

# First Peoples' and Indigenous' Peoples Declaration October 2018

## Introduction

*To God our creator and our Ancestral Spirits we give thanks and praise for the many gifts and blessings of nature and wisdom to all humankind.*

**1.1** We, the First Peoples and Indigenous Peoples representatives from Alaska (Atmautluak, Bill Moore's Slough, Chevak, Elim, Eyak, Golovin, Hamilton, Kotlik, Kwigillingok, Kivalina, Mary's Igloo, Nelson Lagoon, Newtok, Nunapitchuk, Port Heiden, Shishmaref, Teller, Unalakleet), Louisiana (Atakapa-Ishak, Isle de Jean, Pointe-Au-Chien), Washington (Quinault Indian Nation), Bangladesh and the Pacific (Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu), hereby referred to as "Participants of the First Peoples Convening on Climate Forced Displacement," gathered here in Girdwood, Alaska from October 1-4, 2018, express our deep respect and appreciation to the people in whose lands we gathered.

**1.2** We express our solidarity and the truth we are confronting as First Peoples and Indigenous Peoples living in the areas most vulnerable to the impacts of the climate crisis, including being forcefully displaced from our Land. We maintain the unbreakable human and sacred spiritual connection with our land, air, water, forests, sea ice, plants, animals, and our communities handed down to us from our ancestors.

**1.3** We are deeply alarmed by the accelerating climatic devastation brought about by unsustainable development and natural events. We are experiencing profound and disproportionate adverse impacts on our cultures, lands, human and environmental health, human rights, spirituality, well-being, traditional systems and livelihoods, food systems and food security, local infrastructure, economic viability, and our very survival as First Peoples and Indigenous Peoples of the world.

**1.4** We are communities accountable to one another and future generations to uphold and maintain our sovereign and inherent rights as indigenous peoples

of the world and to carry out our responsibility as stewards of this ancestral knowledge that has allowed us to survive in harmony with Mother Earth from time immemorial.

**1.5** We are a spiritual people empowered by values and beliefs which are urgently needed today to elevate humanity to an inclusive and peaceful truth which is based on an indigenous knowledge system of the land, sea, and sky, and on observations gained from the western knowledge system.

## We Affirm

**2.1** Our islands, delta, and arctic ecosystems are suffering the most extreme impacts of the climate crisis. Our homelands, cultures, and spiritual and traditional livelihoods are threatened by rising temperatures, permafrost loss, sea level rise, flooding, erosion, landslides, ocean acidification, storms and other disasters.

**2.2** We express the TRUTH that Mother Earth is no longer in a period of climate change, but climate crisis. We, therefore, insist on an immediate end to the destruction and desecration of the elements of life.

**2.3** Our issues and concerns are similar and there is added value in our collectiveness.

**2.4** We condemn the role of the fossil fuel industry in causing the climate crisis and call for the phase-out of fossil fuels, without infringing on the right to development of indigenous nations.

**2.5** We reaffirm the commitment to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and other U.N. and global treaties.

# We Call

**3.1** We call upon our global leaders, especially the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its decision-making bodies to:

- a.* Recognize Climate Displaced Peoples and their rights and needs as a matter of urgent concern and to take proactive measures to ensure adequate technical and financial support is afforded to them.
- b.* Appoint First Peoples and Indigenous Peoples representatives and focal points in the UNFCCC.
- c.* Take the necessary measures to ensure our full participation as First Peoples and Indigenous Peoples in formulating, implementing, and monitoring mitigation and adaptation activities relating to the impacts of the climate crisis.
- d.* Streamline and improve the often long and burdensome process of accessing technical and financial resources urgently needed by communities of First Peoples and Indigenous Peoples in adapting to the impacts of the climate crisis.

**3.2** We call upon State Governments to:

- a.* Respect, uphold and protect our rights as Indigenous Peoples, as well as rights that affect us as individual members of society, including but not limited to the rights of women; the rights of children; the rights of persons living with disabilities; economic, social and cultural rights; and civil and political rights.
- b.* Uphold their responsibility of protecting the rights of climate-displaced peoples within their jurisdictions.
- c.* Develop and formulate human rights-centered laws, policies, and strategies that address the spectrum of risks associated with forcible displacement, including our right to remain and build protections in place.
- d.* Actively engage our communities in decision-making processes, particularly as it relates to adaptation and relocation.

**3.3** We call upon our friends, supporters, and partners in our states, regions, and around the world to:

- a.* Continue supporting our efforts to advocate for our rights as First Peoples and Indigenous Peoples who are the first and most severely affected by the impacts of the climate crisis.
- b.* Support our goal of empowering our communities, especially our youth, in understanding their rights and the impacts of the climate crisis.
- c.* Support our community leaders to create spaces and innovative ways that allow for the transfer of knowledge, both traditional and modern, to our children.

*d.* Support our desire to establish a network amongst our communities of First Peoples and Indigenous Peoples affected by the climate crisis to share, learn and help one another increase our chances of successful implementation of adaptation strategies that are based on proven shared lessons.

**3.4** We call upon our leaders to:

- a.* Support initiatives to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the communities of their human rights, the climate crisis, and strategies to adapt to these impacts.
- b.* Commit to supporting the creation of spaces and the implementation of initiatives that protect, revive, and transfer the rapidly eroding traditional knowledge and way of life of First Peoples and Indigenous Peoples to younger generations, which is imperative for building community resilience to the impacts of the climate crisis.
- c.* Commit to further building the resilience of our frontline communities who are at risk from climate-forced displacement.
- d.* Commit to improving communications amongst all rights holders and supporting a community participatory process that increases community awareness and input on adaptation strategies.

**3.5** We invite our youth to:

- a.* Continue to be pro-actively engaged in adaptation strategies, planning, and implementation.
- b.* Work closely with their elders to learn and practice their traditional way of living that is important for their identity as First Peoples and Indigenous Peoples.

**3.6** We the Participants of the First Peoples' Convening on Climate-Forced Displacement gathered here in Girdwood, Alaska from October 1-4, 2018 on the issue of climate-forced displacement:

- a.* Commit to remain connected as First Peoples and Indigenous Peoples that are affected by the climate crisis with the goal of accelerating our progress to realizing our adaptation strategies.
- b.* Agree to form the necessary working groups that will help connect our communities through information sharing, learning exchanges, and uniting voices.
- c.* Express sincere appreciation to our friends and supporters for their commitment, vision, and support in making this convening a reality.

*Agreed to by the Participants of the First Peoples' and Indigenous People's Convening in Alaska, focused on climate-forced displacement, October 1 – 4, 2018, Girdwood, Alaska.*