



## Strengthen the application of UNDRIP in all environmental actions worldwide

**Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)**  
**New York City, 24<sup>th</sup> April to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

### **Item 8: Tenth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: measures taken to implement the Declaration**

**Delivered by:**  
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Madam Chair, distinguished members of the UNPFII, distinguished participants:

On behalf of IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment to chair the Permanent Forum at its sixteenth session and wish you all success in your functions.

I would also like to join other speakers in expressing our congratulations and our admiration to the indigenous peoples of the world for the great achievement of the adoption of UNDRIP 10 years ago.

At its 2008 World Conservation Congress, IUCN Members decided to endorse UNDRIP. In doing so, they also established a mandate for the institution to integrate UNDRIP provisions into all components of its conservation programme. Since then, in order to implement this mandate, IUCN has developed a series of approaches and tools that guide its offices, programmes, Commissions and project implementers to fully implement the Declaration's provisions.

Subsequent IUCN World Conservation Congresses have reaffirmed this position and this mandate. At its Sixth World Conservation Congress, held in September 2016 in Hawai'i, IUCN was privileged to have the presence of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Ms Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, who presented there the results of her important report on indigenous peoples and conservation, and shared with us her valuable recommendations. I would like to thank the Special Rapporteur for her presence at the Congress and for her efforts to promote respect for the rights of indigenous peoples in the context of the work of IUCN and its Members.

Madam Chair:

IUCN's position on indigenous peoples in the context of its conservation work is fully consistent with today's scientific and technical knowledge. In fact, research on biodiversity and ecosystems around the world has convincingly demonstrated that many of the most valuable areas for biodiversity and ecosystems important for the stability of nature on the planet are found in indigenous peoples' territories, lands and resources. Therefore it is not possible to achieve the conservation objectives set out in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Aichi Targets without having indigenous peoples as central actors in the conservation of the planet's natural heritage.

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IUCN, the International Union  
for Conservation of Nature,  
helps the world find pragmatic  
solutions to our most pressing  
environment and development  
challenges by supporting  
scientific research; managing  
field projects all over the  
world; and bringing  
governments, NGOs, the UN,  
international conventions and  
companies together to develop  
policy, laws and best practice.

IUCN is the world's oldest and  
largest global environmental  
network. IUCN is a democratic  
union with more than 1,000  
government and NGO  
member organizations, and  
some 10,000 volunteer  
scientists in more than 150  
countries. IUCN's work is  
supported by 1,100  
professional staff in 62  
countries and hundreds of  
partners in public, NGO and  
private sectors around the  
world.

## STATEMENT TO THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

However, as highlighted by UNPFII, indigenous peoples continue to be affected by situations of vulnerability due in large part to the lack of recognition of their rights, in particular their rights to territories, lands and resources, as well as their right to exercise control over them to avoid actions that may lead to the degradation of ecosystems.

Conservation organizations have no mandate to make decisions that are the sole responsibility of States, such as the recognition of tenure rights, or the establishment and implementation of national conservation measures such as the creation and management of protected areas. We therefore fully support the efforts of the UNPFII, the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council and indigenous organizations to call upon States to take decisions that fully respect and support the interests and rights of indigenous peoples in matters related to the environment.

To the same end, we have also advanced the development and application of safeguard systems that ensure that our actions, whether or not carried out in partnership with States, ensure the application of rights-based approaches.

Madam Chair,

Substantial work remains to be done to ensure that the rights of indigenous peoples are effectively respected and integrated into national action on the environment, despite the achievements of the past decade since the adoption of UNDRIP. To that end, IUCN remains committed to joining efforts with the UNPFII, the relevant mechanisms of the UN Human Rights Council and indigenous peoples.

Thank you Madam Chair.