



Indigenous peoples and climate change factsheet

Statement: Indigenous peoples are a key actor if the world shall succeed in reaching the goal of the Paris Agreement and prevent the devastating effects of the climate change

Some of the arguments

- Indigenous peoples manage massive amount of the world's carbon through their territories.
- Indigenous peoples have proven to be the most effective guardians of the forests.
- Indigenous peoples cultivating (agriculture) techniques have been proven some of the most sustainable and most effective to mitigate and adapt to climate change
- Indigenous peoples' rights and their vital role are already recognized in the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Some concrete examples

- Indigenous peoples and local communities worldwide manage roughly 40 percent of Earth's protected terrestrial land¹ with massive amounts of carbon in the trees and soil of their forests - at least 293,061 million metric tons. That's 17 percent of the total carbon stored in the world's forestlands.²
- Tree cover loss is reported to be less than half on indigenous land when compared to elsewhere, and when rights to own their land are legally recognised "the difference is even greater."³
- In Brazil, deforestation in indigenous community forests from 2000 to 2012 was less than 1 percent, compared with 7 percent in the rest of the country. The high deforestation rate outside indigenous communities led to 27 times more carbon dioxide emissions than emissions from deforestation on indigenous community forests.⁴
- Traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and their cultural practices are of high relevance and value for climate change adaptation and mitigation actions (ranging from improved building technologies to rainwater harvesting and community-based disaster risk reduction).⁵

¹ https://www.upi.com/Science_News/2018/07/16/More-than-a-quarter-of-the-globe-is-controlled-by-indigenous-groups/7971531764388/

² <https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Factsheet-for-California-FINAL.pdf>

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/andes-to-the-amazon/2018/jul/16/rights-not-fortress-conservation-key-to-save-planet-says-un-expert> & <http://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/Securing-Rights-Combating-Climate-Change.pdf>

⁴ <http://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/Securing-Rights-Combating-Climate-Change.pdf>

⁵ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_551189.pdf



Statement: *Indigenous peoples are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to their close relationship to and dependence on their land, territories and natural resources. At the same time, they are increasingly impacted by climate change actions that are taking place on their lands without their free, prior and informed consent.*

Some of the arguments:

- Indigenous peoples depend on natural resources and live in ecosystems most at risk to climate variability and extreme weather conditions.
- Indigenous peoples are often marginalized in the countries where they live and are as a consequence left out of decision making processes on climate actions.
- Indigenous peoples are among those with the lowest income, the stratum most vulnerable to climate change.

Some concrete examples:

- A 2012 case study of indigenous farmers in the Bolivian highlands lost their incomes and food security due to water shortages and rising temperatures among other things.⁶
- Indigenous peoples in the Arctic region depend on hunting, herding, fishing and gathering and they are already experiencing changes in the species and availability of traditional food sources. Furthermore, reindeer herders in Scandinavia must, now, feed their herds with fodder, which has an impact on their economy.⁷
- In the high-altitude regions of the Himalayas, the melting of glaciers affects millions of indigenous peoples in rural areas who depend on the seasonal flow of water is resulting in more water in the short term, but less in the long run as glaciers and snow cover shrink.⁸
- Rising temperatures, dune expansion, increased wind speeds, and loss of vegetation are negatively impacting traditional cattle and goat farming practices of indigenous peoples in Africa's Kalahari Basin who must now live around government-drilled bores in order to access water and depend on government support for their survival.⁹
- Indigenous peoples are 5 % of the world's population, but 15 % of the world's "poor". 13 million people from South East Asia and the Pacific, a region where up to 80% of indigenous peoples live, will become "poor" because of climate change before 2030.¹⁰

⁶ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_551189.pdf

⁷ http://www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday/pdf/Backgrounder_ClimateChange_FINAL.pdf

⁸ http://www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday/pdf/Backgrounder_ClimateChange_FINAL.pdf

⁹ https://wotr.org/index.php?q=system/files/Position_Papers/WOTR%20Agriculture%20Position%20Paper.pdf

¹⁰ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_551189.pdf
