



**IPMG**  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES  
MAJOR GROUP TO UNEP

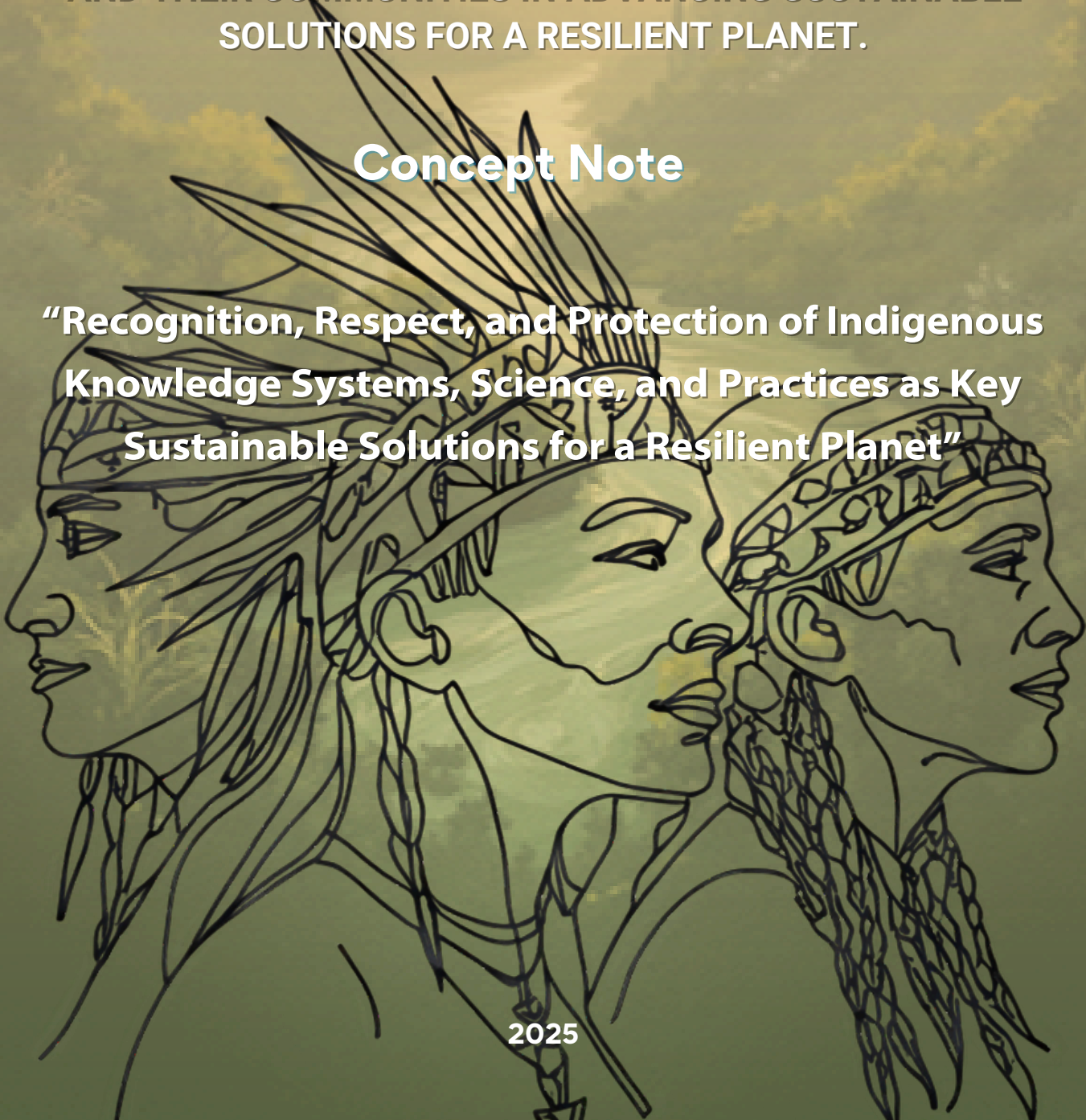


The seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7)  
*"Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet"*

**SPECIAL DIALOGUE ON THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES  
AND THEIR COMMUNITIES IN ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE  
SOLUTIONS FOR A RESILIENT PLANET.**

**Concept Note**

**"Recognition, Respect, and Protection of Indigenous  
Knowledge Systems, Science, and Practices as Key  
Sustainable Solutions for a Resilient Planet"**



# INTRODUCTION

Indigenous Peoples around the world play a crucial role in the stewardship of the environment, conservation, and the sustainable use of biodiversity. Their deep connection to the land, Indigenous knowledge, and cultural practices provide invaluable insights into sustainable living. However, these communities often encounter significant challenges, including the climate crisis, land degradation, biodiversity loss, and socio-economic marginalization.

During the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7), under the theme "Advancing Sustainable Solutions for a Resilient Planet," a Special Dialogue will be dedicated to recognizing the vital contributions and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples in the pursuit of environmental sustainability. This gathering aims to celebrate the resilience and adaptability of Indigenous Peoples while strengthening and empowering their meaningful participation in the development of global environmental policies.

By convening Indigenous leaders, activists, and Member States, the Special Dialogue will seek to facilitate a dialogue that highlights the unique relationship between Indigenous Peoples and their environments and address the urgent need for inclusive and equitable environmental governance. The discussions will cover critical topics such as Indigenous rights to land and resources, the role of Indigenous ecological knowledge in climate adaptation and mitigation, and the importance of protecting Indigenous Peoples' environmental defenders, and preserving Indigenous languages and cultures as vital components of global biodiversity.

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protecting Indigenous Peoples' environmental defenders, and preserving Indigenous languages and cultures as vital components of global biodiversity.

Participants will collaborate to inspire actionable commitments from stakeholders and drive momentum toward integrating Indigenous rights and perspectives into sustainable development frameworks at all levels.

In alignment with the overarching theme of UNEA, the Indigenous Peoples and their Communities Major Group will coordinate the organization of this Special Dialogue with the theme: "Recognition, Respect, and Protection of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Sciences, and Practices as key Sustainable Solutions for a Resilient Planet."

This gathering aligns closely with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples<sup>[1]</sup> (UNDRIP), which emphasizes respect, protection, and fulfillment of the rights of Indigenous Peoples. UNDRIP also underlines the importance of Indigenous Peoples' participation in decision-making processes that affect their lands, resources, and territories, ensuring the integration of Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices into environmental policies and programs.

Additionally, the Special Dialogue will resonate with the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Indigenous Peoples<sup>[2]</sup> (UNSWAP-IP), encouraging a comprehensive approach to advancing the rights of Indigenous peoples across all UN agencies. By focusing on intersectional issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, the Special Dialogue will highlight best practices, share success stories, and encourage partnerships that uplift Indigenous perspectives and solutions.

This concept note outlines the objectives, thematic focus, and proposed structure of the Special Dialogue, seeking to engage a diverse range of participants, including government representatives, civil society organizations, intergovernmental bodies, Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, academia, and representatives of the Special Procedures on the rights of Indigenous Peoples to foster collaborative opportunities and actionable commitments.

<sup>[1]</sup> United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – 2007

<sup>[2]</sup> UNSWAP-IP

## OBJECTIVES:

This special dialogue with Indigenous Peoples aims to:

1. Elevate Indigenous voices in global environmental dialogues and raise awareness of Indigenous Peoples' rights, particularly their rights to lands, territories and resources, to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and self-determination over ancestral lands.
2. Showcase the crucial contributions of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Sciences and Practices in addressing the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, land degradation, desertification, deforestation, pollution and other environmental crises.
3. Foster partnerships among Indigenous Peoples, governments, intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs to address the challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples as stewards of the environment and enhance their roles and contributions.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- A strengthened network of Indigenous leaders and allies committed to advocating for Indigenous rights and environmental protection, including the protection of environmental defenders
- An Indigenous Peoples' Declaration on the Environment, developed by Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous youth, is delivered to the UNEA 7 Presidency and the UNEP Executive Director at the closing plenary of UNEA 7.
- Enhanced visibility of the contributions and good practices of Indigenous Peoples towards achieving successful outcomes and solutions for biodiversity, climate and the SDGs.

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## CHOREOGRAPHY



Date and time: Monday, 8th of December, 15:00 – 18:00 EAT | Place: AGORA Meeting Space, UN Recreation Centre, UN Campus, Nairobi.  
Main moderators: Rochelle Diver and Heni Unwin.

Times	Subject	Format	Panelists	Organization	Moderator
<b>Opening (30-35 minutes)</b>					
2 minutes	Invite IPs leaders to open traditional Ceremony.	Invocation	N/A	N/A	Rochelle Diver
10 minutes	Indigenous opening ceremony	Invocation	Lekapiani Ole Kishoyian (Maasai Indigenous elder and knowledge holder)	Indigenous Information Network (IIN), Kenya	Rochelle Diver
2 minutes	Introduce the next three speakers and invite them to the podium.	Speakers' introduction	N/A	N/A	Rochelle Diver
5 minutes	Welcome remarks by UNEP ED	Opening remarks	Inger Andersen	Executive Director, UNEP	Rochelle Diver
5 minutes	Welcome remarks by Co-Chairs IPMG	Opening remarks	Frankie Orona	Co-Chair IPs Major Group	Rochelle Diver
5 minutes	Introductory remarks by. Ms. Aluki Kotierk - Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.	Introductory remarks	Aluki Kotierk - Chairperson of the UNPFII.	UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII).	Rochelle Diver
2 minutes	Present the structure of the dialogue and invite next speakers to the podium.	Presentation Event structure	N/A	N/A	Rochelle Diver

**Session 1:** Harnessing Indigenous Peoples knowledge for environmental action: Insights from Rio Conventions (CBD CoP16, UNFCCC CoP30 and UNCCD CoP16), Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution and the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) (50 -55 minutes)  
Featuring Indigenous voices from the Rio Conventions and INC and BBNJ to discuss the role of Indigenous participation and knowledge in addressing the biodiversity crisis, climate change, land degradation and pollution, emphasizing the urgent need for enhanced synergy among these conventions.

4 minutes	Scene setting by Susan Gardner, Director of Ecosystems Division, UNEP.	Scene setting Remark	Susan Gardner	Director of Ecosystems Division, UNEP.	Rochelle Diver
2 minutes	Introduce the next four speakers and invite them to the podium.	Speakers' introduction	N/A	N/A	Rochelle Diver

**A. Indigenous Peoples' Voices from the Rio Conventions: Achievements, challenges and path forward.**

5 minutes	CBD CoP16 Outcomes related to Article 8J and other provisions for Indigenous Peoples	Interactive exchange	Lucy Mulenkei	International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB)	Rochelle Diver
5 minutes	UNFCCC CoP 30 Outcomes: Belem and the Baku workplan to elevate voices of Indigenous Peoples in Climate Action	Interactive exchange	Sara Olsvig	Inuit Circumpolar Council	Rochelle Diver
5 minutes	UNCCD CoP16 Outcomes: Indigenous Peoples declaration, Sacred Lands declaration and UNCCD Indigenous Peoples caucus	Interactive exchange	Sela Motshwane	Green Botswana Trust	Rochelle Diver
5 minutes	Enhancing synergy among the Rio Conventions for the protection of environmental defenders	Interactive exchange	Joan Carling	Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI)	Rochelle Diver
10 minutes	Panel discussion: Ms. Lucy Mulenkei; Ms. Sara Olsvig; Ms. Sela Motshwane and Ms. Joan Carling. The first three speakers will each have 5 minutes to discuss history, achievements, challenges and lessons learned from Indigenous Peoples' engagement in the respective RIO Conventions. Following that, Joan Carling will take 5 minutes to address the synergy among the three conventions in relation to the protection of environmental defenders. Afterward, the four speakers will spend 10 minutes reflecting on the following question: <b>Based on your experience with the conventions' processes, what is the most critical change needed to shift from box-ticking exercise, to genuinely partnering with Indigenous Peoples in the MEAs processes?</b>				Rochelle Diver

2 minutes	Introduce the next two speakers and invite them to the podium.	Speakers' introduction	N/A	N/A	Rochelle Diver
<b><i>B. Reflections from INC and BBNJ: What's next for Indigenous Peoples engagement in other MEAs?</i></b>					
5 minutes	An Indigenous Reflection on the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution	Reflection	Juan Leon	International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Plastics (IIPFP)	Rochelle Diver
5 minutes	The road to a Treaty that protects the High Seas (BBNJ): an overview of Indigenous participation	Reflection	Roberto Borrero	International Indian Treaty Council (IITC)	Rochelle Diver
5 minutes	Moderator to request a comment from one MEA Executive Secretary present.				Rochelle Diver
2 minutes	Introduce the next session and invite the next two speakers to the podium	Speakers' introduction	N/A	N/A	Rochelle Diver to Heni Diver

**Session 2:** Role and contributions of Indigenous Peoples and their communities in advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet. (60 - 70 minutes).  
 This session will explore the significant roles that Indigenous Peoples and their communities play in fostering sustainable practices and environmental stewardship. Participants will engage in discussions highlighting Indigenous ecological knowledge, innovative approaches to resource management, and the vital importance of Indigenous voices in ecosystem restoration, climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.

4 minutes	Critical importance of Indigenous Peoples ecological knowledge in the context of environmental challenges.	Scene setting remarks	Haman Joda Tabi	GreenAid-One Billion Trees for Africa	Heni Unwin
4 minutes	Insights from the UNEP GEO-7 Indigenous and Local Knowledge Taskforce	Reflecting on IPs' engagement in the GEO-7 Process.	Yolanda Lopez	Indigenous Science	Heni Unwin
<b>Sharing best practices for sustainable land management and ecosystems restoration from Indigenous Peoples:</b>					Heni Unwin
2 minutes	Introduce the next session and invite the next three speakers:	Speakers' introduction	N/A	N/A	Heni Unwin
15 minutes	1. Restoring Lands Through Indigenous Resilience: Reindeer Herding.	Panel discussion	Marina Tonkopeeva	International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry (ICR)	Heni Unwin
	2. Indigenous Peoples and Coral Reefs (Pacific)		Maleli Qera	Community Centered Conservation, Fiji	Heni Unwin
	3. Accion Andina – UN World Restoration Flagship, UN Decade		Lorena Terraza	Red Az Integration Y Desarrollo (PAZINDE)	Heni Unwin
	Guiding question: <b><i>Using specific case studies, how has the integration of Indigenous Knowledge directly contributed to achieving the goals of major international environmental agreements?</i></b>				
10 minutes	Comments/questions from the audience.				Heni Unwin

2 minutes	Introduce next four speakers and invite them to the podium	Speakers' introduction	N/A	N/A	Heni Unwin
20 minutes	1. Indigenous food systems and native restoration (Latin America)	Panel discussion	Erika Xananine	Jna Tso	Heni Unwin
	2. Presenter/topic The Role of Indigenous Women in Participatory- Evolutionary Plant Breeding in Wheat and Barley (Iran)		Hanieh Moghani	ICCA Consortium	Heni Unwin
	3. Orang utan connection and how Ibans conserve through cultural naming practices		June Mary Rubis	Building Initiatives in Indigenous Heritage	Heni Unwin
	4. Sharing of best practices from Member States: How governments integrate Indigenous knowledge in advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet.		Lena Estrada	Society of Native Nations	Heni Unwin
	Guiding question: <b>Beyond recognition, in what practical ways has Indigenous knowledge directly contributed to achieving the goals of the CBD, UNFCCC, and UNCCD, and what can global environmental governance learn from these examples?</b>				Heni Unwin
10 minutes	Comments/questions from the audience.				Heni Unwin
2 minutes	Introduce the closing session and invite next speakers to the podium.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Heni Unwin to Rochelle Diver
<b>Closing Session (20 minutes)</b>					
10 minutes	Presentation of the Indigenous Peoples Declaration and handover to UNEA-7 Presidency and UNEP	Group reading of the Declaration by Indigenous youth	Indigenous Youth	Indigenous Peoples Major Group	Rochelle Diver
5 minutes	Word of thanks from the Indigenous Peoples Major Group	A word of thanks	Prem Singh Tharu	Co-Chair IPs Major Group	Rochelle Diver
5 minutes	Closing ceremony by Indigenous Peoples	Invocation	Indigenous Peoples Major Group	Society of Native Nations & IITC	Rochelle Diver