



GENEVA CENTRE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND
GLOBAL DIALOGUE



INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



RESEARCH PAPER

October 2024



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1. Introduction

A number of factors contribute to the severity of the effects of climate change on some segments of society, including geographic location, degree of association with climate-sensitive environments, and unique cultural, economic, or political characteristics. In the context of climate change, social vulnerability and equity are important because some populations may be less able to prepare for and respond to climate-related hazards and effects. Climate change may disproportionately affect such populations. Despite evidence of their resilience, indigenous peoples worldwide are highly exposed to environmental change.

Climate change is one of the greatest social and economic challenges today. Adverse weather conditions impact society on all fronts: food, habitat, livelihood, and income. There is an urgent need to consider input from all segments of society. Presenting a holistic approach of the Indigenous communities in coping with climate change, the paper provides inputs to underline the importance of including Indigenous People in the decision-making process of environmental justice, in view also of the Geneva Centre's conference in October 2024 on *Empowering Youth, Indigenous Peoples, and Small Island States in Promoting Environmental Rights and Climate Justice*.

In the following pages, the paper explores how the right to environment for indigenous peoples would allow them to maintain their unique cultural and political status as the peoples of traditional lands, since before the establishment of current national boundaries. In the context of climate change policy, recognition of a right to self-determination would impose affirmative obligations on states to engage in a mitigation strategy in order to avoid catastrophic harm to indigenous peoples. Justice must play a central role in addressing climate change impacts.

As literature affirms, indigenous peoples, affected by climate change, contribute to policies, plans, and programs being developed for adapting to and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The paper describes the key frameworks for indigenous understandings of climate change impacts and pathways for adaptation and mitigation.

It provides descriptions of the distinction between climate change, environmental destruction, and climate justice terminologies. The subsequent chapters analyze the impact of climate change and environmental crises on Indigenous Peoples, their adaptation, and the importance of their inclusion in decision-making.

2. Climate change and climate justice

In the field of climate change and environmental destruction, a distinction among terminologies may be necessary. As the United Nations pointed out, climate change can affect health, the ability to grow food, housing, safety, and work. Conditions like sea-level rise and saltwater intrusion have advanced to the point where whole communities have had to relocate, and protracted droughts are putting people at risk of famine. In the future, the number of people displaced by weather-related events is expected to rise.¹ In a recent statement made by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk stressed that loss and damage resulting from climate change are now hitting people in vulnerable situations and developing countries the hardest, despite the fact they have contributed the least to it.² Indigenous peoples and others dependent on the land and environment for livelihoods face the reality of dying, depleted ecosystems.

Conversely, climate justice means different things to different groups and individuals, and the potential implications of climate change for justice are varied and complex. Climate justice is a human-centered approach linking human rights and development. It protects the rights of the most vulnerable and aims at sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its resolution equitably and fairly. It is about ensuring, both collectively and individually, that we have the ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of climate change and the policies to mitigate or adapt to them by taking account of existing and projected vulnerabilities, resources and capabilities.³ Climate response is characterized by three elements, comprising *mitigation*; *adaptation*; and *resilience*. Although adaptation and resilience are closely intertwined, adaptation actions are generally thought of as responses to climate change impacts. They refer to measures that reduce vulnerability to the consequences of climate change. In the context of adaptation, *recognitional*, *distributive*, *procedural (or participatory)*, and *restorative (or transformative) justice* are inserted. Resilience actions are anticipatory and refer to the properties that enable a socioecological system to withstand the shocks of climate change. Each of these has important implications for justice.⁴ As described by several authors, *recognitional justice* focuses on the existence of societal structures that reinforce unjust outcomes in society by acknowledging that some cultural and institutional norms and practices may inherently give unequal representation to certain groups. Recognizing these vulnerabilities is necessary, but not sufficient. Recognition and validation of Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge is also necessary.⁵ *Distributive justice* considers the fair and equal distribution of environmental goods and benefits to all in society, intending to understand how environmental harm or benefits are experienced in society.⁶ According to distributive justice, the impacts of climate change are experienced unevenly by members of our global community. This observation led scholars to consider the triple injustice of climate change: those who are least responsible for problem creation often have higher vulnerability and weaker financial and technological capacity for adaptation. Beyond this, climate solutions introduced with good intentions might create further injustice. For example, climate solutions and resources might be unequally distributed within a community. Solutions imposed by outside agencies

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change>

² Statement of the UN High Commissioner addressing panel on the adverse impacts of climate change on human rights: Ensuring livelihood resilience in the context of the risk of loss and damage relating to the adverse effects of climate change, 01 July 2024. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/07/high-commissioner-addresses-panel-adverse-impacts-climate-change>

³ https://courses.edx.org/assets/courseware/v1/6d5650625ba71dcc35dac509058b8364/asset-v1:SDGAcademyX+CA001+3T2021+type@asset+block/6.R3_Huntjens_Zhang_Hague_Inst_Climate_Justice.pdf

⁴ <https://online.ucpress.edu/cse/article/5/1/1125003/116311/Climate-Justice-in-the-Global-NorthAn-Introduction>

⁵ Shangrila Joshi, Chapter 15. Climate Justice: Taking Back the Commons, Zeke Baker, Tamar Law, Mark Vardy and Stephen Zehr, Climate, Science and Society: A Primer, 2023. Available at: <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/85779/9781003828761.pdf?sequence=1#page=152>

⁶ <https://online.ucpress.edu/cse/article/5/1/1125003/116311/Climate-Justice-in-the-Global-NorthAn-Introduction>

without understanding the local context may backfire, or worse, damage the community if their autonomy is compromised. Climate solutions need to be just, reducing rather than exacerbating prevailing inequalities.⁷ *Procedural justice* focuses on the fact that participation in decision-making is not always equal, and some groups and individuals can be excluded.⁸ The emphasis is on the rights of affected parties to participate in decision-making processes. It is not just the distribution of emissions responsibility that matters. It also matters that those who are most affected by climate change have meaningful opportunities to participate in deliberations and decision-making on climate policy and action. These principles were designed to protect the rights of indigenous peoples to exercise their agency in granting permission to externally imposed programs after receiving adequate and timely information about them. The right to give consent is a participatory justice issue, as is adequate representation of marginalized groups (such as indigenous, women, youth, and the disabled) in climate policymaking.⁹ Finally, *restorative justice* has been proposed to restore dignity and agency to those who have lost it, as well as an alternative to loss and damage-related climate litigation.¹⁰ This focuses on the root causes of climate injustice and seeks to transform societal structures and systems to alleviate it.¹¹ Case studies reveal that procedural justice is best accounted for, followed by concerns of distributive justice. Both recognition and restorative justice are less accounted for because both are relatively new developments even from the perspective of theoretical discussions.

In conclusion, climate justice means putting equity and human rights at the core of decision-making and action on climate change. Even within the same country, the impacts of climate change may be felt unevenly due to structural inequalities based on race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. Women are more severely affected by climate change impacts because they have access to fewer resources to adapt and cope with abrupt changes. People with disabilities are at increased risk of the adverse impacts of climate change, including threats to their health, food security, access to water energy, sanitation, and livelihoods, particularly in developing countries. Indigenous Peoples are facing increasing threats and risks to their lives, livelihoods, and traditional knowledge. The following chapters analyse the impact of climate change and environmental crises on indigenous peoples, their adaptation, and the importance of their inclusion in decision-making. All people should have the agency to live life with dignity. However, the climate crisis is causing loss of lives, livelihoods, language, and culture, putting many at risk of good health, food and water shortages, and triggering displacement and conflict.¹²

The discussions demonstrate that climate injustices are not just about the climate system or global warming but are rooted firmly in the unequal patterns of vulnerabilities shaped by the distribution of social and political power and economic inequalities. Climate change's social consequences manifest in outcomes related to urban development patterns, energy prices, urban transportation, food production, and food markets. By implication, the pursuit of climate justice also requires addressing these various sectors of the economy and society.¹³ In this vein, environmental justice (EJ) commonly refers to the problems that people of colour, indigenous peoples, women, and people with disabilities, among others, face in toxic environments¹⁴ exposure to environmental hazards, pollution, toxic waste,

⁷ Shangrila Joshi, Chapter 15. Climate Justice: Taking Back the Commons, 2023.

⁸ <https://online.ucpress.edu/cse/article/5/1/1125003/116311/Climate-Justice-in-the-Global-NorthAn-Introduction>

⁹ Shangrila Joshi, Chapter 15. Climate Justice: Taking Back the Commons, 2023.

¹⁰ Sirkku Juhola, Milja Heikkinen, Taru Pietila, Fanny Groundstroem, Janina Kayhko, Connecting climate justice and adaptation planning: An adaptation justice index, Environmental Science and Policy 136 (2022) 609–619. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1462901122002325>

¹¹ Shangrila Joshi, Chapter 15. Climate Justice: Taking Back the Commons, 2023.

¹² <https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/climate-change-matter-justice-heres-why>

¹³ <https://online.ucpress.edu/cse/article/5/1/1125003/116311/Climate-Justice-in-the-Global-NorthAn-Introduction>

¹⁴ Kyle Powys Whyte, Indigenous Experience, Environmental Justice and Settler Colonialism, Chapter 12.

flooding, and, at the same time, the exclusion of minority groups. In this conception of EJ, injustice is rooted in how social institutions are structured and operationalized in ways that favour powerful and privileged populations. It is, indeed, the recognition of disparities among people in costs and benefit distribution, meaning that the concept is a call for equality.¹⁵ As affirmed by Joshi, EJ policy increasingly prioritizes participatory justice. Genuine participation must be meaningful to participants. Their involvement must come when programs are designed and planned, rather than as an afterthought when most critical decisions have been taken. Participatory EJ of decision-making processes that have a bearing on their livelihoods and life chances. Meaningful participation entails taking seriously the agency as well as the worldviews – ways of knowing and ways of being – of those affected by climate change or climate solutions.¹⁶

¹⁵ https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/51913377/Environmental-Justice-libre.pdf?1487888031=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DEnvironmental_Justice.pdf&Expires=1721314557&Signature=euOS9WMb1Q-W9WDPKrWCFId6lZyRQsx-cB6rtG4UjGkQpuJ8-g0aqLnx~AX-06Omfwy29gF0mv-dLIAreiJ~AAKmW8xw5nLFyNjpNfbdCl3LvDZVZcICZafoAKevShXzpP51aujL-usvkYaDVplXiXP2lyMjqA3MaMWdl~facvTgGBJzrgGA46RZW~ioNLXdElpfdSX-mUEomf2v~ws36h6FxoXiPHbXp-0Uo98VPA~4UbkOV~tYa72TK9IGiPmHAZNesvuq2h2X2lJM0xL017hOjLb~erBd2u1NRkgW-vO-amUQ8PiLrJxr8N-TcDJYd65a-yAjhGpZciCLNanKA_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA

¹⁶ Shangrila Joshi, Chapter 15. Climate Justice: Taking Back the Commons, 2023.

3. Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Change

Both climate change and related policies are likely to have wide-ranging effects on indigenous people. Within developing countries, Indigenous women face many gender-specific barriers that limit their ability to cope with and adapt to a changing climate; these must be removed in the interests of both gender equity and adaptation efficiency. The poorest countries pay a steep price, especially highly vulnerable small island nations. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the United Nations body responsible for assessing the science related to climate change, in its Sixth and latest report issued in 2022, reiterated that indigenous peoples are among the most vulnerable to climate change.¹⁷ In its Sixth Assessment Report, the IPCC recognized the ongoing legacy of colonialism on Indigenous Peoples, underlining that the vulnerability of Indigenous peoples is exacerbated by the intersection of multiple constructions that produce inequity and by the marginalization that historically has excluded them.¹⁸ The report also highlighted the daunting impacts of the climate change on the rights of Indigenous peoples: malnutrition, food insecurity, water scarcity, mental health effects, livelihood losses, rising mortality, and morbidity from climate-sensitive diseases, among others.¹⁹

Globally, Indigenous peoples are disproportionately impacted by the wicked problem of climate change, as generations of neoliberalism, colonialism, and forced assimilation have systematically marginalized Indigenous groups and unjustly increased their vulnerability to the negative socio-environmental impacts of climate change.²⁰ Evidence demonstrates that indigenous peoples are often more effective at protecting biodiversity and conserving natural ecosystems than governments.²¹ Indigenous peoples' knowledge is fundamental for developing sustainable solutions, which, in turn, will be most successful when they are context-specific and tailored to the ecological conditions of each particular region.²²

As already mentioned, indigenous peoples are the first to feel the dire consequences of climate change, due to the close relationship with the environment and the resources therein. These impacts include political and economic marginalization, loss of land and resources, human rights violations, discrimination, and unemployment. Changing weather conditions have specifically affected indigenous peoples in many ways. Indigenous peoples have lost lives and properties from drought, typhoons, continuous rains, and unpredictable weather systems. Floods and erosions have claimed the lives of people and animals and caused unaccountable damage to crops, farms and paddies, road systems, food sources, irrigation, water sources, and many others that are essential to the indigenous peoples'

¹⁷ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *"Sixth Assessment Report: (AR6) Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability"*, February 2022. Numerous references throughout the report.

¹⁸ International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), *"Recognising the contributions of indigenous peoples in global climate action? An analysis of the IPCC report on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability"* 23 March 2022.

¹⁹ IPCC, *"Sixth Assessment Report: (AR6) Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability"*, February 2022.

²⁰ Litchfield, Hannah, *Embracing Indigenous Knowledge in Climate Justice: Lessons from the Māori Peoples*, Papers of the 7th International Conference on Global Public Health 2022. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Paul-illingworth-2/publication/368336735_ProceedingsGPH2022_Keynote_Speech_Climate_Change_Perspectives_for_Global_Mental_Health_pp8-15/links/63e36db76425237563979533/ProceedingsGPH2022-Keynote-Speech-Climate-Change-Perspectives-for-Global-Mental-Health-pp8-15.pdf#page=26

²¹ UN OHCHR, David R. Boyd and Stephanie Keene, *Policy Brief No. 1 "Human rights-based approaches to conserving biodiversity: equitable, effective and imperative"*, August 2021, p.11.

²² Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue, *Environment, Climate Change, and Women and Children's Rights: Challenges, Perspectives and the Role of Indigenous Peoples*, October 2023. The book draws on the conclusions made during the Geneva Centre Conference on Climate Change and Human Rights and provides an analysis of recent developments in the climate – human rights nexus. Available at: <https://gchragd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/REPORT-climate-change-and-human-rights-geneva-centre-conference.pdf>

survival. In this vein, indigenous peoples are forced to adjust their economic activities to survive.²³ Indigenous peoples are also vulnerable to adverse government responses. Indigenous peoples, for example, are suffering from a lack of transparency and inclusion in climate negotiations and plans, and a lack of access to education and resources on the environment, climate change, and human rights. Language barriers can often pose a challenge as well, especially for local communities and Indigenous Peoples participating in decision-making and negotiations.

Among the indigenous communities, women and children are particularly more vulnerable and more affected. Indigenous women often serve as custodians of vital traditional knowledge and technical skills, including those related to weather patterns, natural resource management, and food and agriculture. Thanks to their intimate relationship of respect, responsibility, and interdependency with their ancestral lands, the Indigenous women can build their scientific knowledge, a vast resource for environmental protection and stewardship. In addition to climate change, Indigenous women face special challenges resulting from discrimination against Indigenous peoples and women. Indigenous women have been exposed to climate change as a consequence of non-recognition, violation, interference, denial, and noncompliance of their rights by States and businesses. National and international policies and mechanisms protect indigenous women's rights. It is, however, due to insufficient policies and ineffective implementation that environmental injustice, poverty, and gender inequality have increased, and sustainable development has not been achieved.²⁴ The success of climate action depends on indigenous women's empowerment and recognition of their knowledge. It is their unique understanding of how climate change affects their productive assets that makes them well-suited to understand what climate change means to them. It is essential to acknowledge, value, and incorporate their perspectives into the development of sustainable approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Indigenous women are custodians of lands, territories, resources, and Indigenous knowledge.²⁵ The international community should implement indigenous knowledge policies for the preservation, promotion, and use of indigenous women's knowledge, skills, technology, innovation, and customary practices for the transfer of economic activities, and to stop criminalization. Indigenous Women's knowledge exchange through civil society organizations in multiple formats and across generations should be expanded and intensified, with Indigenous Women meaningfully represented and involved in such organizations' decision-making, ensuring their participation and governance at all levels of climate policy and decision-making process.²⁶

²³ Grace Balawag, Helen Biangalen-Magata, Maribeth Bugtong-Biano and Raymond De Chavez, Climate Justice and Indigenous Peoples, FORUM-ASIA Working Paper Series No.8, 2020. Available at: https://forum-asia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Forum-Asia-Working-Paper-Series-No.-8_Final-01082020.pdf#page=35

²⁴ <https://cipp.unfccc.int/sites/default/files/2022-04/AIPP%20Climate%20justice%20for%20indigenous%20women.pdf>

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

4. Participation in the decision-making process

Within the international framework, one can find several Declarations, treaties, and agreements made to define rights and obligations between States and the local communities. Among them, the rights of indigenous peoples are affirmed by international human rights instruments, including binding treaties and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Indigenous peoples have invaluable and critical contributions to make to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Yet they are also facing serious threats to the realization of their rights from climate change actions.

The importance of engaging with indigenous peoples in climate change policies and actions has been recognized by the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, international treaty adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992), including in the Cancun Agreement. In 2015, the UNFCCC State Parties adopted the Paris Agreement. The preamble of the Paris Agreement also acknowledges that Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote, and consider their respective obligations on, *inter alia*, the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Paris Agreement recognizes the need to strengthen practices and efforts of local communities and Indigenous peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change and operationalizes the local communities and indigenous peoples' platform to help do this.

The range of climate change adaptation activities undertaken by indigenous peoples reflects the reality that indigenous cultures face different internal and external challenges.²⁷ These plans are still primarily responding directly to current climate vulnerability. Although the short-term plans for adaptations to the current climate variability can also increase resilience to long-term climate change, indigenous peoples will require investment and planning responses that go beyond these short-term activities. The global community must take the necessary measures to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities in monitoring the impacts of climate change and in formulating and implementing mitigative and adaptive responses to those impacts. Indigenous peoples' engagement in UNFCCC is not just about inclusion in non-indigenous processes, but also tangible, transformative, and innovative proposals, grounded in our knowledge systems and reciprocal relationship with the natural world, that actively strengthen climate policy and research by challenging the dominant assumptions underpinning mainstream climate policy solutions, including those discussed at the UNFCCC.

The State's legal obligations to combat climate change align with a human-rights-based approach to climate change. The large majority of human rights are affected by climate change, including the rights to life, freedom of expression and movement, housing, water, food, health, and professional development alike. A human rights-centred approach shifts the focus from purely economic and scientific considerations and consequences toward human rights violations caused by climate change. This approach enhances democratization through active citizen participation and the claim for transparency and accountability. Thus, a positive side-effect of such responses to climate change is the creation of new ways of governance seeking justice based on good governance principles.

The adoption of a human rights-based approach to climate justice implies that challenges and solutions must take full account of the human rights of individuals and groups affected by climate change, of measures to reduce climate change, and of climate change adaptation strategies. It aims to ensure that human rights are accorded prime consideration among the wide array of social, political,

²⁷ https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kirsty-Galloway-Mclean/publication/259609272_The_role_of_Indigenous_Peoples_in_global_environmental_governance_Looking_through_the_lens_of_climate_change/links/5475bc760cf245eb437109fd/The-role-of-Indigenous-Peoples-in-global-environmental-governance-Looking-through-the-lens-of-climate-change.pdf

economic, and security priorities that face Governments and the international community at large. Therefore, climate justice must adopt a consistent human rights-based approach because the effects of climate change and the measures to prevent, reduce, or mitigate these effects, together with climate change adaptation strategies, inevitably affect the human rights of individuals and groups. Additionally, policymaking regarding climate justice issues will be more sustainable and equitable only if affected populations, particularly vulnerable groups, are fully empowered to associate, organize, and present their views on decisions to be taken, in a genuine and democratic fashion. This implies that climate justice can be achieved only if the human rights guaranteed in all universal human rights standards and norms, of everyone affected in any way by climate change, are fully respected. Finally, where legal disputes arise concerning climate change issues, the courts, and any other dispute resolution mechanisms, must adjudicate the matter in line with international human rights law. This has to take precedence over domestic law and policy wherever they may be inconsistent because every State is bound by international law, and it therefore cannot accord its own constitutional or statutory domestic law or policy over its international legal obligations.

A human rights-centred approach shifts the focus from purely economic and scientific considerations and consequences towards human rights violations caused by climate change. This approach enhances democratization through active citizen participation and the claim for transparency and accountability. Thus, a positive side-effect of such responses to climate change is the creation of new ways of governance seeking justice based on good governance principles.²⁸

Indigenous peoples and the role they may play in combating climate change are rarely considered in public discourses on climate change. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is well placed to support indigenous peoples in arising issues and challenges. The Forum was established in 2000 to deal with Indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health, and human rights.

To secure climate justice, the international community must put indigenous people and their communities at the centre of climate actions and laws. The inclusion of indigenous traditional leaders in relevant international decision-making processes seems consequent to the right of indigenous peoples to autonomy, self-governance, and self-determination. However, indigenous peoples have little effective representation in decision-making bodies. Indigenous women are even more marginalized in this regard. They are neither represented in decision-making structures of the government nor community councils or civil society organizations. Consequently, their perspectives are invisible and their priorities, needs, interests, and expectations are not considered. They are also less able to access resources and opportunities and, as a result of their socio-political exclusion, the socio-economic development of their communities remains a distant dream.²⁹ Applying a gender perspective to indigenous people's issues will provide several positive implications, making a difference in the approaches and strategies designed to empower and advance communities.³⁰

²⁸ P. Huntjens, T. Zhang, Climate Justice: Equitable and Inclusive Governance of Climate Action Policy and governance recommendations for advancing climate justice, The Hague Institute for Global Justice, Working Paper 16, 2016. Available at: https://courses.edx.org/assets/courseware/v1/6d5650625ba71dcc35dac509058b8364/asset-v1:SDGAcademyX+CA001+3T2021+type@asset+block/6.R3_Huntjens_Zhang_Hague_Inst._Climate_Justice.pdf

²⁹ <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/Briefing%20Notes%20Gender%20and%20Indigenous%20Women.pdf>

³⁰ Ibid.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the paper shows that issues related to climate change and biodiversity cannot be resolved without the real and effective participation of indigenous peoples. The energy transition policies must take indigenous peoples into account from the very beginning. Urgent climate action involves, among others, stopping the persecution, homicide, and criminalization of indigenous peoples and their actions defending human rights and the rights of nature. This is because indigenous peoples are social groups with a strong relationship with nature. This relationship with nature forms the unique and organic values, religiosity, and culture of indigenous people.

As affirmed by scholars, the social exclusion of indigenous people is a situation of rejection and ostracism, that affects mainly their access to rights. Many cases show that indigenous people experience limited access to basic resources and services due to the situation of social exclusion that they experience along with the imbalance of political relations. With a different cultural, food, and language background, when families and indigenous groups move to communities of other cultures, integration can be complicated.

Currently, only a few financial mechanisms in place include the support for indigenous peoples' environmental and climate strategies, projects, and actions. The set of participatory tools for indigenous peoples within international institutions provides them with greater possibilities to influence decision-making. It may result in outcomes that affect their rights and interests. Involving indigenous peoples in the development of mitigation measures for climate change presents procedural, conceptual, and structural challenges. Social inclusion is an approach that encourages the process of building social relations and respect for individuals and communities so that those who are marginalized and experience prejudice can have equal access and control over resources, as well as participate fully in decision-making, and economic, social, political, and cultural life.³¹ Meaningful engagement of Indigenous Peoples as partners in the development process is an essential part of conflict management and resolution, enhancing governance and human rights, reducing poverty, and sustainable environmental management.

To facilitate the inclusion of displaced indigenous populations, communities can carry out multiple actions, including recognizing traditional skills and knowledge; respecting the collective dimension of their culture; and procuring alternative means of communication and openness to other languages. In particular, media agencies need to have a diversity of indigenous voices at all levels, especially when discussing indigenous matters. Increasing Indigenous participation in climate-change initiatives may increase Indigenous communities' resilience. Indigenous perspectives and traditional knowledge must guide climate-change assessment and adaptation to develop culturally appropriate strategies. The perspectives and knowledge of indigenous communities serve as an invaluable source of knowledge for climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies nationwide because of tribes' demonstrated capacity for adaptation.³² As recently affirmed by Antonio Guterres UN Secretary-General, indigenous people as keepers of knowledge help safeguard some of the most biodiverse areas of our planet. As guardians of the environment, "their survival is our survival".³³ These communities also face serious challenges that threaten their very existence, being often victims of threats and violence. Their rights

³¹ <https://kumparan.com/nurul-firmansyah/encouraging-social-inclusion-for-indigenous-peoples-1w9Vmq10tiu/2>

³² Norton-Smith, Kathryn; Lynn, Kathy; Chief, Karletta; Cozzetto, Karen; Donatuto, Jamie; Hiza Redsteer, Margaret; Kruger, Linda E.; Maldonado, Julie; Viles, Carson; Whyte, Kyle P. 2016. Climate change and indigenous peoples: a synthesis of current impacts and experiences. Gen. Tech. Rep. PNWGTR-944. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station. 136 p. Available at:

https://www.cakex.org/sites/default/files/documents/pnw_gtr944.pdf

³³ <https://www.un.org/en/observances/indigenous-day/message>.

to self-determination and agency – enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – are yet to be fulfilled.³⁴

Additionally, financial constraints make it hard for indigenous peoples to participate in global environmental governance. All this limits their capacity to participate on equal terms with representatives from larger more resourceful organizations and government representatives. Indigenous peoples also need to allot time to seek funding, which limits their time to prepare for meetings.³⁵ A holistic approach to the right to political participation of indigenous peoples is rooted in international law, international human rights law, and international indigenous law.

In conclusion, it is vital for the paper to offer concrete recommendations and practical steps that governments, international bodies, and civil society could take to achieve this goal.

In particular:

1. *Capacity-Building Initiatives: Training and Education Programs:* Establish programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of indigenous communities in environmental governance, climate science, and policy advocacy. For example, workshops or online courses on environmental laws, rights, and negotiation skills can empower indigenous leaders to participate effectively in national and international forums.
2. *Policy Reforms and Legal Frameworks: Legal Recognition of Indigenous Rights:* improve national laws to recognize indigenous land rights, traditional knowledge, and governance systems.
3. *Enhanced Participation in International Forums: Representation at Global Conferences:* Ensure indigenous delegates are adequately represented in international environmental conferences, such as the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC.
4. *Integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Collaborative Research and Knowledge Sharing:* Promote partnerships between indigenous communities, scientists, and policymakers to integrate traditional ecological knowledge with scientific research.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Bertilsson, J. and Soneryd, L. (2023) 'Indigenous peoples and inclusion in the green climate fund', *Environmental Sociology*, 9(3), pp. 233–242. doi: 10.1080/23251042.2023.2177091. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23251042.2023.2177091#abstract>



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