

Potato Park Declaration

International Network of Mountain Indigenous Peoples





We, over 100 indigenous peoples, representing 39 mountain communities from Bhutan, China, India, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Papua New Guinea, Peru, The Philippines, Taiwan, Tajikistan and Thailand, together with 26 representatives from civil society, research, government and donor organisations, gathered in the Potato Park, Cusco, Peru, from 19 to 23 April 2017, for the fourth community to community learning exchange of the International Network of Mountain Indigenous Peoples (INMIP). The exchange began with a policy dialogue in Cusco, which brought together representatives of indigenous mountain communities, government officials and experts to discuss the role of indigenous and modern knowledge systems in improving the wellbeing of mountain communities in the face of climate change.

Our mountain homelands are hotspots of biological and cultural diversity, that play a critical role as water towers, centres of crop domestication and diversification, repositories of resilient genetic resources for adaptation to climate change and places of high spiritual value. Our rich biocultural heritage is rooted in our distinct cultural identities, ancestral knowledge and customary laws that ensure the sustainable management of mountain ecosystems.

Even though we play a vital role in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services for rural and urban populations, indigenous mountain peoples are amongst the poorest, most marginalised and most vulnerable to global climatic changes. These changes are adding to existing problems of insecure land ownership, out-migration, cultural disintegration, extractive industries, inappropriate mountain policy regimes and biopiracy.

We met in the Potato Park, a Biocultural Heritage Territory in a centre of origin of the potato, where six Quechua communities conserve about 1,367 native varieties of potato, three species of wild potato, and many other Andean crops and wildlife. The INMIP horizontal learning exchange provided training on methods and tools for establishing Biocultural

Heritage Landscapes, based on the successful Potato Park model. It used an empowering walking workshop methodology, where indigenous farmers shared their expertise directly with other farmers, using the landscape as the classroom. It also sought to strengthen and expand this emerging indigenous peoples' network.

As the world moves towards a highly urbanised population, with an estimated 66 per cent of people living in cities by the year 2050, our concern is that there will be too few people living in mountain areas to produce sufficient food, conserve agrobiodiversity and protect fragile mountain ecosystems. One response to this is to create biocultural heritage landscapes, which sustain vibrant and inclusive green economies, using old traditions and wisdom, in harmony with modern science and technologies.

INMIP, concerned for the future of mountain ecosystems and the livelihoods of our communities in the face of global and climatic change, calls upon governments, religious and spiritual leaders, research organisations, civil society organisations and the international community to:

1. Recognise and respect indigenous peoples' spiritual values and expressions, particularly the sacred nature of their food and landscapes, and the messages they provide for peace and harmony among all peoples of the world.
2. Recognise the critical importance of biocultural heritage, including indigenous peoples' holistic worldview, where the human, spiritual and natural realms are interconnected and interdependent.
3. Recognise the important contribution of indigenous mountain peoples' knowledge to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, provision of ecosystem services, including water, soil, food crops, crop wild relatives and wildlife, and implementation of community-based disaster risk management strategies.



4. Support participatory action-research with indigenous mountain communities that fully respects their traditional knowledge, local institutions, and collective rights to knowledge and innovations, to enable communities to address the urgent threats posed by environmental and socio-economic changes, particularly climate change.
5. Support and facilitate the repatriation of native crop varieties from gene banks to indigenous mountain communities, the creation of landscape-based gene reserves and community seed banks, and horizontal seed exchanges, and protect and promote local seed systems for food and nutrition security in the face of climate change.
6. Support the establishment and legal protection of indigenous peoples' Biocultural Heritage Landscapes and Community Conserved Areas to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and foster local green economies, pro-poor inclusive growth, and nutrition-sensitive climate change adaptation and mitigation.
7. Recognise the particular role of indigenous women in food security and the conservation, development and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture, strengthen the voice of indigenous women and ensure opportunities for their participation in decision-making processes at all levels.
8. Strengthen traditional natural resource management systems, and the traditional policies and institutions that govern them, and prevent the rapid loss of indigenous knowledge and languages through intergenerational transmission.
9. Recognise the important role of indigenous peoples' agroecological farming practices in climate adaptation and mitigation, and the significant contribution of indigenous highland pasture management to carbon sequestration.
10. Provide support for participatory development of biocultural products and services, creating market linkages, branding of indigenous products and protecting indigenous names, to support sustainable livelihoods and the conservation of biocultural heritage.
11. Ensure that government policies and programmes do not exacerbate the impacts of climate change on indigenous mountain peoples, and support traditional knowledge-based strategies for climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction, alongside science.
12. Recognise the important contribution of indigenous mountain peoples to achieving the Aichi Targets and Sustainable Development Goals, and establish collaboration with them to monitor the achievement of these global goals at local level.
13. Recognise and strengthen INMIP as an important mechanism for knowledge exchange and innovation for enhancing the biocultural heritage and adaptive capacity of mountain indigenous peoples.

We call on indigenous peoples and traditional farmers to work for the preservation of their biocultural heritage landscapes and traditional resource management systems, and we call upon national governments to implement policies that support indigenous knowledge systems.

Finally, we want to reaffirm our commitment to working together and in our own communities towards our common vision: a world rich in biocultural heritage that maintains the harmonious relationship among the spiritual, human and natural realms for resilient indigenous mountain communities.

“We call upon national governments to implement policies that support indigenous knowledge systems”

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, or visit www.inmip.net

To finance INMIP adaptation projects and engage the network in policy dialogue, contact the Country Coordinators:

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