

IIFBES OPENING STATEMENT TO IPBES9 PLENARY

Gawis ay agew ken datako am-in!

The International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IIFBES) welcomes our participation in IPBES work and this opportunity to make our statement.

Our engagement can be further improved by opening our hearts and minds and by making spaces in IPBES where Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' contributions can be more fully applied, through the use of indigenous languages, values, and holistic methodologies fostering healthy relationships between humans and our natural world. We need better support for Indigenous participation, including funding support.

Given that this is the UN Decade of Indigenous Languages, IPBES needs to recognise the limitations inherent in the use of non-indigenous languages to express indigenous and local knowledge, values and customs. English, for example, as a language does not fully capture the knowledge and relationships embodied in local languages.

VALUES

Indigenous people's cultural values are vital to biodiversity policies and decision-making processes, thereby shifting away from a practice of privileging a few selected values, towards more inclusive relationships for living in harmony with nature. Our customary laws and governance regulate human actions so as not to be harmful of all our relations.

On sustainable use of wild species, we propose some additional points:

Crucial for indigenous peoples is our right to collective land ownership, maintenance of sacred sites, and to our customary sustainable resource practices, knowledge and innovations. Loss of indigenous lands and land conversion, are linked to loss of wild species and loss of languages.

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

All biodiversity hold a unique relationship with Mother Nature. Indigenous peoples have our own definitions or conceptualizations of invasive species, considering these as "Neighbour species or newly arrived species". We employ community-based monitoring, collecting information, documentation and practice to understand the risks and possible benefits including methods to control the impact of invasive alien species. All these can support and provide a great contribution to the IPBES thematic assessments. We have a publication to contribute on this thematic issue.

BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

We welcome the scoping for a methodological assessment of the impact and dependence of business on biodiversity and nature's contributions to people. We have proposals for improving the document as follows:

- Human rights are not mentioned in the scoping document, which needs explicit mention of indigenous peoples rights. including free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and other relevant principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- The assessment should address challenges in the operationalization of a human rights-based approach in relation to business practices, including the negative social, cultural and ecological impacts of business on biodiversity and IPLCs as well as strategies for the restoration of ecosystems.

At this time, we all need to work together for social and ecological peace and justice.