

Statement by Astrid Schomaker Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

Theme: "Protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact"

9 August 2024

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On behalf of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, I am pleased to join this year's commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples to recognize the contribution of Indigenous Peoples to the protection of nature and the well-being of humanity.

Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact are custodians of biodiversity and rich cultural and linguistic diversity that nurtures human heritage.

Their close relationship with their natural environment, rooted in their traditional knowledge, provides important lessons the world must heed in promoting the conservation of biodiversity and in the mitigation of the impacts of climate change. But they must reckon with relentless encroachment on their territories and rising pressures that pose high risks to their lives, health, culture, resources and well-being.

Considering their intricate relationship with nature, tampering with their habitat jeopardizes their very existence and traditional ways of life, with dire consequences for forests and biodiversity.

Indigenous Peoples, in particular those in voluntary isolation and initial contact, have the inherent right to determine freely their own paths and to live free from forced assimilation or destruction of their culture.

As we commemorate this day, let us reflect on our responsibilities and actions to protect Indigenous Peoples' rights.

The Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity have a responsibility to safeguard their physical, cultural and territorial integrity, including their ancestral patterns of movement within their territories.









The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), which promotes a human rights approach in its implementation, recognizes the crucial role of Indigenous Peoples and, by extension, the rights of Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact, as custodians of biodiversity and as partners in its conservation, restoration and sustainable use.

The KMGBF includes targets to ensure that their rights including those over their traditional knowledge are truly respected and that their special relationship with their territories and lands is fully protected, in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

It is imperative that conservation policies respect their fundamental rights, including their autonomy, safeguarding their territories to preserve their traditional ways of life and cultural identities.

In our collective efforts to support and accelerate the implementation of the KMGBF, let us ensure that Indigenous Peoples' rights and cultural identities are fully respected, especially those of Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact.