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Dear Forum Members and Meeting Participants:

On behalf of Conservation International (CI), I would like to thank you for this opportunity to share the experiences, best practices, gaps, and challenges that make up CI's work to integrate indigenous rights into our conservation practice.

Tropical forest loss is at an all-time high and contributes directly to the global climate crisis. Over 12 million hectares of forest are lost each year, eroding their ability to maintain a favorable climate -- at a cost of \$2-5 trillion/year globally.¹ As much as one-third of the world's wild-caught fisheries are overexploited or declining due to overfishing, pollution, climate change and other threats.² To add to this, violence is growing toward those who are defending the planet. Last year alone, Global Witness tallied 197 murders of land rights and environmental defenders, of which 40% were Indigenous Peoples.³

Indigenous peoples (IPs) alone manage or have tenure rights to at least 38 million square kilometers in 87 countries or politically distinct areas on all inhabited continents. This represents over a quarter of the world's land surface and intersects about 40% of all terrestrial protected areas and ecologically intact landscapes.⁴

While there is growing evidence that indigenous peoples' rights to land and benefit-sharing are essential to meeting local and global conservation goals, there are still huge gaps in achievement of these rights. Communities who are closest to nature and who are most heavily impacted by environmental destruction and climate change still struggle for recognition, respect, adequate financial resources and clear decision-making power when it comes to conservation and development planning.

Recent articles and reports such as those in *The Guardian* and *Foreign Policy* and the report by *Rights and Resources Initiative*⁵ suggest that commitments over the last 10-15 years haven't added up to improved conservation outcomes or benefits for people. As an evidence-based organization with a focus on human well-being and improved livelihoods, CI takes the growing threat to indigenous peoples and their lands seriously.

In 2003, the V World Parks Congress marked a pivotal point for the conservation community as a whole. There, practitioners recognized the shortcomings of the conventional protected areas model and pledged to advance an innovative approach to protected area development that respected the rights of all associated peoples and communities. Since 2003, CI has taken clear steps to enhance its partnerships with indigenous peoples and ensure respect for their rights in all our work but obviously much more needs to be done.

¹ TEEB (2008) An Interim Report. European Communities.

² FAO 2014, ISC 2012, WWF/ZSL 2014, Hoegh-Guldberg 1999, Hoegh-Guldberg et al. 2007, Waycott et al. 2009, UNEP 2014.

³ The Guardian. February 28, 2018. Almost four environmental defenders a week killed in 2017.

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/feb/02/almost-four-environmental-defenders-a-week-killed-in-2017?CMP=share_btn_tw

⁴ Garnett, S. T. et al. (2018). A spatial overview of the global importance of Indigenous lands for conservation. *Nature Sustainability*. doi:10.1038/s41893-018-0100-6

⁵ Tauli-Corpus, V., Alcorn, J. and Molnar, A. June 2018, *Cornered by Protected Areas: Replacing Fortress Conservation with Rights-based Approaches Helps Bring Justice for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, Reduces Conflict, and Enables Cost-Effective Conservation and Climate Action*. Washington, DC: Rights and Resources Initiative.

At Conservation International (CI), we firmly believe people need nature to thrive. Successful conservation is a complex endeavor that hinges on women and men sustainably managing lands and natural resources. For more than 30 years, CI has delivered successful conservation outcomes by empowering societies to responsibly and sustainably care for nature, our global biodiversity for the well-being of humanity. We work at all scales – community, district, regional, national and international – to build skills, connect local and national level efforts, provide funding for those already demonstrating success, and increase the number of men and women advocating for conservation and the myriad benefits it can provide. Through our efforts, CI aims to foster effective governance of natural capital and equitable access to and sharing of nature’s benefits. When people can actively and effectively participate in decision-making that impacts them, manage their crops and harvests and enjoy secure land tenure, conservation improves, and people everywhere thrive.

Our mission is founded on the principles of human rights, including full and effective participation, the equitable sharing of benefits derived from conserving and sustainably using natural resources, and respect for the cultural practices of and contributions from those communities that are most directly connected to nature. CI understands that conservation cannot be successful or sustainable without the support of indigenous peoples and local community stewards who have the tools, capabilities and rights to make informed decisions in designing and implementing conservation approaches that benefit them.

To address these fundamental issues and generate the benefits that men and women need to thrive, CI is continuing to expand our work in this area with the development of a new center that will focus on indigenous peoples, local communities and human right and is expected to be launched in the spring of 2019. This new Center is intentionally focused on making conservation more inclusive and transparent while improving social and environmental governance to help us and our partners worldwide achieve more lasting conservation and human well-being outcomes. Through this new Center, CI commits to:

- Expand our Indigenous Advisory Group to more effectively guide CI’s work with Indigenous Peoples;
- Support work that increases direct finance to indigenous peoples, recognizing that they have the capacity to make their own development decisions but often lack access to adequate financing;
- A dialogue between indigenous peoples, governments, conservation actors, funders and United Nations representatives to develop pragmatic strategies to better promote the implementation of international principles on indigenous rights in weak governance contexts;
- A meeting of senior representatives of indigenous peoples’ organizations and Conservation Initiative on Human Rights (CIHR) member organizations to discuss standards, implementation challenges and strategies to overcome them, and to invigorate collaboration;
- Incorporate recommendations of the UNPFII Expert Group Meeting into CI’s work.

We are pleased to share with the UNPFII Expert Group Meeting on Conservation and Indigenous Peoples Rights this submission; which will highlight some of the experiences, best practices, gaps, and challenges resulting from CI’s efforts to integrate indigenous rights into our conservation practice. We have significantly improved the internal foundation and framework needed to meet our rights-based targets, and, indeed, we have already achieved some of our goals. There is still more work to be done, but the path is clear, and momentum is strong.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Morris
President
Conservation International

International Expert Group Meeting

“Conservation and the rights of indigenous peoples” (Articles 29 and 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)

23-25 January 2019

United Nations Office in Nairobi, Kenya

Submission by

Conservation International

Principles and Policies

Conservation International has partnered with indigenous peoples since the organization was formed in 1987. The organization has taken clear steps to further enhance these relationships over the years, clarifying through policies and guidelines how CI respects indigenous peoples’ rights and improving how the organization collaborates with these key community partners in our practice.

In 2009, [the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights⁶](#), a consortium of seven international conservation organizations that seeks to improve the practice of conservation by promoting integration of human rights in conservation policy and practice was established, with CI as one of the founding members. The group collectively advocates and demonstrates through each organization’s practice the positive linkages between conservation and the rights of people to secure their livelihoods and ensure healthy and productive environments. Indigenous peoples and their rights are an important focus of the consortium. CI and all CIHR members have committed to four common principles to guide integration of human rights, including indigenous rights, throughout each organization’s policies and practices. These principles are:

1. **Respect human rights** Respect internationally proclaimed human rights; and make sure that we do not contribute to infringements of human rights while pursuing our mission.
2. **Promote human rights within conservation programs** Support and promote the protection and realization of human rights within the scope of our conservation programs.
3. **Protect the vulnerable** Make special efforts to avoid harm to those who are vulnerable to infringements of their rights and to support the protection and fulfilment of their rights within the scope of our conservation programs.
4. **Encourage good governance** Support the improvement of governance systems that can secure the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities in the context of our work on conservation and sustainable natural resource use, including elements such as legal, policy and institutional frameworks, and procedures for equitable participation and accountability.

Noting our longstanding collaborations with diverse partners, CI added a fifth principle:

5. **Work in partnership:** Seek and incorporate the knowledge and contributions of partners to ensure that our Rights-based Approach results in lasting and fundamental improvements for nature and human well-being.

With these principles as a guide, CI took clear steps to integrate respect for human rights, including indigenous rights, into the fabric of our organization. Conceptualized in 2009 and formally launched in 2012, CI’s Rights-based Approach (RBA) to conservation includes a set of policies, multiple tools and guidelines, and a growing

⁶ Current CIHR members are Birdlife International, Conservation International, Fauna & Flora International, International Union for Conservation of Nature, The Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Society and World Wide Fund for Nature.

body of practice. Each of the RBA policies carries importance for indigenous peoples:

- **Indigenous Peoples Policy:** Drafted in 1996 and revised in 2012, this policy reflects CI's commitment to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) and the rights of indigenous peoples as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other international instruments.
- **Gender Policy:** Calls on CI to conduct gender analyses, develop gender-sensitive and sex disaggregated indicators, and apply gender equity principles, noting the importance of both men and women in realizing conservation on the ground.
- **Involuntary Resettlement Policy:** Recognizes that people, including indigenous peoples, should not be removed from their lands involuntarily, consistent with international law and standards.
- **Vulnerable Populations Policy:** States that CI will protect vulnerable populations by articulating strategies that take them into account, creating indicators, and sharing best practices.
- **Partnerships Policy:** Holds that partnerships between CI and another entity, such as indigenous organizations, governments, or other conservation NGOs, will be mutually beneficial and based on equitable collaboration in project/program design and implementation.
- **Research Ethics Policy:** Designed to protect individuals who may be the subject of research led or sponsored by CI. It calls for an ethical review by CI's Institutional Review Committee, which gives special consideration to elements such as whether or not indigenous peoples are subjects, consent procedures, and transparency and protection in data management.
- **Anti-Trafficking in Persons Policy:** Recognizes that CI's work with vulnerable populations, including indigenous peoples, potentially exposes CI staff and partners to issues of human trafficking and forced labor. As such, CI supports the zero-tolerance policy adopted by the United States government to combat such occurrences.
- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy:** Reflects CI's commitment to protecting the rights of children, including indigenous children, consistent with host country and local child welfare and protection legislation or international standards, whichever gives greater protection.

Guidelines, Tools, Standards

A suite of guidelines, tools, and standards complements CI's RBA policies, helping CI staff working in different contexts across the globe to implement the RBA policy commitments. A sampling is included below:

- **[Guidelines for Applying Free, Prior and Informed Consent](#):** As a way to further improve our practice and demonstrate our commitment to respecting rights, in 2013 CI created FPIC guidelines for our work with indigenous peoples. The guidelines are derived from the experiences outlined in nine FPIC case studies and are available in four languages.
- **[Gender Guidelines](#):** A set of CI guidelines addresses gender considerations within conservation. These include: Guidelines for Integrating Gender into Conservation Programming, Integrating Gender into Funding Proposals, Integrating Gender into Monitoring and Evaluation, and Recognizing and Responding to Gender-based Violence in Community Conservation. Available in four languages, these guidelines help CI staff develop strategic approaches when women's empowerment conflicts with traditional gender roles.

- **Stakeholder Mapping Guide:** A Stakeholder Mapping Guide leads CI staff through a systematic analysis of stakeholders to determine which groups have an interest in a conservation project, are typically included or excluded, are relevant to include, support or oppose the project, and will benefit or be harmed by it. The Stakeholder Mapping Guide is a useful tool for designing FPIC processes with indigenous people
- **Stakeholder Network Analysis:** A Social Network Analysis helps CI staff understand how information and resources move through a network of individuals or institutions, allowing them to map the relationships between actors. This is helpful in determining who plays key roles in disseminating information or resources within a network, as well as where there are barriers to accessing information. It is also used for visualizing relationships where a power imbalance exists. CI has used this tool together with indigenous partners to identify and address barriers to the flow of information about REDD+.
- **Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards:** CI is a member of the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA), “a unique partnership of leading international NGOs that was founded in 2003 with a mission to stimulate and promote land management activities that credibly mitigate global climate change, improve the well-being and reduce the poverty of local communities, and conserve biodiversity.”⁷ The Climate, Community, and Biodiversity Standards require projects to respect free, prior, and informed consent.
- **Environmental Peacebuilding Manual:** the manual focuses on increasing awareness, knowledge and skills on environmental peacebuilding among conservation practitioners and organizations working in areas affected by conflict or where conservation efforts could potentially impact conflict.

Dissemination

CI’s RBA policies, guidelines and tools have been disseminated throughout headquarters and field offices in a variety of ways, including through email announcements, on intranet search engines, via web platforms such as CI’s RBA Google site, and most successfully through in-person trainings.

In 2014, CI launched a formal RBA training program for CI staff at global, regional, country and headquarters levels. The program focuses on themes such as stakeholder engagement; free, prior and informed consent; gender; and research ethics. Each of these holds great importance for CI’s collaboration with indigenous peoples. Since initiating the formal program, a total of 162 CI staff (70 men, 92 women) have participated in CI’s RBA training. We also rolled out a complementary training focused specifically on gender for CI headquarters staff, reaching an additional 180 participants (64 men, 118 women) in the same time period. Recognizing that respect for human rights, and particularly indigenous rights, must be integrated across the life of projects, our trainings have targeted individuals in a variety of roles, including technical staff, fundraisers, finance personnel, and communications staff. A training for CI’s senior leaders took place in 2011, and a second one is slated for 2019.

Implementation of Policies, Guidelines and Standards

CI has created a metrics framework that includes an integrated set of indicators for governance and human well-being, both of which are intrinsically related to our work with indigenous peoples. However, despite this framework, we lack systematic coordination of monitoring efforts across the institution, including for the implementation of the Rights-based Approach policies, among them the Indigenous Peoples Policy.

⁷ <http://www.climate-standards.org/about-ccba/>

Thus far, any monitoring of the policies' implementation has taken place in an ad hoc fashion, sometimes driven by donor requirements, often occurring on a project-by-project basis. A sampling includes [The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund](#), which has developed an extensive monitoring and evaluation framework that capture participation of and impacts on people.

Another good example of a robust framework with clear implications for indigenous peoples is the [Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities \(DGM\)](#), an innovative grant program for fighting forest loss by putting project design and funding decisions in the hands of indigenous peoples and local communities. As Global Executing Agency for the Global Project of the DGM, CI has facilitated the design of a common monitoring and evaluation framework for the 14 participating countries. Supporting the DGM's overall goal of strengthening the capacity of indigenous peoples and local communities to participate in the Forest Investment Program and REDD+, this framework effectively showcases the program's impact while being flexible enough to fit each national context. The DGM monitoring and evaluation framework presents an important opportunity for exploring how our work contributes to the empowerment of indigenous peoples.

Systematic monitoring of policy implementation has been identified as one of the most significant challenges to full integration of our Rights-based Approach, and as such it also becomes an important opportunity that we are beginning to pursue. Our [CI GEF](#) and [GCF Agencies](#) offer great examples of how to effectively monitor and ensure the inclusion of rights into projects, as the RBA is the basis of the safeguard systems for both agencies, and was foundational to CI's success in becoming implementing agencies.

Additionally, the RBA is included as a component within CI's internal audit system, currently to assess the degree of RBA awareness, but with the potential to help assess the degree of implementation in the near future. The RBA is also included within the five-year plan for each CI field program, which is then responsible for monitoring its implementation.

Dedicated Team

Our Rights-based Approach and all its components – policies, guidelines, tools, and a growing body of evidence – are a foundation for our engagement with other sectors. A dedicated team of 12 staff is tasked with advancing the RBA within the institution and throughout our collaborations with other entities. The CI staff members have a deep understanding of indigenous issues and hold a wide range of relationships with indigenous partners in regions where CI works and within international human rights, environment and climate policy fora. Expertise within CI is called on frequently by the World Bank, UN agencies, and governments to provide targeted advice on policy and programmatic issues related to indigenous peoples.

Underscoring our commitment to promote indigenous rights, two prominent indigenous leaders hold senior roles within this team and lead work directly related to indigenous rights in the conservation context. Minnie Degawan, an indigenous Kankanaey-Igorot from the Philippines, joined CI in May 2016 as Director of CI's Indigenous and Traditional Peoples Program. Minnie joins Johnson Cerda, a Kichwa leader from the Ecuadorian Amazon, who is Technical Director of the [Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities](#).

In the field, Candido Pastor, a Quechua from Bolivia, is Regional Director for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Engagement in the Americas and Sinegugu Zuklul is CI's Indigenous Knowledge Specialist in South Africa. Hindou Ibrahim of Chad is also collaborating with CI as Senior Fellow and will hold that post for the next year, focusing on climate and indigenous peoples as well as gender. We also recognize that many of our country programs include indigenous staff as core members, and CI continues to expand efforts to diversify our staff across the organization.

Indigenous representation on the CI Board helps to elevate human rights concerns within the institution and among other Board members, who are influential in their own right. Kayapó leader Megaron Txucarramae and current Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, have both served as CI Board Members in recent years. We are currently in the process of seeking a new indigenous Board Member.

Since 2009, CI has benefited from an Indigenous Advisory Group comprised of five indigenous leaders from Asia, Africa and Latin America. The purpose of this group is to advise on indigenous peoples' rights when working on topics related to climate, biodiversity and indigenous rights. This expert group has advised several CI projects that involve government and civil society partners and contributed to the creation of [CI's Guidelines for Applying FPIC](#), which are publicly available. The current Indigenous Advisory group (IAG) recently reviewed this guideline and forwarded concrete recommendations towards making them stronger and more relevant, and these recommendations are currently being incorporated into an updated version of CI's FPIC guidelines.

Policy Engagement

In our interactions with governments, the rights of indigenous peoples are considered when developing CI policy positions to be used in key policy arenas such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the UN Permanent Forum on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNPFII). CI acts as an advisor to governments, providing analysis, data, and policy options before and during the negotiations, while some members of CI staff work closely with or are on national delegations. CI's influence is often behind the scenes through advice to leading policy makers in the climate and biodiversity arenas, and as a result it does not often translate into public attribution though we are often called upon to advise the development of national level plans that directly support international obligations.

CI has also acted as a trusted advisor to indigenous leaders at the global and regional levels on issues related to indigenous interests in climate change negotiations and climate finance. This historic partnership with indigenous peoples has enabled us to jointly highlight community solutions to climate change and natural resource management, solutions that are often obscured at the international level. We also host climate change trainings for indigenous peoples at major UNFCCC meetings, helping to ensure that these community representatives can engage country delegates with the most up-to-date information on the state of the negotiations vis-à-vis indigenous rights. For example, CI hosted the 3rd DGM global exchange for indigenous peoples and local community leaders and hosted, together with the IIPFCC, a panel with key government climate negotiators in Katowice, Poland in preparation for the UNFCCC COP24.

Over the years, CI has engaged the World Bank Group and other multilateral finance institutions on indigenous peoples safeguards within their policy frameworks. In addition to providing input into the creation of the GEF Indigenous Peoples Principles and the GCF Gender and Indigenous Peoples Policies, CI endeavors to shape the safeguard policies of these entities and their clients through implementation of our own GEF and GCF Agency safeguard policies, founded on CI's RBA. We believe it is the best way to not only do no harm, but also to do the most good for the environment and human well-being.

Internal Processes

In addition to internally-focused requirements, CI contracts and internal processes obligate our civil society partners to certain human rights standards and define how we work with partners. For example, CI has developed contracts that specifically recognize indigenous peoples' rights over their traditional knowledge. This is especially important when CI and partners are creating products such as case studies and training tools together. Additionally, our ethics review process provides the checks and balances necessary to ensure rights are protected in all research involving human subjects, including indigenous peoples. When such research is conducted together with partners, they, too, must submit to an ethical review in order to create protections for traditional knowledge and personal information, ensure consent, and establish transparent protocols. Finally, CI's accreditation as implementing agencies of the Global Environment Facility and Green Climate Fund was made possible by our Rights-based Approach policies, which meet donor requirements and create obligations for all subsequent grantees under those Agencies.

In 2018, we developed and proposed a system to improve CI's accountability to its RBA and safeguard policies. It includes checks and balances and a draft Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), a

recognized tool for ensuring that adverse social and environmental impacts are avoided or appropriately mitigated and compensated for in projects. While the system is still under review internally, we are building awareness of the accountability system and advising interested staff on its application. Improved accountability to our RBA is always a win for communities and conservation.

Good Practice

The following are a sampling of good practice examples within CI, addressing a host of different issues relevant and important to indigenous peoples.

Addressing Full and Effective Participation

CI uses multiple tools and processes to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in our activities, and while some projects may still rely on ad hoc procedures, we are working towards a systematic approach across all CI programs. Chief among these tools and processes are CI's FPIC Guidelines, Gender Guidelines and tools for robust stakeholder engagement (see above). Additionally, CI's established ethical review process ensures that rights are respected when humans, including indigenous peoples, are the subjects of research.

Within these established methods, there is room for creativity. In South Africa, for example, dance and drama are traditional ways of communicating and passing on lessons in communities. Therefore, the CI team there developed an innovative way of using dance and drama to adapt the FPIC guidelines to the local context.

Under the banner of the project Widening Informed Stakeholder Engagement for REDD+ (WISE REDD+), we also enhanced and scaled-up ongoing stakeholder engagement in five developing tropical forest countries (Costa Rica, Kenya, Peru, Suriname and Vanuatu) that are participants in the global Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). As a testament to the importance of this work, the WISE REDD+ project led to a meaningful and unprecedented partnership between the six tribal communities of Suriname to join forces and determine their development path by forming the South Suriname Conservation Corridor in March 2015.

Challenges to achieving full and effective participation do still exist, including lack of an organization-wide monitoring and evaluation system, instability at the national or local government level and even tensions within communities.

Complaint Mechanisms

- **EthicsPoint**: CI employs a hotline called EthicsPoint as its primary complaint mechanism for illegal or unethical behavior. This resource provides employees, grantees, and other partners and beneficiaries with a globally accessible, multilingual reporting tool that gives the ability to report incidents while maintaining the individual's anonymity and confidentiality. It is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by logging on to www.ci.ethicspoint.com or by dialing a toll-free number from anywhere in the world where CI works that can be found on the website. The EthicsPoint Hotline is provided by Navex, a third party specializing in ethics and compliance.
- **DGM Grievance Redress Mechanism**: In the role of Global Executing Agency for the DGM, CI facilitates the implementation of a grievance redress mechanism and complaint procedure on behalf of the DGM Global Steering Committee, comprised primarily of indigenous peoples and local communities.

The DGM has set a unique precedent: Indigenous peoples and local communities across 13 countries operate grievance redress mechanisms in ways that incorporate customary decision-making and conflict resolution procedures already existing in most indigenous territories. The Grievance Mechanism for the Global Project can be accessed anonymously, by email, phone, or through a secure web portal, located [here](#).

- [Mecanismo de Atención Ciudadana \(MAC\)](#): In Peru, CI and the development organization Helvetas are supporting the national government in the design and pilot of a grievance mechanism known as MACREDD+, or *mecanismo de atención ciudadana (MAC)* in Spanish. Designed to complement existing legal mechanisms for complaints, the mechanism addresses stakeholder claims related to REDD+ while also considering the risks for REDD+ actors, particularly indigenous peoples and forest dependent communities.

These emerging good practice examples in grievance redress, several of which have been led by indigenous peoples, will influence the design of further project- level mechanisms within CI and elsewhere.

[Integration of Customary Practice and Worldviews](#)

CI integrates the customary practices and worldviews of indigenous peoples into our conservation policies and programs in a number of ways, all of which rely on strong partnerships with indigenous peoples from the outset. Our Indigenous Peoples Policy specifically states that “we respect the right of indigenous peoples to their governance systems, including their traditional and customary decision-making, representatives and authorities.” With respect to traditional knowledge, it further states that, “we respect the right of indigenous peoples to their traditional indigenous knowledge and practices that form their cultural heritage and intellectual property and that are important for the sustainable management of lands, territories and natural resources.”

Our conservation programs demonstrate how this policy works in practice. Since 2003, CI’s Indigenous and Traditional Peoples Program and our field programs have focused specifically on collaborations with indigenous peoples, working to enhance our engagements by creating a common agenda that incorporates their needs, desires, rights and worldview. The projects highlighted below provide examples of this work:

- [Indigenous Leaders Conservation Fellowship](#): With this fellowship, CI creates opportunities for indigenous leaders to explore solutions to the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss using the traditional knowledge of the men and women in their communities. Some of the research findings have been important inputs for national and international policy making processes, including the Inter-governmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.
- [Kayapó Fund](#): Created in 2011 through an initial donation from CI and Amazon Fund/BNDES of US \$8 million, the Kayapo Fund is the first trust fund exclusively dedicated to the long-term support of the Kayapó indigenous peoples in the southeastern Amazon region of Brazil. Managed by Fundo Brasileiro para a Biodiversidade (FUNBIO), the Fund provide grants to Kayapo organizations representing 9,000 people and 54 villages to help conserve an area of 10.6 million hectares, about 3 percent of the Amazon.

Grants from the Kayapo Fund support The Kayapo’s ability to increase monitoring and enforcement against illegal resource extraction in their territory well into the future and to foster sustainable productive activities such as Amazon nuts, tonka beans and traditional handicraft production and commercialization. The fund also supports the strengthening of the three main Kayapo organizations: Associação Floresta Protegida, Instituto Raoni e Instituto Kabu that together cover over 80% of Kayapo communities. In 2019 the third grant cycle will come to an end. The Fund has already provided almost R\$ 5.5 million for the conservation of Kayapo territories through the support of their organizations.

- [Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities \(DGM\)](#): The DGM is an innovative grant program for fighting forest loss by putting project design and funding decisions in the hands of indigenous peoples and local communities. In CI’s role as the DGM Secretariat, we provide support to the DGM program leadership to increase the indigenous influence over REDD+ decision making and other relevant forest policies. By strengthening this global governance mechanism, CI seeks to further legitimate and scale up support for the various indigenous approaches to land and natural resource management that have already contributed significantly to climate mitigation.

CI has been implementing the DGM Global project since 2015, and after three years, the DGM has 11 steering committees with 133 IPLC leaders; 9 active projects with US\$ 50 million in approved budgets; 209 Community-led Subprojects and more than 100,000 beneficiaries. Through our training efforts, 90% of exchange participants reported strengthened engagement with relevant networks, 93% reported increased knowledge of key issues related to forests and climate change, and 100% reported strengthened skills through engagement with the DGM. For more information, please review the December [2018 annual report for the Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities \(DGM\)](#).

- [Nia Tero](#): As a founding partners, CI was instrumental in the initial design, development and consultation around the new organization Nia Tero. While still a new organization, Nia Tero works in areas where indigenous peoples manage, maintain and hold rights to large-scale ecosystems within their collective territories. They support existing and potential systems of governance that can secure successful guardianship of these territories.
- [Sustainable Fisheries Work with Hawaiian Communities](#): In Hawai'i, CI works with fishing communities and policymakers to help Hawai'i's fish populations thrive. At the community level, CI Hawai'i supports responsible fishing and traditional knowledge sharing by engaging local fishers and funding educational family fishing camps. At the state level, we have worked with the Department of Land and Natural Resources to launch a Community Fisheries Enforcement Unit, which spurred a 90% compliance rate with fishing regulations in a patrol area around the island of Maui.
- [South Africa's Wild Coast and the Pondo people](#): CI Fellow Sinegugu Zukulu engaged in the legal case related to South Africa's Wild Coast and the Pondo people. This ruling recognizes the community's right to say no to unsustainable development, as well as the ability to reject applications from new applicants proposing the same mining activities, which is and has been both disruptive and divisive for the community.
- [Supporting Indigenous rights and territory in Bolivia](#): Through our collaborations with Tacana, T'simane, Uchupiamonas , Lecos – Apolo and Esse – Ejja peoples we have supported training on indigenous peoples rights at the national and international level, and supported the development of life plans. We have also supported the titling of 400,000 hectares of the T'simane – Mosekene territory and the titling of 500,000 hectares of the Lecos – Apolo indigenous territory, and promoted indigenous economy in San José de Uchupiamonas through the development of the [Chalalan Ecolodge](#). Through their income from the Ecolodge, the community paid directly for the titling of 210,000 hectares of land.
- [Collaborations with Indigenous Networks and Organizations](#):
 - [Indigenous Peoples Coordinating Committee of Africa \(IPACC\)](#): CI has collaborated with IPACC on climate policy, train the trainer programs, and is currently supporting the development of their gender strategy.
 - [Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin \(COICA\)](#): CI and COICA have an MOU that focuses on capacity building for fundraising, information about CI field activities; land tenure analysis: institutional strengthening and indigenous economy over the next 3 years.
- [Indigenous Negotiations](#): Recently, the Indigenous and Traditional Peoples Program, with input from the IAG and partners has begun a training program on indigenous negotiations. This is in recognition of the fact that indigenous communities are being forced to negotiate with development actors, despite lacking the necessary skill set. The aim is to ensure that communities have the skills to negotiate meaningful agreements that uphold their rights, including the rights to say “no”. Two regional exchanges have taken place: Africa in July 2018 and Asia in January 2019, with another one planned for Peru.

Influencing Governments

CI strives to positively impact State partners at all levels, from the policy arena to joint projects on the ground. At the policy level, we promote our [FPIC guidelines](#) within fora such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and include respect for indigenous rights in our institutional policy positions, among work outlined earlier in this submission.

On the ground, CI often works with governments to advance joint projects with indigenous peoples. In Guyana, such collaboration resulted in the creation of [Guyana's first Community Owned Conservation Area \(C.O.C.A.\)](#), which is now the largest protected area in the country and managed exclusively by an indigenous group. This brings more than one million acres of rainforest under sustainable management while ensuring the continued development of the Wai Wai people and their traditional way of life.

In Ecuador, the forests are home to millions of people and species and help stabilize climate change. Through the [Socio Bosque program](#), we are helping to reduce deforestation while also alleviating poverty and strengthening communities. CI provides technical support for Ecuador's Ministry of Environment to implement the Socio Bosque program across the country. We work with local nonprofits and indigenous communities to sign voluntary, 20-year conservation agreements that provide economic incentives for forest conservation. In turn, indigenous communities and other signatories receive direct economic incentives to conserve their native forests. Learning from the Socio Bosque experience, other countries such as Brazil, Peru and Bolivia are establishing similar national-level incentive programs.

Early lessons related to the [DGM](#) objective of increasing effective IPLC participation in national level decision making on REDD+ policy indicates that there is no one size fits all approach or solution. Because the prevailing context of dialogue and trust between governments and indigenous peoples varies considerably across the 14 DGM countries, it is difficult to generalize about good practice for promoting IP right to participate and benefit from REDD+ policy. Some National Steering Committees such as Brazil have adopted a Committee Structure that includes government representatives as decision makers, while others such as DRC have limited governments to the role of observer. In Lao PDR, the government has not facilitated the DGM in that country to move forward. Still, outreach to government agencies, directly or indirectly, in nearly every DGM country by the transitional or national steering committees is taking different routes to establish independence without ignoring the critical influence the state has on the program's goals. CI will continue to document the different approaches to DGM engagement of stakeholders, governmental and otherwise, to show how these relationships factor into the increased indigenous and local community participation in policy decisions related to their forests.

Working with government actors to ensure respect for indigenous rights also brings unique challenges. First and foremost, our partnerships with indigenous peoples are cultivated over years and built on trust and decision-making power; sometimes governments fail to meet community expectations on both counts. With respect to FPIC, some governments have committed to ensuring this principle, but significant variation in the quality of implementation exists. It must also be recognized that CI works in countries at the invitation of the host government. This means that we can jeopardize our status in the country if we fail to address State concerns or engage them as a real stakeholder. With respect to funding, eligibility issues keep emerging sources of funds largely out of reach for indigenous groups to scale up innovative, self-managed projects. Finally, the international policy framework is shifting, with new actors pressing to weaken hard-won policy achievements that favor indigenous rights, and presumed government champions on pro-indigenous policy wavering on best practice.

That said, CI excels as a convener: we bring together all relevant actors, foster discussion, and build consensus around possible solutions that are consistent with our mission and Rights-based Approach. Our ability to promote dialogue on difficult issues, provide up-to-date information and know-how for problem-solving on the ground, and access to resource people is what makes us an effective organization at the end of the day.

Conclusion

Conservation International would like to thank the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for the opportunity to share our experiences, best practice, gaps, and challenges related to our wide-ranging partnerships and collaborations with indigenous peoples. We express our willingness to provide additional examples of our work, connect the Secretariat to staff working directly with communities on the ground, provide introductions to our indigenous partners and offer our expertise and skills to work with the Special Rapporteur and members of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to address the difficulties that have been identified in working at the nexus of conservation and indigenous rights. Concretely, CI can assist the Special Rapporteur and Forum members when they conduct in-country visits, specifically in those places where CI has field offices. We can also work to pursue more active dialogues with governments and other partners in the areas where CI works. We have more than 30 years of experience working in multiple countries with diverse partners, and our ability to convene dialogues can generate positive outcomes for indigenous peoples and conservation at all scales. CI will also plan to share a more detailed summary of progress and outstanding challenges in building conservation approaches that promote and protect rights at the 18th session of the UNPFII this spring.