

US Women's Caucus at UN: Climate - Indigenous Women

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Summary

Indigenous peoples are frontline communities in the climate crisis, in large part because of their strong dependency on nature for subsistence living, health, and economic livelihood. IPDES found that nature is "declining less rapidly on indigenous peoples' land than other lands, but is nevertheless declining, *as is the knowledge of how to manage it.*"¹

Over a quarter of the Earth's land is managed or owned by indigenous peoples, and their own indicators show that they are facing growing problems for their land and people – including resource extraction, mining, deforestation, water pollution, and even some negative effects from certain climate change mitigation programs.²

It is vital that indigenous peoples are part of the climate mitigation process, from inception through implementation. Indigenous knowledge of nature plays a vital role in designing climate mitigation strategies. Within indigenous communities, indigenous women and girls are impacted not only by threats to nature, but additional household burdens that increase when clean water and diverse food is difficult to find. They are also less likely to have land titles and may experience barriers to agency and decision-making roles. Indigenous women should have seats at the table in the fight to combat climate change, as they are leaders in building solidarity across communities.

Fast Facts

- "While indigenous people make up only 6.2% of the global population, they protect 80% of the world's remaining diversity."²
- There are few legal protections for the rights of Indigenous peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant Peoples to carbon on their lands. "Only 3 of the 31 countries studied explicitly recognize community rights to carbon on lands owned by or designated for communities (Ethiopia, Peru, Republic of the Congo)."³

Recommendations – Indigenous Women & Climate Change

Global

- A. Grant extra protections, resources, and funding for indigenous communities to confront climate change as they will be disproportionately hit by its effects.
- B. As indigenous peoples are responsible for 80% of the planet's biodiversity, they should play important roles as decision makers. Implement laws to secure voting rights, educational rights, inheritance rights, and other protections outlined in CEDAW.

¹ <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3831673>

² <https://unfccc.int/news/indigenous-women-vital-to-climate-action>

³ <https://rightsandresources.org/publication/carbon-rights-technical-report/>

- C. Enhance or create laws to recognize the territorial property of indigenous communities and protect land titles for indigenous women.

Domestic

- D. Respect the rights of indigenous peoples to end any plans for intensive resource extraction on their lands or the use of their lands in any way that may threaten water, land, or air.
- E. Support and fund education, health, and the maintenance of indigenous knowledges for all indigenous peoples.

Suggested Reading

- IPBES (2019): Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. E. S. Brondizio, J. Settele, S. Díaz, and H. T. Ngo (editors). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. 1148 pages. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3831673>
- Santisteban, Rocio Silva. Editor. 2020. [Indigenous Women & Climate Change](#).
- Cultural Survival. 2021. [Indigenous Women and the Climate Crisis](#).
- United Nations [Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).

Footnotes

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