

**DECLARATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF AFRICA**  
**ON**  
**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND RIO+20**

**ARUSHA, TANZANIA, 19<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2012**

We the representatives of Indigenous Peoples of Africa met in the city of Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, on 19 April 2012, for a preparatory meeting on sustainable development, to deliberate on the objectives, themes and substantive matters for indigenous peoples to Rio+20;

**Committed** to the success of the Rio+20 Conference and having as an objective to promote sustainable development focusing on human rights;

**Recognising** the African Charter on Human and Peoples' rights;

**Taking into Consideration** The Malabo African Union General decision to ensure that Africa's interests on the Green Economy issues within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and institutional frameworks for sustainable development are defined and taken into account;

**Welcoming** the work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights and its Working group on indigenous populations/communities and taking its guidance on indigenous peoples as an important indicator for the existence of and the rights of indigenous peoples in Africa;

**Taking into consideration** the Resolution No. ACHPR/Res153(XLVI)09 on "climate change and human rights and the need to study its impact in Africa", adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, calling for a human rights-based approach to climate change in Africa;

**Reaffirming** the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) led African Civil Society Limbe Declaration on Rio+20;

**Recognising** that the livelihoods of indigenous peoples are under threat in the name of modern development paradigms.

**Acknowledging** the fact that indigenous peoples' contribution to the UNCSD/Rio+20 process and its outcome is essential for informed policy formulation and for monitoring of the implementation of its outcomes at all levels;

**Reaffirming** the need for the Rio+20 process to take a strong human rights-based approach, where the rights of indigenous peoples amongst others are fully recognized, respected and protected;

**Acknowledging** the fact that the principles, agreements and commitments established in the Rio Declaration of 1992, Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation are still fully in effect, and the need to strengthen the commitments as defined in these agreements in the upcoming Rio+20 Conference;

**Confirming** our support of and contribution to the development of sustainable development goals, in order to proceed with the design of new development models, made within the framework of the discussions for Rio+20, and that this can become an important tool to focus on goals that ensure the integration of culture and good governance in the three pillars of sustainable development;

**Affirming** that the rights of people to development imply the recognition of the collective rights of indigenous peoples to overcome poverty, to eliminate inequality and social exclusion, to promote life in harmony with nature, spirituality and culture under the principles of Agenda 21 and other relevant instruments; and the recognition that these rights be implemented in an inclusive and interdependent manner;

**Reaffirming** the importance of full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in all Rio+20 processes and decision-making;

**Concerned** by the weakness and or inexistence of legal as well as institutional frameworks for the protection, promotion and respect of indigenous peoples' rights in Africa;

**Deeply Concerned** that Indigenous Peoples livelihoods have been compromised by new and emerging challenges; these are increasing water scarcity, biodiversity and ecosystem loss, desertification, low resilience to natural disasters, food crisis, conflict, energy crisis, cultural erosion, infringed intellectual property rights, climate change, land grab and land degradation, which have increased poverty, diseases and impacted negatively on indigenous peoples;

**Concerned** that Indigenous Peoples' rights to development and well-being have been limited by the current development models hence calling on governments to allocate resources for the facilitation of the formulation and subsequent implementation of Indigenous Peoples Development Goals (IPDGs);

**Taking Into Account** the fact that the concept of green economy needs to be defined in the indigenous peoples holistic context; considering indigenous peoples local diverse economies, traditional knowledge and occupations and the importance of safeguards for this concept;

## **We declare that:**

### **On the Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication,**

1. African Indigenous Peoples continue to challenge the dominant development models that have not contributed to sustainable development, poverty alleviation and the preservation of the environment.

2. Currently the three pillars of sustainable development are “environment”, “economy” and “social”. We strongly believe that the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples should serve as a key framework, which underpins all international and national policies and programmes on sustainable development. Ratification of ILO Convention No.169 on indigenous peoples by African countries is to be considered as further measure to be taken.
3. A sustainable low carbon, equitable economy is not a new concept as it has been practiced by Africa's Indigenous Peoples for millennia. We therefore call on African states to develop low carbon economies and move to local, national and regional economies which are sustainable, equitable and assist in environmental rehabilitation, resilience and adaptive capacities of Indigenous Peoples.
4. African Indigenous Peoples are determined to contribute by showcasing their good practices of local diverse green economies in Rio and beyond, reflecting traditional knowledge and ways of living, in order to create awareness, and inform and influence policy processes at the national, regional and international levels.
5. As our contribution to sustainable development, we will continue to define our development goals based on our cultural, social and economic knowledge, occupations, practices and technologies.
6. We are repeating our call on African governments to respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples towards Rio+ 20 and beyond, as enshrined in the Convention on Biological Diversity, Agenda 21, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and ILO Convention No. 169.
7. We further urge governments and regional organizations/financial institutions to allocate resources to enable the capacity building and the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in international, regional and national processes related to the Rio conventions and other sustainable development related dialogues and processes.

**On the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development and Governance,**

8. There is an urgent need in strengthening, reforming and integrating the three pillars of sustainable development, inter alia by adding culture as a fourth pillar of sustainable development.
9. We support the position of the African Governments and African Civil Society to strengthen UNEP and transform it into a specialized UN Agency. Its mandate should include the protection and promotion of the rights of the indigenous peoples of the world. In this regard, we further recommend that UNEP adopts a strong policy on Indigenous Peoples.
10. We are in support of the African consensus position on the establishment of Sustainable Development Councils at National level; but with meaningful and effective participation of indigenous peoples. We strongly recommend African States to take into consideration the Resolution on climate change and indigenous peoples adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.
11. African states should adopt specific legal frameworks that recognize, protect and promote indigenous peoples as rights-holders, including ratification of ILO Convention No.169 on indigenous peoples.

12. In order to promote conservation of ecosystems, environmental governance in Africa must encourage the recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, which includes the right to access and manage their own land and territories. As key rights holders who have been stewards of natural resources for generations, they must be integrally involved in discussions and decisions concerning their environment.
13. There is a need for the contemporary knowledge, science and technology community and the indigenous knowledge, science and technology community to develop a mutual alignment and synergy in order to feed into research, training and development as well as policy formulation.
14. We are in total support of the African Civil Society call on African Governments to accelerate the implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio 1992 Declaration by first implementing the current UNEP guidelines on this principle with a view to initiate an African Convention on Principle 10.

***Done in Arusha, this Nineteenth Day of the Month of April, the Year Two Thousand and Twelve.***

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