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Indigenous International Forum on Biodiversity in Ecuador

### Views from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities geoengineering research and governance

C2G2 Webinar on Geoengineering and Biological Diversity, November 2, 2017

I should like to start by remembering who are the indigenous peoples. We have ancestral rules; we have an ancestral culture and languages.

We are linked to the territories' land and waters. We consider ourselves as the children of Mother Earth. Why? Because she is the fundamental base for our culture and development. And of course, as indigenous peoples, we have a close and holistic relationship with Mother Earth, because in her is the development of our life and spirituality.

We are the guardians of the biodiversity and ecosystems. For doing this, we have our customary law which administrates and guides our life. For instance, we have laws for access to resources. We have specific community protocols. By using that, of course, we use the resources in a rational way. Before using anything, always we ask permission of the spirit of the Mother Earth and we make offerings and prayers.

As indigenous people, during the calendar year, we observe the agricultural cycle and the life cycle. Both of them are interrelated and have activities and different ceremonies. We use circular and cyclical time.

[Slide] Here you see the picture of Mother Earth, where, as indigenous peoples, we see everything is interconnected, interrelated. In the next figure you see the universe of the Andes.

[Slide] As I said before, Mother Earth for us is sacred in our life. Our universe has different worlds: the high universe, the center, and the low. Also, we follow the sacred directions: the north, south, east, west; the center, the above, and below.

Every plant, every animal, every being, in Mother Nature has a place, a role, and a spirit. As Dr. Cajete says, "All things are related and interconnected, everywhere and at all times."

We transmit our knowledge orally from one generation to another. And always we are defending our life, our collective rights, our genetic resources, and traditional knowledge. Every defense we do within the frame of self-determination.

[Slide] For us indigenous peoples we have our own epistemology, which include entire systems of knowledge and relationships with the cosmos, among people, and with the environment. Our epistemology refers to our cultural times, languages, stories, values, beliefs, spiritualities, and our places in the cosmos.

[Slide] Concerning this critical and unknown field for indigenous peoples, I would like to say that even the term "geoengineering" we don't know. That word doesn't exist in our languages.

I know, and maybe some other people, a few indigenous people, might know about this, maybe because we know a little more English, or maybe we have some time to read. From that we know that geoengineering is referring to a variety of techniques to solve climate change.

We know that there is research to create these technologies. I was reading about the implantation on plastic in the desert, about the ocean fertilization, about dams construction and mono-plantations. Also, we know that these are untested technologies.

In thinking on that, we know that some risks and damages are coming. For instance, for indigenous peoples already we see displacement from our lands and territories. By doing that we are losing the culture, we are losing the identity, and also we are losing the languages.

Also, with these kinds of experiments, we already know that they are causing disorder in our lives. For that we are saying this is a manipulation of the elements of Mother Earth with uncertain results. Also, we see that this is a field of business related with Western societies.

Of course, we keep thinking. Whenever I have to make a presentation, I always go to my community, I always go to my elders and to my network, and to other indigenous peoples, to find from there what might be the impacts.

We say that, of course, the impacts are on the three objectives of the CBD, particularly Articles 8(j), 10(c), and 15, on the Aichi targets, and of course on humankind and Mother Earth.

[Slide] We have been thinking about how to participate in this field. Our thinking is, generally speaking, we are very busy trying to survive. Every day we are looking for ways to overcome poverty, to overcome inequality and exclusion. So, we do not have resources or time to make or to participate in this kind of research.

So what we do is to follow the natural laws, to cohabitate all together in harmony. We follow the ancestral teachings and values, like caring, reciprocity, and solidarity, and we use our science and technology from ancestral times until now.

What we do is to observe deeply and closely Mother Nature. From that observation we know what to do and the reason for doing that. Until now, in this century, we are still calling the wind, we are still calling the rain, through the ceremonies and praying.

[Slide] Concerning the research, as indigenous peoples we would like to recommend the development of an intercultural governance. When we say that, of course we are asking for consultation with the whole community, with the elders. We are the ones who got the wisdom through the years.

- Also, to observe free, prior, and informed consent, to respect our right to the veto, as the Special Rapporteur for Indigenous People's Human Rights, and even the Pope, said, concerning our issues.
- The bio-cultural community protocols should be respected in this case related to research. There are certain things that the researchers, indigenous and non-indigenous, need to know about the kind of research.
- We need to have a deep dialogue, to have an agreement about how we are going to do this, if we are going to participate or not, or if we are going only to be of service, or what.
- The creation of a technical group for monitoring and evaluation.

- The inclusion of indigenous peoples, men and women.

What I am saying is we need to participate in these kinds of meetings, in face-to-face meetings, but for that we need the financial resources.

- We need also the translation. I keep thinking about my region, Latin America. We speak our languages and Spanish, the main language. If these kinds of discussions are in English or in French or in other languages, of course we are not going to be able to participate.

- In this kind of governance, also we are asking for capacity building for indigenous peoples at different levels. Of course, for doing that we need to use culturally appropriate tools, remembering that we are coming from oral tradition peoples.

[Slide] For this governance we need to know, to use, and to practice what is said in the national constitutions of every country; the customary law for indigenous peoples; the international conventions; the international instruments, like the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP). Also, we need to respect and include the traditional knowledge in climate change in other areas also.

As I said before, we need to be included in the deliberations and decision-making; also to include women's participation.

We keep thinking that it is the time now to really try to create, design, and develop sustainable development with identity to achieve the *Alli Kawsay* for all, which means the good life for all.

We keep thinking, and we say from our heart, that we need to have a healthy Mother Earth for future generations.

[Slide] In this regard, considering the time, we have some reflections.

For instance, indigenous peoples have been making experiments and innovation in a sustainable and respectful way for centuries.

Many elders from my region keep asking me, "Why are some human beings trying to dominate and destroy Mother Earth and her ecosystems?" Another question is: "How are humanity and Mother Nature going to survive with the effects of these unknown new technologies?"

We would like to know also if the geoengineering world is still dominated by men only.

Is the precautionary approach in use and also the *Ake Kon* Guidelines? We know that this is very important as indigenous peoples.

We would like to conclude by asking: would it be possible to collaborate with you in this field, because indigenous peoples want to work with you as partners in the frame of trust and respect?

Thank you very much.