



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #KAN-18-006

### **TITLE: Implementation of the Indigenous Peoples' Traditional Knowledge Platform within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

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**WHEREAS**, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, numerous prior NCAI resolutions have recognized that Climate change constitutes one of the greatest threats facing the peoples of the world today, and that Indigenous Peoples are often the most severely impacted by the effects of climate change and are facing immediate and significant impacts on their ways of life from climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples provides in paragraph 36 that “indigenous peoples' knowledge and strategies to sustain their environment should be respected and taken into account” in the development of “national and international approaches on climate change mitigation and adaptation;” and

**WHEREAS**, at the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) of the United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 196 Parties adopted the Paris Agreement beginning a new age of international efforts to combat climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, in resolution MOH-17-053, NCAI reiterated our ongoing support for the Paris Agreement despite the decision of the United States to withdraw; and

**WHEREAS**, the Paris Agreement called upon States to respect, promote and consider their respective human rights obligations, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples, when taking action on climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, Article 7, paragraph 5 of the Paris Agreement recognizes that adaptation actions should, as appropriate, be based on and guided by “traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples, and local knowledge systems;” and

**WHEREAS**, Paragraph 135 of the Paris Decision “Recognizes the need to strengthen knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change, and establishes a platform for the exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner;” and

**WHEREAS**, at the Twenty-Third Conference of the Parties (COP23), the Parties adopted a decision on the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform, identifying a new pathway for its further operationalization at COP24 to take place in December 2018 in Katowice, Poland; and

**WHEREAS**, the Parties agreed on the objectives of the Platform:

- 1) **Knowledge**: the platform should provide a space for documenting and sharing experience and best practices, respecting the unique nature of and need to safeguard indigenous and local community knowledge systems;
- 2) **Climate change policies and actions**: the platform should facilitate the integration of indigenous and local knowledge systems as well as the engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities in relevant climate change related actions, programs and policies; and
- 3) **Capacity for engagement**: the platform should help to build the capacities of indigenous peoples and local communities to help enable their engagement in and support the UNFCCC process, including the implementation of the Paris Agreement, and other climate - related processes; and

**WHEREAS**, Indigenous peoples traditional knowledge, teachings, innovations and practices of sustainable management and conservation can serve as positive contributions in addressing climate change adaption and mitigation strategies; and

**WHEREAS**, NCAI recognizes that the creation of the traditional knowledge platform, in addition to providing the opportunity to strengthen indigenous knowledge and to help Indigenous Peoples influence climate policies and actions, also poses potential dangers to the rights of Indigenous to safeguard their traditional knowledge, and that it is therefore crucial to ensure that the inherent rights affirmed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including, among others, rights to the lands, territories and resources they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired (A26); the right to maintain, protect, control and develop their cultural heritage (A 31); the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of Treaties and Agreements (A 37); and the right to Free Prior and Informed Consent in various articles are respected and protected in this process; and

**WHEREAS**, NCAI affirms the vital important of ensuring the input of Tribal leaders and traditional knowledge holders into this process at all stages to ensure that these rights are protected and that traditional knowledge is respected, protected and properly used; and

**WHEREAS**, NCAI also underscores the importance of Indigenous Peoples' independent efforts to ensure resiliency and mitigate the impacts of Climate Change through strengthening and restoring their traditional practices, continuing intergenerational knowledge transmission and creating opportunities to exchange experiences and methods with other Tribal Nations and knowledge holders, as agreed and appropriate.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) calls on the Parties to the United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to support all efforts, including changing the draft rules of procedure, to ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in the UNFCCC processes, particularly traditional knowledge holders; equal status, including in leadership positions; the self-selection of representatives; and adequate funding for Indigenous Peoples' participation; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCAI commits to continuing to work with the IIPFCC to achieve a platform that best serves indigenous peoples and preserves and shares traditional knowledge in a way that upholds and protects the rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination, cultural heritage, and lands, territories, and natural resources; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

#### CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2018 Midyear Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Marriott Kansas City Downtown, June 3-6, 2018, with a quorum present.

  
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Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:

  
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Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary