



**Call to Action to Defend Indigenous Defenders and Activists  
Latin America Indigenous Funders Conference  
October 24, 2016 Lima, Peru**

Around the world there are 5,000 Indigenous Peoples with diverse identities, whose culture and ancestral lands—often rich in resources—have been and continue to be subject of violence and misappropriation. The world system is deeply changing with society and culture shifting beyond recognition in our lifetime. Climate change, emergent and current political, religious and economic crises, as well as power struggles are creating a New World System. These characteristics and dynamics profoundly affect the functioning of our planet and its rich diversity. Indigenous peoples time tested philosophies of wellbeing and sustainability can help to ensure the survival of the planet and thus are key to the future survival of humanity.

Indigenous peoples live in a paradoxical situation: on the one hand, policies and institutions have pushed them to the fringe of society and the economy: on the other hand, the world is coming to understand that a deep and longtime relationship with the earth holds the key to changing the current development path, which is putting the survival of humanity and the planet at stake.

Indigenous peoples' principles of gratitude, respect, honor and reciprocal living should be at the center of giving and taking. The indigenous practice of reciprocity sends a message for a just world existence where we give back to the earth whenever we receive. These principles ensure that we recognize that all of life exists in a sacred balance of give and take.

Reciprocity should be the guiding principle for indigenous philanthropy.

We are thus calling upon our peers in the global philanthropic community to make a commitment of reciprocal solidarity and support in the hope that we stand together as one beside those on the frontlines to defend Indigenous collective rights and Earth. This can take the form of supporting the efforts of Indigenous people, civil society and governments to pursue the implementation of commitments of Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization and the principles expressed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples. Together, we recognize that Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination, and the right to collective ownership of their lands and resources. We support their efforts to promote and protect these rights and commit to work with them to safeguard their territories and ensure their continued survival as distinct peoples.

As demand intensifies for the Earth's remaining resources, the violence against those who defend them continues to escalate, particularly in Latin America. According to Global Witness, around the world "on average two people are killed every week defending their land, forests, and waterways against the expansion of large-scale agriculture, dams, mining, oil, logging and other threats."—Close to half of those killed are Indigenous People. In this regard, we call for support of Indigenous efforts for peaceful resistance

of Indigenous peoples to maintain their own cultural identity or exercise control over their traditional lands and resources. Indigenous leaders face violence and even murder when they seek to defend their



communities and lands. More than 40 percent of environmental activists killed defending these resources are Indigenous People. This is why we make this urgent call for strategic support.

Indigenous peoples are key allies of biodiversity and food systems, which are crucial to the health and food sovereignty of the world. Their principles, knowledge, expertise, skills and practices related to the environmental management, health and agricultural production and diversity is critical and in need of support. Such knowledge is based on long tested systems and innovations that focus on food sovereignty while conserving biocultural diversity and key ecosystems processes. However, indigenous food and medicinal practices as well as traditional medicinal plant, crop varieties, and animal breeds have become endangered by factors such as land grabbing, industrial agriculture, migration, discrimination, and by the impacts of climate change.

Our vision is that Indigenous peoples build and strengthen their own livelihoods, provided that their rights and life plans are respected and implemented. Donors should support the rights of local communities and Indigenous Peoples, especially women who more and more take up key roles and responsibilities in their communities and households as drivers of social change and livelihoods. Women are also the transmitters of cultural and spiritual knowledge and defenders of indigenous rights and the environment.

We call on the philanthropic community and allies to:

- ❖ include Indigenous peoples in philanthropic decision making processes to ensure alignment with Free Prior and Informed Consent across all funding
- ❖ acknowledge reciprocity as a principle of the philanthropic community and that the responsibility to share with others is done in the spirit of gratitude, respect, honor and reciprocal living
- ❖ fund indigenous communities experiencing urgent threats on their rights and territories

We call on the international cooperation community to:

- ❖ address the efforts of Indigenous peoples to pursue their collective rights and protect the integrity of biocultural diversity and Mother Earth in a cooperative manner, with holistic approaches rather than with dispersed one-issue actions
- ❖ make sure to contribute and support the safety, security and well-being of Indigenous peoples defending collective rights
- ❖ make flexible funding available to indigenous organizations and communities

Accompaniment, support and funding can make a huge difference to prevent violence against Indigenous defenders. It is time to form collaborations across approaches and thematic areas.

Join IFIP in this Call to Action for reciprocal solidarity to support, partner and stand together with Indigenous peoples to defend indigenous collective rights and protect Mother Earth.

In solidarity,

International Funders for Indigenous Peoples