



# INDIGENOUS SUMMIT JUST TRANSITION

**Indigenous Peoples' Perspectives,  
Knowledge, and Lived Experiences**

OCTOBER 8 -10, 2024 GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

## **Just Transition: Indigenous Peoples' Perspectives, Knowledge, and Lived Experiences**

**October 8-10, 2024  
Geneva, Switzerland**

### **Indigenous Peoples Principles and Protocols for Just Transition**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

From October 8-10, 2024, 95 Indigenous Peoples' representatives from all 7 socio-cultural regions met in Geneva, Switzerland, for the Indigenous Peoples' Perspectives, Knowledge, and Lived Experiences Summit on Just Transition.

We, as Indigenous Peoples, were born to our ancestral lands, waters, and territories by the Great Creator in a sacred and spiritual way. We belong to our Mother Earth, and she belongs to us as a mother and child belong to each other. We are Earth, Earth is us. It was the Creator's intent that we live on these blessed homelands in perpetuity. We remain.

We have lived our lives in the ways prescribed by the Creator from time immemorial, until our Indigenous worlds were shattered by intruder colonial and imperialist powers who claimed our lands, territories, and resources, subjecting us to unimaginable devastation. We have been murdered, raped, enslaved, plundered, criminalized, displaced, and generations of our relatives were stolen away, and our lands and territories militarized. We are still here.

We, as Indigenous Peoples, understand the intent of the Creator is supreme law, superseding man-made law. We rightfully maintain our belonging to our homelands. We are resolute in our inherent rights to know of all that is contemplated for our lands; we retain the authority to determine all that should occur to, with, on, and in our lands and territories. Nothing about us, without us.

During the Summit, we shared knowledge, lived experiences, concerns, and struggles related to the imposition in our homelands of development projects promoted by States and corporations as "green/clean energy", supporting transition to a "green economy" and climate change mitigation. These include mining and extraction of "transition" and related minerals, and any other resources sought, that displace Indigenous Peoples and

contaminate our lands, air, ice and waters where Indigenous Peoples are no longer able to live or gather foods due to this new form of land grabbing and water grabbing in the name of investment and conservation.

We affirm that these activities carried out in Indigenous territories without free, prior and informed consent violate our inherent and recognized rights and do not constitute a transition, but rather a form of modern genocide against our worldviews, ways of life, and territorial governance systems.

We also have noted solutions and good practices, based on our own knowledge, sciences, technologies, lived experiences and time-tested practices for restoration of sustainable food production and soil, ecosystem protection, and true and equitable just transition, distinct from models based on imposition, extraction, and colonialism.

As Indigenous Peoples, we affirm that the concept of a just transition as it is currently presented is not true, as it implies initiatives and proposals driven by transnational corporations and States to implement and consolidate the free-market economic model, neoliberalism, and deepens the inequalities of the capitalist system.

This leads to genocide and ecocide, as States and corporations fail to ensure respect for Mother Earth and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

For Indigenous Peoples, a just transition means exercising our own forms of territorial governance according to our traditions and ways of life.

We point out that we continue to be affected by the current and increasing levels of fossil fuel extraction, which, along with so-called "green" or "clean" energy projects, create a double impact on Indigenous Peoples.

We recognize the urgent need to affirm Indigenous Peoples' own visions, definitions, and to develop principles and protocols, as well as plans and means for action, in order to confront these threats, as well as to contribute in a positive way to discussions, programs, and actions on all levels for environmental sustainability, protection of ecosystems and biodiversity, and the prevention and aversion of climate change.

## **II. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES VISION AND MEANING OF “JUST TRANSITION”**

### **Vision:**

As Indigenous Peoples from the 7 socio-cultural regions, our vision is:

To develop principles and protocols to guide the world towards healing from the multiple environmental crises that we face, to live in harmony with the Natural World, and—

To ensure that our inherent role and responsibility, borne from divinity as Indigenous Peoples, to protect the spiritual, cultural, social, and economic health and well-being of our regions and all resources—from the womb of Mother Earth to the Stars—is respected and supported through our own voices.

### **Meaning of Just Transition:**

For Indigenous Peoples, a just transition means exercising our own customary institution and Indigenous Peoples' governance systems, based on our traditions and ways of life. It is a restoration of what we were, a return to wholeness, from the womb of our mother to the stars above us. It is our cultural right to be who we are and our physical right to be healthy and have a good life, to be safe. We seek Just Transformation until all that is sacred is restored.

We support global coordination, solidarity, and sharing of knowledge and experiences to inform collective advocacy for Indigenous Peoples' solutions.

This will enhance biodiversity conservation, slow and halt desertification and ice thaw and restore lands and waters for the protection of all life.

This will also shape effective responses to the impacts of climate change and move us towards building a just and equitable transition that benefits all sacred life on Mother Earth.

We affirm that activities that are being proposed or carried out on our lands, ice, waters and territories in the name of just transition, green economy, green/clean energy, or emissions reduction, without the obtainment of our free, prior and informed consent or which threaten our sacred places, cultural practices, Indigenous Peoples' food sources, and ecosystems, or otherwise violate our inherent rights, are not a just transition. They are simply a rebranding of existing processes to enable the oppression of Indigenous Peoples to continue without change to the status quo. The "green economy," in its current implementation is still colonization. Just transition must also be based on a radical transformation of the current economic systems, which are based on extraction and exploitation of nature, moving towards an Indigenous Peoples' world view of economic, social, educational, and cultural development.

We affirm that the concept of just transition, as it is currently presented, involves initiatives and proposals driven by transnational corporations and States to implement and consolidate the free-market economic model—"neoliberalism"—which deepens the

inequalities of the capitalist system. This generates genocide and ecocide as States fail to ensure, and corporations fail to respect, Mother Earth and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Even though concepts of “co-management,” “co-jurisdiction,” “joint management,” or “cross jurisdiction” over new projects sometimes work as methods to protect our lands and ecosystems, limit damage, ensure participation in project development and benefit-sharing, and respect for Indigenous Peoples’ practices and occupations, in many places they are used to undermine our inherent rights to our lands, seas, waters, ice, air, and other resources, including those recognized and affirmed in international treaties and conventions, Nation-to-Nation treaties with prior or post-independence colonial governments. Such frameworks must always respect Indigenous Peoples’ rights.

### **III. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ PRINCIPLES FOR JUST TRANSITION**

- 1. Right to Life:** This includes the physical and spiritual integrity of Indigenous Peoples, guaranteeing their present and future existence.
- 2. Right to Self-determination and Sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples:** A just transition must be based on the recognition, respect, and full implementation of the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples as affirmed in international instruments, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and others, as a minimum standard. The right of Self-Determination is inherent and is the prerequisite to the enjoyment of all other rights. This includes, among other things, the right to free, prior and informed consent prior to the approval of any project, the right to participate in decisions affecting our rights, cultural rights, and the rights to lands, waters, air, ice, territories, and resources traditionally used, possessed, or acquired, as well as the right to determine our own priorities for the governance, development, management, protection, and use of our lands, waters, air, ice, and intangible and tangible resources. By virtue of the right of Self-Determination, Indigenous Peoples freely determine their own political, social, economic development, future, and rights to equitable benefit-sharing.
- 3. Decolonization:** For Indigenous Peoples, a just transition rejects the Doctrine of Discovery and the continued imposition of colonial and extractive resource exploitation, false solutions, military occupation, and activities that threaten our mental, spiritual, reproductive, intergenerational, and physical health, biodiversity, natural ecosystems, cultures, values, and plant and animal relatives. Just transition must be carried out in the context of decolonization of our lands and ways of life, taking into account all the ways that Indigenous Peoples have experienced and

continue to suffer from different forms of colonization, genocide, and the creation of conflict, as a basis for rejecting false solutions and forced choices.

- 4. Reparations, Land Back, and Full Restoration of Lands, Territories, Waters, and Biodiversity:** A just transition must ensure the return, recognition, and respect of Indigenous lands, territories, and waters, as well as the protection of all Indigenous natural resources, ecosystems, and other means of livelihood. This must begin with the unrestricted access, restoration, recognition, and respect of our rights to our ancestral lands, territories, and waters, and other resources that were taken without our consent during the colonization process. It also includes respect for our inherent sovereignty and the full, unqualified implementation of our rights, including but not limited to Indigenous land tenure, Indigenous economies, jurisdiction, languages, Indigenous food systems, health, cultures, spirituality, natural world responsibilities, biodiversity, ways of knowing, and ways of life.
- 5. Respect for Indigenous Peoples' Ways of Life:** A just transition must guarantee our food sovereignty, Indigenous economies, Indigenous science, technologies, and innovations, lived experiences, jurisdiction, languages, cultures, spirituality, responsibilities to the natural world, biodiversity, knowledge systems, and all forms of life. This includes respect for Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, beliefs, and ancestral practices to protect our ecosystems and food systems, and uphold our sacred responsibilities to our Peoples, families and future generations. Safeguards and protection of our Indigenous intellectual property rights must be guaranteed. For safeguards and protection, a mechanism should be established to promote, protect, and preserve Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, and initiate a process to establish an institution for the documentation of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge of food systems, ethno-medicine and ethno-plants.
- 6. Transparency and Accountability:** A just transition must include and reflect the input and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, including youth, women, elders, knowledge-holders, persons with disabilities, and active practitioners of Indigenous Peoples' ways of life, addressing the multiple and intersectional levels of impacts. This includes the opportunity for active and effective negotiations, based on free, prior and informed consent regarding all projects, from the design to implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, on and affecting Indigenous Peoples' lands, territories, resources, and waters. A just transition cannot rely on false solutions such as carbon trading or offsets. It must ensure full transparency in funding sources and accountability, and ensure direct engagement with Indigenous Peoples. Accountability shall be established based on evidence and the effective participation of Indigenous Peoples.

- 7. Historical Reparations:** A just transition must guarantee historical (economic and non-economic) reparations for the damages caused, following the standards established by human rights courts and bodies, and as determined by the pre-existing Indigenous nations and peoples when demanding such reparations.
- 8. Full Protection of Indigenous Peoples:** End the criminalization of Indigenous Peoples' human rights and environmental defenders, and cultural practitioners, including but not limited to extrajudicial killings, torture, imprisonments, surveillance, and other threats of harassment, intimidation, and reprisals with impunity, including the policing and militarization of Indigenous Peoples' territories. Those who engage in these acts must be held accountable.
- 9. Recognition of Indigenous Peoples Roles and Responsibilities:** Just transition must be based on recognition of our role and responsibility as caretakers, stewards, and guardians of our traditional lands, rangelands, forests, deserts, savannas, waters, air, ice, territories, and resources, our Indigenous laws and protocols, and the spiritual, cultural, historic and ongoing relationships we have with the plants, animals, elements, lands, ice, and waters which give us life and identity.
- 10. Maintaining 1.5 degrees:** A just transition must contribute to the actual reduction, aversion, or prevention of climate change based on a path to maintain no more than a 1.5-degree temperature increase, and include direct access to financing for Indigenous Peoples' own projects for climate change aversion and mitigation, adaptation, resilience, and direct access payments for loss and damage.
- 11. Rights-based Approach to Supply Chains:** Just transition projects and activities throughout supply chains must not cause harm to Indigenous Peoples, other peoples, ecosystems, or sacred sites. This includes assessing the impacts of the totality of supply chains (from raw materials to end-use projects to waste). This includes rejecting false solutions such as carbon trading or carbon offsets when such market schemes trade off benefits to one peoples to the detriment of another peoples' lands, territories, and resources. State and private actors must also ensure full transparency regarding the sources of funding and investors in these projects, and the expected financial returns for investors, funders and intermediary organizations.

#### **IV. COMMITMENTS FOR ACTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION**

- 1.** We will initiate processes for our own Peoples to exercise our right to development by defining for ourselves our vision and priorities for development, including safeguarding

what we determine to be critical for our survival and well-being, not in reaction to colonial systems or limited by the priorities and practices, but rooted in our own worldviews, values, livelihoods, practices, and principles based on our natural laws/original instructions to honor and protect the sacred.

2. We will disseminate, promote and defend these principles and protocols and use them in our education, training, and advocacy efforts including, but not limited to, with respective Indigenous Peoples' nations, governments, organizations, communities, councils, working groups, members, policymakers, corporations/business, and international bodies, mechanisms, special procedures, and fora, in all Indigenous languages.
3. We will continue to engage/challenge local, national, state, provincial, federal and international regulations, standards, laws, policies and actions that streamline "green/clean" energy projects that ignore our free, prior and informed consent and socio-cultural and environmental review processes in order to "fast track" such projects in the name of public or national interest.
4. We will stand in solidarity with one another to oppose the imposition of "green energy" renewable energy projects on or impacting our lands, waters, ice, and territories that our Peoples consider harmful and violate our rights. We recognize that renewable energy technology - wind, solar and microgrid batteries - requires metals and minerals mined in other communities. We desire a supply chain that respects Indigenous Peoples' decision-making authority and free, prior and informed consent at all steps. We do not support nuclear energy under any circumstance.
5. We will call for implementation of an ecosystem approach, rather than false distinctions such as "developed/developing", including comprehensive impact assessments that recognize environmental social, cultural, economic and human rights for all proposed projects, incorporating Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and expertise
6. We will continue to demand that Indigenous, human, environmental, and lands rights defenders be protected and safeguarded and halt their criminalization, including for those who are protecting their homelands against the imposition of "green energy" projects and related infrastructure development including factories, roads, mines, pipelines, etc. We further demand the protection of Indigenous women, girls and women with disabilities, from discrimination of any kind, and sexual and environmental violence associated with extractive industries, "green" or otherwise. We will protect our Peoples from forced labor and indentured servitude in all its forms.

7. We will consider utilizing international human rights bodies and national, international and regional mechanisms, including UN working groups, Treaty Bodies, and Special Procedures, and others, to submit urgent complaints in order to halt States actions and rights' violations.
8. In line with UNDRIP Article 10, Indigenous Peoples have a zero tolerance with regards to any forced evictions, displacements, relocations, dispossession, and expulsion, in the name of any development including "green transition" projects and the creation of "protected areas" and need to formulate a development model which does not create displacement.
9. We call for all mapping exercises on transition minerals and social, environmental, and human rights impacts through due diligence procedures. Information shall be freely accessible on the existence of these minerals found in our lands, territories and waters.
10. We demand companies, governments, financial mechanisms, private sector, all responsible parties, to take full responsibility and action for damage, loss of cultural heritage, and other adverse impacts of mining activities to human, biodiversity, ancestral lands, cultural, and spiritual practices, territories and waters.

*Adopted by unanimous agreement of the Summit Participants on October 10, 2024, Geneva Switzerland. This document will be reviewed in twelve months, by the seven socio-cultural regions.*



## Annex

### **Indigenous Peoples Global Coordinating Committee (IPGCC):**

SIRGE Coalition; International Indian Treaty Council (IITC); Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP); Saami Council; Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC); PINGO's Forum; He Kainga Indigenous Solutions, Aotearoa; Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA); Association Des Femmes Peules & Peuples Autochtones Du Tchad (AFPAT); Nyungar Nation; United Confederation of Taino People (UCTP); Center for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North (CSIPN).

### **Participating Organizations and Nations:**

SIRGE Coalition; International Indian Treaty Council (IITC); Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP); Saami Council; Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC); PINGO's Forum; He Kainga Indigenous Solutions, Aotearoa; Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA); Association Des Femmes Peules & Peuples Autochtones Du Tchad (AFPAT); Nyungar Nation; United Confederation of Taino People (UCTP); Batani Foundation; Cultural Survival; Beaver Lake Cree Nation; Laguna Acoma Coalition for a Safe Environment; Tooh' Diné Bi Keyah; Camp Morningstar; Pit River Nation; Yaqui Nation Traditional Authorities, Vicam Pueblo; Comunidad Indígena Colla Comuna de Copiapó; Saami Parliament, Norway; Youth Council in Saami Parliament, Norway; NDN Collective; Parlamento de Naciones, Pueblos y Comunidades Indígenas de Jujuy; Ton-kla Indigenous Children and Youth Network; Marka Tahua Aranzaya Maranzaya Yonza; Central Unica Nacional de las Rondas Campesinas del Perú CUNARC-PERÚ; Centro de Investigacion de Tecnologías Aplicadas al Qullasuyu (CITAQ); Observatorio de Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas-UMSA; Center for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North (CSIPN); Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones Comunidad de Historia Mapuche; Comunidad de Historia Mapuche Lof Boroa, Ecuador Runacanapac Tandanacui; Consejo General Kuna de Panama; Tsehay Golgota Community Development Organization - Ethiopia; Acal El Hejeb / Indigenous Amazigh Network AZUL - Morocco; MBOSCUDA - Cameroon; PIDP - Shirika la Bambuti - DRC; Lmartin People Association- Kenya; Association Repare Promotion de l'éducation et Accès aux Soins des Filles et Femmes - Burkina Faso; Association TUNFA - Niger; Unissons nous pour la promotion des Batwa (UNIPROBA) - Burundi; Family Support Centre - Botswana; *Kanawayandan Daaki* – Land, Air, Water, Spirit; Tonkla Indigenous Children and Youth Network (TKN); Torang Trust; Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN); Tobpinai Ningkokoton Koburuon Kampu (TONIBUNG); Sarawak Dayak Iban Association (SADIA); Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together (POINT); Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN); National Indigenous Disabled Women Association-Nepal (NIDWAN); ICCA Southeast Asia; Pgayenkaw Association for Sustainable Development (PASD); International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA); Earthworks; Society for Threatened Peoples; DOCIP.

## Glossary of Terms

By **Lands, Territories, Resources, and Waters**, we refer to the entirety of interconnected ecosystems that encompass, but are not limited to, savannas, rangelands, grasslands, mountains, lagoons, deserts, highland deserts, islands, rivers, lakes, oceans, creeks, springs, air, glaciers, ice, forests, and the subsoil. These elements form a holistic web of life, sustaining biodiversity, human cultures, and countless forms of life, while also serving as critical sources of sustenance, livelihood, spiritual connection, and ecological balance. It is through these ecosystems that life thrives, communities are rooted, and future generations inherit the legacies of the past.

**The seven socio-cultural regions of Indigenous Peoples** often refer to distinct geographic and cultural zones recognized globally for their unique Indigenous populations. These regions are defined based on shared cultural, historical, linguistic, and ecological characteristics, and they include: Africa, Arctic, Asia, Central and South America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia, North America and Pacific. These socio-cultural regions highlight the diversity and resilience of Indigenous Peoples, each having distinct ways of life, languages, and cultural practices deeply connected to their environments.

**Green Colonialism** refers to all of the frameworks, existing and emerging, related to climate change adaptation and mitigation that continue to perpetuate rights violations and false solutions. These include but not limited to “green/clean energy”, development of a “green economy”, energy transition, just transition, “alternative” energy projects including, but not limited to, carbon capture projects, industrial wind farms, solar power, mega-dams, nuclear power, introduction of invasive species, and geo-thermal development, and greenwashing of emissions reduction with carbon injection, and the creation of “protected areas”

**Neoliberalism** is a political and economic ideology that promotes free markets, deregulation, privatization, and minimal government intervention, often framed as a means to enhance efficiency and individual freedom. However, neoliberalism prioritizes corporate interests and profit over social welfare, deepening inequality and eroding public services. It often leads to the commodification of essential services (like healthcare, education, and water) and reduces the state's role in addressing poverty, environmental degradation, Indigenous Peoples' and worker protections. Neoliberal policies have been criticized for fostering exploitation, weakening labor rights, and exacerbating wealth disparities globally.