

# World Indigenous Peoples Present Climate Action Commitments at UNSG Climate Action Summit

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**23 September 2019, New York City, NY** - The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) met in New York City at the United Nations before the UNSG Climate Action Summit to finalize the Indigenous Peoples commitments on climate action.

Mr. Tuntiak Katan from the Shuar people of Ecuador will present a brief statement today inside the UNSG Climate Action Summit on behalf of the Indigenous Peoples outlining our three commitments to 1) Lead the implementation of holistic plans to protect biocultural diversity, ensuring the inclusion of our most marginalized; 2) Develop actions to secure indigenous peoples' rights to lands, territories and resources, self-determination and free, prior and informed consent (FPIC); 3) Access the development of renewable energies in accordance with our self-determination and FPIC.

The commitments put forward by Indigenous Peoples were developed in response to the call for proposals for climate action from the UN Secretary General. Indigenous Peoples have been raising concerns regarding the environment, climate and our unique rights for decades, to no avail. Kuupik Kleist from Greenland states, "Inuit have been bringing forth warnings about global warming to the international community since the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992."

The proposed actions reflect the reciprocal relationship we have with our lands, territories, and resources and our responsibility to protect them for generations to come. "I want to be a good ancestor. Indigenous Peoples commitments to climate action ensure that we are thinking of the seven generations to come," stated Chief Howard Thompson, Haudenosaunee.

The continued degradation of Indigenous Peoples' lands, territories, resources, and biocultural diversity causes and compounds the impacts of climate change and reduces our adaptive capacity. "Pacific Nations are facing an immediate crisis. We don't have the luxury of adaptation and mitigation. We need to see a dramatic reduction in emissions now - we can't afford to wait around," explained Mike Smith, Aotearoa.

With the arrival of delegations to the General Debate of the 74<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, the IIPFCC demands that States and other relevant actors uphold their commitments to the rights of Indigenous Peoples and commit to all actions possible to maintain global warming under 1.5 degrees to protect the social, environmental, economic, and cultural lifeways of Indigenous Peoples. Kittisak Rattanakrajangsri, Chair of the Asian Indigenous Peoples Pact, echoed this call: "Asian Indigenous Peoples call upon all the states to enhance their Nationally Determined

Contributions (NDCs) by putting collective land tenure rights and cultural values of Indigenous Peoples in the center of all climate actions. We will continue to sustainably manage, use and protect our land, territories and resources using our knowledge systems, for our survival, and for our future generations.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Land underlines the crucial role of Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge systems contribute to the implementation of the Paris Agreement objectives. If efforts continue to support our rights to lands, territories, and resources, we can increase the amount of carbon captured from 100tC/ha to 625tC/ha, scale-up agroecosystems for sustainable food production, and restore harmony with nature and all life forms. Clearly, Indigenous Peoples are uniquely positioned to lead transformative change in the face of a climate emergency.

## Quotes

“Inuit have been bringing forth warnings about global warming to the international community since the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. [T]his year Alaska experienced the hottest July on record, Greenland faced unprecedented ice melt, and wildfires in the Canadian Arctic broke records in numbers and emissions. We have also stood in solidarity with the Indigenous peoples of the Amazon in the face of the tragic wildfires and the irreparable implications for the whole planet, including Inuit Nunaat, our lives, and our livelihoods.” - **Kuupik Kleist, Greenland**

“I want to be a good ancestor. Indigenous Peoples commitments to climate action ensure that we are thinking of the seven generations to come.” - **Chief Howard Thompson, Haudenosaunee**

“Pacific Nations are facing an immediate crisis. We don't have the luxury of adaptation and mitigation. We need to see a dramatic reduction in emissions now - we can't afford to wait around.” **Mike Smith, Iwi Chairs Forum, Aotearoa**

“Asian Indigenous Peoples call upon all the states to enhance their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by putting collective land tenure rights and cultural values of Indigenous Peoples in the center of all climate actions. We will continue to sustainably manage, use and protect our land, territories and resources using our knowledge systems, for our survival, and for our future generations.” - **Kittisak Rattanakrajangsri, Chair of the Asian Indigenous Peoples Pact**

“Our rivers and Lakes are drying, our forest burning, our grasses flooding and our children present is under threat with an uncertain future. African indigenous peoples are now more vulnerable than ever because of the changing climate directly impacting our livelihood and survival. We have our grand mother and father with incredible traditional knowledge that can

help to the climate adaptation and mitigation but this needs to be ensured by respecting our rights and FPIC” - **Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim**

“Our territory is part of our body and our spirit, we see it and live it as a space that we all must keep, protect and that we all know is a non-negotiable space. I come from a community in the Amazon rainforest, that forest that has been preserved by the indigenous peoples, through our traditional knowledge, that space that has the capacity to preserve and give continuity to the life of our peoples and of humanity in general. The survival of the Amazon forest is our survival, and it is in the hands of the indigenous youth, because we are defenders of the environment, of the climate, defenders of life. States must understand that we are the guardians of these territories, of our mother earth, just as the Amazon forest and other ecosystems in which we live are the hope of the planet. We indigenous women and youth are on the front line defending the rights of indigenous peoples, and now we are facing climate change in our territories and we can provide solutions to this global concern and bring it to all the political advocacy spaces.” - **Rayanna Maximo Franca, Indigenous youth of the Baré people and Indigenous Youth Network of Brazil**

“The Ts’msyen Nation in Northern British Columbia is currently experiencing the effects of climate change and industrial development within our region. Rain patterns are shifting, drought is occurring, ocean temperatures are rising, and industry threatens our way of life and the coastal ecosystem every single day. Support is required from all sectors and government to safeguard our way of life and to help Indigenous peoples and communities mobilize to advance the clean energy, net zero carbon, sustainable future that is desperately needed to keep global temperatures below 1.5 degrees Celsius.” - **Braden Etzerza, Metlakatla First Nation**

“With the climate crisis happening across our world, there is high concern and anxiety for our children. Alaska is thawing at twice the rate as the rest of the planet. We have dead birds falling out of the sky, thousands of dead fish in our waters, record breaking fires, and over 33 coastal communities are experiencing erosion; and yet, the United States government is continuing to disrespect the human rights of the Gwich’in Nation and push for oil and gas development in our sacred homelands. We must act now. No more discussions! No more meetings! We need action and we need to develop a strategy RIGHT NOW! We indigenous and non-indigenous people must find ways to coordinate and work together for Mother Earth and for our children. As parents, as aunts, grandparents, and leaders we must step up and not leave it to our children to fix a problem that they did not create. We must be there to support, encourage, and stand with them.” - **Bernadette Demientieff, Executive Director of the Gwich’in Steering Committee**

#### **Associated Links**

The statement as read by Tuntiak: [Bilingual](#)

The full statement as submitted: [English](#) and [Spanish](#)

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