



# GLOBAL LAND FORUM INDIGENOUS

JUNE 13-15, 2025 - RESGUARDO KWET KINA

## Kwet Kina Declaration by Indigenous Peoples

June 2025

### Preamble

We, the Indigenous Peoples, both members of the International Land Coalition (ILC) and other Indigenous organisations, from various countries across Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the EMENA (Europe, Middle East, and North Africa) gathered together in the Department of Cauca, Colombia, at the first Global Indigenous Land Forum, held in the ancestral territory of Kwet Kina. We have come together to exchange experiences of our struggles for self-determination, territorial governance and the recognition and protection of our lands, territories, resources, living spaces and sacred sites. United in our commitment to defend lands, territories, resources, living spaces and sacred sites, we thereby declare the following:

Historically, we, the Indigenous Peoples, lived in accordance with our own social, political, and cultural systems, guided by spirituality, natural law, the law of origin, our own law, and higher law. We fully enjoyed our self-determination to govern in harmony according to the uses and customs of our territories. This way of life was violently interrupted during the colonial invasions.

These invasions and forced assimilations, have resulted in the disregard of our collective rights inherent to our territorial pre-existence, through the gradual imposition of different state laws and policies contrary to the way of life of Indigenous Peoples. These were framed with the states' models of governance, understood as a form of development where monetary value is more important than the care of the land, threatening our collective survival with the destruction of cultures, ancestral territories, and nature, thereby interrupting the natural cycles and integrity of the different forms of life in our territories including oceans. While our contribution to climate change is minimal, our intimate relationship with the environment has meant that we are the most impacted by its adverse effects and consequences.

For millennia we have been victims of systemic dispossession of our lands through violent acts including massacres, murders, forced disappearances, and deceit. This has led to the forced displacement of our communities, reducing the space in which we live, profoundly affecting our means of subsistence, security, and food sovereignty. This has resulted in our Peoples being decimated to the point of becoming marginalised minorities within the nation-states built upon our lands, places where we were once vibrant, diverse, and dynamic Peoples.

However, despite these violations of our collective and individual rights, which seek to undermine our self-determination, we the Indigenous Peoples of the world have not abandoned our struggles for justice. We are therefore engaged in various acts of resistance in defence of our territories, promoting the Buen Vivir (Good Living) of our communities through respect for the right to self-determination, the strengthening of native languages, and our systems of self-government.

As a result, governments have begun to recognise our ways of life. Yet, this situation of struggle and resistance has placed our leaders in the firing line, as attacks against them have intensified with approval from the highest levels of political power. This situation calls on us, as Indigenous Peoples of the world, to unite in solidarity to strengthen our political and organisational processes. The first Global Indigenous Land Forum is therefore an initial space to weave bonds of kinship and generate a clear stance to demand the recognition, respect and protection of our rights before governments, private sector and international organisations.

In this, we demand the full and effective recognition of our right to self-determination, not as a symbolic principle but as a tangible reality in our territories. We equally demand respect for our worldview, biocultural heritage, and our systems of territorial governance according to our uses and customs. In the same way, our own economies, based on solidarity, reciprocity, collective care, and harmony - manifesting themselves in sustainable practices such as small-scale agriculture, fishing, pastoralism, hunting and gathering, and traditional crafts - must be strengthened. Therefore, whilst our demands are not met, we will continue our struggle to protect, regenerate, and govern our lands and territories, including coastal and marine areas, guided by our ancestral wisdom, collective responsibility, and unwavering commitment to the survival, dignity, and future of our Peoples. We thus reiterate the call, as Indigenous Peoples, to national and local governments, United Nations agencies, civil society, international financial institutions, and the private sector to fulfil their responsibilities—not through symbolic alliances, but through justice, truth, recognition, and reparation.

To do so we must recall the internationally recognised regulatory framework affirming our rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169, as well as decisions by international and regional human rights mechanisms, and courts. Further, we recognise and call for the full implementation of all relevant provisions of international conventions, including treaty bodies' recommendations, as well as treaties and other constructive agreements between states and Indigenous Peoples.

We urge action on the following:

## **Articles**

### **Article 1: Individual, collective rights and legal framework**

We affirm that we are Indigenous Peoples with collective rights inherent within the international legal framework that supports us, in which various rulings by international, regional and national courts have been made in favour of our Peoples.

We denounce that, despite these favourable rulings, we are witnessing the continual theft, destruction, and degradation of our lands and territories by colonisers, states and business, through all forms of extractivism (both legal and illegal of our resources, knowledge, culture and

spirituality); agribusiness, infrastructure projects, the tourism industry, conflict, and militarisation. These acts constitute ecocide, ethnocide, and genocide.

We demand that states and multilateral institutions fulfil their international legal obligations and implement the decisions of national and regional courts that affirm our customary rights to land and our right to free prior and informed consent. The protection, demarcation, titling, and legal recognition of our lands and territories, including coastal and marine areas, are urgent and cannot be postponed.

## **Article 2: Indigenous Peoples affected by conflict**

We stress the urgent need to recognise and protect Indigenous Peoples living in areas of armed conflict, militarisation, or cross-border disputes, where we face acts of genocide, ecocide, displacement, dispossession, environmental destruction, and various forms of systematic violence. In defence of our right to self-determination, we affirm that we, Indigenous Peoples, are not merely passive victims of conflict, but fundamental agents of peace, resilience, and cultural continuity. Our participation is essential to achieving sustainable peace and just solutions.

We demand the formal inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in all processes of peace-building, conflict resolution, and transitional justice, ensuring the comprehensive involvement of women, youth, elders, and persons with disabilities.

As holders of distinct rights under international law, we demand that Indigenous Peoples be guaranteed individual and collective protection measures, as well as safeguards for their cultural integrity and territorial rights, both during and after conflict.

## **Article 3: Justice and protection for Indigenous defenders of land, territory, and natural resources**

We affirm that as Indigenous Peoples, hand in hand with our communities, we will continue to defend our lands, territories, and natural resources, as well as the knowledge and wisdom of our communities.

We demand an end to the criminalisation, persecution, and murder of Indigenous defenders of lands, territories, and natural resources. States and international bodies must provide simple, immediate, accessible, and effective protection mechanisms, so that protecting our rights does not cost us our lives or the safety of our families.

## **Article 4: Governance and autonomy of Indigenous Peoples lands and territories**

We affirm that as Indigenous Peoples, we possess an inalienable right to self-determination, through which we exercise our own models of governance within our territories and other ways of life, in accordance with our ancestral law, natural law, and our own legal systems. We affirm that free, prior, and informed consent is a right, not a procedure. It must be respected before, during and after any actions that can affect the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We demand recognition, respect and protection of our rights, and full, effective, meaningful and equitable participation at all levels of decision-making—local, national, regional and international. This is to ensure that our voices shape the policies, programmes, and actions that impact our lives, lands, and territories, respecting our territorial authority and governance over said lands, territories, and other forms of life.

## **Article 5: Women, Youth, and Elders**

As Indigenous Peoples, our families and cultures are intergenerational and interdependent. The family is the fundamental basis of our organisations, wherein mothers have traditionally been the guardians of life, our hearth, seeds, and future generations, youth have led the processes of caring for and protecting our lands and our elders are the custodians and transmitters of wisdom and knowledge to future generations.

We demand that states recognise Indigenous women's rights, especially to land, provide comprehensive training programmes, protect the voice of Indigenous youth and promote their leadership, and show profound respect and recognition for our elders as bearers of ancestral wisdom. In the same vein, we demand that guarantees be granted for the full and effective participation of women, youth, and elders in actions to protect lands and territories and to protect the role of women as the transmitters of knowledge, our languages and as keepers of our identity.

## **Article 6: Cosmovision, territory and sacred spaces**

We affirm that for Indigenous Peoples, our lands and territories are sacred. We also recognise that we are the primary guardians of the world's biodiversity. Despite various regulations that run contrary to the care of nature and our territories, we still maintain our own seeds, wisdom, and knowledge concerning the use, care, and protection of our lands and other forms of life.

We reject any climate solution that infringes upon our right to self-determination, our rights to our lands, territories, resources, living spaces and sacred sites; and to free, prior, and informed consent.

We demand from governments that our territories be free from mining (legal or illegal) which generates violence and destruction of our resources including water bodies. We also demand respect for our territories in the face of false solutions such as carbon markets, biodiversity offsetting, and extractivist energy transitions. We demand timely and non-discriminatory access to processes for the care and protection of living spaces, as well as respect of our cosmovision, spirituality and holistic approach, honouring our knowledge systems.

## **Article 7: On the protection of Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact**

Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and in initial contact are among the most vulnerable in the world and their territorial rights are constantly violated by states, businesses and other entities. We reaffirm that protecting Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and in initial contact is not only a legal obligation but a profound moral responsibility.

We urge governments, international bodies, and corporations to recognise and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact.

We demand that their right to self-determination be guaranteed through the full legal protection of their territories, the establishment of strict no-contact and other policies responding to their unique situations, and effective sanctions for any violation.

## **Article 8: The Right to mobility of pastoralist and hunter-gatherer Indigenous Peoples**

We affirm the rights of pastoralist and hunter-gatherer Indigenous Peoples to mobility, cross-border access, and collective stewardship of grazing and hunting lands, water routes, and traditional territories.

We demand an end to forced evictions, policies of sedentarisation and restrictions to mobility, which are violations of our identities, economic systems, cultures, and self-determination.

#### **Article 9: Data sovereignty and knowledge systems**

We affirm that we, the Indigenous Peoples of the world, in accordance with our customs and traditions, have our own ways of coexisting and understanding the spaces in which we live, which has led to the generation of different knowledge processes rooted in our cultures.

We demand that our intellectual property rights be recognised, respected and protected, that our Indigenous knowledge is not indiscriminately commercialised without our consent. That our data be returned, and no data be generated about us, without us. Further, we Indigenous Peoples, demand the right to govern and store our data.

Our mapping and demarcation of our territories embody spatial knowledge, toponymics and our historical relations with our land and resources. We urge that mapping processes recognise our biocultural rights and document our processes of territorial defence. Harms we have suffered must be memorialised in ways that respect our ways of feeling and being. States must recognise our Indigenous wisdom on conflict-resolution mechanisms related to lands and resources.

#### **Article 10: Direct access to funding**

As Indigenous Peoples, we continue to be affected by different economic models, in which there is no justice for economic development that is unjust and inequitable.

We demand that funds intended for Indigenous Peoples be provided without intermediaries, through decolonised and simplified mechanisms based on trust and respect for our autonomy. We reject discriminatory laws, policies, sanctions and restrictions and unilateral coercive measures imposed by states on states that limit our access to funds and resources. Funding must support our self-defined priorities, such as land tenure, food sovereignty, the protection of biodiversity, and regenerative economies.

#### **Closing Statement:**

We are committed to self-determination, governance, and the care of our lands and territories. Our communities have safeguarded these lands for generations; it is our duty to protect, defend, and strengthen these rights so that future generations may inherit the same dignity, identity, and freedom.

The International Land Coalition (ILC) commits to actively supporting Indigenous Peoples in the monitoring and fulfilment of the declaration from the first Global Indigenous Land Forum.

We call upon governments, international organisations, civil society, and the private sector to fully and unconditionally recognise, respect and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, our full, effective, meaningful and equitable participation must be guaranteed in decision-making processes that affect our lives and territories. Cross-border travel restrictions shall not be used to silence our voices and prevent our participation.

We reaffirm that a just and inclusive future is only possible when we are not only heard but are also empowered in the decision-making that affects our Peoples.

We, Indigenous Peoples, participants of the first Global Indigenous Land Forum would like to express solidarity with the peoples of Palestine who are subjected to genocide by the state of

Israel, and we denounce the lack of action by global leaders allowing this crime against humanity to continue with impunity.

Inspired by the unity, courage and collective actions of the Indigenous Peoples of Cauca and our hosts, the Consejo Regional Indígena de Cauca (CRIC), together, we shall stand firm in upholding ancestral wisdom and protecting the lands and territories of our Peoples!

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