featured participation by Indigenous youth from each of the UN indigenous socio-cultural regions, local communities, Party representatives, international organizations, constituted bodies under the Convention, and scientific bodies. In this segment of the gathering, the Indigenous youth presented observations and recommendations, and proposals for integrating this knowledge into climate action and policies.

The session was co-moderated by the late Chris Honahnie and Dilbara Sharipova. Indigenous youth knowledge holders from all seven regions, selected in collaboration with FWG representatives, and then opened the floor to contributions from Indigenous youth around the room. The spirit of the discussion was powerful, as each speaker shared their reflections, experiences, and emotions with everyone in the room.

This summary document focuses on the outcomes of Part I, and the response from Parties and constituted bodies in Part II.

Key Reflections from Part I of the Roundtable

The moderators provided some high-level reflections at the end of the roundtable to prepare for Part II:

- Capacity building programs are needed for Indigenous youth
- Indigenous Peoples need to be linked to their governments and to be listened.
- Indigenous youth must be involved in decision making and should have a bigger role in the design, implementation, and monitoring of any climate policy and action.
- Global warming, Climate change and Greenhouse gas emissions have a significant impact on Indigenous Peoples and their lands, waters, ice, air, and territories.
- Stakeholders and companies are targeting lands of the Indigenous Peoples for land grabbing and extractive development. This process must be stopped.
- Indigenous youth may migrate to the urban centres, or even other countries, to find job opportunities and make more money. There should be special attention to ensure they remain connected to their communities.
- Africa, as a continent, has only contributed 3.8% of emissions, but they are disproportionately affected by climate change. Given the large amount of Indigenous Peoples, there needs to be more attention and support provided to them through educational opportunities focussed on climate change as well as financial aid and job opportunities inside their countries. This would help prevent the need to migrate and leave their lands searching for better options.
- Funding programs specifically for Indigenous youth is essential to support their education and for them not to leave their lands.

- Indigenous Peoples use diverse methods of climate change adaptation, depending on where they live. These methods should be implemented and refined to help them adapt while protecting the Land, Water, and Ice of their ancestors.
- Indigenous youth should be provided support to prepare them to be leaders and protectors of their heritage.

Summary of Part I of the Roundtable

The participants reflected on specific questions during the Part I of the roundtable

Question #1 What practices are indigenous peoples, and local communities from your region doing to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) and to adapt to climate change impacts?

Indigenous youth are returning to traditional ways of living in order help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to climate change impacts. Returning to traditional ways of living, connect them to their ancestors, who were experts in living in ways that did not pollute our air, waters, ice, and land, but created a healthier environment for all living beings. These traditional ways of living include activities such as, planting traditional crops that have naturally adapted to the environment in which they live in, harvesting animals and utilizing every part of the animal so to not leave anything to waste, using natural materials to build our homes and infrastructure, also using traditional forms of government that were developed by and for Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous youth were born into the world at a crucial time. Many new technologies were developed and advanced during this time, such as the internet which Indigenous youth have learned to use for beneficial purposes such as to record and document their elders' teachings and to share that message with other Indigenous youth across the world. Creating an international network of Indigenous youth to combat climate change has never been easier. The more connected they are as youth, the more they can share solutions and experiences that may inspire them to develop and improve their Indigenous ways of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and climate change adaptation.

One of the Indigenous youth participants said “We as Indigenous youth, have taken action into our own hands. We have been proactive in developing strategies and practices that help to reduce and prevent greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impacts. We look to our past, to find new solutions to the climate crisis that we are all experiencing today.”

Question #2 How can meaningful youth engagement in climate policy development and implementation be enhanced? Are there any existing good practices, in your experience?

Indigenous youth require more opportunities to share the same space with their local, regional, and national governments in order to meaningfully engage in climate policy development and implementation. The participants shared the following recommendations:

- Requesting “the full and undivided attention of our local, regional, and national governments when we want to provide input and recommendations in regard to climate policy development and implementation, and we need to be taken seriously. If our local, regional, and national governments do not take it upon themselves to organize spaces

for meaningful engagement, we call upon the international community to support our efforts in achieving this process.”

- Encouraging “local, regional, and national governments to take the necessary time to understand us as Indigenous youth and to really consider the circumstances that we have grown up in and how it has affected our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Taking the time to understand this, will allow for governments to realize the reality of the climate crisis and that our young people are facing challenges that have never been seen before. This will allow for more meaningful engagement in climate policy development and implementation”
- Encouraging “local, regional, and national government officials to come to our communities to see the amazing work that is being done by our Indigenous youth. Seeing the work firsthand, will provide for a better understanding of the climate crisis and how climate policy can be developed to support the important work by Indigenous youth”
- Requesting “training opportunities to allow us to better understand our current climate policies and how it affects us. Currently, non-Indigenous forms of education do not educate us on our governments climate policies and that needs to change. The need for reformed educational systems was repeatedly highlighted. There is a need for capacity building programs, that will allow for Indigenous youth to access the spaces needed to meaningfully engage in climate policy development and implementation.”
- Requesting “more work opportunities in our home communities that will allow us to remain in our homelands so we can engage in climate policy development and implementation. If we are not present in our home communities, we could eventually lose our connection to our homelands and that is crucial in order to preserve our identity as Indigenous Peoples.”

Question #3 and 4:

What practices would enhance the engagement of indigenous youth and youth from local communities in the activities of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform or in other areas of work under the UNFCCC?

What recommendations would you provide to the FWG to ensure that the annual youth dialogues build on one another during the workplan period, 2022 - 2024?

In order to enhance the engagement of Indigenous youth in the activities of the LCIPP or in other areas of the work under the UNFCCC, Indigenous youth provided the following recommendations:

- Requesting that Leaders, including Parties, take recommendations from Indigenous youth seriously.
- Recommending “further funding opportunities to attend the LCIPP activities and other activities of the UNFCCC. Our financial capacity as young people is extremely limited due to many reasons, including the lack of jobs for young people. More time is required for Indigenous youth to participate in the activities of the LCIPP so that we can provide more detailed perspectives and experiences that are important for the LCIPP to consider.”
- Encouraging “the development of an Indigenous youth gathering activity under the LCIPP in addition to the youth roundtable that is already in place. The development of this youth gathering will allow for adequate time to engage and network with Indigenous youth in a setting that is appropriate for us, such as in an Indigenous community.”

- Requesting thoughtful inclusion of “Young Indigenous women in the activities of the LCIPP. Indigenous women are still marginalized and unnoticed in many aspects yet, they are the main contributors to climate action.”
- Requesting “training and workshop opportunities for Indigenous youth to learn what the function of the FWG is and how Indigenous youth can actively engage in the Platform. There also must be stronger attempts by FWG members to engage youth participation from their regions.”
- Recommending “developing guidance for climate funding that goes directly to Indigenous youth.”
- Requesting “Interpretation in as many languages as possible. Portuguese interpretation was not provided for parts of the activities and that is very unfortunate. We must remember to not exclude any of our Indigenous brothers and sisters from the important dialogues that have taken place.”

Responses from Parties and Constituted Bodies

There was a positive response from Parties and constituted bodies in attendance. This included representatives from Parties such as Bolivia, Canada and Egypt (the COP 27 Presidency), constituted bodies such as the Paris Committee on Capacity Building (PCCB) and the Katowice Committee on Experts on the Impacts of Climate Change (KCI), and the Office of the High-Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR). All responded positively to the contributions of Indigenous youth and recommended clear action moving forward.

Key takeaways from the interventions included:

- An invitation from the PCCB and KCI to participate in its workplan to share, where appropriate, Indigenous knowledge and highlight the real effects of climate change.
- A recommendation to review the Indigenous training programs offered by the UN, including the UN Voluntary Fund, the fellowships at the OHCHR, and focus of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2023.
- A call for additional support for youth to share what they are facing in their communities, including additional support for translation, participation of diverse and intersectional communities (including from rural and urban settings), and from different countries.
- A recognition that more COPs are not needed, requiring more action by the global community to prevent the impacts on our Lands, Waters, and Territories.

Note of acknowledgement

The Activity 8 Co-leads are immensely grateful for the depth and breadth of contributions that Indigenous youth and youth from local communities shared in these conversations, as well as the positive and growing participation of Party and constituted body representatives. The Co-leads look forward to continuing these conversations in the planning for the next Annual Youth Roundtable at COP 28.

We are also grateful for the contributions of the late Chris Honahnie. A true leader was lost.