



International Indian Treaty Council

Working for the Rights and Recognition of Indigenous Peoples

Consejo Internacional de Tratados Indios

Trabajando por el reconocimiento y los derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas

International Indian Treaty Council 50th Anniversary Conference June 21 – 24, 2024 Standing Rock, Oceti Sakowin Treaty Territory

Resolution on “Protected Areas”, “30x 30” and other “Conservation” Projects and “Conservation Funding” impacting the Lands, Territories, Natural Resources and Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Affiliates of the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), representing over 300 Indigenous Peoples and Nations from North, Central and South America, the Arctic, the Pacific, and the Caribbean, participated in IITC’s 50th Anniversary Conference in IITC’s birthplace, the Standing Rock Nation, Oceti Sakowin Treaty Territory. We came together to defend with one voice our inherent rights as affirmed in the Treaties we concluded with the colonizing settler governments. We reaffirmed and endorsed IITC’s founding document adopted in June 1974, “The “Declaration of Continuing Independence” which recognized the binding, inviolate international relationship affirmed by these Nation-to-Nation Treaties.

Further, we adopted by consensus the following resolution to defend the inherent rights and ways of life of Indigenous Peoples and support the continuity of life for our future generations:

- 1) We endorse the recommendations adopted at the 47th IITC Conference in Guatemala on March 2022 regarding the creation of so-called Protected Areas and the resulting violations of Indigenous Peoples’ rights to lands, territories, food sovereignty and free prior and informed consent among others. The resolution, in its final paragraph, specifically addressed the issue of financing of protected areas and the lack of transparency and accountability in this regard as follows:

“Finally, we insist on full and transparent disclosure of all private, public, UN and NGO funding and financial transactions involved in the establishment, implementation and maintenance of Protected and Conservation Areas including World Heritage Sites and National Parks, and that this information be made available upon the request of the impacted Indigenous Peoples without delay.”

- 2) We confirm that, since this resolution was adopted, the widespread destructive impacts of so-called conservation and climate financing as well as the role of large conservation NGO’s and other intermediaries in imposing “protected areas” and “30x30” projects, on Indigenous lands in the name of biodiversity conservation and climate mitigation have become even more extreme. Indigenous Peoples continue to report forced relocations, land dispossessions, violence, militarization, lack of access to sacred places, and restrictions on access to food sovereignty as a result.

- 3) IITC therefore calls for an immediate halt to all so-called conservation financing impacting Indigenous Peoples' traditional lands and territories until their lands and territories as defined in Article 26th of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are formally and legally recognized and demarcated by States, and Indigenous Peoples' have determined their own priorities for the development and conservation of their lands, territories, and resources, based on their inherent right to self-determination.
- 4) We further resolve to take an active role in defining the human rights obligations of conservation funders and NGO intermediaries and holding them accountable for violations of Indigenous Peoples' rights.
- 5) We express our concern at the growing manipulation of concepts that equate Indigenous Peoples and their recognized distinct rights with "vulnerable groups", and groups that are not recognized in international law, as in the case of "local communities".
- 6) We reject the fact that several States Parties to the CBD, donors, funders, and some Indigenous representatives cite the text of Article 8j of the Convention on Biodiversity, which uses the term "Indigenous and local communities" to perpetuate this conflation which undermines the full rights of Indigenous Peoples. We affirm that granting rights that are inherent and internationally-recognized for Indigenous Peoples to unknown, undefined groups undermines and diminishes our rights as affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and is being used to violate our rights in International processes and bodies as well as in our homelands.
- 7) We especially appreciate the recommendations of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples who have insisted on the need to treat Indigenous Peoples separately from local communities and not to equate Indigenous Peoples with vulnerable or unknown groups. In this regard, IITC will continue our efforts to insist on separating the terms "Indigenous Peoples" and "local communities".
- 8) We call upon States Parties participating in the CBD, UNFCCC, the Ramsar Wetlands Convention, UNESCO, UN FAO, the UN Committee on Food Security, the UN Plastics Treaty, the World Intellectual Property Organization, and all other international multilateral entities, agencies and processes, to respect and put into practice the content of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples including by ceasing to mix, equate or apply the recognized rights of Indigenous Peoples with those of "local communities" or other so called "vulnerable" groups.
- 9) We will work for the reform of the text of Article 8j of the Convention on Biodiversity and other related paragraphs to give adequate treatment to the unique distinct rights as well as the scientific knowledge of Indigenous Peoples regarding protection of biodiversity,
- 10) Finally, as Indigenous Peoples, we affirm our support for activities that preserve and recover Biodiversity and prevent pollution and contamination of all kinds that generate climate change, harms Mother Nature, poisons our foods and waters, and impacts the intergenerational health of our Peoples and all life. But we are not willing to be injured by such activities if they are carried out in ways that undermine, violate or fail to uphold our internationally-recognized rights.