Informal Consultation with Indigenous Peoples on the New York Declaration on Forests

On the occasion of the 18th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

26 April 2019

UNDP Headquarters, New York, USA
Meeting Summary:

On 26 April 2019, on the Margins of the 18th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the Secretariat of the Global Platform for the New York Declaration on Forests (NYDF Platform) hosted an informal consultation with indigenous peoples to discuss a pathway for achieving the goals of the New York Declaration on Forests (NYDF) from an indigenous perspective. Participants included indigenous people’s endorsers of the NYDF; indigenous people’s organizations interested in endorsing; representatives from UNDP’s Nature for Development and Climate and Forests teams, the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), Conservation International; and the NYDF Secretariat (see full participant list on page 7). The meeting was co-facilitated by Nina Kantcheva and Clea Paz-Rivera from the NYDF Secretariat and Paola Rozo, a graphic facilitator who produced a living image capturing the discussion. The living image depicts the challenges indigenous peoples face related to forest protection and conservation and summarizes the pathway to achieve the NYDF goals from an indigenous perspective. See the full illustration above. A larger version of the photo will be shared shortly to be viewed in more detail.

The session opened with a discussion by participants about the meaning and value of the forests from an indigenous perspective and the fundamental issues that need to be addressed related to forests and deforestation, which were represented in the illustration. Next, Clea Paz provided an introduction on the New York Declaration on Forests, the role of the NYDF Global Platform, and an update on the progress of each NYDF goal, based on findings from the NYDF Assessment Reports, using illustrations of the key takeaways from the progress assessment of each goal as a visual resource. See the illustration for Goal 1 above and click here to view the illustrations for each goal. Following this introduction, participants split into two working groups, one in English and one in Spanish, to discuss the key challenges.
in implementing the NYDF goals and what is needed for achieving each of the goals and then reported back to the group in a plenary session. Next, the discussion groups reconvened, and participants discussed how to move forward and who is responsible for specific actions. After reporting back in the plenary session, participants reviewed the illustration and provided inputs on what was missing that should be added to the drawing.

Meeting participants welcomed the opportunity to reengage with the NYDF and play an active role as the indigenous people’s constituency. There was a strong consensus that the introductory paragraphs of the Declaration needs to be revisited to ensure that the tone of the Declaration reflects the expressed value of “forests for life” as opposed to “forests for profit”. Finally, an important reflection was an overall feeling of frustration by the indigenous peoples in the meeting that there is a disconnect between what is discussed in meetings like this and what indigenous peoples are experiencing on the ground, including discrimination, encroachment and destruction of their land, and violence. Participants suggested that rather than continuously discussing the value of forests to indigenous peoples, it is a better use of their time to focus on the key issues and how to tackle them. This call to action lead to the two rounds of productive discussions in the groups.

Meeting Outcomes:

- Eight illustrations produced showing the progress of goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 9. Goals 6 and 7 were omitted since they are considered achieved. Click [here](#) to view the illustrations.
- Produced an indigenous people’s pathway to achieve the NYDF goals, which is presented in the form of an illustrated “living image”.
- Four new indigenous peoples’ organizations endorsed the NYDF during the meeting and two more endorsers were added after the meeting during the week of the UNPFII for a total of six new IP endorsers: [Consejo Coordinador Nacional Indígena Salvadorreño (CCNIS)](https://www.ccnis.com) from El Salvador, [Foro Indígena de ABYA YALA (FIAY)](https://www.foroabiyayalanet.org) which covers Latin America and the Caribbean, [Yiaku Laikipia Trust](https://yiaku.org) from Kenya, [Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC)](https://onico.org), [ANAPAC-RAC](https://www.anapacrac.org) (National Alliance of Support and Promotion of the Aboriginal Areas and Communities Conserved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), and finally, [REPALEAC](https://www.repalac.org) (Network of Indigenous and Local Communities for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa) was part of the initial NYDF process in 2014 and they renewed their commitment. See the full list of endorsers [here](#).
- NYDF Platform received key recommendations from IPs which will inform the NYDF work plan.
- NYDF Platform received key recommendations for the NYDF post-2020 vision and potential NYDF 2.0.
- Valuable in-person engagement with indigenous peoples’ organizations.
- Increased understanding among indigenous peoples’ organizations of the role of the Declaration and the NYDF Platform.

Key Points from Discussions:

**Plenary Session: Key issues for indigenous peoples in relation to forests and deforestation**

- There is disconnect between how different stakeholders view the forest: “forests for life” vs. “forests for profit”. 
It is difficult for indigenous peoples to get direct access to climate and forest finance.
Translating commitments into action is a challenge.
Finance is not going to where the forests are disappearing the fastest.
The role of women as forest managers is essential to recognize but this is rarely discussed.
Discriminatory laws and policies lead to the criminalization of and violence towards indigenous peoples and forest defenders.
Illegal logging and encroachment of indigenous territories are immediate and urgent threats to be addressed because they are resulting in the loss of old growth and intact forests.
There is no recognition of customary land tenure and often when indigenous peoples do get rights to land, the land is already degraded, while companies have access to the forested land.
There is a disconnect between aggressive destruction of forests on the ground and the discussions at international meetings and conferences. Indigenous peoples are frustrated because their lives are affected on a daily basis and they are experiencing violence and discrimination on the ground, but this urgency is not reflected in these meetings.
There is no accountability for endorsers.

Working Group Session 1: What needs to be done to achieve the goals of the NYDF?
- Recognize indigenous peoples at the center of the efforts to protect forests and to ensure that resources go to the people doing the work on the ground.
- Implement participatory processes to give indigenous peoples the mandate to protect their forests. This can be done through consultations on public policies and co-administration of natural resources.
- Consolidate multi-stakeholder national-level platforms that facilitate dialogue.
- Promote that more companies and governments commit to and implement the NYDF goals.
- Find mechanisms for endorsers and other stakeholders to be held accountable.
  - Is there an assessment on the deforestation track record of corporate endorsers of the NYDF?
  - Need indicators and a way to monitor their progress.
- Document traditional knowledge and encouragement to apply that knowledge to protect forests.
- Foster recognition and consolidation of land-rights of indigenous territories.
- Respect governance structures of indigenous peoples.
- Carry out awareness raising campaigns about the role of indigenous peoples in protecting territories.
- Foster direct dialogues with entrepreneurs without intermediaries.
- Continue capacity-building processes for indigenous peoples.

Working Group Session 2: How can we move forward and who is responsible?
- Need capacity-building for indigenous peoples to effectively protect the forest, including:
  - assistance to access funds;
  - lobbying and advocacy;
  - sustainable forest management, protection, and restoration;
  - documentation and research on traditional knowledge and best practices.
- Identify the key solutions and best practices and filter through the actors that just talk but are not making progress. Important to focus on the actions and Goals that work.
- Maximize the role of indigenous peoples in lobbying government to endorse the Declaration, especially subnational governments.
• Map the governments that recognize IP rights.
• States to provide restitution of expropriated territories.
• Apply consultation and FPIC to all politics and programs affecting indigenous peoples, not only to chapters related to indigenous peoples.
• Support indigenous peoples to mobilize and organize demonstrations to put pressure on governments and companies and the international community to listen to these messages.
  o Currently, there are multiple converging protests in Latin America (Acampamento Terra Livre in Brazil, Minga and Paro Nacional in Colombia, and TIPNIS in Bolivia), with a common message of denouncing IP rights violations by extractive industries, and their fight is now about the right to exist.
• Ask donors to provide specific, dedicated funds to indigenous peoples.
• Highlight the role of women and traditional practices.

Summary of Key Recommendations:

NYDF Global Platform:

Declaration

• Revisit the language of the Declaration, ensuring that its core message reflects “forests for life” as opposed to “forests for profit”. Change the opening paragraph of the declaration to reflect this message and move away from its current market-based tone.
• Need to update the goals:
  o Add a Goal committing to reduce demand for forest-derived products and responsible consumption of products that drive deforestation;
  o Highlight role of indigenous women in goal 4 and the importance to maintain traditional practices/livelihoods;
• Make an inventory of the contributions/good practices by indigenous peoples, like restoration and resource mapping and share them. For example, there is a Carbon Map which shows how much carbon is stored in each IP territory.
• Identify specific strategies/actions to deliver the NYDF goals by breaking the goals down into activities and indicators/milestones with specific responsible stakeholders. This involves revisiting the NYDF Action Agenda.
• Take stock of endorser actions and progress:
  o Hold regular progress checks with endorsers to improve accountability. This could be done by organizing stakeholders by region and taking stock of their actions and asking them to share their progress.
  o Appoint regional focal points in order to get regular feedback on what is happening in each region.
  o Develop a way for systematized collection of endorser contributions, like a form for endorsers to complete, to share their actions and record their progress on the goals so there is an inventory of endorser achievements. This is partially being done through the NYDF endorser consultations.
• Increase the number of endorsers, especially from governments and the private sector.
  o Indigenous peoples’ groups can help by advocating for their regional and local governments to endorse.
• To identify the big solutions that can be presented at the Summit, focusing on those that have shown progress and impact. These should be linked directly to the NYDF goals.

Meetings

• NYDF Platform to facilitate direct dialogue between IPs and private sector representatives that are truthfully committed to reduce deforestation at regional and global levels.
• Create National Platforms where indigenous peoples, governments, and companies can meet, or support such platforms if they already exist, and facilitate linkages with regional and global platforms
• Regular meetings with all endorsers, and a specific request for regular meetings with all other IP endorsers:
  o Recommendation to have a meeting among IP endorsers at the Climate Summit and UNFCCC COP and separately, another meeting with all NYDF endorsers. Or could have a separate stand-alone meeting with each endorser group and then an Annual General Meeting (AGM).
    ▪ Objectives: where are we now, reinvigorate/update the NYDF, create a work plan for next 10 years to achieve all goals.
• NYDF Platform to attend IP meetings rather than IPs coming to us.
• Where possible, join forces with other multilateral initiatives and platforms, such as Landmark, RRI, the Dedicated Grant Mechanism for IPs, the GCFTF – especially considering its Guiding Principles.

Funding
• Catalyze specific funds to support IPs to achieve the Goals as well as for capacity-building needs identified above

NYDF Assessment:
• Restoration targets and data on restoration should promote restoration of native forests and native species.
• Document and disseminate data on which countries that have endorsed the NYDF have recognized land tenure rights to indigenous peoples.
• Integrate RRI research into NYDF Assessment, if it hasn’t been done already.
• The findings should be shared more widely with endorsers: Disseminate the results of the NYDF Assessment reports at a national level, and in citizen language (lenguaje ciudadano). Participants liked the hand-drawn depictions of the key messages of the Assessment report.
• Goal 10 Assessment: to take stock of the multiple protests and demonstrations by IPs, including the converging protests in Latin America this week.

Next Steps/ Action Items to consider:
• Suggestion to have a meeting with all endorsers; consider having a virtual meeting (to the We Don’t Have Time Climate Conference in Sweden on April 22 as an example).
• Facilitate a direct dialogue with IPs and companies/governments during Forest Action Day.
• Add a question to the endorser survey about updating NYDF goals: “What is missing from the NYDF goals/Declaration and what needs to be added?”
  o How would we go about updating the opening paragraphs of the Declaration, as well as adding a Goal on reducing consumption and demand of the drivers of deforestation?
• Climate Focus to approve NYDF progress illustrations for each goal.
• Create an NYDF email listserv for each endorser group to provide a space for dialogue and increased engagement.
# PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grace Balawag</td>
<td>Tebtebba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrinal Tripura</td>
<td>Maleya Foundation/ Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Network on Climate Change and Biodiversity (BIPNet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimaren Riamit</td>
<td>Indigenous Livelihoods Enhancement Partners (ILEPA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Koinante</td>
<td>Yiaku Laikipia Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesús Amadeo Martinez</td>
<td>Foro Indígena Abya Yala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty Elisa Perez Valiente</td>
<td>Foro Indígena Abya Yala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dario Mejía</td>
<td>Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis Fernando Arias</td>
<td>Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mina Setra</td>
<td>Indigenous Peoples’ Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdon Nababan</td>
<td>Indigenous Peoples’ Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai Thin Yu Mon</td>
<td>Chin Human Rights Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beto Marúbo</td>
<td>Indigenous Peoples of the Vale do Javari (UNIVAJA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirawan Wongnithisathaporn</td>
<td>Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asyl Underland</td>
<td>World Bank/ FCPF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnie Degawan</td>
<td>Conservation International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elspeth Halvorson</td>
<td>UNDP, Climate and Forests Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paola Rozo (Graphic Facilitator)</td>
<td>Graphic Facilitator/ Illustrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clea Paz- Rivera (Facilitator)</td>
<td>UNDP, Global Programme on Nature for Development, Climate and Forest Team, NYDF Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nina Kantcheva (Facilitator)</td>
<td>UNDP, Global Programme on Nature for Development, NYDF Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeline Craig</td>
<td>UNDP, Global Programme on Nature for Development, NYDF Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emin Mammadyarov</td>
<td>UNDP, Global Programme on Nature for Development, NYDF Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meredith Beaton-Marx</td>
<td>UNDP, Global Programme on Nature for Development, NYDF Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Perez (Spanish Translation)</td>
<td>UNDP, Global Programme on Nature for Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Tremolet (Portuguese Translation)</td>
<td>UNDP, Global Programme on Nature for Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion Marigo</td>
<td>UNDP, Global Programme on Nature for Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>