

# Position of Indigenous Peoples

FIRST CONFERENCE ON TRANSITIONING AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS

April 27, 2026  
Santa Marta, Colombia

*“Indigenous Peoples are rights-holders, self-governing Peoples, and guardians of our territories and Mother Earth. Without the right to self-determination, Free, Prior and Informed Consent, and the legal protection and security of our territories, lands and waters, there is no climate, environmental and economic justice. The Just Transition recognizes that humans are inseparable from Earth and nature. The Just Transition and phase out of fossil fuels must be built with us or it will not be just.”*

A Just Transition is grounded in the effective respect of our right to self-determination and must be based on the guarantee of our internationally recognized inherent and distinct collective rights over our territories, land and waters. It is not limited to the substitution of energy sources; it must not reproduce forms of colonialism and extractivism such as those that characterize fossil fuel exploitation, nor contribute to armed conflict or promote the militarization of Indigenous Peoples’ territories.

For Indigenous Peoples of the world, respect for our right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent, our own governance systems, cosmovision, spirituality, and our full, effective, inclusive, gender-responsive, intergenerational participation and representation in decision-making; respect for our knowledge systems, sciences, governance, practices, and our own and regenerative economies, Indigenous jurisprudence, customary rights; and the legal protection of our territories, lands, and waters, are indispensable for a true Just Transition.

Furthermore, a Just Transition must guarantee respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact (PIACI), as well as the Principle of No Contact that applies to them. It must also ensure the protection, safety, and non-criminalization of Indigenous defenders.

Considering the provision adopted by COP30 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in its UAE Just Transition Work Programme, paragraph 12.i, which states:

*“...i) “The importance of the rights of Indigenous Peoples including their right to free, prior and informed consent and the importance of ensuring that all just transition pathways respect, protect and promote the distinct, collective and internationally recognized rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to self-determination, and acknowledge the specific rights and protections for Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact, in accordance with relevant international*

*human rights instruments and principles;”*

When read together with paragraphs 13, 25 and 26 of the same document, this paragraph 12.i reaffirms that the design and implementation of Just Transition pathways should center the rights of Indigenous Peoples, incorporating our proposals and contributions.

As a result of our deliberations and agreements reached during the preparation process toward the First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels, Indigenous Peoples from the different socio-cultural regions introduce the minimum standards for the discussions during the Conference and for their inclusion in its outcomes:

## **ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES FOR A JUST TRANSITION**

The principles that guide this position reflect our holistic vision of a Just Transition. They are not isolated elements; rather, they are grounded in an approach that brings together the rights, systems of knowledge and governance of Indigenous Peoples to transform the economic model in a way that enables a true Just Transition.

**1. Right to self-determination and self-governance of Indigenous Peoples:** As adopted by COP30 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in its UAE Just Transition Work Programme, paragraph 12.i, the transition must fully respect and guarantee our right to self-determination. We are Indigenous Peoples with our own governments who, by right, decide over our territories, lands, and waters, our ways of life, and our own pathways toward the Just Transition. Our decisions must be respected in all policies, initiatives, and projects to be implemented in or affecting our territories, lands, and waters, in order to avoid repeating historical relationships of subordination, dispossession and imposition.

**2. Free, Prior and Informed Consent as a non-negotiable right:** No measure, policy, or project related to the transition should proceed without our free, prior and informed consent. This is not a simple consultation process, but the full exercise of our right to decide, including the right to deny such consent.

**3. Indigenous governance, representation, and full, equitable, inclusive, effective, and gender-responsive participation in decision-making:** As authorities, governments and Nations with decision-making rights at all levels of climate governance, our role as key actors in the Just Transition must be recognized and respected. Our participation must be funded to ensure full and effective participation in all stages of the decision making processes affecting our territories, lands, and waters, as well as our lives and ways of life.

**4. Legal and ancestral protection of our rights to our territories, lands, and waters for the exercise of our right to self-determination:** For us, territory is not a resource, but the foundation of life, culture, governance, and spirituality; through our Indigenous knowledge systems and sciences, we organize, protect, and sustain life.

La Transición Justa debe garantizar la integridad territorial de la Madre Tierra así como nuestros derechos territoriales, incluyendo los derechos sobre el subsuelo; el reconocimiento del uso, posesión tradicional y propiedad colectiva de nuestras tierras, así como la salvaguarda de nuestros espacios sagrados, reconociendo efectos jurídicos vinculantes a nuestras relaciones culturales y espirituales con nuestros territorios, tierras y aguas. Todas estas acciones son fundamento de la acción climática y la conservación de la biodiversidad.

PROPOSED/ The Just Transition must guarantee the territorial integrity of Mother Earth as well as our territorial rights, including sub-surface rights; the recognition of the traditional use, possession and collective ownership of our lands; and the safeguarding of our sacred landscapes, recognising the legally binding nature of our cultural and spiritual relationships with our territories, lands and waters. All these actions form the basis of climate action and biodiversity conservation.

**5. Protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact (PIACI) and exclusion of extractive activities:** The protection of the rights of PIACI constitutes a collective responsibility and an ethical imperative for humanity. Guaranteeing their right to self-determination and the principle of no contact, as well as ensuring the legal protection of their territories by adopting measures to designate them as exclusion zones for extractive activities, land-use change, and energy infrastructure, is a non-negotiable element of a Just Transition. This exclusion must also be applied in the territories of other Indigenous Peoples who so determine within the framework of their autonomy.

**6. Protection of the rights of Indigenous defenders:** Indigenous defenders face disproportionate levels of violence, criminalization, and stigmatization associated with extractive activities. A Just Transition requires guaranteeing respect for the rights to life, liberty, security, freedom of expression, and freedom of association of Indigenous defenders, among other rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, while strengthening our own systems of care and collective protection. This includes implementing measures for prevention, protection, and non-repetition, recognizing our role in defending our territories, lands, and waters, and ensuring the investigation, sanction, and effective reparation of Human Rights violations.

**7. Specific protection for Indigenous women, children, youth, and elders, gender-diverse and persons with disabilities:** The differentiated impacts of extractive activities on Indigenous women, gender-diverse, persons with disabilities, children, youth, and elders must be addressed through the urgent implementation of measures to guarantee their physical, mental, and spiritual safety and well-being. A Just Transition cannot ignore or fail to address these differentiated impacts.

**8. Elimination and non-repetition of extractivism:** The transition must not become a new form of colonial extractivism that perpetuates models that exploit our territories, lands, and waters and generate the accumulation of wealth for a few at the expense of life on the planet. A Just Transition must not allow the imposition of mineral extraction activities, nuclear energy and proliferation, hydro energy, petrochemical industry and applications, agribusiness and acceleration of petrochemicals, or land dispossession and land grabbing in our territories.

**9. Environmental, social, cultural, and spiritual reparation and restoration:** It is

necessary to guarantee the right of Indigenous Peoples to reparation in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples<sup>1</sup> and ILO Convention 169. A Just Transition must include frameworks to halt, reverse, and restore the environmental, social, cultural, and spiritual impacts of extractive activities and land-use change linked to fossil fuels, transition minerals, petrochemical industry and applications, agribusiness, and biofuel production in the territories, lands, and waters of Indigenous Peoples.

**10. Contribution of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Science:** Our Indigenous knowledge systems and sciences, including their cultural foundations for care, regeneration, and balance within our territories—must be recognized and strengthened as a basis for a Just Transition within a framework of environmental justice.

**11. Direct, accessible, adequate, and sustained climate funding and financing :** In the context of climate justice, Indigenous Peoples require direct funding and financing for the implementation of our Just Transition strategies, initiatives, programs, and projects, designed and led by us, including through our own financial mechanisms.

**12. Reject climate false solutions:** Nuclear energy, geoengineering, and other imposed false solutions fail to address the root causes of the climate crisis and enable the fossil fuels corporations and high-emitting countries to greenwash their activities. Geoengineering, comprising carbon dioxide removal technologies, solar radiation modification and ocean marine manipulation poses grave risks to ecosystems, biodiversity and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. This includes the new forms of tech-based colonialism.

**13. Move away from market mechanisms and financialization of Nature:** The transition must focus on leaving fossil fuels in the ground, rather than relying on offset mechanisms that commodify nature. In accordance with our right to self-determination, Indigenous Peoples maintain the right to consent or withdraw consent at any point throughout our participation in these mechanisms. In all cases, it is necessary to take actionable steps to address the harms of sacrifice zones and remedy the negative impacts caused by these market systems.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO EACH PILLAR

As Indigenous Peoples, we present our contributions to develop and deepen the proposals defined under each Pillar of the Conference, in accordance with the outlined principles:

### **Pillar 1: Overcoming economic dependence on fossil fuels.**

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<sup>1</sup>Article 28 1. Indigenous Peoples have the right to redress, by means that can include restitution or, when this is not possible, just, fair and equitable compensation, for the lands, territories and waters resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed consent.

As **actionable proposals**, we present the text in italics for inclusion in the Final Report under Pillar 1.

- a. *“To overcome economic dependence on fossil fuels, it is essential to recognize, respect, strengthen, and develop our own and regenerative economies of Indigenous Peoples”.*

The recognition and strengthening of regenerative economies of Indigenous Peoples is central to overcoming dependence on fossil fuels and as a foundation for sustainability, food sovereignty, and territorial autonomy within a Just Transition and phaseout of fossil fuels. This recognition must be consistent with their systems of knowledge, sciences, and governance, guaranteeing the right to self-determination, governance, Free, Prior and Informed Consent, and respect for their territories, lands, and waters.

- b. *“To overcome economic dependence on fossil fuels, it is essential to guarantee direct, accessible, territorial, adequate, and sustained climate funding and financing for Indigenous Peoples”.*

Within the framework of climate justice, we propose ensuring our direct access to funding and financing for the implementation of our Just Transition strategies, initiatives, programs, and projects, designed and led by us, including the strengthening of our own financial mechanisms. This funding must ensure that Indigenous Peoples have direct and equitable access to it within their territories at the regional and local level, preventing centralisation and the use of intermediaries.

- c. *“To overcome economic dependence on fossil fuels through economic diversification and avoid repeating extractivist schemes, it is essential to implement traceability mechanisms for investments in alternative productive activities proposed to transition beyond fossil fuels”.*

It is necessary to prevent climate funding and financing from being directed toward projects that impact the territories, lands, and waters of Indigenous Peoples without their Free, Prior and Informed Consent. For this reason, it is essential to implement investment traceability mechanisms to ensure transparency, regulatory compliance, and accountability of such investments, and to ensure that Indigenous Peoples can access this information.

## **Pillar 2: Transforming the supply and demand of fossil fuels**

As **actionable proposals**, Indigenous Peoples have submitted the text in italics for inclusion in the Final Report under Pillar 2.

**To transform the supply and demand of fossil fuels, it is essential to:**

- a. *“Guarantee respect for the right to self-determination, including over territorial and environmental planning defined by Indigenous Peoples, and their right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent in the design and implementation of activities and projects related to the energy transition.”*

- b. *“Safeguard against the shifting from fossil fuel dependency to the production of petrochemical materials and plastics products. This includes ammonium based fertilizers and agricultural synthetic pesticides.”*
- c. *“Halt the expansion of extractive activities, land-use change, and infrastructure development in the territories of Indigenous Peoples, particularly in the territories of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact (PIACI), adopting, for these and for other Indigenous Peoples who so determine within the framework of their autonomy, legal measures to designate them as exclusion zones for any extractive activities, land-use change, and/or infrastructure development related to the energy sector and tech-based solutions.”*
- d. **Immediately scale back the duration of concessions for extractive activities carried out in Indigenous territories that undermine the protection of their rights and territories; do not extend existing concessions; and do not grant new extractive concessions.**
- e. **“Halt, reverse, and restore the territorial, social, cultural, and spiritual impacts of extractive activities and land-use change linked to fossil fuels, transition minerals, and biofuel production in the territories, lands, and waters to be transformed to ensure climate justice and the recognition of Indigenous Peoples as actors with decision-making power.**

In this regard, as **actionable proposals**, Indigenous Peoples submit the text in italics for inclusion in the Final Report under Pillar 3.

- a. *“Consider equitable coalitions between governments and Indigenous Peoples, recognizing that Indigenous Peoples are governed by their own governance systems, which have resulted in the effective conservation of their territories, lands, and waters.”*
- b. *“Guarantee the representativeness and full, equitable, inclusive, effective, and gender-responsive participation of Indigenous Peoples in all stages of decision-making.”*

In order for the solutions promoted to be practical, to strengthen multilateral objectives, and to effectively address the climate challenge, it is necessary to fund and guarantee the representativeness and full, equitable, inclusive, effective, and gender-responsive participation of Indigenous Peoples in all stages of decision-making, contributing to inclusive governance and global climate cooperation in the Just Transition.

- c. *“Protect the territories of Indigenous Peoples through their legal and ancestral recognition, including their sacred landscapes, titling and demarcation, to ensure their connectivity and conservation, while always respecting the right to self-determination and their governance systems over their territories, lands, and waters, so that environmental responses function when implemented in a coordinated manner.”*

d. *“Recognize and uphold all international conventions and agreements affirming the Rights of Indigenous Peoples including ILO 169 alongside existing and future agreements.”*

Nothing in these contributions should undermine the rights Indigenous Peoples currently hold or shall hold in the future, **including Article 45 of the United Nations Declaration Rights of Indigenous Peoples**. It is also necessary to include in the content of the Pillars and in the Conference outcome report the following **safeguards**:

1. Guarantee respect for the right to self-determination and **Free, Prior and Informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**, including the full exercise of their right to decide, including **the right to withhold such consent**, while respecting their governance systems and systems of knowledge.
2. Recognition and respect for the **rights and protection of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact (PIACI)**, in accordance with relevant international human rights instruments and principles, and in line with the provision adopted by COP30 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change under the UAE Just Transition Work Programme.
3. Recognition and **respect for Indigenous knowledge systems, sciences** and data sovereignty as a foundational element for defining the transition, particularly within the territories of Indigenous Peoples and in relation to their territories, lands, and waters.
4. Guarantees for the **protection, safety, and non-criminalization** of Indigenous defenders.
5. Implementation of **investment traceability mechanisms**, ensuring transparency, regulatory compliance, and accountability in transition-related plans, programs, initiatives, and projects, and ensuring that Indigenous Peoples can access this information.
6. Implementation of **direct, accessible, and culturally appropriate climate funding and financing for Indigenous Peoples**, avoiding intermediaries that limit their autonomy and oriented toward strengthening their territorial initiatives, ways of life, and their own solutions to address climate change.
7. Guarantees for the full respect of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent, in the design, implementation, and monitoring of market-based instruments to address climate change and advance the transition.
8. **Guarantees for the energy security and sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples**, strengthening their own systems of generation, use, and management of energy, and avoiding the imposition of projects that undermine their **right to self-determination**. Equitable, sufficient, and culturally appropriate access to renewable energy, without generating harm to their territories, ways of life, and rights.
9. **Full, effective, inclusive, and gender-responsive participation and representation of Indigenous Peoples** in defining, negotiating, and adopting priorities related to the Just Transition, including resource mobilization, capacity-building, and technological and knowledge exchange.
10. Implementation of **coordinated responses** to halt, reverse, repair and restore the various transboundary and regional impacts affecting Indigenous Peoples and their territories, related to extractive activities and land-use change in the energy sector.

11. **Uphold the existing UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) de facto moratorium on geoengineering** and apply the precautionary principle under the London Convention/Protocol.
12. All relevant actors—including governments, the private sector, and corporations—must address their climate debt through direct public finance and prioritize absolute and direct emissions reductions, avoiding reliance on market-based schemes, such as those related to carbon and biodiversity, and any other current or future offset mechanisms that commodify nature. This must always be done while respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including Free, Prior, and Informed Consent.
13. Respect the natural and ancestral order of Indigenous Peoples' territories as a means of ensuring the holistic care and sustainability of life across the entire planet, for humanity, non-human beings, and the universe, always placing life at the center.

Having presented this proposal, we expect that our standards are recognized, upheld, and respected in the final report. Our submission outlines the necessary solutions for the rapid and equitable transition away from fossil fuels. We will build on this work and Indigenous leadership with strengthened participation of all seven regions to land on an Indigenous roadmap of actionable steps that transition away from fossil fuels.