

## **The Suusamy Declaration\***

**From the International Network of Mountain Indigenous Peoples (INMIP)**

We, representatives from more than 50 indigenous mountain communities of 10 countries of South, Central and Southeast Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and Africa, members of the International Network of Mountain Indigenous Peoples (INMIP), are profoundly alarmed about the rapid deterioration of our mountain environments caused by huge biodiversity loss and accelerating climate change.

Mountains sustain a large proportion of the world's biodiversity hotspots, are several important food crops' places of origin and serve as water towers for millions of people living downstream. But they are also highly sensitive to climate impacts. The rate of warming in mountain regions is significantly higher than the global average, rainfall has adversely changed, and glacier cover has dramatically reduced. As a result, our cultures and human and environmental health are being damaged. This is adversely affecting human rights, women, children and men's well-being, traditional livelihoods, food systems and food sovereignty, local infrastructure, economic viability, and our very survival as mountain indigenous peoples with unique traditional lifestyles.

As members of ancient cultures who possess and maintain a wealth of knowledge, practices and strategies on how-to live-in harmony with nature, we reaffirm that any solution to the climate crisis must be mindful of the deep relationship between human communities and biological diversity as it forms the physical and spiritual basis of our existence. The future of mountain indigenous peoples depends above all on the maintenance of the sacred relationship between our cultures and water, air, plants, pastures, animals, mountains, and respect for the wisdom of our elders and the sacred position of women.

We call on the UNFCCC Parties meeting in Katowice, Poland to:

1. Develop a framework for action on mountains that heightens awareness of the vulnerability of mountain ecosystems and establishes policies and guidance to build the biocultural resilience of mountain environments and to recognize indigenous mountain peoples' contributions to climate change adaptation and mitigation.
2. Take urgent action to protect the human rights of environmental defenders, of the spiritual guides of indigenous youth and of the indigenous generations of tomorrow. More than 270 indigenous environmental defenders were murdered in 2017-18 alone. We reaffirm the inherent and fundamental human rights and status of Indigenous Peoples, especially those contained in Articles 25–30 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
3. Make sure climate change actors strengthen their gender approach to climate action and to open all spaces for participation and representation of youth, particularly women. Initiatives on climate change of national governments, and at community level, should support both direct and indirect opportunities for youth participation and gender-transformative approaches, particularly in educational and developmental learning, and support empowerment of youth.
4. Agree to make real efforts towards the conclusion of the Paris Agreement Work Programme (PAWP), and to ensure it includes a strong mandate for poverty alleviation, protecting the rights of indigenous peoples, public participation, gender equality and women's empowerment, food security and ecosystem integrity. The survival of humanity demands radical and rapid action.

This should include decreasing the dependency of States on fossil fuels. We call on Parties to work collaboratively for a just and inclusive transition to decentralized and biodiversity-friendly renewable energy economies and to support indigenous peoples and local communities to achieve energy security and sovereignty.

5. Abandon false climate change solutions that harm indigenous peoples' human rights and the rights of Mother Earth. These include nuclear energy, large-scale dams, geo-engineering, bio-fuels, plantations, "climate smart" agriculture, and market-based mechanisms such as carbon trading, the Clean Development Mechanism, and forest offsets.
6. Support the full and effective operationalization of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP), and the implementation of activities at local level that enable exchange of knowledge, experiences, best practices and lessons learned for addressing climate change. These activities should support the cross-fertilization of diverse knowledge systems in a holistic and respectful manner, to create a multiple-evidence base that supports local solutions and responses and builds local resilience within the framework of the Paris Agreement and other biodiversity and climate change related processes.
7. Request the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform to carry out studies on how climate change is affecting the movement of indigenous groups out of their traditional lands. This is crucial to addressing the environmental degradation, in part due to climate change, that is fueling mountain indigenous peoples' internal and international migration. Increasingly, indigenous peoples are migrating to seek better opportunities, or because of persecution and statelessness, which hampers the transmission of traditional knowledge for adaptation.
8. Recognize and respect indigenous peoples' land rights as part of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs). This is critical to curb deforestation rates and help achieve the global mitigation needed between now and 2030.
9. Support the protection of biocultural landscapes that harbour centers of crop origin and diversity. Climate change is projected to affect agricultural production and is contributing to a rise in global hunger and malnutrition. Landraces cultivated in centers of crop diversity by indigenous farmers are critical to local food and nutrition security and to ensure the viability of the agriculture of tomorrow. The conservation of these genetic resources depends on the protection of our biocultural landscapes and the evolutionary processes within them. In return, we declare our commitment to implement "*Food Crop Neighbourhoods*" that ensure centers of crop origin and diversity are protected, secure the survival of our biocultural heritage, are defined and managed by indigenous peoples according to our customary laws, and are free from extractive industries, deforestation and chemical-based industrial food systems.

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\* This Declaration collects the main issues and concerns discussed during the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the International Network of Mountain Indigenous Peoples (INMIP) which took place in various locations of Kyrgyzstan during 25-29 July 2018. The meeting culminated in a final session at the Suusamyр pasture.