



**.IPCCA.**

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' BIOCULTURAL CLIMATE CHANGE ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE**

*CREATING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN LOCAL INDIGENOUS BIOCULTURAL REALITIES AND COMPLEX GLOBAL SYSTEMS*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Indigenous Leaders call upon the IPCC to Respect Traditional Knowledge**

**Addressing scientific bias against Indigenous Knowledge will improve international responses to climate change, say Indigenous Leaders**

*Helsinki, Finland (IPCCA).* As the UNFCCC climate talks open in Panama, a gathering in Finland of indigenous leaders from around the world has called upon the international community to address remove bias against traditional knowledge from climate change science and policy. The “Sevettijärvi Declaration”, adopted at the meeting, calls on the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to make all efforts necessary to include indigenous knowledge and local perspectives in its assessment processes.

*“Indigenous peoples and other marginalized communities are on the frontlines of climate change. Their knowledge of climatic phenomena and trends includes detailed understanding of impacts on ecosystems and livelihoods,”* said Alejandro Argumedo, International Coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples’ Biocultural Climate Change Assessment (IPCCA) initiative, *“Insights provided by this are critical for a comprehensive global understanding of climate change. Without indigenous knowledge, climate adaptation and mitigation efforts will continue to exacerbate inequities rather than redress them.”*

*“We have not contributed to the climate crisis, and we continue to have low carbon societies, yet we are suffering the biggest burden and face food insecurity”,* said Sagari Ramdas, representing Adivasi Aikya Vedika of India. *“Through our biocultural assessments of climate change, guided by indigenous knowledge, we are responding to the unprecedented impacts and building evidence-based adaptation and mitigation strategies. Our partnerships with research institutions and donor agencies enable us to bring knowledge systems together in our fight for survival. The IPCC should learn from our experience”* she concluded.

The IPCCA leaders discussed their experiences and emerging findings which illustrate the major contributions that traditional knowledge has made in the past, and continues to make today, to understanding what we all face. Tero Mustonen of Snowchange Cooperative, a host of the Northern gathering, added *“The IPCCA is an example of how indigenous communities are undertaking climate change assessments on their own terms, creating invaluable knowledge based on local information about conditions and trends in critical ecosystems. Our knowledge systems and our distinctive spiritual relationship to our territories should be fully recognized by the international community.”*

The IPCCA network will be releasing a synthesis report of the results of their local assessments in 2012. The report will present evidence of climate change, impacts and adaptation and mitigation responses from the most representative ecosystems on the planet and provide recommendations to policy makers for future actions.



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*“Addressing climate change requires that climate justice be taken seriously”, said Paulina Feodoroff of the Skolt Sami nation. “We remind the international community that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples establishes international minimum standards for the respect, protection and fulfillment of indigenous peoples' rights. The IPCC and others are therefore obliged to include traditional knowledge in assessment reports. We call upon our brothers and sisters to communicate the problem of bias against our knowledge in Western science, and to pressure the IPCC to make the changes we need for all of humanity to survive the climate crisis.” she concluded.*

The “Sevettijärvi Declaration” (<http://ipcca.info/blog/2011/10/03/indigenous-leaders-call-upon-the-ipcc-to-respect-indigenous-knowledge/>) contains further analysis and examples of the climate change impacts on indigenous peoples. The Declaration includes specific requests to the IPCC, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and national governments on how ensure that indigenous knowledge properly informs climate change science and policy.

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