



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SD-15-007

TITLE: Calling on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to Adopt an Agreement that Upholds the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, climate change is one of the greatest threat facing the peoples of the world today; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food stated in 2010 that Climate Change is the single biggest threat to global food security in the future; and

WHEREAS, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), composed of thousands of scientists from around the world, has found that Indigenous Peoples are among the peoples most vulnerable to climate change and are disproportionately affected by it; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous Peoples depend upon the health of their ecosystems and natural resources for social, economic, and cultural vitality; and climate change threatens to destroy indigenous ways of life that have been sustainable for thousands of years; and

WHEREAS, climate change thus poses a serious threats to the inherent and Treaty rights of Indigenous Peoples as affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including, *inter alia*, rights to subsistence, traditional lands and resources, health, productive capacity of the environment, cultural heritage, sacred sites and free prior and informed consent; and

WHEREAS, the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will meet in Paris at the end of 2015 to reach a universally binding agreement to address climate change; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the UNFCCC as stated in its Article 2 is: “to achieve . . . stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. . . .;” and

WHEREAS, that goal as presently contemplated by States is to keep temperature rise within 2 degrees C, however, Indigenous Peoples and many scientists consider this goal to be inadequate to protect the ways of life of Indigenous Peoples as well as the survival of small island states and Peoples; and

WHEREAS, in connection with an ongoing review of the adequacy of the 2 degree C goal, the Structured Expert Dialog, (SED) report concludes that at 2 degrees C of warming, “...indigenous people[s] would be at risk of loss of land and cultural and natural heritage, and cultural practices embedded in livelihoods would be disrupted”; therefore Indigenous Peoples are calling for that goal to be lowered to no more than 1.5 degrees C of warming at COP 21.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) calls on the Parties to the UNFCCC at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP 21) in Paris to adopt an agreement with a strong human rights based approach reflected in the operative provisions of the agreement and which covers all aspects of the agreement such as mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology transfer, transparency and capacity building, and specifically recognizes the rights of Indigenous Peoples; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI calls on the State Parties to adopt a goal of a temperature rise of no more than 1.5 degrees C of warming, with a review to ascertain if that should be further lowered to no more than 1 degree C of warming; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI calls upon the States Parties to recognize in the final agreement respect for and use, with free, prior, and informed consent and full participation, of Indigenous Peoples’ traditional ecological knowledge; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any Conference Of the Parties (COP) decision at Paris should acknowledge the obligation to guarantee full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in all processes, programs and actions at all levels, including *inter alia* access to funding mechanisms, financing, capacity building, monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) and guaranteed and enforceable safeguards and all other evolving climate change-related mechanisms; and

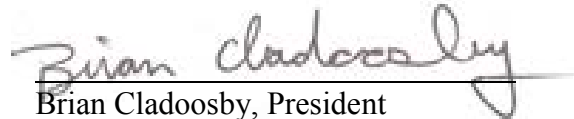
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any funds created through the United Nations for Indigenous People’s for mitigation and adaptation to climate change be available on an equal basis for Indigenous Peoples from all regions, including North America; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to be submitted prior to Paris as each Party's commitment to address climate change should include, along with commitments to reduce emissions, commitments on adaptation, finance, technology transfer, and capacity building as well as indicators on the extent to which Indigenous Peoples' rights and safeguards are respected, and non-carbon benefits, including cultural, spiritual and subsistence values are ensured; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2015 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Town and Country Resort, San Diego, CA, October 18-23, 2015, with a quorum present.


Brian Cladoosby, President

ATTEST:


Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary