

Press release

New alarming UN climate change report coincides with the World Indigenous Peoples Day

9 August 2021

- *The **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** has today published part one of its Sixth Assessment Report. It observes that green house gas concentrations are “unequivocally caused by human activities” and that already all regions of the world are impacted by the effects of climate change.*
- *The human rights organisation **International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)** expresses deep concern. It is telling that the report’s release coincides with the World Indigenous Peoples Day as Indigenous Peoples around the world are at the frontline of climate action and among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.*
- *Indigenous Peoples are **stewards of nature** and have been ringing the alarm of climate change for decades. They need to be listened to in global climate action.*

The response on the report from **Indigenous representatives** and climate advocates, is strong.

Gideon Sanago, representative of the Maasai Indigenous People (Tanzania), states:

“As a new report has been launched today, Indigenous Peoples call for our knowledge on climate change to be recognised. Our governments must appreciate the role of Indigenous Peoples in biodiversity conservation and climate action...”



Maasai in a dried river bed in Tanzania (Stefan Thorsell)

Daria Egereva, representative of the Selkup Indigenous People (Siberia, Russia), notes with sadness, how being from the Arctic, her people will be among the most impacted in decades to come:

“The year of 2021 has brought disease and disasters to the entire planet. Listening to stories from all corners of the world, one understands only too clear that none of this would have happened without humans. We see again forest fires, death of animals and nature. With melting ice in the North, we lose unique Indigenous cultures, traditions and knowledge. The changing climate, and the threats coming with this, forces Indigenous Peoples to migrate and forget forever that snow has tens of names and autumn comes twice.”

Tunga Rai, representative of the Rai Indigenous People (Nepal), notes with sadness how the Summary for Policymakers fails to recognise the role of Indigenous Peoples in climate action:

“It is unfortunate to see that the climate science, including Summary for Policymakers of the IPCC report, does not recognise our distinct knowledge systems / Indigenous science and the positive contribution of Indigenous Peoples in climate action. The summary unveils the changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere, but fails to cite even once *human rights* and *the rights of Indigenous Peoples*. This gesture is even more threatening than climate change itself, for indigenous peoples.”



Asho Chin planting trees in Myanmar amid the COVID-19 pandemic (POINT)

Stefan Thorsell, IWGIA Climate Advisor, summarises:

“We cannot ignore the fact that year after year, Indigenous Peoples from all regions of the world have warned of the impending path humanity is on. Indigenous Peoples are experiencing the effects of climate change first-hand. Despite constituting a mere 6% of the world’s population, they are protectors of nearly a quarter of the global land surface and the biodiversity it holds. Indigenous Peoples need to be listened to and must be heard at the COP 26 climate conference in October.”



IWGIA and Indigenous representatives at COP25 in Madrid (Stefan Thorsell)

Ends

For more information, photos and quotes from IWGIA and the Indigenous representatives, please contact Karl Johnsen, kaj@iwgia.org / +45 5373 2843 or Stefan Thorsell, st@iwgia.org / +45 5373 2842 .

[International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs](#) (IWGIA) is a non-governmental human rights organisation promoting, protecting and defending Indigenous Peoples’ collective and individual rights for more than 50 years. We support Indigenous Peoples’ advocacy at the international climate negotiations at the UNFCCC. See our award-winning documentaries [here](#).



Wampi youth from Peru (Alejandro Parellada)