



INTERNATIONAL
INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES'
FORUM ON
CLIMATE CHANGE

On behalf of the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC), it is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of our dear friend, brother, colleague, and mentor Estebancio Castro-Diaz.

Estebancio is a Kuna leader who has been involved in the international movement for climate justice and rights of Indigenous Peoples for decades. He played an essential role as Focal Point of the Indigenous Peoples Constituency (the Caucus) as well as a member of the Facilitative Working Group of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform ('The Platform'), representing the Latin-America and the Caribbean UN Indigenous socio-cultural region. Put simply, indigenous participation within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) would not be as successful without Estebancio having participated for so long. This has been recognized by the Executive Secretary, the [Chair of the SBSTA](#), and [all Constituency groups](#).



This legacy is difficult to meaningfully articulate in words. Over the last week, hundreds of stories and memories of Estebancio have been shared over email and video calls. Many remember him as an exceptionally skilled diplomat who not only took his responsibilities to advocate for Indigenous Peoples around the globe to heart, but also developed a unique style that included humility, dedication, and laughter. He was steadfast in his commitment to protecting Mother Earth, highlighted by his dedication into the late hours of the night and the final hours of these large conferences. But no matter the seriousness of the situation, he is remembered to have always brought good humour, a cheeky smile, and deep empathy.

Many old and new members of the IIPFCC, and the broader international Indigenous movement, credit Estebancio's generous teaching with the skills, knowledge, and diplomacy required to continue the legacy of making space for Indigenous Peoples and Nations in state-led processes. He was welcoming to all Indigenous Peoples entering the space, but took extra care in supporting the participation of Indigenous Youth - many who credit their understanding of these complex processes to him and his willingness to answer questions, listen, and direct with a gentle hand.

A core part of this work for Indigenous Peoples is being a good ancestor to those future generations. As Estebancio makes his journey to being an ancestor, we honour, from all seven regions, his extensive legacy for Indigenous Peoples worldwide. We are privileged to carry his spirit with us always.

We send our love and care to Estebancio's family and Kuna Yala in this time of grief and loss.

Rest in power, dear brother Estebancio.

A Last Goodbye

Receiving news of a brothers passing

Feeling them in the morning light

next to a fresh fire

Snowflakes, perfect stars shining down on me.

Feeding the fire

Saying thank you brother - for all the laughter you gave.

For all that you shared, for your spirit and endurance.

For all those years you paved a way for us to continue on.

The fire running through the day.

Oh, how you will be missed!

By Jannie Staffansson