



LAND BACK!



Message from
the Articulation of
Indigenous Peoples of
Brazil to world leaders,
public policy makers,
businessmen and civil
society organisations
gathered at COP26



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ARTICULATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF BRAZIL
COP 26, GLASGOW, REINO UNIDO, 2021.



THERE IS NO SOLUTION TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS WITHOUT US



We are a Brazilian Indigenous delegation heading to Glasgow, Scotland, as representatives of the yearnings and bearers of urgent messages from more than 305 Indigenous Peoples of Brazil.

We are men and women, descendants of millennial generations of guardians of the biomes of South America, and we are united with the original peoples from every corner of our Mother Earth.

On all continents, native peoples fight to protect their lands and guarantee the right to live to all species. Our struggle is for our lives and our territories, for the defence of the last ancestral lands and to confront the climate crisis on our planet. Our struggle is for the healing of the Earth. Therefore, we reiterate the urgency of the demarcation and land tenure rights of our territories.

Indigenous Land is a guarantee of the future for all humanity. Our relationship with territory is not one of ownership, exploitation, expropriation or appropriation, but one of respect and management of a common good, which serves all humanity as barricades to the extractive dynamics that cause the climate crisis. Until today - based on reports from the UN and several research institutes with the highest reputation that

western science can demand - it is we, Indigenous Peoples, who are the most responsible for the preservation of the biomes of the planet.

As we leave our villages and cross the Atlantic Ocean to the most important climate convention that global governance has instituted, we carry in our bags our traditional knowledge and the authority to affirm that our territories are oases of biodiversity and models of climate solution. Our culture and our knowledge are originally environmentalist, even before the term was invented.

Many of those who listen to us today are unaware of all the effort we put into this mission. We have shaped and protected our biomes at the price of the blood of millions of our relatives. The genocide of the native peoples, the persecution of the defenders of our territories and the illegal capture of our lands, is the greatest and most widespread crime that humanity has produced throughout its history. This is a continuing and present crime, which we denounce in all the instances we occupy.

It is fundamental that the world understands that there is no solution for the healing of Mother Earth that does not have its feet on the ground. Connecting with the earth, feeling its needs, understanding its cycles and its imbalances is fundamental to reverse the damage caused in recent centuries by the thirst for an irresponsible, unequal and ecocidal accumulation and disposal behavior.

What we feel in our villages, territories protected at such cost, are the devastating symptoms of the climate apocalypse. The indigenous genocide and the continuous expropriation of our territories by legislative onslaughts and predatory interests is a clear sign that our lands are the last Reserves of the Future. The massacre of indigenous peoples is an omen of the irreversible devastation that is claiming victims in forests, fields, savannahs, and all biomes throughout the world. If left unchecked, it will bring all living beings to a tragic, painful and unjust end.

To the authorities and experts meeting now in Glasgow, we ask them to take real action for the protection of our territories and to work tirelessly for a fairer and less polluting production system for all societies.

We are going to Glasgow to warn the world once again, and on this occasion with even more gravity: humanity is leading the destiny of us all to chaos and death! Our Mother Earth is exhausted.

The future of the planet and the species that inhabit it depend on our global capacity to cooperate to defend and strengthen indigenous peoples and local communities, to ensure the security of traditional territories in the face of predatory economic interests, and to create and promote effective climate solutions based on nature and the communities that protect it.

Therefore, we stand against false solutions based on technological innovations designed from the same developmental and productivist logic that causes climate change. We criticize solutions that do not recognize indigenous peoples and local communities as central to the defence of forests, the reduction of deforestation and fires, and as essential to ensure that we reach the stated goal of keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

We hope that this message will reach global leaders, businessmen and civil society organizations present at COP26, vibrate in their hearts, and reforest their minds!

LANDBACK!



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LANDS ARE THE MAIN FUTURE RESERVOIR

**There is no solution
to the climate crisis
without us**



DEMARCATION AS A SOLUTION TO THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CRISIS.

The indigenous pedagogy that makes us understand the signs of Mother Earth also gives us a holistic vision in which rivers, lakes, animals, forests and enchanted beings that live there are entitled of rights like us, human beings, and must be respected. Therefore, talking about impacts of climate change requires recognizing the importance of traditional territories, especially Indigenous Lands. These spaces play a fundamental role in the climate balance, thus benefiting all of Humanity. But for them to be maintained it is also necessary to preserve the way of life of the Indigenous Peoples. With their own way of life, indigenous people guarantee this harmony and well-being beyond their lands.

In the times we are living, in which a virus has stopped the world and affected the routine of billions of people from all social classes and different cultures, it is essential to stop and think seriously about the need to respect the biodiversity present in our territories. In Brazil, a policy has been adopted by the current government that is extremely harmful to the environment and to traditional communities. Territories are being invaded by miners

and loggers; villages have been surrounded by cattle and soy farms; rivers are contaminated by pesticides and mercury; the Amazon Forest, the savannah and the Pantanal wetlands are burning and turning to ashes. Despite this scenario, economic funds continue to financially support the unbridled greed that destroys the planet.

It is in this context that we once again call attention to the need to think about justice from our territories. It is necessary to go beyond the targets set in international agreements and consider the vital role that traditional communities play in this process, which must be thought through along the lines of socio-environmental responsibility. We have no doubt that governments and justice structures are important spaces for action, but it is necessary to include in the strategies the practices and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples in the care of the environment. In order for this to happen, the recognition and protection of traditionally occupied lands is a fundamental presupposition.

Even being responsible for protecting most of the global forest heritage and, consequently, for the capacity to store more than 293 gigatonnes of carbon, one third of Indigenous and community lands in 64 countries are under threat due to the lack of land tenure rights.

Faced with a scenario where human impact reached, by 2016, almost 95% of the planet's land surface, traditional territories are the last spaces where nature has its rights respected and where the climate balance is sought on a daily basis.

The failure of governments and states to recognize the collective rights of indigenous peoples over their lands turns these guardians into targets for attacks and atrocious violence, also promoting the illegal capture of

¹ [Clima e Direitos Humanos: Vozes e Ações. Povos indígenas e justiça climática. Sonia Guajajara e Luiz Eloy Terena, pg. 27, Conectas Direitos Humanos, 2021.](#)

² [Mapping the extent of human impact on the Earth's surface. World Economic Forum, 2020.](#)

³ [Vegetação nativa perde espaço para a agropecuária nas últimas três décadas, Mapbiomas Brasil.](#)

⁴ [Missing Pathways to 1.5°C. The role of the land sector in ambitious climate action. CLARA, 2018.](#)

their lands by exploitative dynamics of nature.

Brazil, originally an Indigenous Land, today reserves only 13.8% of the national territory for its original peoples. This portion of the national territory is the one that has been most preserved in the last 35 years, representing less than 1% of deforestation in Brazil in the same period. In addition to not meaning the entire extent of the forests protected by indigenous peoples - and which are with their demarcation process paralyzed - the already demarcated traditional territories are under strong legislative threat, in an unconstitutional attempt to deny the traditional presence of indigenous peoples in the country, and the occupation of their lands long before the formation of the Brazilian State.

Therefore, **demanding and guaranteeing that governments recognize the traditional territories under threat and that they ensure the collective tenure rights of indigenous peoples and local communities over their lands** is fundamental to effective global climate confrontation.

In addition to the responsibility of national governments to recognize rights, **it is important to highlight the responsibility of economic and financial actors who finance and promote processes of production and exploitation** and, as a result, violence against peoples and communities and the contamination and destruction of nature.

INDIGENOUS CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Faced with the obvious and disastrous consequences of climate change, caused by the logic of accumulation and disposal and the erroneous perception that the earth can be exploited in an unlimited way, it is utopian

to believe that capitalism and consumer society can be recreated, updated and reformed to continue consuming at the same pace, despite the limits of the destruction of nature.

Indigenous Peoples have witnessed climate change for a long time. They have seen their rivers dry up, the soil contaminated, fish die, their relatives become ill. Yet they have not lost touch with the human practice of using their resources wisely and creating solutions to ensure that all human needs are met, without preventing the needs of other species from being met as well.

Over generations, Indigenous Peoples have managed the biomes they inhabit in a process of millennial learning and daily reinvention. Observing, understanding, confronting and seeking strategies for the construction of a possible future is a speciality of the traditional peoples of Brazil, who have survived a policy of genocide for over 500 years.

In a debate clouded by technological innovations, online applications and complex financial systems, indigenous solutions are based on the origin of the problem: the imbalance in human relationship with the territory.

Over the years, Indigenous Peoples have improved their mechanisms to ensure the management and protection of their lands, such as the Plans for Territorial and Environmental Management of Indigenous Lands (PGTA). The PGTA is an instrument collectively constructed by Indigenous Peoples, in which they consolidate the desires and commitments to their territories and the wellbeing of current and future generations. Such an instrument in Brazil was recognized through the National Policy for Territorial and Environmental Management of Indigenous Lands (PNGATI), instituted in 2012 by Decree 7.747/2012, which brings essential elements for the defence of

territories, management and recovery of degraded areas, community management of agroforestry products, for maintaining the forest standing and strengthening the community that defends it. These are practices elaborated and implemented millennia ago by Indigenous Peoples, and which, during a short period of indigenous participation in decision-making spaces, were recognized in national climate policies.

Supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities in their traditional practices, in the promotion of food and energy sovereignty of communities, in the guarantee of their needs from the construction of resilient and locally adapted structures, in the strengthening of community management capacities is the strategy to protect and recover ecosystems and build not only a contingency plan for the climate crisis, but also a plan for the future.

Indigenous firefighters

As temperatures rise and deforestation advances over indigenous territories, forest fires frequently decimate resources and ways of life. Non-indigenous technology has not been sufficient to fight and prevent unmanaged fire inside and outside the lands. To this end, Indigenous firefighters combine Indigenous Peoples' and non-Indigenous knowledge to create fire prevention and firefighting strategies rooted in each People's knowledge of their territories. Indigenous firefighters need to be professionally recognized and have their skills improved with current technologies, sufficient resources to continue protecting their territories and the expansion of their techniques to other spaces.

The resilience of territories and peoples is based on the shoulders, hands and feet of Indigenous Women, who carry the memory of their peoples in their practices, knowledge, philosophies, techniques and technologies. Supporting Indigenous women, their voices and bodies,

their traditional knowledge and their seeds is to open space for the solutions cultivated, developed and refined by many generations of ancestral women and to recognize the place of these women and their effort for the “Healing of the Earth”.

Launched by the National Articulation of Indigenous Women Warriors of Ancestry in September 2021, Reflorestarmentes is a platform that aims to share and promote non-predatory forms of relationship with Mother Earth, focused on collective collaboration to implement climate solutions, rescue humanity and promote harmonious coexistence between peoples for the construction of Brazilian Buen vivir. The proposal intends to trigger a broad process of mobilisation, which will connect projects and activists at local, national and international levels. The focus of the programmatic agenda of the platform are the ecological transition, the demarcation of indigenous territories as a fundamental step to mitigate the effects of the climate and environmental crises and the production of environmental, social and cultural alternatives to the current economic model, which results in global warming.

⁵ [Quanto custa tirar um PGTA do papel? Possibilidades de financiamento para os planos de gestão territorial e ambiental das terras indígenas.](#) INESC, Brasília, 2021.

⁶ [Donor funding for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to secure tenure rights and manage forests in tropical countries \(2011–2020\).](#) Rainforest Foundation Norway, 2021.

FINANCE FOREST PROTECTION

International finance is a necessary global ambition for tackling the climate crisis and achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. However, it is not enough to mobilize billions of dollars in climate finance and apply it to solving false problems.

Only 1% of the annual funding budget is accessed by indigenous peoples, most of the resources are transferred directly between countries and multilateral organizations, and sometimes fund process, projects and implementations that do not relate to addressing the climate crisis.

Meanwhile, Indigenous Peoples, who make up 5% of the world's population, are directly responsible for protecting 80% of global biodiversity, as demonstrated by research conducted by global scientists on forest governance and the marginalization of Indigenous Peoples from the climate debate.

The funds mobilized by countries are necessary for those who for centuries have been performing the most important environmental service for tackling the climate crisis: the defence and maintenance of forests, traditional territories and their biodiversity.

According to a recent study by the Institute for Socioeconomic Studies (INESC), the annual cost of implementing an Environmental and Territorial Management Plan in Brazil is around US\$ 265,000 to US\$ 4.4 million, depending on the size of the Indigenous Land. A derisory amount when compared to large infrastructure projects, reconfiguration of land use patterns and international cooperation agreements.

GLOBAL COLLABORATION

In order to respond to the climate crisis, it is necessary to work together and cooperate beyond the spaces of international articulation, driven by a sense of global responsibility beyond borders. The many nations coming together at this important time need not only to develop contingency plans for climate change, but more importantly to affirm their commitment to a plan for the future.

In order to work together, it is important that Indigenous Peoples and local communities are duly included in spaces for debate and decision making in order to influence the definition of international policies and agreements. Traditional peoples are rarely included in spaces for participation and debate. This results in flagrant gaps in the protection of the human and socio-environmental rights of indigenous peoples and local communities in various international agreements.

Climate agreements (such as the Paris Agreement and its rules), economic agreements (such as the Agreement between the European Union and Mercosur) and the internal legislation of countries on the importation of commodities that imply forest risk need to be duly and urgently revised so that they include in their texts respect for the rights of indigenous peoples, the security of their land tenure rights through land demarcation, the creation of safeguard mechanisms for indigenous rights and traceability systems for production chains and their impacts on territories and communities.

⁷ [Adaptation and resilience at the margins: Addressing indigenous peoples' marginalization at international climate negotiations.](#)
Environment, 2019.

Furthermore, it is necessary that countries that claim to be supporters of Indigenous Peoples and that are in the fight against the climate crisis take specific measures to boycott the Brazilian government and follow up with reprisals against companies and investment funds that pave the way for the destruction and contamination of territories and promote violence and genocide against traditional peoples.

