



## Convention on Biological Diversity

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### **Subsidiary Body on Article 8 (j) and Other Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity Related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities**

#### **First meeting**

Panama City, 27–30 October 2025

Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

**In-depth dialogue: “Strategies for mobilizing resources to ensure the availability of and access to financial resources and funding, as well as other means of implementation, including capacity-building, development and technical support for indigenous peoples and local communities, including women and youth, to support the full implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework”**

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Note by the Secretariat

## **I. Introduction**

1. In its decision [X/43](#), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity decided to include a new agenda item for future meetings of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Intersessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity, entitled “In-depth dialogue on thematic areas and other cross-cutting issues”, in order to contribute to the incorporation of Article 8(j) and related provisions as a cross-cutting issue throughout the work undertaken under the Convention and its Protocols.

2. In its decision [16/5](#), the Conference of the Parties decided to establish a subsidiary body on Article 8(j) and other provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity related to indigenous peoples and local communities. The Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity Related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities replaces the Ad Hoc Open-ended Intersessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the

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\* [CBD/SB8J/1/1/Rev.1](#).

Convention on Biological Diversity, providing a permanent institutional space dedicated to the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities.

3. In its decision [16/7](#), the Conference of the Parties decided that the theme of the next in-depth dialogue shall be: “Strategies for mobilizing resources to ensure the availability of and access to financial resources and funding, as well as other means of implementation, including capacity-building, development and technical support for indigenous peoples and local communities, including women and youth, to support the full implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework”.<sup>1</sup>

4. The Conference of the Parties, at its sixteenth meeting, addressed the issue of access to funding for indigenous peoples and local communities in several decisions.

5. In decision [16/4](#), the Conference of the Parties adopted a programme of work on Article 8(j) and other provisions of the Convention related to indigenous peoples and local communities to 2030. The programme of work contains two specific tasks that focus on access, including direct access, to funding for indigenous peoples and local communities for the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity.

6. In decision [16/34](#), the Conference of the Parties recognized that indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth often lack adequate access to biodiversity finance. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties decided to implement Articles 21 and 39 of the Convention and address the global biodiversity finance gap by 2030, by inter alia, enhancing the provision of timely and accessible financial support to indigenous peoples and local communities.

7. In decision [16/2](#), the Conference of the Parties adopted modalities for operationalizing the multilateral mechanism for the sharing of benefits from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, including the Cali Fund. The Cali Fund will receive contributions from private sector entities using digital sequence information on genetic resources. Fifty per cent of the resources of the Cali Fund will be allocated for the self-identified needs of indigenous peoples and local communities, including women and youth.

8. The above-mentioned decisions, along with external reports and independent evaluations of funding for indigenous peoples and local communities,<sup>2</sup> point to a growing interest in the issue of access to funding and direct access to funding for indigenous peoples and local communities. An overview of various mechanisms and initiatives that have been adopted or implemented in relation to access to funding for indigenous peoples and local communities is provided below.

9. Indigenous peoples and local communities have emphasized the need for funding mechanisms that are accessible, transparent and aligned with their rights, priorities and governance systems. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, at its twenty-second session, urged all actors to ensure that climate and biodiversity financing is rights-based and directly accessible to indigenous peoples, through mechanisms designed and managed with their full and effective participation. The Permanent Forum also recommended that international and multilateral donors support indigenous-led funds and institutions as effective pathways for financing self-determined development and environmental stewardship.<sup>3</sup>

## II. Finance landscape for indigenous peoples and local communities

10. In decision [15/7](#), the Conference of the Parties decided to explore the current biodiversity finance landscape with a view to assessing gaps and overlaps and identifying opportunities to

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<sup>1</sup> A variety of terms are in use in the literature on funding with respect to indigenous peoples and local communities. For the purpose of clarity, the term “indigenous peoples and local communities”, as used in the present note, includes indigenous women and youth. The terminology used in the wider literature is maintained as is.

<sup>2</sup> Ford Foundation, Forest Tenure Funders Group and Indufor, *Forging Resilient Pathways: Scaling up Funding in Support of Indigenous Peoples’ and Local Communities’ Tenure and Forest Guardianship in the Global South* (April 2023).

<sup>3</sup> E/2023/43, paras. 24, 28 and 93.

strengthen, simplify and reform existing instruments to strengthen the current finance landscape for biodiversity. In line with that guidance, a study entitled *Exploration of the Biodiversity Finance Landscape* was undertaken and issued.<sup>4</sup>

11. According to the study, in the period 2015–2022, there was an overall positive trend in biodiversity-related official development finance. Data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reveal that biodiversity-related official development finance increased from \$10.5 billion in 2015 to 25.8 billion in 2022. Biodiversity-specific development finance from all sources rose from \$7.3 billion in 2015 to \$15.4 billion in 2022. Recent estimates for international private finance range between \$6.6 billion–13.6 billion per year and \$35 billion per year. Private finance is divided between contributions from philanthropic entities and the private sector (businesses) and includes financial flows mobilized by official development finance (for example, co-funding). Private philanthropic flows increased to \$700 million in 2022, while private finance mobilized alongside official development finance more than doubled, to \$1.8 billion in 2022. An important methodological challenge in calculating private finance is that data on private sector contributions are not readily available owing to a lack of common definitions and reporting frameworks, including the challenge of identifying the biodiversity component of private transactions.<sup>5</sup>

12. Similar challenges are encountered with respect to methodologies for calculating the share of biodiversity finance committed to indigenous peoples and local communities and their ability to either directly or indirectly access biodiversity finance. To address this challenge, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recommended that the OECD Development Assistance Committee “include a policy marker in its statistical system for the reporting of development aid to facilitate tracking of funding allocated for indigenous peoples across all sectors”.<sup>6</sup> The Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples recommended the tracking of funds allocated directly to indigenous peoples.<sup>7</sup>

13. In a OECD report entitled *A Decade of Development Finance for Biodiversity 2011–2020* (Paris, 2023), a keyword-based methodology was used to search for terms related to indigenous peoples and local communities in reports on biodiversity-related official development finance of members of the Development Assistance Committee. While it was highlighted in the report that providing funding to indigenous peoples and local communities could step up action, the need to support capacity to access, absorb and report on those funds was noted. According to the OECD report, indigenous peoples and local communities-related projects received little official development finance for biodiversity over 2011–2020, a total of \$275 million on average per year, representing 4 per cent of Development Assistance Committee members’ total biodiversity-related official development finance.<sup>8</sup>

14. The majority of funded activities focused on land tenure, governance, policy support and capacity development. In the OECD report, it was noted that, owing to high transaction costs, only a fraction of funds channelled through public sector and multilateral organizations towards indigenous peoples and local communities was managed by them or invested locally.

15. In a later report covering the period to 2022, OECD used an updated keyword methodology and found that the estimated share of biodiversity-related official development finance targeting indigenous peoples and local communities remained low, representing 6 per cent of Development Assistance Committee members’ total biodiversity-related official development finance in 2022, in line with past assessments. Most of this funding (56 per cent) corresponded to activities addressing

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<sup>4</sup> See document CBD/COP/16/INF/32.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 30–33 and 72–73.

<sup>6</sup> E/2023/43, para. 93. See also E/2024/43, para. 142.

<sup>7</sup> See A/HRC/54/31.

<sup>8</sup> Details of the methodology are provided in annex C of the report.

the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity as a main priority, underscoring the connections between indigenous peoples and local communities and nature.<sup>9</sup>

16. The OECD findings are in line with ongoing work conducted by the Rainforest Foundation Norway in partnership with the Rights and Resources Initiative. Their method uses a combination of keywords and a wider range of public data sources than OECD, notably the International Aid Transparency Initiative and additional data sets from philanthropic organizations. Recent work led by the Rights and Resources Initiative includes an online interactive Path to Scale Funding Dashboard which uses an advanced methodology to track funding relating to tenure and forest guardianship by indigenous peoples and local communities.<sup>10</sup>

17. The creators of the Path to Scale Funding Dashboard have recently reported that funding for what they describe as tenure rights and forest guardianship for indigenous peoples, local communities and Afro-descendant peoples has averaged \$517 million per year since 2020, representing a 36 per cent increase over the average for the preceding four years. In the report it is observed that the increasing trend holds across geographies and donor types, underscoring a robust and growing commitment of funders to supporting the rights and efforts of indigenous peoples, local communities and Afro-descendant peoples to safeguard the world's forests.<sup>11</sup>

### **III. Technical overview of initiatives that address access to funding, including direct funding, for indigenous peoples and local communities**

#### **A. Global Biodiversity Framework Fund**

18. In 2023, at the request of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its fifteenth meeting, the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund was established by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to support implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The Global Biodiversity Framework Fund can receive contributions from public, philanthropic and private sector sources. The operation of the Fund involves streamlined procedures to provide efficient and impactful support for developing countries towards achieving biodiversity goals. The Global Biodiversity Framework Fund provides an opportunity to receive funding from all sources, quickly disbursed through streamlined procedures, with enhanced access for indigenous peoples and local communities, according to their own priorities.

19. In 2025, under the second work programme for the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund, an amount of \$25 million was requested and an indicative \$42.5 million in co-financing for three projects in five countries in Central Africa and Peru was leveraged. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a project with a value of \$5.8 million and \$12 million in co-financing is focused on community-based conservation for biodiversity and livelihoods in the context of climate change (GEF project identifier 11590). The Twa indigenous people will play a central role in stewardship involving restoration, conservation and sustainable use and promote the creation of indigenous-led sustainable businesses among 50,000 members of Twa communities. Also in Central Africa, a regional project was approved focusing on improving access to forest resources and participation of indigenous peoples in the context of strengthening the management of the Sangha Tri-National landscape, whose area covers over 4.4 million hectares (ha).<sup>12</sup> The third project (GEF project

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<sup>9</sup> OECD, *Biodiversity and Development Finance 2015–2022* (Paris, 2024), p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> See Rainforest Foundation Norway, “Falling short: donor funding for indigenous peoples and local communities to secure tenure rights and manage forests in tropical countries (2011–2020)” (2021); and Right and Resources Initiative, Path to scale methodology, available at <https://dashboard.pathtoscale.org/methodology>.

<sup>11</sup> Rights and Resources Initiative and Rainforest Foundation Norway, “State of funding for tenure rights and forest guardianship: donor funding for indigenous peoples, local communities and Afro-descendant peoples in tropical forested countries (2011–2023)” (April 2024).

<sup>12</sup> See GEF, “Community-based conservation for biodiversity and livelihoods”, *GBFF in Focus* (9 June 2025); and GEF, “Collaborating across borders in Central Africa”, *GBFF in Focus* (9 June 2025). The Sangha Tri-National project, valued at 7 million dollars, will seek to address the systemic exclusion of an estimated 5,500 mainly hunter-gatherer indigenous peoples in

identifier 11595), in northern Peru, with a value of \$11.2 million and co-financing of \$30 million, will apply the ecosystem approach in the Northern Transversal Economic Corridor of that country. The project will support the development and implementation of life plans for indigenous peoples and create sustainable bioeconomic opportunities.<sup>13</sup>

20. Furthermore, under the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund, an effort has been initiated to develop guidelines for the tracking and reporting of Framework Fund resources to support actions by indigenous peoples and local communities, including a consultation process.<sup>14</sup> This is in line with the guidance provided by the Conference of the Parties to the financial mechanisms, in which the Conference of the Parties specifically invited the GEF to explore ways to further improve, facilitate access to and increase direct funding for indigenous peoples and local communities.<sup>15</sup>

## **B. Cali Fund**

21. The Cali Fund forms part of an innovative mechanism through which companies that directly or indirectly benefit from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources and pass a threshold, determined by the Conference of the Parties in its decision [16/2](#), should voluntarily contribute an indicative rate of 0.1 per cent of sales or 1 per cent of revenue to the fund. The Cali Fund, which is hosted by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, is the first international fund that depends entirely on contributions from the private sector. The fund will allocate at least 50 per cent of funding towards the self-identified needs of indigenous peoples and local communities.

## **C. Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean**

22. The Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean is an intergovernmental organization established in 1992 during the Second Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Madrid. The Indigenous Peoples Fund consists of 22 member States in Latin America and Belgium, Portugal and Spain. The governing bodies of the Fund are composed equally of representatives of Governments and indigenous peoples. Under the 2018 Ibero-American Action Plan for the Implementation of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Sumaq Kawsay Indigenous Cooperation Initiative, the Fund has provided direct access to finance in seven priority areas including: organizational strengthening, indigenous youth, economic development with identity, intercultural health, empowerment of indigenous women, humanitarian aid and climate finance. The information available for project areas such as indigenous languages suggests that individual project finance is likely to be in the range of \$5,000–\$20,000.<sup>16</sup>

## **D. United Nations Development Programme-implemented GEF Small Grants Programme**

23. Over the past three decades, GEF has provided more than \$26 billion and mobilized \$149 billion in co-financing for more than 5,000 national and regional projects. Established shortly after the establishment of GEF, the Small Grants Programme provides non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities with access to finance. From 1992 to 2019, the Small Grants Programme invested about \$163 million to implement 5,832 projects that have benefited indigenous peoples. This represents 37 per cent of all project-level small grants for countries participating in the Small Grants Programme where indigenous peoples are present. Following a pattern similar to that for other Small Grants Programme projects, 54 per cent of all project grants involving indigenous peoples were more than \$25,000 and 46 per cent were less

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the Sangha Tri-National by securing their participation in governance of the Sangha Tri-National across different levels including the Sangha Tri-National trust fund (GEF identifier 11609).

<sup>13</sup> GEF, “Work program for the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund” (17 April 2025, GEF/GBFF.04/02), pp. 11–13.

<sup>14</sup> See GEF, “Progress report on the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF)” (6 May 2025, GEF/GBFF.04/03). The initiative includes the initial creation and testing of templates to identify: (a) activities directed towards indigenous peoples and local communities and (b) activities carried out by indigenous peoples and local communities.

<sup>15</sup> Decision 16/33 of the Conference of the Parties, para. 32.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, [www.filac.org/iniciativas/lenguas-indigenas/](http://www.filac.org/iniciativas/lenguas-indigenas/).

than \$25,000, with an average grant award size that was slightly larger, at \$27,945. In total, the Small Grants Programme delivered \$600 million in grants to civil society organizations and partners in 133 countries in the period leading up to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the programme. In addition, successive phases of the Small Grants Programme have combined resources from a range of donor countries and foundations.<sup>17</sup>

24. The Small Grants Programme is intended to be decentralized and country-driven in order to recognize the different contexts and realities of the various countries. This is an important design feature of the Programme which is achieved through a combination of locally staffed country programmes led by a national coordinator who is accountable to a national steering committee comprising volunteers.<sup>18</sup>

25. Activities under the Small Grants Programme have focused on supporting indigenous peoples in accordance with the norms and guidelines of the United Nations system and GEF. Regular consultations with indigenous peoples and local communities have been organized in the context of implementation of the Small Grants Programme and focal points for indigenous peoples and local communities' have been designated with the GEF Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group.

## **E. International Fund for Agricultural Development**

26. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is a specialized agency of the United Nations established in 1977 to address hunger and poverty in rural areas in developing countries. From 2006 onward, the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility has provided project support in the amount of \$20,000–\$50,000 for projects designed and implemented by indigenous peoples and in 2009 adopted a policy on engagement with indigenous peoples. A 2023 independent assessment of the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility revealed that it had received 4,200 project proposals from 90 countries since 2007 and had financed 159 projects in over 45 countries, with a total of \$5.1 million provided by IFAD, philanthropic organizations and Governments. At the start of the sixth funding cycle in 2022, \$3.3 million had been committed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Packard Foundation.<sup>19</sup>

## **F. Inclusive Conservation Initiative**

27. In 2022, during the seventh replenishment of the GEF trust fund, GEF launched the Inclusive Conservation Initiative in partnership with Conservation International and the International Union for Conservation of Nature with an initial \$22.5 million budget and expected \$90 million in co-finance. The objective of the Inclusive Conservation Initiative is to enhance the capacity of indigenous peoples and local communities in stewarding land, water and natural resources across 7.5 million ha of landscape, seascapes and territories. It is intended that 79 per cent of project funds will go directly to 10 indigenous peoples and local communities-led organizations which will act as executing agencies for subprojects. The governance structure is composed primarily of representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities. Fiduciary oversight is provided by Conservation International and the International Union for Conservation of Nature with a significant focus on capacity-building. A range of safeguard policies and processes relating to topics such as gender awareness have been put in place, a practice that the Initiative has in common with the Small Grants Programme.

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<sup>17</sup> See GEF, “The GEF at a Glance”, June 2025; and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), “Small Grants Programme: 25 years of engagement with Indigenous Peoples” (2020), pp. 7 and 16.

<sup>18</sup> By design, a national steering committee must be made up of a majority of participants from a range of civil society organizations, including academia and indigenous peoples organizations, as well as the private sector, and government representatives. The national steering committee is responsible for preparing the country programme strategy and reviewing and approving project proposals. The national steering committee elects its own chair, normally from among non-governmental organization members, with the UNDP country office serving as the secretariat.

<sup>19</sup> See Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility, “Assessment of the performance of the fifth IPAF cycle: summary” (Rome, IFAD, 2023).

28. In 2024, it was reported that phase two of the Inclusive Conservation Initiative included the signing of direct finance agreements in the amount of \$14.5 million with 10 indigenous peoples and local communities-led initiatives across 12 countries, with funding volumes of \$1 million–\$2 million per project. Eighty per cent of this funding was allocated directly to indigenous peoples and local communities. The governance arrangements include 10 indigenous peoples and local communities-led governance committees, 10 indigenous peoples and local communities-led gender action plans and full engagement with updates to national biodiversity strategies and action plans on the national level. A total of 17,123 partners and beneficiaries have reportedly been engaged so far and the project portfolio encompasses 7.6 million ha of landscapes and seascapes. As part of phase 2 of the Inclusive Conservation Initiative under the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund, a Heart of Conservation Initiative has been established and will be implemented by the World Wide Fund for Nature. In June 2025, a call for expressions of interest from indigenous peoples and local communities organizations was issued for projects of \$1 million–\$2 million between 2026 and 2030. Projects are linked to the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.<sup>20</sup>

### **G. United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries**

29. The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD), a flagship United Nations initiative that was launched in 2008, is a partnership between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). A number of donors, led by Norway, the European Commission, Denmark, Japan, Luxembourg, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have contributed to a multi-donor trust fund. The Collaborative Programme has passed through three phases since its launch, including on the development and formal adoption of an agreement on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+) at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in 2010, which expanded the scope of the Collaborative Programme. The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries has supported the development of national strategies in at least 65 countries in Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America. With respect to volume, it has been reported that the Collaborative Programme has channelled or mobilized over \$1 billion since its inception. A total of 30 countries are reported to have adopted participatory and socially inclusive REDD+ processes involving indigenous peoples and local communities, including an emphasis on women. The Collaborative Programme set an important precedent among climate initiatives by including dedicated participation for indigenous peoples and civil society in its Policy Board.<sup>21</sup>

30. From 2014 to 2017, the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries and the GEF Small Grants Programme implemented the Community-based-REDD+ (CBR+) initiative under which a total of \$8 million in grants was disbursed. The initiative operated in six countries: Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay and Sri Lanka. It funded over 100 community projects implemented by indigenous peoples and non-governmental organizations focusing on sustainable livelihoods, community forestry and local monitoring. The Community-based REDD+ initiative led to an increase in dedicated support for indigenous peoples and local communities, including the creation of consultative platforms and participation in decision-making

<sup>20</sup> See Conservation International and International Union for Conservation of Nature, “Inclusive Conservation Initiative: a focus on inclusive finance – phase two report” (Washington, DC, 2024), pp. 1 and 12; Conservation International and International Union for Conservation of Nature, “Spearheading inclusive conservation: phase one report” (Washington, DC, 2023); and World Wide Fund for Nature Call for expressions of interest: Heart of Conservation Initiative (2025), available at [www.worldwildlife.org/pages/wwf-gef-expressions-of-interest](http://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/wwf-gef-expressions-of-interest).

<sup>21</sup> See FAO, UNDP and UNEP, *15<sup>th</sup> Consolidated Annual Progress Report of the UN-REDD Programme Fund* (2023), available at [www.un-redd.org/](http://www.un-redd.org/). See also [www.un-redd.org/about/our-impact](http://www.un-redd.org/about/our-impact) for information on impact of the UN-REDD Programme.

on REDD+ (for example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Panama). Precise figures on Collaborative Programme country programme budget lines for indigenous peoples and local communities are difficult to establish but an emphasis on stakeholder engagement has been an important feature of the Collaborative Programme, including in the 2013 guidelines on free, prior and informed consent. Programme activities are guided by the United Nations-wide policy framework noted above in connection with GEF and the Small Grants Programme. Engagement of the Collaborative Programme with indigenous peoples and local communities provided an important foundation for the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Tenure Pledge signed at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.<sup>22</sup>

## H. Green Climate Fund

31. The Green Climate Fund was established by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its sixteenth session in 2010 to channel climate finance to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation. The Fund, which mobilized over \$10 billion in its initial funding round, supports projects through grants, loans, equity and guarantees through accredited entities. A total of \$16.8 billion is currently listed as committed and a sum of \$5.7 billion, linked to 297 projects with national designated authorities or focal points in 133 countries, has reportedly been disbursed. Projects are implemented by accredited entities of various types. The Green Climate Fund has followed a model similar to that of GEF through a process of consultation and, later, adoption of a policy on indigenous peoples (2017–2018) and the establishment of an Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group.

32. In 2025, the Independent Evaluation Unit of the Green Climate Fund published its independent evaluation of the approach of the Green Climate Fund to indigenous peoples. While it was estimated that 128 projects included activities relevant to indigenous peoples, it was not possible to identify the precise number of indigenous peoples that were beneficiaries or the exact amount of finance directed to them. In the evaluation, it was determined that the Green Climate Fund was “the only major multilateral climate fund without a specific mechanism or commitment to support indigenous peoples”.<sup>23</sup>

## I. Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

33. The Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities was established in 2010 as a targeted initiative under the Forest Investment Program of the Climate Investment Funds to support the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in activities related to the Forest Investment Program. The Dedicated Grant Mechanism is funded by the World Bank, with Conservation International serving as the global executing agency. The Mechanism, which is led by representatives of indigenous peoples, follows a model similar to that of the GEF Small Grants Programme, which entails establishment of national steering committees and a Dedicated Grant Mechanism global steering committee which are supported by the national executing agencies. Those agencies manage administrative and fiduciary elements in accordance with World Bank standards. The national steering committees are responsible for grant making decisions which are then executed through the national executing agencies. Under this mechanism, a non-governmental organization or similar intermediary can execute a project on behalf of a national steering committee that represents the interests of indigenous peoples and local communities.

34. As of 2023, the Dedicated Grant Mechanism had been implemented in 12 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America and channelled over \$70 million directly to community-based forest

<sup>22</sup> See UNDP, “Raising forest voices: SGP community-based REDD+ Initiative” (2022); and UN-REDD Programme Secretariat, “Guidelines on free, prior and informed consent” (Geneva, January 2013).

<sup>23</sup> See Green Climate Fund Independent Evaluation, *Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Approach to Indigenous Peoples*, evaluation report No. 22 (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 2025). See also Green Climate Fund, *2021 Annual Results Report* (Incheon, Republic of Korea, March 2022).



stewardship initiatives led by indigenous peoples and local communities. The 2023 annual report refers to 915 subprojects and over \$23 million invested in community-led initiatives covering such areas as sustainable forestry, traditional medicines and land tenure. A notable feature of the Dedicated Grant Mechanism globally and nationally is the emphasis on the participation of women in decision-making.<sup>24</sup>

## **J. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Tenure Pledge**

35. At the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Glasgow, United Kingdom, in 2021, the Governments of Germany, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States of America led a coalition of what are currently 25 bilateral and philanthropic donor organizations in pledging \$1.7 billion of financing, from 2021 to 2025, to support the advancement of indigenous peoples and local communities' forest tenure rights and greater recognition and rewards for their role as guardians of forests and nature. Signatories to the pledge form the informal Forest Tenure Funders Group. While the Forest Tenure Pledge did not include a specific commitment to direct funding, improving direct funding has been a key focus of attention. Moreover, increasing attention is being paid to gender and youth.

36. In 2022, the Forest Tenure Funders Group provided \$464 million in what is called “pledge aligned” funding. Under that funding, approximately \$8.1 million was provided directly to indigenous peoples and local communities. In 2023, \$521 million was provided and an estimated \$55 million was directly disbursed to indigenous peoples and local communities organizations, representing an increase from 2.1 per cent of total Pledge funds in 2022 to 10.6 per cent in 2023. Over 27 per cent of direct funding was provided by philanthropic organizations compared with 4 per cent from bilateral funding. In 2023, direct funding was provided to seven indigenous peoples and local communities-led funds which the Forest Tenure Funders Group described as “becoming critical pathways for directing resources to indigenous communities”. The number of indigenous peoples and local communities organizations receiving funds increased from 39 in 2022 to 100 in 2023. In 2023, 58 per cent of funds were distributed in Latin America, 33 per cent in Africa and 9 per cent in Asia-Pacific. The volume of funding increased significantly for Latin America and Africa in 2023 but remained static for Asia-Pacific. The key priorities for the final years of the pledge include: scaling direct funding; fostering more accountable funding mechanisms; and increasing support for underrepresented groups, in particular women, youth and environmental defenders.

37. In the 2022–2023 annual report of the Forest Tenure Funders Group, the President of the Ford Foundation, in his capacity as Chair of the Group in 2023, identified the following challenges associated with the insufficiency of funding, the inequitable nature of funding and inflexibility of funding: much of the existing climate finance remained stuck in complicated global funds; and sluggish bureaucratic systems and bottlenecks prevented rapid responses and released funding to indigenous peoples and local communities slowly.

38. Norway, as Chair of the Forest Tenure Funders Group in 2024, noted in the Forest Tenure Funders Group annual report for 2023–2024 that while donors' risk aversion and administrative requirements and grantees' limited legal and financial infrastructure continued to prevent many indigenous peoples and local communities organizations from accessing funds directly, those barriers were being addressed by identifying intermediaries that were more accountable to indigenous peoples and local communities and growing investments to help indigenous peoples and local communities organizations build their capacity to receive and manage funds.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> DGM Global, “Annual report 2023” (2024), pp. 2, 5 and 27. Available at [www.dgmglobal.org/blog/2024/10/dgm-annual-report](http://www.dgmglobal.org/blog/2024/10/dgm-annual-report).

<sup>25</sup> Forest Tenure Funders Group, *Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Tenure Pledge: Annual Report 2022–2023* (2023), pp. 6, 19 and 25; and Forest Tenure Funders Group, *Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Tenure Pledge: Annual Report 2023–2024* (2024), pp. 9, 10, 23, 28 and 29.

## K. Podong Indigenous Peoples Initiative

39. The Podong Indigenous Peoples Initiative aims towards recognizing, supporting and strengthening the contributions of indigenous peoples to biodiversity conservation and climate action, while ensuring their full leadership and access to adequate resources. The initiative is co-led and -designed by the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and indigenous peoples' organization members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature. At the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Global Affairs Canada announced an investment of 7 million Canadian dollars to support the first phase of actions under the Podong Indigenous Peoples Initiative. Those actions will include, inter alia: scaling up indigenous-led conservation in Guatemala, Nepal, Panama and the United Republic of Tanzania; contributing to national biodiversity strategies and action plans; supporting the participation of indigenous peoples, notably of women and girls, in global biodiversity forums; and establishing a working group on the design of an indigenous-led direct financing mechanism.<sup>26</sup>

## L. Direct access funds

40. An emerging development is the creation of mechanisms to provide direct access to funding. A variety of terms appear to be in use to describe those mechanisms, the most frequent being "Indigenous Led Funds" as well as "Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities-led funds", the term used by the Forest Tenure Funders Group. For the purpose of dialogue and with note being taken of potential sensitivities in the use of such terms, direct access mechanisms might be described as platforms or mechanisms established by coalitions or alliances of indigenous peoples and local communities organizations at different geographical scales (e.g. subnational, national, regional and global) for receiving and disbursing funding to indigenous peoples and local communities organizations and communities in accordance with priorities identified by representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities and accountable to them.<sup>27</sup>

41. In a 2024 report, the Rights and Resources Initiative and Rainforest Foundation Norway reviewed demand for funding by measuring the number of applications received relative to the number of projects funded for 10 indigenous funding mechanisms. Across the nine mechanisms issuing open calls for proposals, the median number of applications was 305. In contrast, the median value for the number of projects funded by the mechanisms was 49 (across a range from 10 [low] to 90 [high]). The available data suggest that there is a strong unmet demand for funding from indigenous peoples and local communities organizations on the front lines with respect to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and that methods could be further developed to promote an understanding of the level and nature of the demand for funding from indigenous peoples and local communities organizations.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See Government of Canada, "Project profile – Podong Indigenous Peoples Initiative" (CA-3-P014080001). Available at <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/project-projet/details/P014080001>.

<sup>27</sup> A number of examples of direct access mechanisms are emerging in different regions. The following illustrative list of mechanisms (containing information on date and place of establishment) encompasses: (a) Africa: Network of Indigenous and Local Populations for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa (Central Africa, 2003) and Maliasili (United States, 2010); (b) Asia: Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund (Asia, 2022) and Nusantara Fund (Indonesia, 2023); (c) Americas: Podáali Fund (Brazil, 2020), Mesoamerican Territorial Fund (established by the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests), Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples (United States, 1977) and Native Americans in Philanthropy (United States, 1989); (d) global-level funds: Pawanka Fund (2014), Global Greengrants Fund (community focused, 1993) and Global Greengrants Fund UK (community focused, 2015); and (e) funder networks/platforms: Shandia established by the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (2022), International Funders for Indigenous Peoples(2006) and Global Alliance of Indigenous Led Funds (established by International Funders for Indigenous Peoples, 2023).

<sup>28</sup> See Rights and Resources Initiative and Rainforest Foundation Norway, "State of funding for tenure rights and forest guardianship: donor funding for indigenous peoples, local communities and Afro-descendant peoples in tropical forested countries (2011–2023)" (April 2024). The reference data are found in table 3, entitled "Available funding for community-based projects" (p.12). Organizations may make open or closed calls for proposals. The Mesoamerican Territorial Fund, which uses closed calls for proposals, received 31 applications and made 22 grants. This mechanism is excluded from the calculation. The

## IV. Analysis and lessons learned

42. Over the last 30 years, experience, capacity and lessons have been generated in creating pathways to improve access to funding and, more recently, direct access to funding for indigenous peoples and local communities. While United Nations entities, bilateral donors and philanthropic organizations have contributed to these efforts, the engagement of the private sector remains limited.

43. This growing body of experience can usefully be viewed within the wider context of attempts by major funding bodies, notably the members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee, to identify pathways to locally led development cooperation using a peer learning or learning-by-example approach, where “locally led development means that local stakeholders should have agency for development cooperation: in framing; design; delivery, including control over resources; and accountability”.<sup>29</sup>

44. The concept of funding pathways is becoming increasingly prominent in assessing current barriers to supporting indigenous peoples and local communities.<sup>30</sup> This concept may prove useful in framing dialogue on improving access to funding for indigenous peoples and local communities through the focusing of attention on:

(a) The need to identify the actors involved at different scales and their roles, responsibilities and accountability (for example, major funders, intermediaries and indigenous peoples and local communities organizations);

(b) Practical actions that could be taken to improve access to funding for indigenous peoples and local communities in the short to medium term;

(c) The need for a strategic overview of opportunities, barriers, indicators and other issues that need to be addressed to improve access to funding over the medium to long term.

45. A set of key themes have emerged in the literature centring on funding pathways at different scales. These themes are: (a) levels of funding; (b) risk aversion on the part of public funders; (c) roles, responsibilities and accountability of intermediary entities (e.g. regranting and technical support) with respect to indigenous peoples and local communities; (d) financial (absorptive) and administrative capacity of indigenous peoples and local communities organizations; and (e) arrangements for longer-term funding.

### A. Lessons learned

46. There is a need for a clearer understanding of the global funding landscape for indigenous peoples and local communities. As is the case for the overall biodiversity finance landscape, information is fragmented and can be difficult to access. This suggests a need for further methodological development to improve the robustness of quantitative indicators on access to finance for indigenous peoples and local communities.

47. In this regard, a better understanding is needed of what activities constitute and qualify as direct access to funding for indigenous peoples and local communities. A better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different actors, including intermediaries, in funding pathways is also

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Nusantara Fund issues open calls for proposals but calls are confined to select partner organizations. One mechanism, Côte d’Ivoire – DGM, received thousands of applications which distorts the average. The median value is used to control for this.

<sup>29</sup> See OECD, *Pathways Towards Effective Locally Led Development Co-operation: Learning by Example* (Paris, 2024). See also OECD, “Peer learning on locally led development: DAC member deep dive – Ireland”, perspectives note (5 August 2024), p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> Ford Foundation, Forest Tenure Funders Group and Indufor, *Forging Resilient Pathways: Scaling up Funding in Support of Indigenous Peoples’ and Local Communities’ Tenure and Forest Guardianship in the Global South* (April 2023), p. 1. A funding pathway can be described as comprising the specific routes, mechanisms or channels through which financial resources flow from their sources to their intended use. In recent work to support Forest Tenure Funders Group donors in scaling up funding for indigenous peoples and local communities, a funding pathway has been defined as “a set of institutional relationships through which a donor deploys financial resources in order to achieve certain objectives”. In practice, a donor will typically fund a pathway anchored by a primary intermediary (potentially part of a chain of actors) which serves as the entry point for donor funding.

needed. The development of common principles and tools such as working definitions for a glossary of terms, guidelines and codes of conduct or similar tools could result in the creation of a platform for mutual understanding and shared action.<sup>31</sup>

48. Capacity is a cross-cutting theme which merits clarification, especially with respect to the ability of indigenous peoples and local communities to receive and administer funding (absorptive capacity) to meet funder requirements. Absorptive capacity is linked to scaling up and the creation of indigenous peoples and local communities fund mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels. However, capacity-building should not be reduced to financial or administrative capacity since capacity-building cuts across funding pathways and involves Governments and peer learning among funders regarding experiences and challenges encountered.<sup>32</sup>

49. The accountability of indigenous peoples and local communities organizations to their constituent communities has emerged as a key requirement for funding. Further, attention is increasingly being drawn to the accountability of intermediary organizations involved in funding pathways. It may be useful as a trust building measure to develop guidance material and tools for better defining common expectations and applicable standards in the context of accountability.

50. One of the challenges identified in the literature pertains to the need to move from project funding to long-term investments so as to allow funding provided to indigenous peoples and local communities to produce a greater impact.<sup>33</sup>

## **B. Possible elements for discussion**

51. The in-depth dialogue will involve presentations by a panel of experts, followed by an interactive dialogue between the panel and the participants in the meeting. On the basis of past practices, the outcomes of the in-depth dialogue will be annexed to the report of the meeting.

52. Participants may wish to consider the following questions:

(a) There are a growing number of initiatives, good practices and approaches aimed at improving access to funding for indigenous peoples and local communities. What are some key examples and lessons learned that can be derived with a view to enhancing the implementation of those practices, initiatives and approaches?

(b) What challenges do indigenous peoples and local communities face in relation to access to funding at different geographical scales and what can be done to address those challenges?

(c) In terms of capacity-building, what can be done to strengthen the capacity of indigenous peoples and local communities to absorb and manage funding at different scales? What are some current working models?

(d) How can funders address the often complex and burdensome application processes and reporting requirements? Are there models of good practices that could be followed to improve this situation?

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<sup>31</sup> See GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, “Strengthening GEF support for indigenous peoples: issues of governance, project design, financial access, and livelihood benefits”, STAP information note (May 2025). On guiding principles, see, for example, the annex to the study prepared for the twenty-third session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues entitled “Financing the future: the financial needs of Indigenous Peoples to support their actions for biodiversity, climate and the protection of Mother Earth” (E/C.19/2024/7). See also the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as set out in document A/HRC/54/31; the recommendations contained in the study entitled “International financial architecture and the rights of Indigenous Peoples” (E/C.19/2025/3), prepared for the twenty-fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; and the joint letter by the Chairs of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples (April 2025).

<sup>32</sup> Ford Foundation, Forest Tenure Funders Group and Indufor, *Forging Resilient Pathways: Scaling up Funding in Support of Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' Tenure and Forest Guardianship in the Global South* (April 2023).

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, CBD/COP/16/INF/32 (para. 108); and Ford Foundation, Forest Tenure Funders Group and Indufor, *Forging Resilient Pathways*.

## V. Recommendation

53. The Subsidiary Body may wish to recommend that, at its seventeenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopt a decision along the following lines:

*The Conference of the Parties,*

*Noting* that, at its first meeting, the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>1</sup> Related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities held an in-depth dialogue on the theme “Strategies for mobilizing resources to ensure the availability of and access to financial resources and funding, as well as other means of implementation, including capacity-building, development and technical support for indigenous peoples and local communities, including women and youth, to support the full implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework”,<sup>2</sup>

*Noting also* that element 8 of the programme of work on Article 8(j) and other provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity related to indigenous peoples and local communities to 2030<sup>3</sup> is aimed at promoting the implementation of the relevant targets of the Framework, in particular by supporting access, including direct access, to funding for indigenous peoples and local communities in the context of national policies, plans, projects, programmes or systems, as appropriate,

*Noting further* that the implementation of the programme of work on Article 8(j) and other provisions of the Convention related to indigenous peoples and local communities should follow a human rights-based approach,

1. *Invites* Parties and other relevant actors to take into account the outcomes of the in-depth dialogue held at the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity Related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to support efforts, in line with element 8 of the programme of work on Article 8(j) and other provisions of the Convention related to indigenous peoples and local communities, for the mobilization of financial resources for indigenous peoples and local communities, including women and youth among them, and to identify gaps, promote good practices and further explore options for the development or improvement of existing policies, mechanisms and other appropriate initiatives and measures to enhance access, including direct access, to funding, by indigenous peoples and local communities;

2. *Decides* that the theme of the next in-depth dialogue shall be “Strategies and tools to support the application of a human rights-based approach in the implementation of the programme of work on Article 8(j) and other provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity related to indigenous peoples and local communities to 2030 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework”.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

<sup>2</sup> Decision [15/4](#), annex.

<sup>3</sup> Decision [16/4](#), annex.