

UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, seventeenth Session

New York, 16 April – 27 April 2018

Agenda Item 4:

*Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum
with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of
Indigenous Peoples*

Thursday 19th

**Joint Statement on the Strengthening of
Accountability and Redress Mechanisms for Indigenous Peoples in
the Context of Conservation Policies and Practices**

Jointly submitted by: Natural Justice (South Africa), Forest Peoples Programme (UK) Sengwer Indigenous Peoples Programme (Kenya), SwedBio (Sweden)

Madame Chairperson,

This statement is on behalf of Natural Justice, Forest Peoples Programme, SwedBio and the Sengwer Indigenous Peoples Programme. Over the last few years this group of organisations have individually and in partnership worked to highlight the historic and on-going injustices indigenous peoples face in the name of conservation.

We, the undersigned, therefore recommend that the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues undertakes the following work:

- 1 Convene an Expert Meeting in 2019 on Conservation and Indigenous Peoples' Rights, to consider
 - a. the application of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to conservation-related activities
 - b. effective enforcement and accountability mechanisms available to indigenous peoples to seek redress from human rights abuses in the name of conservation
- 2 Undertake an expert report on existing strategies and mechanisms to provide redress for indigenous peoples in the context of conservation activities and analyse to what extent these have been and can be utilized in the context of conservation.
- 3 Strengthen collaboration on expert reports and studies with other relevant UN mandates, including the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and to synergise efforts and roadmaps in charting ways forward in this work. For this purpose we suggest the UN Permanent Forum to convene a joint meeting with EMPRIIP and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right of Indigenous Peoples to validate expert reports and recommendations for the way forward.

- 4 Propose a specific element of the upcoming EMRIP meeting on transitional justice to look at opportunities for restitution in the context of historic conservation related evictions and other harms.

We further propose that the UN Permanent Forum recommends the following actions:

5. The Convention on Biological Diversity and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) to actively engage with indigenous organisations, relevant UN mandates, non-governmental organizations and other actors to develop a set of actions and commitments in relation to conservation and human rights in the context of the post-2020 biodiversity framework and the next World Conservation Congress, including through IUCN committing resources to action previous commitments, such as in relation to the Whakatane Mechanism, that have not been acted on.

Our organisations welcome the recent attention given by Members of the Permanent Forum to the urgent matter of Conservation and the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the report produced by Brian Keane and Elifuraha Laltaika for this session and the participation of Elifuraha Laltaika in the global dialogue held in Eldoret, Kenya.

We believe that the recognition and protection of indigenous peoples' rights to land, territories and resources and the flourishing of their cultures and values is central to the scale of biodiversity protection needed to safeguard the future of this planet. This work is urgent and critical in light of on-going deliberations on the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, the 2018 High-Level Political Forum's theme on transition towards sustainable and resilient societies and review of SDG 15 on Life on Land.

We are convinced that the Forum's work, in concert with EMRIP and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and in partnership with indigenous peoples and other actors will be critical in advancing this work in the next two years.