

The Huaran Declaration: Indigenous Peoples are the real solutions to the climate and biodiversity crises

International Network of Mountain Indigenous Peoples





“ Indigenous Peoples living in mountains regions conserve many global biodiversity hotspots and most of the world’s centres of crop domestication and diversity ”

We, over 50 Indigenous Peoples, representing 137 mountain communities from Peru, Bolivia and China, and 10 villages from semi-arid Kenya, along with civil society, research, government and donor organisations from Peru, Bolivia, China, Kenya, UK, US and France, gathered in Huaran, the Potato Park and the Barter and Maize Park in Cusco, Peru, from 30 May to 4 June 2024. We took part in the 6th learning exchange of the International Network of Mountain Indigenous Peoples (INMIP) which explored the challenges facing Indigenous mountain and semi-arid communities, and solutions to the climate and biodiversity crises that are enshrined in Indigenous Peoples' ancestral knowledge systems, conservation practices, ways of life and biocultural heritage territories.

We reaffirm our rights to our ancestral territories, self-determination and food sovereignty, which are intrinsically linked to our biocultural heritage and our spiritual relationship with Mother Earth, and our rights established in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, ILO Convention 169, and other relevant international and national law and policy.

Indigenous Peoples living in mountains regions conserve many global biodiversity hotspots and most of the world's centres of crop domestication and diversity, providing critical co-evolving repositories of resilient crop varieties and livestock breeds for climate adaptation. Our mountain homelands and territories serve as water towers for billions of people, and are places of high spiritual value. We actively conserve Mother Earth by maintaining our ancestral beliefs, values, practices and customary laws. Traditional landscapes in mountains, semi-arid and arid regions, including forests, natural pastures, wetlands and biodiverse agroecological production systems, are vital for climate adaptation and mitigation but are also highly sensitive to climate change.

Even though we have contributed least to the climate crisis, Indigenous Peoples are suffering serious impacts from climate change. Mountain glaciers that provide essential freshwater for people living in mountains, major cities and arid and semi-arid regions are rapidly disappearing, with above-average temperature rises in mountain regions. Mountain and semi-arid peoples are experiencing frequent droughts, water shortages, increased pests and diseases and increased risk and loss of life (eg. due to mudslides in mountain communities). We are also losing ancestral crop varieties, traditional knowledge and cultural heritage due to rising temperatures which are causing the movement of traditional crops and other species to higher altitudinal ranges.

These climate change impacts are exacerbated by growing pressure from extractive industries polluting our territories and water, and by forest degradation, loss of traditional knowledge driven by globalization, and weakening of traditional governance institutions, as well as the emergence of false solutions to climate change.

We call upon UNFCCC Parties meeting at COP29, and CBD Parties meeting at COP 16, to:

1. Fully integrate traditional knowledge and innovation systems of Indigenous Peoples in national adaptation and mitigation plans, NDCs, NBSAPs and development plans at all levels, recognising the equal value of traditional and western sciences, and ensure protection of the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples to their ancestral territories and resources and the governance of their territories.
2. Recognise, protect and support Indigenous Biocultural Heritage Territories given their critical role for meeting global climate adaptation and mitigation goals and achieving the CBD's Global Biodiversity Framework targets, with full respect to the rights of Indigenous Peoples to their territories.



3. Take urgent action to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are causing widespread climate chaos and to transition to alternative development paradigms based on respect for Mother Earth, such as *Buen Vivir* (good living).
4. Significantly increase direct climate and biodiversity finance to Indigenous Peoples in mountain, semi-arid and arid regions, given their critical role in conserving unique, multi-functional biodiversity, cultural heritage and globally valuable ecosystem services.
5. Provide full compensation directly to Indigenous Peoples in mountain, semi-arid and arid regions for economic and non-economic Loss and Damage, including loss of life, biodiversity, water resources, food systems and cultural heritage.
6. Support the strengthening, recognition and representation of Indigenous and traditional authorities, governance systems and customary laws for territorial management and for conserving ancestral knowledge in mountain and semi-arid regions.
7. Protect forests and watersheds in mountain and semi-arid regions, recognise and support traditional forest guardians, support reforestation in water catchments, springs and wetlands using indigenous and native species with full participation and leadership of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and support protection and restoration of traditional irrigation systems.
8. Take urgent action to protect Indigenous Peoples and their territories from extractive industries that threaten their livelihoods, human rights and biocultural heritage, ensure Free Prior and Informed Consent for any proposed project on their territories, including full transparency regarding risks and responsibilities, and promote the use of customary conflict resolution mechanisms, and participatory monitoring and evaluation.
9. Ensure full and effective participation of indigenous youth, women and elders in policy- and decision-making fora on climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development; and promote inter-generational transmission of Indigenous knowledge and leadership, and integration of TK in the curricula of primary, secondary and university education.
10. Develop strategies to stem out-migration of youth from indigenous communities by strengthening economic, training and networking opportunities for youth, and provision of quality education within or adjacent to indigenous territories.
11. Reject all false climate 'solutions', including carbon markets and offsets, Net Zero, geo-engineering, Nature-based Solutions, markets for environmental services, and climate-smart agriculture, which have failed to reduce emissions, seek to privatise communal resources and are diverting attention and resources from real solutions and urgent action needed.
12. Ban GMOs and genetic engineering technologies that threaten the great diversity of native seeds and indigenous food systems that provide the basis for global food security, climate resilience, food sovereignty, particularly from centres of origin and diversity of crops. Support the right of municipal and regional governments to declare themselves agroecological and GMO-free territories.

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Get involved

To find out more about the International Network of Mountain Indigenous Peoples (INMIP), contact the Network Coordinator, **Alejandro Argumedo** (inmip-secretariat@andes.org.pe; alejandro@andes.org.pe) or visit www.inmip.net

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Perú: Asociación ANDES; Parque de la Papa; Parque Chalakuy; Centro Bartolomé de las Casas (CBC); Asociación Nacional de Productores Agroecológicos (ANPE); Asociación de Guardianes de Papa Nativa (AGUAPAN); GEOYACHAQ

Kenya: Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI); Rabai community (Kilifi County)

China: Society of Entrepreneurs and Ecology; Farmers' Seed Network; Nanning Green Seeds Poverty Alleviation Service Center

Bolivia: Comunidad Pluricultural Andino-Amazónica para la Sustentabilidad (COMPAS); Gobierno Autónomo Municipal Samaipata; Comité Agroecológico Samaipata

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