

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

On the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
9 August 2026

On the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, I am pleased to join the global community in honoring Indigenous Peoples, their knowledge systems and their contributions to the planet.

This year's theme invites us to recognize Indigenous midwives as guardians of life, well-being and cultural continuity.

Indigenous midwives are caregivers, knowledge holders and leaders. Their work connects birth, family, community, culture, nature and future generations.

Their work reminds us that Indigenous knowledge systems are living, dynamic and contemporary.

It also reminds us of the leadership of Indigenous women, the importance of transmitting knowledge across generations and the need to safeguard the conditions that allow Indigenous Peoples to thrive.

The knowledge of Indigenous midwives is part of these broader knowledge systems. It is place-based, culturally specific and rooted in relationships with territories, waters, biodiversity and traditional governance systems.

This recognition is closely connected to the work of the Convention. At COP 16, Parties adopted the Programme of Work on Article 8(j) and established the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j), marking an important step forward in the recognition of the traditional knowledge, contributions and participation of Indigenous Peoples.

At COP 17, Parties will consider the *modus operandi* of the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j), which is needed for the Subsidiary Body to become fully operational and to support the effective and inclusive implementation of the Programme of Work on Article 8(j).

On this day, let us honor Indigenous midwives by recognizing their knowledge, supporting their leadership and safeguarding the conditions that allow life, culture, biodiversity and well-being to flourish for generations to come.
