

LAUNCHING OF A COALITION ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' FOOD SYSTEMS

Excellencies,

We would like to congratulate you for the outcomes and organization of the Pre-Summit in July 2021 in Rome and we look forward to working with you towards the Summit on 23 September 2021 in New York.

We have been following the announcement of the coalitions and the progress about possible new coalitions to be confirmed at the Summit itself. In the 27 August documentation provided by the Summit Secretariat we note the proposal to identify five “Action Areas”, under which any number of coalitions can be established. We were pleased to see a coalition on “Indigenous Peoples food systems” represented in the documents under the Action Area “Advance Equitable Livelihoods, Decent Work, & Empowered Communities”.

In this regard, we are writing to convey our support for the establishment of a Coalition on “Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems”, and to request your assistance in ensuring appropriate recognition and acknowledgement of this initiative in the Summit outcomes and in securing the necessary support from relevant UN entities to take it forward.

Indigenous Peoples have values, views and beliefs that constitute a unique set of perspectives and characteristics in relation to food systems that need to be looked at on their own merit. Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems rely on oral transmission, which brings to the frontline the importance of preserving the culture and 4000 languages spoken by Indigenous Peoples. As a result, Indigenous Peoples manage 25% of the Earth Surface but preserve 80% of the remaining biodiversity.

The White/Wiphala paper, drafted in a participatory manner by the Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples' food systems, summarized the way in which Indigenous Peoples' values, beliefs, territorial management practices, governance mechanisms and social fabric have resulted in food systems that are resilient, sustainable, productive and equitable. As recent research has confirmed, they preserve biological diversity, are climate resilient and low carbon emitters, and are already achieving zero hunger for many Indigenous Peoples' communities. These food and knowledge systems feed over 500 million Indigenous Peoples across the world.

At the same time, Indigenous Peoples are among the most marginalized and disadvantaged populations in both developed and developing countries. They often face systemic exclusion from their nations' social, economic and political systems, and are often the first to experience the destructive impacts of policies and programs that promote unjust and unsustainable food systems and that amplify the impact of climate change.

Any effort to address the unsustainability and inequities of food systems should consider and address the unique challenges that Indigenous Peoples face, and the unique contributions that they can make to finding solutions and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals and the Climate Change agreements.

Our countries recognize that Indigenous Peoples and their food systems have a vital role in realizing the objectives of the UNFSS. Over the past two years, we have seen the tremendous efforts done by Indigenous Peoples to contribute to the Action Tracks, the evidence provided in the Wiphala paper, the inputs provided by indigenous leaders in the self-organized regional and global dialogues and the contributions made at the Pre-Summit by the Indigenous Delegation. We also noticed that their recommendations were not taken into consideration and their June request, and subsequent agreement to have an Indigenous Peoples' food systems coalition, was not included among the seven coalitions announced at the Pre-Summit.

While member countries and scientists are convinced of the unique role that Indigenous Peoples play through their food and knowledge systems on sustainability and resilience, the most important consideration we have when formulating this request is that the SDGs will not be met unless we specifically support Indigenous Peoples. The spirit of leaving no one behind, will not be achieved without Indigenous Peoples' active participation.

Moving forward to September 23 we hope to remedy this. While it is important that Indigenous Peoples' food systems and Indigenous Peoples' rights are mainstreamed across all UNFSS coalitions, agreements and activities, we also see a vital role for a coalition on "Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems" within which member states, Indigenous Peoples, the scientific community and others can work together to strengthen their food systems and advance in the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights to implement UNDRIP.

A coalition that can spearhead specific initiatives that:


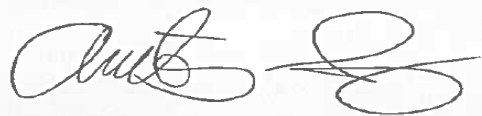



- recognize Indigenous Peoples' food systems as game changers for the world, whose contributions about sustainability and resilience can help transform other food systems;
- advance research that engages Indigenous Peoples as experts, values Indigenous People's values, cosmogonies and knowledge, recognizing them as co-creators of Knowledge and creators of solutions;
- address Indigenous Peoples' rights, discrimination, and the systemic barriers that undermine their ability to sustain their livelihoods and food security;
- recognize Indigenous Peoples as knowledge holders and innovators and support their economic empowerment according to their interests and needs;
- promote Indigenous Peoples leadership in food systems, including showcasing success stories and sharing models of food production and processing by Indigenous Peoples;
- include Biocentric considerations practiced by Indigenous Peoples in their food and knowledge systems in food systems transformation as well as on conservation and restoration efforts;
- support the effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in decision making and policy making at global, regional and country level.

Indigenous Peoples have struggled for over 80 years to achieve their space in the United Nations System. It took years of negotiation to have UNDRIP and UNPFII. Therefore, it is essential now that the UNFSS recognizes, through a coalition, "Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems" as game-changers. A coalition on Indigenous Peoples Food systems will provide them with a space of their own from which to build on, and make effective contributions, as we endeavor to transform the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food.

The member countries proposing this coalition are working with the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, with the Global Hub on Indigenous Peoples' food systems, with scientists and with UN organizations to finalize a an initial concept note with the outcomes our coalition will achieve in the coming years that will be submitted to the UNFSS secretariat in the coming days. We are also working with other interested delegations and stakeholders to encourage their participation and further broaden support for this initiative.

We take this opportunity to congratulate you again for all your efforts and we look forward to working with you to ensure the coalition achieves the above objectives in coming years.

Sincerely,

Miguel Jorge García Winder Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico	Anthony Simpson Ambassador and Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the Food and Agriculture Agencies of the U.N.
Signature: 	Signature: 
Alexandra Bugailiskis Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the Food and Agriculture Agencies of the U.N.	Tanja Grén Permanent Representative-Designate of Finland to FAO, WFP and IFAD
Signature: 	Signature: 
Mario Arvelo Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Dominican Republic to the Food and Agriculture Agencies of the U.N.	Morten Aasland Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN Organisations in Rome
Signature: 	Signature: 