



# The Anchorage Declaration

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*24 April 2009*

From 20 – 24 April 2009, Indigenous representatives from the Arctic, North America, Asia, Pacific, Latin America, Africa, Caribbean and Russia met in Anchorage, Alaska for the Indigenous Peoples' Global Summit on Climate Change. We thank the Ahtna and the Dena'ina Athabascan Peoples in whose lands we gathered.

We express our solidarity as Indigenous Peoples living in areas that are the most vulnerable to the impacts and root causes of climate change. We reaffirm the unbreakable and sacred connection between land, air, water, oceans, forests, sea ice, plants, animals and our human communities as the material and spiritual basis for our existence.

We are deeply alarmed by the accelerating climate devastation brought about by unsustainable development. We are experiencing profound and disproportionate adverse impacts on our cultures, human and environmental health, human rights, well-being, traditional livelihoods, food systems and food sovereignty, local infrastructure, economic viability, and our very survival as Indigenous Peoples.

Mother Earth is no longer in a period of climate change, but in climate crisis. We therefore insist on an immediate end to the destruction and desecration of the elements of life.

Through our knowledge, spirituality, sciences, practices, experiences and relationships with our traditional lands, territories, waters, air, forests, oceans, sea ice, other natural resources, and all life, Indigenous Peoples have a vital role in defending and healing Mother Earth. The future of Indigenous Peoples lies in the wisdom of our elders, the restoration of the sacred position of women, the youth of today and in the generations of tomorrow.

We uphold that the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples, affirmed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), must be fully respected in all decision-making processes and activities related to climate change. This includes our rights to our lands, territories, environment and natural resources as contained in Articles 25–30 of the UNDRIP. When specific programs and projects affect them, the right to self-determination of Indigenous Peoples must be respected, emphasizing our right to Free Prior and Informed Consent, including the right to say “no”. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreements and principles must reflect the spirit of the UNDRIP.



## **Calls for Action**

1. In order to achieve the fundamental objective of the UNFCCC, we call upon the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC to support a binding emissions reduction target for developed countries (Annex 1) of at least 45% below 1990 levels by 2020 and at least 95% by 2050. In recognizing the root causes of climate change, participants call upon states to work towards decreasing dependency on fossil fuels. We further call for a just transition to decentralized renewable energy economies, sources and systems owned and controlled by our local communities, to achieve energy security and sovereignty.

In addition, the Summit participants agreed to present two options for action: some supported option A and some option B. These are as follows:

- A. We call on the phase out of fossil fuel development and a moratorium on new fossil fuel developments on or near Indigenous lands and territories.
  - B. We call for a process that works towards the eventual phase out of fossil fuels, without infringing on the right to development of Indigenous nations.
2. We call upon the Parties to the UNFCCC to recognize the importance of our Traditional Knowledge and practices shared by Indigenous Peoples in developing strategies to address climate change. To address climate change we also call on the UNFCCC to recognize the historical and ecological debt of the Annex 1 countries in contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and we call on these countries to pay this historical debt.
3. We call on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, and other relevant institutions to support Indigenous Peoples in carrying out Indigenous Peoples' climate change assessments.
4. We call upon the UNFCCC's decision-making bodies to establish formal structures and mechanisms for and with the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples. Specifically we recommend that the UNFCCC:
- a. Organize regular Technical Briefings by Indigenous Peoples on Traditional Knowledge and climate change;
  - b. Recognize and engage the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change and its regional focal points in an advisory role;
  - c. Immediately establish an Indigenous focal point in the secretariat of the UNFCCC;
  - d. Appoint Indigenous Peoples' representatives in UNFCCC funding mechanisms in consultation with Indigenous Peoples; and
  - e. Take the necessary measures to ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous and local communities in formulating, implementing, and monitoring activities, mitigation, and adaptation to impacts of climate change.



5. All initiatives under Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) must secure the recognition and implementation of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including security of land tenure, recognition of land title according to traditional ways, uses and customary laws and the multiple benefits of forests for climate, ecosystems, and peoples before taking any action.

6. We challenge States to abandon false solutions to climate change that negatively impact Indigenous Peoples' rights, lands, air, oceans, forests, territories and waters. These include nuclear energy, large-scale dams, geo-engineering techniques, "clean coal", agro-fuels, plantations, and market based mechanisms such as carbon trading, the Clean Development Mechanism, and forest offsets. The rights of Indigenous Peoples to protect our forests and forest livelihoods must be ensured.

7. We call for adequate and direct funding in developed and developing States and for a fund to be created to enable Indigenous Peoples' full and effective participation in all climate processes, including adaptation, mitigation, monitoring, and transfer of appropriate technologies, in order to foster our empowerment, capacity building, and education. We strongly urge relevant United Nations bodies to facilitate and fund the participation, education, and capacity building of Indigenous youth and women to ensure engagement in all international and national processes related to climate change.

8. We call on financial institutions to provide risk insurance for Indigenous Peoples to allow them to recover from extreme weather events.

9. We call upon all United Nations agencies to address climate change impacts in their strategies and action plans, in particular their impacts on Indigenous Peoples, including the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), etc. We call upon all the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other relevant United Nations bodies to establish an Indigenous Peoples' working group to address the impacts of climate change on food security and food sovereignty for Indigenous Peoples.

10. We call on United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to conduct a fast track assessment of short-term drivers of climate change, specifically black carbon, with a view to initiating negotiation of an international agreement to reduce emission of black carbon.

11. We call on States to recognize and implement the fundamental human rights and status of Indigenous Peoples, including the collective rights to traditional ownership, use, access, occupancy and title to traditional lands, air, forests, waters, oceans, sea ice and sacred sites as well as the rights affirmed in treaties are upheld and recognized in land use planning and climate change mitigation strategies. In particular, States must ensure that Indigenous Peoples have the right to mobility and are not forcibly removed or settled away from their traditional lands and territories, and that the rights of peoples in



voluntary isolation are upheld. In the case of climate change migrants, appropriate programs and measures must address their rights and vulnerabilities.

12. We call upon States to return and restore lands, territories, waters, forests, oceans, sea ice and sacred sites that have been taken from Indigenous Peoples and have limited our access to our traditional ways of living, thereby causing us to misuse and expose our lands to climate conditions that contribute to climate change.

13. In order to provide the resources necessary for our collective survival in response to the climate crisis, we declare our communities, waters, air, forests, oceans, sea ice, traditional lands and territories to be “Food Sovereignty Areas,” defined and directed by Indigenous Peoples according to customary laws, and free from chemical-based industrial food production systems extractive industries (i.e. contaminants, agro-fuels, genetically modified organisms, and deforestation).

14. We encourage our communities to exchange information while ensuring the protection and respect of intellectual property rights at the local, national and international levels pertaining to our Traditional Knowledge, innovations, and practices. These include land, water, and sea ice use, traditional agriculture, forest management, ancestral seeds, pastoralism, food plants and animals, medicines, which are essential in developing climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, restoring our food sovereignty and food independence, and strengthening our Indigenous families and nations.

We offer to share with humanity our Traditional Knowledge, innovations, and practices relevant to climate change, provided our fundamental rights as intergenerational guardians of this knowledge are fully recognized and respected. We reiterate the urgent need for collective action.

*Approved by consensus of the participants  
Anchorage, Alaska, 24 April 2009*