



# An indigenous-led strategy for conservation in IUCN

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**Item 4:** Implementation of six mandated areas

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Thank you for this opportunity to speak on the topic of the environment.

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, recognizes that indigenous peoples play a vital role in conserving lands, seas and natural resources. Much of the world's biodiversity is in the lands and waters of indigenous peoples, and indigenous knowledge has not only sustained these areas to the present, but is essential to resolving the most serious challenges facing the Earth and humanity, including climate change and the loss of natural and cultural diversity.

As reported previously to the PF, IUCN endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2008 and created a new category of membership for Indigenous Peoples' Organizations in 2016. These changes have strengthened the presence, voice and role of indigenous peoples in IUCN. IUCN's Member Indigenous Peoples Organizations – currently, eighteen organizations from six continents - convened as a group last year and drafted an ambitious, self-determined strategy for advancing indigenous issues in IUCN, and more broadly in conservation.

IUCN Indigenous Organization members have been working actively to implement this strategy, with support from the IUCN Secretariat and Commissions. Key areas of work have included making recommendations to strengthen attention to indigenous rights in the World Heritage nomination guidelines, engaging in global climate and biodiversity policy, and creating enabling conditions to further expand IPO membership and voice in IUCN.

As IUCN prepares for the 2020 World Conservation Congress in France, member Indigenous Organizations are also taking initiative to convene a summit on Indigenous Peoples and Mother Earth linked to the Congress. This meeting offers an opportunity for indigenous peoples to advance their priorities regarding biodiversity, climate change and protected areas. The organizers anticipate and welcome a wide engagement of Indigenous Organizations and interested partners in this effort.

Earlier this year, IUCN participated actively in the International Expert Group Meeting on Conservation and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Kenya, with representation from the IUCN Secretariat, Members and Commissions. Updated information on IUCN's work relevant to indigenous peoples was prepared as background for the meeting and is available on the meeting website.

Despite advances, much more needs to be done. Indigenous peoples continue to face marginalization, displacement, and threats to their cultures and environments. IUCN will continue to work constructively with Indigenous Peoples Organizations, governments, the UN system, and other partners to secure indigenous rights as an integral part of our vision for "a just world that values and conserves nature."  
Thank you.

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