

COP29: A Sacred Wisdom Keepers Delegation

This Conference of the Parties on Climate Change 29 is expected to focus on assessing progress toward previously established climate goals, including creating the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance and countries will be finalizing and submitting their transparency documents to show how far they have come in addressing their climate goals at national level. In 2025, countries will update or enhance their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, and Indigenous voices must be heard and integrated into these updates. To do this, Indigenous engagement must begin now in 2024.

1. Implementation of Climate Funds: With the operational details and mechanisms of the new loss and damage fund finalized. We demand that these funds be disbursed equitably, prioritizing developing countries and Indigenous communities that are disproportionately affected by climate change. These funds must be in the form of grants, not loans that will only further financial colonization.

2. Advancements in Green Technology: As technological advancements continue, we anticipate a widespread adoption of green technologies, including improvements in renewable energy, battery storage. Our delegation demands that these technologies be transferred, accessible, and beneficial to Indigenous peoples. It is imperative that the extraction of essential materials for these technologies is conducted in a manner that fully respects Indigenous knowledge and rights. We insist on stringent mechanisms to ensure that the extractive processes do not generate any environmental or cultural harms. This includes mandatory and thorough consultations with Indigenous representatives to incorporate their perspectives and needs, guaranteed equitable access to technology and resources, and rigorous continuous monitoring to prevent any adverse impacts on our lands, livelihoods, and cultural heritage. The extraction and processing of materials must comply with the highest environmental and human right standards to avoid any degradation of ecosystems and disruption of Indigenous ways of life, and only with the free prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples. The well-being and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples are non-negotiable, and we demand a more just and uncompromising approach that unequivocally safeguards both the environment and cultural heritage. Of particular note, these technologies must not be created by mining for rare Earth minerals on Indigenous lands and sacred sites. We reject the green-washing of nuclear energy as a solution; so-called low-carbon cancer still kills.

3. Global Economic Shifts: A shift toward green economies globally is expected, with increased investments in sustainable infrastructure and industries. This transition must include robust just transition programs, as we demand support for communities and workers, particularly those in regions dependent on fossil fuel industries. In many cases Indigenous communities have borne the brunt of fossil fuels production and harm, and suddenly where that industry is no longer available there is a significant economic gap. While we reject capitalism, we embrace climate reparations and compensating workers directly for physical, environmental, cultural, and psychological harms that they have endured and wages lost is a nonnegotiable component of

that. These communities then not only face environmental degradation and health detriments, but are then left without income. A just transition ensures that these individuals are retrained and can work in new industries in the sustainable economy.

4. International Agreements and Policies: The introduction of new or updated international agreements and policies aimed at accelerating the transition to a sustainable and low-carbon economy is anticipated. We demand that these policies include provisions that protect Indigenous rights and promote environmentally sustainable goods and services in a manner that respects our traditions and sovereignties. Sovereign Indigenous Nations must be recognized as such and all the decision-making rights that encompasses must be honored.

Our involvement and the demands we put forward are essential for ensuring that these developments not only address global climate challenges but also advance the rights and well-being of Indigenous populations, emphasizing the importance of sustained international cooperation and commitment to achieving comprehensive climate goals.

Fossil Fuel Phase Out - End All Subsidies for the Fossil Fuel Industry

Ending all subsidies for the fossil fuel industry involves a comprehensive shift in governmental and economic policy. Subsidies that currently support the production and consumption of fossil fuels should be entirely and immediately phased out. This measure is intended to discourage the use of fossil fuels by making them economically unviable in comparison to renewable energy sources. The funds previously allocated to these subsidies should be redirected towards supporting renewable energy projects, research in sustainable technologies, climate reparations, and aiding workers transitioning from the fossil fuel sector to emerging green industries. This shift also includes reforming tax codes, ending financial incentives for oil, gas, and coal exploration and production, and implementing strict regulations against lobbying efforts by the fossil fuel industry.

Developed nations should do their fair share and not only place a moratorium on any new fossil fuel expansion domestically, with an included phase out by the early 2030s (<2034), but should also provide funding to developing nations to transition them from fossil fuels but to leap to an economy powered by renewable energy.

Transition to an 80 Percent Green Economy by 2035 by Developed Nations

Transitioning to an 80 percent green economy by 2035 entails a significant transformation in how economies operate, prioritizing sustainability and ecological balance. This goal would require aggressive investment in renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, hydroelectric, and geothermal power. The objective is to ensure that these clean energy sources account for at least 80% or more of total energy consumption by 2030, drastically reducing the reliance on

fossil fuels. It also involves enhancing energy efficiency across all sectors of the economy—from industrial processes to residential heating and cooling systems. Infrastructure developments would focus on sustainable practices, including green building standards, expanded public transportation networks to reduce vehicular emissions, and widespread use of electric vehicles. Moreover, this transition includes fostering green job creation and providing educational programs and training to equip the workforce with skills necessary for sustainable development roles. Governments, businesses, and communities would collaborate to create policies and incentives that promote a green economy, ensuring that economic growth is both inclusive and environmentally responsible.

These initiatives require global cooperation, robust policy frameworks, significant financial investment, and a commitment to overcoming political and economic challenges associated with such a transformative agenda.

In 2024, as part of ongoing efforts to combat climate change and foster international cooperation, several significant events and developments are expected. We, as an independent Indigenous peoples' delegation, are actively engaged in these processes, bringing forth our demands for justice and inclusivity.

JUST TRANSITION

A Just Transition, through an Indigenous lens, ensures that the shift to a low-carbon economy is equitable and inclusive, particularly for our Indigenous communities. This approach acknowledges the historical and ongoing injustices we have faced, emphasizing the need for reparative justice. It involves creating opportunities for green jobs that integrate our traditional knowledge and practices, providing support for workers transitioning from environmentally harmful industries, and ensuring that we are central decision-makers, respecting our sovereignty and self-determination. This transition needs to nurture the preservation of our cultures, languages, and traditions, recognizing their importance for our community resilience and identity. It emphasizes community-led initiatives and environmental stewardship, highlighting our contributions to biodiversity and ecosystem health. Policy recommendations include ensuring our representation in climate and energy decision-making bodies, allocating funding for Indigenous-led green projects, implementing legal frameworks that protect our land rights, and creating educational programs incorporating our knowledge for green jobs. A Just Transition, seen through an Indigenous lens, is both sustainable and just, sharing the benefits of a low-carbon economy equitably and empowering us to lead towards a resilient and inclusive future.

LOSS & DAMAGE

Loss and Damage, from an Indigenous perspective, acknowledges the disproportionate impacts of climate change on our Indigenous communities. Climate change affects us in unique and profound ways, threatening our lands, livelihoods, and ways of life. Recognizing this, it is essential to develop equitable mechanisms to compensate for these impacts. This involves

actively involving Indigenous communities in designing and implementing these solutions to ensure they are culturally appropriate and effective.

This approach ensures that new opportunities in the green economy are accessible to Indigenous Peoples, providing pathways for sustainable livelihoods that align with our values and traditions. Our traditional wisdom and practices, honed over centuries of living in harmony with nature, are invaluable in crafting sustainable solutions to climate challenges. By valuing and utilizing our knowledge, we can enhance the effectiveness of climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.

Furthermore, it is crucial to preserve our cultural heritage in the face of climate change. This includes protecting our sacred sites, languages, and traditional practices that are at risk. Addressing non-economic losses is equally important, as the loss of cultural identity, spiritual connections, and community cohesion cannot be measured in monetary terms but is deeply felt within our communities.

Ensuring legal and policy support is fundamental to protecting our rights and promoting our active participation in climate action. This includes recognizing and upholding our land rights, providing financial resources for community-led climate initiatives, and creating inclusive policies that reflect our needs and perspectives.

By integrating these elements, we can create a more inclusive and just response to climate change that honors and empowers Indigenous communities. This holistic approach not only addresses the immediate impacts of climate change but also builds a resilient and sustainable future for all.

FREE, PRIOR, AND INFORMED CONSENT (FPIC)

FPIC stands as a cornerstone in the relationship between Indigenous communities and development projects impacting their lands and cultures. It is crucial for ensuring that any economic, environmental, or social initiatives, including those related to Just Transition and addressing Loss & Damage, proceed only with the clear consent of the Indigenous communities affected. FPIC empowers Indigenous Peoples to negotiate the terms of engagement, protect their cultural heritage, and ensure their rights are upheld in the face of global changes and challenges. This principle must be globally recognized and implemented to truly respect and uphold Indigenous sovereignty and ensure their active participation in shaping a sustainable future.

DANGEROUS DISTRACTIONS

False solutions in the context of climate change are not just inadequate; they are dangerous. These measures, which appear beneficial for reducing carbon emissions or mitigating environmental impact, ultimately fail to address the root causes of the issues and often

exacerbate them. From an Indigenous perspective, these so-called solutions are particularly insidious as they frequently undermine Indigenous rights and disregard the holistic, interconnected nature of ecosystems understood through Indigenous wisdom.

For Indigenous communities, the battle against false solutions is urgent. These measures, including large-scale geoengineering projects, carbon trading schemes, or biofuel production, often result in land dispossession, ecological degradation, and further marginalization. They prioritize profit over people and nature, perpetuating a cycle of environmental and social harm. This not only disrupts our sustainable practices but also threatens our very existence.

Indigenous activists and leaders are calling for a severe reevaluation of these "green" solutions. We must expose and dismantle new forms of environmental colonialism masquerading as climate action. True solutions must incorporate Indigenous knowledge systems, prioritize ecosystem health, and respect the sovereignty and self-determination of Indigenous communities globally. Community-led initiatives are essential, empowering Indigenous Peoples to lead the fight against climate change on their terms.

Equitable participation in climate decision-making processes is non-negotiable. Indigenous voices must not only be included but must be central to all forums where climate policies and solutions are discussed. This ensures that strategies are not only technically effective but also socially just and culturally appropriate.

Highlighting these issues is crucial to ensuring that climate action is genuinely sustainable and just. It's not enough to reduce carbon footprints; we must also respect the land rights and traditional practices of Indigenous Peoples. Our wisdom, which emphasizes living in harmony with nature and recognizing the interdependence of all living beings, offers the path forward. By integrating this perspective, we can foster genuine solutions that benefit the planet and all its inhabitants equitably.

Addressing false solutions involves scrutinizing climate strategies to ensure they do not perpetuate harm or inequality. The stakes are too high to settle for half-measures or deceptive fixes. By elevating Indigenous knowledge and leadership, we can develop approaches that truly tackle the root causes of climate change, promoting a healthier, more just world for everyone. Our future depends on it.

OPPOSING CARBON TRADING SCHEMES

Opposing carbon trading schemes is a critical focus point from an Indigenous perspective, as these schemes often promote a market-based approach to solving climate issues that can neglect the deeper systemic changes needed for true environmental justice. Carbon markets, allows companies and countries to buy and sell allowances to emit greenhouse gasses. While ostensibly designed to reduce emissions, these schemes can lead to "carbon colonialism," where the burden of adjustment falls disproportionately on Indigenous lands and peoples.

Indigenous communities frequently argue that carbon trading does not reduce overall emissions but merely shifts the responsibility from high emitters to areas with lower economic development. This can lead to situations where Indigenous lands are targeted for carbon offset projects like large-scale afforestation, often without genuine consent or benefit to the local communities, disrupting traditional lifestyles and causing ecological imbalance.

The focus is on advocating for direct emission reductions at the source and promoting sustainable practices that integrate Indigenous knowledge and stewardship of the environment. This approach opposes merely commodifying nature as a 'sink' for industrial pollution and emphasizes holistic, community-led environmental management that respects and preserves Indigenous cultures and the integrity of the natural world.

Building off the momentum from last year's conference, our delegation is dedicated to deepening our engagement and advancing a comprehensive understanding of the climate crisis at COP29. We have refined our key policy priorities to further integrate Indigenous knowledge and practices into the global environmental discourse. Here's how we plan to approach this:

PROMOTING INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING

Continuing from last year's discussions, we advocate for recognizing Indigenous ways of knowing as an essential alternative perspective that offers a holistic and interconnected view of nature. This worldview is crucial for enriching global environmental stewardship and sustainability.

ADVOCATING FOR INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION

Building on previous engagements, our delegation insists on the crucial inclusion of Indigenous voices and practices in climate policy-making and global negotiations. Additionally, Indigenous Communities should be recognized regardless if they are "formally" recognized by governments. We are pushing for the establishment of working groups that explore alternative systems for valuing and interacting with nature, moving beyond conventional economic frameworks.

Forests and Amazon

In preparation for the 2025 update of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, the Guardians of Amazonian Wisdom, as allies in the Wisdom Keepers Delegation, see COP29 as a pivotal moment to influence these climate policies in the fight for a healthy, just, and livable future. Young Indigenous members of the delegation will actively participate in negotiations, advocate for the integration of Amazonian Indigenous rights and knowledge, lobby national governments, and collaborate with other organizations to ensure that the NDCs accurately reflect their communities' needs. By closely monitoring the process, they

aim to ensure that Amazonian Indigenous voices are represented in these critical international climate agreements.

OCEAN HEALTH & PROTECTION

Emphasizing the progress made last year, we remain focused on the critical importance of ocean health and the protection of coastal reefs, particularly around island nations. Our continued advocacy efforts are geared towards establishing protective measures informed by traditional knowledge and sustainable practices.

POST-GROWTH SOLUTIONS & REPARATIONS

Reflecting on last year's discussions, we address the need for post-growth and de-growth solutions that recognize the historical responsibilities of the Global North and aim to rectify the ongoing inequities rooted in colonialism. Our approach includes advocating for reparations and sustainable development pathways that move away from reliance on economic growth metrics.

RESTORING THE KINSHIP VIEW: INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING

Building off last year's insights, our delegation continues to challenge the dominant colonial perspective of nature, which often commodifies the environment. We emphasize restoring a kinship view that regards humans and nature as interconnected relatives, not mere resources.

Throughout COP29, we will host a series of side events in both the Green and Blue zones to promote these refined policy priorities. These events will highlight Indigenous-led climate action, emphasize the importance of decolonization, and advocate for environmental equity, fostering a platform for meaningful and transformative discussions.

COP29 CLIMATE FINANCE THROUGH AN INDIGENOUS LENS

Climate finance, from an Indigenous lens, focuses on the equitable and culturally appropriate distribution of resources to support Indigenous communities in adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. This perspective emphasizes that financial mechanisms and resources must not only reach Indigenous communities but also respect their sovereignty and traditional knowledge systems.

Direct and Equitable Access to Funding:

Indigenous voices call for direct access to climate finance, advocating for simplified processes that eliminate bureaucratic barriers. This ensures that funding directly reaches indigenous peoples, empowering us to implement localized climate solutions that are rooted in their traditional ecological knowledge and practices.

Participation in Financial Governance:

Our indigenous delegations stress the importance of including Indigenous Peoples in the governance structures of climate finance mechanisms. This inclusion ensures that funding decisions are made with a deep understanding of the unique challenges faced by Indigenous communities and that these decisions are aligned with the principles of self-determination and consent.

Respecting Traditional Knowledge and Practices:

Climate finance should support projects that incorporate Indigenous ecological knowledge, which has been proven to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem health. Financial support for projects that utilize this knowledge not only aids climate resilience but also promotes the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous cultures.

Accountability and Transparency:

There must be mechanisms in place to ensure that climate finance is used effectively and reaches the intended recipients without diversion. Indigenous communities should have the tools and capacity to monitor and report on how these funds are being used, promoting transparency and accountability.

Addressing Historical Inequities:

Climate finance mechanisms should recognize and address the historical inequities and injustices that Indigenous Peoples have faced, including land dispossession and exclusion from economic opportunities. Financial resources aimed at combating climate change should contribute to rectifying these injustices, supporting both environmental and social rehabilitation.

By focusing on these principles, climate finance can serve as a powerful tool for not only addressing the impacts of climate change but also for advancing the rights and well-being of Indigenous Peoples globally.

NCQG

In the context of the New Climate Finance Quantified Goal (NCQG), our demands for equitable climate finance are clear: both the quantity and quality of climate finance need radical transformation. We call for climate finance in the trillions. The cost of inaction on climate change far outweighs this investment. Currently, war and conflict receive trillions in funding, which is often used for destruction, while the urgent need for funds to support regeneration and life through climate action remains underfunded. The last \$100 billion climate finance target is woefully inadequate and falls far short of addressing the growing climate-related needs, particularly for disaster relief and climate-induced damages.

The quality of climate finance must also shift towards being debt-free and grant-based. Historically, 63% of the \$100 billion in climate finance has been loan-based, which only exacerbates the debt burden on vulnerable countries. This shift is critical, as climate finance should be seen as a right, not as a profit-driven, extractive mechanism. It is essential that climate finance is sourced from public finance rather than private investments, ensuring that it is

predictable, adequate, and accessible. Without this, the urgent needs of vulnerable populations, including disaster recovery and climate resilience, will remain unmet.

The accessibility of climate finance, particularly for Indigenous peoples and local communities, remains a significant challenge. Mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) largely channel funds through state actors, which often operate within colonial structures. This creates barriers for Indigenous communities and local stakeholders to access the funds directly. Furthermore, intermediaries such as Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) often introduce complexity, red tape, and bureaucratic hurdles that make it difficult for the most vulnerable to benefit from climate finance. This needs to be addressed, as Indigenous peoples, who are on the frontlines of the climate crisis, require direct and simplified access to these funds.

The NCQG must place public finance at its core, with public provisions driving the bulk of climate finance. Public finance should not only be a part of the broader global investment landscape but should be the primary source of climate finance, ensuring it is distributed equitably and without adding further debt burdens. Developed countries have a particular responsibility to reallocate budgets from harmful industries, such as fossil fuel subsidies, which on average amount to \$13 million per minute, and redirect these funds to climate finance. In comparison, climate damages are currently costing the global economy \$16 million per hour. In Europe alone, an additional \$900 billion could be mobilized through taxes and by holding polluters accountable.

Finally, the NCQG must address questions of responsibility, implementation, tracking, and impact. Who will be responsible for implementing and overseeing the NCQG? How will the funds be tracked, and how will we ensure transparency and accountability? And most critically, how will the impact of climate finance be measured, particularly for those most vulnerable to climate change

Addressing these questions will be crucial to ensuring the NCQG is effective and truly transformative in the fight for climate justice.

Shorter version; summarized text on NCQG

The NCQG is advocating for climate finance that reaches trillions, emphasizing that the cost of inaction far exceeds the initial investment needed. Currently, trillions are allocated to war and conflict instead of regeneration and life creation. The \$100 billion goal is insufficient, especially given that 63% of this finance was loan-based, burdening recipients with debt. Climate finance must be debt-free and grant-based, with budget allocations shifting from Official Development Assistance (ODA) to climate finance. Accessibility is crucial, with funds needing to be easily obtainable with minimal red tape due to the urgency of the climate crisis. A significant portion of the finance should be directed towards disaster relief and related damage, sourced from public finance rather than loans or profit-making schemes. Predictable, adequate, and accessible funding is essential, with a clear definition of climate finance and improved tracking mechanisms

to overcome previous challenges. Indigenous communities must have better access to these funds, addressing the complexities and barriers of current mechanisms like the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Global Environment Facility (GEF). The NCQG emphasizes the need for public finance, advocating for a layered approach where public finance is the core, supplemented by global investments, or placing public finance at the center of all initiatives. Public budgets should be redirected from fossil fuel subsidies and military spending to climate finance, with Europe having the potential to raise \$900 billion through taxes and a polluters-pay system. Finally, the implementation of these goals requires clear accountability, ensuring proper tracking and assessment of climate finance impacts.

Women-Led Solutions to Climate Change Through an Indigenous Lens

Women-led solutions to climate change, particularly from Indigenous perspectives, empower women as pivotal agents in environmental stewardship, harnessing their unique roles and deep cultural insights to advance both gender equity and ecological sustainability. Indigenous women possess ancestral knowledge about land and resource management, and their leadership in women-led initiatives leverages this wisdom to devise climate resilience strategies that are culturally attuned and effective for their communities. These movements empower Indigenous women to address pressing local environmental issues like land degradation and water scarcity. By leading grassroots efforts, they not only tackle immediate challenges but also strengthen their communities' long-term capacities for sustainable living. Indigenous women advocate for substantial representation in climate policymaking, striving to ensure that climate action frameworks incorporate Indigenous rights and perspectives, thus promoting policies that are both inclusive and equitable. They are at the forefront of integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern sustainability practices, pioneering approaches that minimize environmental impacts while bolstering community resilience. Linking climate action with economic empowerment, Indigenous women-led initiatives foster opportunities in sustainable sectors such as native plant cultivation, eco-tourism, and traditional crafts, which support both community development and environmental goals. Emphasizing and supporting Indigenous women-led solutions is essential for a holistic and just approach to addressing climate change, ensuring that solutions not only mitigate environmental impacts but also enhance the cultural, social, and economic fabric of Indigenous communities.

Policy Recommendation: Inclusion of Military Emissions in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

To enhance transparency and accountability in climate action, all countries should include emissions from military operations in their NDCs, encompassing both domestic and international activities. This inclusion should extend to the Global Stocktake process to ensure comprehensive assessment of global progress under the Paris Agreement. Countries must provide detailed methodologies for calculating these emissions and set ambitious, specific reduction targets with clear strategies. Increased investment in low-carbon military technologies

is also crucial. Implementing this policy requires amendments to national laws on climate and military operations, with close collaboration between environmental and defense departments, thereby offering a more accurate representation of national efforts in global climate initiatives.