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The Quaker UN Office, located in Geneva and New York, represents Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers), an international non-governmental organization with General Consultative Status at the UN.

QUNO works to promote the peace and justice concerns of Friends (Quakers) from around the world at the UN and other global institutions. It is supported by the American Friends Service Committee, Britain Yearly Meeting, the worldwide community of Friends, other groups and individuals.

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QUNO Briefing Paper for the Climate Negotiations under the UNFCCC: The Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform

by Beatrice Liese

Quakers support Indigenous peoples' rights, based on our commitment to peace and justice. We recognise the historical and ongoing injustice faced by Indigenous peoples and the direct role historically played by Quakers in the genocide of Indigenous peoples. Today, Quaker support for Indigenous peoples in their struggles for justice has taken form at both the community, national and international level, including long-standing support to establish the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Over the years, QUNO has backed efforts to secure and strengthen the rights of Indigenous peoples, predominantly through supporting the work of the Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC). In the context of the climate negotiations, QUNO's Human Impacts of Climate Change programme advocates for human rights-based, urgent and ambitious climate action and raises up the voices of those most marginalized and vulnerable. We have been observers to the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform since its first meeting in 2018. For more information or to share comments and feedback, please contact: lfcook@quno.ch

Introduction

Indigenous peoples (IPs) and local communities are amongst those most vulnerable and least responsible for climate change. They also hold a key role in the climate response and are a crucial and courageous voice in the call for climate justice. An equitable and effective response to climate change must include Indigenous peoples' rights, knowledge and solutions.

Indigenous peoples' role has been recognised in a number of UN fora, such as the 2020 Human Rights Council Resolution on Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples that "recognised that IPs are among the first to

face the direct consequences of climate change” and also “the vital role they can play in addressing and responding to climate change.” The 2018 report on 1.5C degrees by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) also placed strong emphasis on the need to include IPs knowledge and representation.

During the 2015 climate negotiations in Paris, the Indigenous caucus – whose advocacy was based on regional consultations with Indigenous peoples across the world – lobbied for language concerning Indigenous issues. This resulted in the inclusion of language in the Paris Agreement that acknowledges that Parties’ actions to address climate change should “respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights” including the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities.

Within the international climate negotiations, Indigenous peoples have held a consistent and important presence. They were first recognised as an official constituency in 2001, which formalised their speaking rights and designated office space in the negotiations. The International Indigenous Peoples’ Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) was established in 2008 to develop unified negotiation positions. Today, Indigenous peoples’ engagement in the negotiations spans participation through the Indigenous Peoples caucus, non-governmental organisations and as members of delegations. It is crucial to recognise the participation of Indigenous peoples in these spheres as distinct from the participation of nonstate actors, based on their right to self-determination as affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

As a dispersed group with diverse characteristics based on the region where they have long-standing historical, cultural and political roots, local communities have faced challenges in self-organising to participate in international processes. This is especially the case given the lack of clear legal and policy frameworks for local communities’ participation. Key steps towards facilitating inclusion at the international level have recently occurred outside of the UNFCCC – including under the Convention on Biodiversity and the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants. These steps are now feeding into the representation of local communities in the climate negotiations.

The Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform

The Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP), established at the COP24 in Bonn in 2017, is a formal space in the UNFCCC for States and Indigenous peoples to meaningfully engage and partner in international climate policy making. The purpose of the LCIPP is “to support exchanging experience, knowledge sharing and accelerating the inclusion of Indigenous peoples and local communities” (UNFCCC, 2017). The LCIPP’s work is split into three, interrelated strands, these being:

1. *Knowledge*: creating a space for documenting and sharing best practice and experience, while “respecting the unique nature of and need to safeguard Indigenous and local community knowledge systems”;
 2. *Climate change policies and actions*: facilitating the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems and the engagement of IPs and local communities to inform climate change-related actions and policies; and
 3. *Capacity for engagement*: building the capacities of local communities and IPs to engage with the UNFCCC process, particularly in implementing the Paris Agreement. (UNFCCC, 2017)
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The Facilitative Working Group of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform

The Facilitative Working Group (FWG) is the committee which activates and supports the platform. This Working Group is made up of 14 representatives: 7 country representatives and 7 Indigenous representatives (one from each of the 7 world regions). The FWG is significant in that it is the only Constituted Body under the UNFCCC that includes both country and non-country representatives. It is also the only space within a United Nations body where Indigenous peoples are able to choose their Representatives and participate on an equal basis. This positioning gives Indigenous peoples – through the Representatives – the agency to shape the LCIPPs form and the work produced. Representatives are newly chosen every three years and are selected through an electoral process in each of the 7 regions.

What does Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) mean? Why is this relevant to the work of the LCIPP?

There is an expectation that the LCIPP's work is underpinned by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration affirms Indigenous peoples' self-determination – including the right to determine their own priorities and control how their lands and resources will be used – as a fundamental human right.

Free, prior and informed consent – often shortened to FPIC – establishes the right of IPs to determine their response to actions proposed by governments or corporations that could impact their lives, their lands and jurisdictions. This is important in the context of the climate negotiations as it gives protection to ensure that decisions are made by the Indigenous peoples involved in this process and that indigenous knowledge documented and shared via the platform is treated ethically and with respect.

The Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform offers an important model for what Indigenous peoples and local communities' engagement in decision-making at the international level may look like.

Ways to engage and further resources include:

- The LCIPP Web Portal: the portal features a resource hub that welcomes and features contributions from Indigenous peoples and local communities around the world.
- Meetings of the Facilitative Working Group: details of upcoming meetings can be found on the LCIPP web portal at lcipp.unfccc.int. Meetings are broadcast on the UN Climate Change - Events YouTube Channel.
- LCIPP Training Webinar series on Indigenous Knowledge: this series is also available on the UN Climate Change – Events YouTube channel.