



A Model Proposal for Rights-Based Nationally Determined Contributions

The Ideal NDC Commitments With and For Indigenous Peoples,
Afro-descendant Peoples, and Local Communities

Full Report | September 2025



#ThePledgeWeWant



Introduction

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are the central policy instruments through which countries communicate their climate commitments under the Paris Agreement, including their budgetary needs and how they plan to distribute, allocate, and raise funds. They outline national goals, measures, and frameworks for both mitigation and adaptation, as well as increasingly for just transition.¹

The Paris Agreement mandates that all Parties prepare, communicate, and update their NDCs every five years, with a new update due before UNFCCC COP30 in Belém, Brazil, in November 2025.² This process aims to enhance ambition over time, ensuring that each successive NDC represents a progression beyond the previous one.

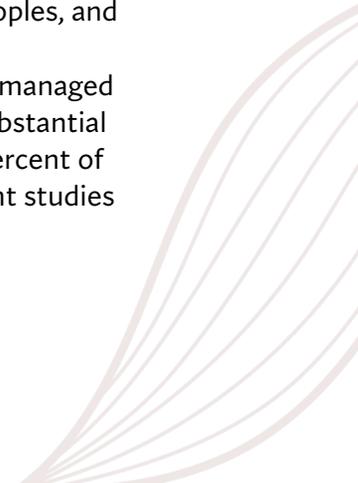
In this context, COP30 is a key moment for rights-based organizations and movements to pressure governments to integrate a rights-based approach into its NDC. Such an approach ensures that climate actions respect, protect, and fulfill human rights, particularly the rights of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities, including women and youth.

Incorporating human rights principles into NDCs enhances their legitimacy, effectiveness, and equity, fostering trust and accountability among stakeholders. **As countries prepare their updated NDCs for COP30, aligning them with international human rights standards and the specific demands of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities will strengthen the global response to the climate crisis and contribute to the achievement of the Paris Agreement's long-term goals.**

The Imperative of Integrating Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and Local Community Demands into NDCs

The climate mitigation contributions of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities are robustly evidenced by peer-reviewed research and leading international organizations. Studies show that Indigenous- and local community-managed forests not only have lower deforestation rates than other areas but also store substantial portions of terrestrial carbon, with estimates showing such lands hold up to 34 percent of the Amazon's carbon³ and about 17 percent of global forest carbon stocks.⁴ Recent studies

1 A Model Proposal for Rights-Based NDCs



demonstrate that Afro-descendant Peoples' territories in South America are associated with up to a 55 percent reduction in forest loss and an above-average density of irrecoverable carbon, underlining their vital climate regulation role.⁵

Studies also corroborate that Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendent Peoples', and local communities' lands are essential carbon sinks: between 2001 and 2021, Amazonian Indigenous territories removed a net 340 million metric tons of CO₂ annually, outpacing emissions in state-managed or unprotected forests.⁶ **Thus, consolidating customary land tenure and Indigenous Peoples' rights is widely recognized as an indispensable strategy for realizing climate commitments and goals as well as achieving effective, equitable mitigation and adaption.**

Why a Rights-Based NDC Model?

Despite the well-documented contributions described above, preliminary results analyzing the most recently updated NDCs in 15 countries in Latin America, 5 countries in Africa, and 5 countries in Asia—conducted at the request of the Rights and Resource Initiative (RRI)⁷—demonstrates that while some progress has been made, the NDCs still fall short in protecting and promoting a rights-based climate policy.

Key findings from Latin America

- 100 percent of NDCs mention Indigenous Peoples (15 of 15), but only 40 percent (6 of 15) recognize their territories.
- 53 percent (8 of 15) of NDCs mention Afro-descendant Peoples, but only 1 country (Ecuador) recognizes their territories.
- 80 percent of NDCs cite local communities (10 of 15), but almost none provide concrete actions for territorial recognition (although some NDCs include local populations as vulnerable populations in specific adaptation actions).
- Only 1 of 15 countries includes territorial recognition as a climate strategy (Ecuador).
- Only Colombia recognizes that Indigenous Peoples' and Afro-descendent Peoples' territories are key to reducing deforestation. (Four other countries recognize the importance of Indigenous Peoples exclusively: Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Guyana.)
- Zero NDCs provide clear mechanisms for remedy of rights violations.
- Only Belize, Guyana, and Honduras mention FPIC—the other 12 countries ignore it.
- Mexico and Brazil cite energy transition minerals but ignore affected peoples, while Panama reinforces the moratorium on open-air copper mining, which protects peoples.
- Of the 15 countries studied, none guarantee direct financing for peoples and communities.

Key findings from Africa

- Four out of 5 countries mention the terms "local communities" and "Indigenous Peoples" (only Ghana does not).
- All NDCs were silent about the interface between Indigenous Peoples' territorial rights and climate policy.
- Three of 5 countries (the DRC, Nigeria, and Kenya) mention the inclusion of traditional knowledge as part of their adaptation actions, but none include FPIC.
- Only 1 of 5 countries (DRC) includes Indigenous Peoples and local communities as implementation partners.

Key findings from Asia

- 80 percent of NDCs (4 of 5) reference communities or "local wisdom," but only 40 percent (2 of 5) explicitly mention Indigenous Peoples (Cambodia and Nepal).
- Only Nepal commits to implementing FPIC; none operationalize it in sectoral measures.
- Collective tenure rights are partly recognized in Cambodia but largely symbolic elsewhere.
- No country provides direct access to climate finance or community monitoring mechanisms.
- Traditional knowledge and gender inclusion are increasingly referenced but treated procedurally, not as enforceable rights.

To support communities in promoting their demands during the drafting of their countries' NDCs, this Rights-Based NDC Model outlines guiding principles and commitments that place Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities at the center of climate action. It is intended to serve both as a reference for advocacy and as a practical tool for designing inclusive, equitable NDCs.

This Rights-Based NDC Model was developed drawing directly on the positions, principles, and demands articulated in key statements, documents, and collective declarations authored by Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities, as well as women's and youth movements and the Land Rights Standard. These sources provide the foundation and guidance necessary to ensure climate action that is rights-based, inclusive, and concrete.⁸ Thus, it is important to note that this Model represents an **ideal** Rights-Based NDC, unconstrained by political or institutional limitations.

As an advocacy tool, one of the main purposes of this model is to help communities move beyond merely presenting demands to proposing concrete ways to operationalize them—illustrating **how** these demands can be implemented in practice through time-bound and measurable targets and actions within national NDCs.



An important conclusion of RRI’s NDC analysis, referenced above, is that while some countries acknowledge Indigenous Peoples’ contributions—and, to a lesser extent, Afro-descendant Peoples and local communities—to climate action, and in some cases establish participatory mechanisms for NDC design, they often lack clear, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound) commitments that translate those acknowledgments into practice.

When countries present clear, SMART commitments, the results are palpable. For example, in the DRC’s latest submitted NDC, the government has committed to establishing at least 2.5 million hectares of local community forest concessions by 2025.⁹ According to RRI’s Forest Tenure Database, in 2017, there were seven Local Community Forest Concessions (LCFCs) covering approximately 0.165 million hectares in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).¹⁰ As of 2024, there were 202 LCFCs covering approximately 3.94 million hectares.¹¹

This Rights-Based NDC is systematically organized into four main parts: General Principles, Commitments, accompanying Targets and Actions, and Outcome and Output Indicators—together building a coherent framework for implementation and accountability.

General Principles

This section lays the normative guidance, setting out rights-based and inclusive approaches. These principles are aligned with recognized international agreements and prioritize community leadership, including women and youth, in climate action.

Commitments

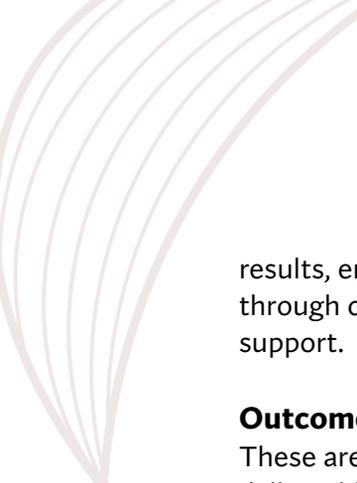
Commitments represent the formal pledges and responsibilities that translate the principles into actionable measures, positioning Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities as key partners in advancing effective and equitable climate action.

Targets

Here, the document specifies time-bound and measurable deliverables to implement the commitments. Each target is designed to operationalize the commitments in a clear, trackable, and scalable manner that is adaptable to each national context.

Actions

The actions described in the Rights-Based NDC Model serve as the operational mechanisms that translate commitments and targets into real changes on the ground. Actions are the specific processes and interventions through which the document’s principles, commitments, and targets can be concretely implemented at local, regional, and national levels. Each action is designed to connect measurable targets with practical



results, ensuring accountability and local leadership, so that policy ambitions are delivered through community-led processes, transparent monitoring, and ongoing institutional support.

Outcome and Output Indicators

These are indicators to assess progress and impact. Output indicators track immediate deliverables. Outcome indicators measure longer-term impacts. These indicators provide a robust basis for monitoring, evaluation, and public reporting over time.

The Rights-Based NDC Model is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. It is designed to guide national-level dialogue through illustrative examples that can be adapted and complemented according to each country's specific context. What is essential in this design is that rights-based commitments follow the SMART logic to ensure they can be effectively implemented on the ground and go beyond empty political promises.

Understanding NDC Structure: Entry Points for Community-Centered Climate Action

An NDC is a comprehensive policy document that outlines a country's climate strategies across multiple sectors, including energy, agriculture, transport, and land use. While these sectors are critical for achieving national climate goals, they often extend beyond areas directly managed or governed by Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities.

The core of the NDCs consists of mitigation and adaptation measures that delineate a country's principal sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate vulnerabilities, alongside the strategies devised to achieve its climate objectives:

- *Mitigation* typically follows a sectoral approach, as emission reductions are more easily defined and quantified within specific sectors such as energy, transport, industry, waste, and Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU).
- *Adaptation measures* may follow either sectoral or thematic structures, often organized around areas like water resources, agriculture, ecosystems, health, or disaster risk management.

In addition to Mitigation and Adaptation sections, NDCs also typically include other key components:

- *Operationalization and accountability*, covering finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building needs.
- *Monitoring and reporting frameworks*, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Increasingly, countries are also incorporating dedicated just transition sections that address social equity concerns and the impacts of climate policies on workers and vulnerable communities.

Key Entry Points for Community Demands in NDCs

This review or analysis identifies five key entry points for integrating Indigenous Peoples', Afro- descendant Peoples', and local communities' demands into NDC components. These are:

1. Mitigation

National strategies to reduce GHG emissions present critical opportunities for the advancement of community rights. In particular, the agriculture, forest, and other land use (AFOLU) sector is where community demands and contributions are most relevant because it encompasses forests, lands, and natural resource management—domains closely tied to community governance and traditional stewardship. It offers the greatest opportunity to integrate community priorities, rights, and governance systems into national climate commitments and implementation measures.

2. Adaptation

Efforts to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience of communities to climate change and its associated impacts offer pathways for protecting local livelihoods and traditional knowledge systems while enhancing community-led ecosystem restoration and resource management.

3. Just Transition

As countries integrate just transition sections within their NDCs, they are recognizing that decarbonization must be both socially equitable and rights-based. This section serves as a critical bridge between human rights and climate policy, offering a platform to demonstrate how national climate actions uphold internationally protected rights—including those of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, local communities, women, and youth. It presents a key opportunity to ensure that these rights, especially

related to territories, FPIC, and collective governance, are explicitly recognized and protected within national climate frameworks.

4. Gender and Youth

An increasing number of countries are adopting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) approaches in their NDCs, integrating equity principles across planning, implementation, and monitoring processes. These approaches aim to make climate policies more inclusive, participatory, and responsive to the needs of all social groups, particularly those most affected by climate impacts. Embedding GESI frameworks provides an opportunity to center the unique perspectives and priorities of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community women and youth—ensuring that climate action strengthens equity and representation across generations.

5. Operationalization and Accountability

The targets, measures, and indicators sections of NDCs translate national climate goals into actionable commitments that can be tracked, evaluated, and adapted over time. These mechanisms ensure transparency, accountability, and progress toward implementation. For community rights, this stage offers a vital opportunity to establish clear operational guidelines, measurable milestones, and dedicated resources for advancing territorial recognition, participation, and funding access—ensuring that commitments made on paper are realized in practice.

Model for Rights-Based NDCs

The following two sections outline i) the principles that underpin rights-based approaches, and ii) the strategies and commitments that can be employed to realize these on the ground.

A. Core Principles

- **Free, Prior and Informed Consent:** All climate actions, policies, and programs shall uphold and respect the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities, as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and other relevant human rights instruments.
- **Territorial Rights as Climate Imperative:** The recognition, protection, and restoration of Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' territories—including traditional marine territories—are essential for effective climate mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development.

- **Knowledge Integration:** Indigenous traditional knowledge, alongside Afro-descendant and local community knowledge systems, shall be fully integrated and respected in the design, implementation, and monitoring of climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience strategies.
- **Direct and Simplified Access to Climate Finance:** Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community organizations shall be guaranteed direct, equitable, and simplified access to climate finance mechanisms, ensuring that resources flow effectively to locally led climate solutions.
- **Full and Effective Participation:** Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities must have meaningful decision-making power and representation at all levels of national and international climate governance processes, from policy formulation to implementation and monitoring.
- **Gender and Intergenerational Inclusion:** Climate actions must recognize and address the distinct roles, knowledge, and priorities of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community women and youth, ensuring their autonomous participation and leadership in decision-making, adaptation strategies, and access to benefits.
- **Risk Mitigation and Safeguards:** Climate actions shall include safeguards to prevent and address any negative impacts on Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' rights, livelihoods, and cultures.

B. Rights-Based Commitments and Strategic Actions to Promote the Climate Contributions of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and Local Communities

1. MITIGATION AND THE RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION OF TERRITORIES AND GOVERNANCE

1.1. Recognition and protection of Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' territories and governance

Commitment 1: Guarantee effective territorial protection by preventing illegal entry and ensuring the eviction of third parties occupying or exploiting Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' lands and territories illegally, in accordance with international human rights standards, including UNDRIP and ILO Convention No. 169.

Targets: By **Year**, complete legal demarcation and titling of **X%** of Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' lands (where applicable).

Commitment 2: Guarantee effective territorial protection by preventing illegal entry and ensuring the eviction of third parties occupying or exploiting these territories illegally, in accordance with international human rights standards, including UNDRIP and ILO Convention No. 169.

Target: Ensure that by **Year**, **X%** of titled Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' collective lands are free from third-party occupants and illegal extractive activities, with secure funding, protective legal instruments, and community-led monitoring mechanisms in place.

Commitment 3: Align all mitigation and adaptation policies with strict safeguards that prevent agribusiness, mining, oil, gas, and other extractive activities, as well as infrastructure and other projects, from expanding into Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' territories, ensuring tenure security, FPIC compliance, biodiversity conservation, and livelihood protection.

Target: By **Year**, ensure that **X%** of Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' territories are free from concessions in agriculture, mining, oil, gas, and other extractive industries, as well as infrastructure and other projects.

Commitment 4: Restore all Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' lands impacted by illegal or unsustainable extraction, agriculture, or mining, prioritizing areas most affected in the last 20 years.

Target: By **Year**, rehabilitate at least 50 percent of all lands degraded by illegal or unsustainable extraction, agriculture, or mining—prioritizing areas most affected in the past 20 years—through community-led restoration supported by predictable funding (including at least **X%** of resources directly managed by affected communities), with full ecological and social restoration achieved by **Year**.

1.2. Recognition and governance of traditional marine territories for climate-resilient ocean stewardship

Commitment 1: Establish a mechanism to formally recognize and regulate traditional marine territories and coastal areas, recognizing inclusive self-territorial governance and supporting Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' sustainable development priorities.

Target: By December **Year**, at least **X**% of traditional marine territories within coastal and marine zones will be legally recognized and managed by Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities.

Commitment 2: Collaborate regionally and internationally to establish and strengthen International legal and policy frameworks that recognize, protect, and support the governance of traditional marine and coastal territories held by Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities.

Target: By **Year**, co-lead or participate in at least three formal regional or international initiatives aimed at the legal recognition and protection of traditional marine territories; and support the inclusion of traditional marine territories related to language and rights in at least two major international climate, biodiversity, or ocean governance instruments.

2. RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, AFRO-DESCENDANT PEOPLES, AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES AS COLLECTIVE RIGHTSHOLDERS, STEWARDS, AND GUARDIANS OF NATURE AND PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Commitment 1: Affirm and explicitly recognize Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities as collective rightsholders, ensuring their role and contributions as key environmental stewards are reflected across the NDC and other related policies.

Target: By **year X**, include explicit language in the country's NDC 3.0 and in at least **X** additional national climate, biodiversity, and land-use policies recognizing Afro-descendant Peoples (in particular), Indigenous Peoples, and local communities as rightsholders and key environmental stewards. Progress shall be monitored and publicly reported in each NDC revision cycle.

Commitment 2: Integrate Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' territorial stewardship in national GHG inventories.¹²

Target: By **Year**, integrate Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' territorial stewardship into national GHG inventories by establishing disaggregated tracking and reporting for **[X]**% of communities' territories, covering approximately **[X]**% of national forest area and **[Y]** million hectares.

Commitment 3: Explicitly recognize Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities as groups particularly vulnerable¹³ in NDC and other environmental policies, with emphasis on women, youth, and people with disabilities.

Target: By 2026, include explicit reference to Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities as vulnerable groups in the NDC and national policies, with special attention to women, youth, and people with disabilities.

Commitment 4: To respect, promote, and protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities, and particularly environmental defenders; provide support for access to justice and effective remedy to victims, defenders, and their families; and actively support initiatives and establish internal policies and procedures to prevent criminalization, threats, reprisals, and violence against them and ensure all such measures provide timely, appropriate, and effective remedies for women and youth, particularly when they are survivors of discrimination and gender-based violence.^{14,15}

Target: By **Year**, establish effective monitoring and rapid-response systems in all territories to ensure zero tolerance for violence against defenders, in particular women and youth, achieving both zero attacks/threats and zero impunity for such cases.

3. ADAPTATION, RESILIENCE, AND LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

Commitment 1: Recognize and integrate traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities into ecosystem management and climate adaptation strategies, ensuring their active participation in designing and implementing nature-based solutions that draw from ancestral practices, while securing and diversifying livelihoods in ways defined by them.

Target: By **Year**, establish a national mechanism to integrate Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' knowledge into adaptation planning, ensuring its incorporation into at least 50 percent of national and state adaptation plans, and guarantee that at least 70 percent of participating communities report improved and diversified livelihoods based on their own priorities.

Commitment 2: Strengthen adaptation and resilience measures in Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' marine and coastal territories in alignment with relevant international law, with special consideration for women and youth. This includes recognizing and integrating traditional knowledge in marine ecosystem management; supporting community-led marine conservation and restoration; and developing community-based Early Warning Systems that combine traditional knowledge with scientific approaches to address sea-level rise, ocean acidification, and other climate-related impacts on coastal ecosystems and livelihoods.

Target: By **Year**, **X**% of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community-managed marine and coastal areas will have formally integrated traditional knowledge into adaptation and resilience strategies. This includes community-led conservation and restoration projects and Early Warning Systems that combine traditional knowledge with scientific approaches to address sea-level rise, ocean acidification, and other climate-related impacts on coastal ecosystems and livelihoods, with specific measures ensuring active participation of women and youth.

4. CARBON MARKETS RISKS

Commitment 1: All mitigation and adaptation activities generating tradable carbon units, including public and private initiatives, or those supported under the UNFCCC within Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' territories shall: i) be subject to FPIC; ii) ensure effective participation in decision-making around program design and implementation, including in determining governance structures, fair and equitable benefit distribution plans,¹⁶ and transparent monitoring and reporting;¹⁷ iii) include social and environmental safeguards¹⁸ aligned with international standards; and iv) provide grievance and remedy mechanisms.¹⁹

Target: By **Year**, 100 percent of all NDC-supported mitigation and adaptation projects in Indigenous Peoples' and Afro-descendant Peoples' territories shall have: i) complied with FPIC of affected communities; ii) clearly defined and community-developed Benefit Sharing Mechanisms; iii) Social and Environmental Safeguard Plans; iv) Social and Environmental Measuring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems; and v) accessible Grievance and Remedy Mechanisms.

5. JUST TRANSITION RISKS: TRANSITION MINERALS

Commitment 1: Permanently prohibit new exploration and extraction of transition minerals (including lithium, cobalt, nickel, copper, and rare earths)²⁰ within all demarcated, declared, recognized, or claimed territories of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities, including areas pending formal regularization.

Target: By **Year**, ensure that 100 percent of Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' territories—including those pending titling or regularization—are legally excluded from transition mineral concessions and fully protected through updated cadastres, legislation, and secure land tenure.

Commitment 2: Gradually phase out or decommission transition-mineral mining projects operating within or adjacent to Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' territories. This process must include fair compensation, comprehensive

environmental restoration and remediation, alternative livelihood support as prioritized by communities, and full compliance with international human rights standards, including FPIC, in accordance with international human law standards.

Target: By **Year**, ensure that **X%** of transition-mineral mining projects operating within or adjacent to Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' territories are either fully decommissioned or transitioned to FPIC-compliant operations through a process that includes: i) fair compensation mechanisms agreed upon and documented with affected communities by **Year**; ii) implementation of comprehensive environmental restoration and remediation plans for all decommissioned sites by **Year**; and iii) establishment of community-led alternative livelihood programs that provide sustainable income for at least **X%** of affected households within **Years** of project closure.

6. CROSS-CUTTING COMMITMENTS AND SAFEGUARDS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, AFRO-DESCENDANT PEOPLES, AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

6.1. Guaranteeing FPIC across all climate actions

Commitment 1: All mitigation and adaptation activities supported under the NDC shall only proceed within Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' territories after obtaining FPIC, in accordance with international human rights standards.

Target 1: By **Year**, a national FPIC protocol aligned with international standards (ILO Convention No. 169, UNDRIP) shall be formally adopted and operationalized, ensuring that 100 percent of NDC-supported activities in Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' territories have documented, publicly registered, and independently verified FPIC agreements prior to implementation.

6.2. Direct finance for Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities

Commitment 2: Ensure that Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities are central actors in climate finance allocation, governance, and implementation, with direct access to at least 20 percent of all climate finance related to them.

Target: By **Year**, at least 20 percent of climate finance related to Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities will reach them directly through fiduciary and governance mechanisms that respect FPIC.

6.3. Commitment to respect and promote traditional knowledge in the NDC

Commitment 3: Guarantee the recognition, protection, and promotion of the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities, ensuring FPIC-based governance and safeguarding against misappropriation consistent with international obligations.²¹

Target: By **Year**, ensure the comprehensive integration and protection of traditional knowledge across all components of the NDC and other climate policies, establishing robust regulatory frameworks, inclusive governance structures, and dedicated financing mechanisms for Indigenous- and community-led climate initiatives. Progress will be measurable through nationally reported milestones and indicators, with annual reporting from **Year** onwards, in line with the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement.²²

6.4. Rights-based inclusive governance and participation for Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities

Commitment 4: Guarantee the full, effective, and equitable participation of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities as rightsholders and decision-makers in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the NDC as established under the Paris Agreement (Articles 7 and 12), UNDRIP, and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).²³

Target: By **Year**, ensure full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities in the NDC by establishing inclusion frameworks with at least **X%** women and **X%** youth represented in all governance, decision-making, and monitoring bodies. Deliver capacity-building to the majority of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community organizations, guaranteeing community-led annual reporting and directing at least **X%** of NDC-related climate finance to initiatives designed and led by Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities.

6.5. Commitment to the leadership and empowerment of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community women and youth

Commitment 5: Guarantee the full, effective, and equitable participation of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community women and youth across all NDC processes, design, implementation, reporting, and review, recognizing them as rightsholders and co-decision-makers central to climate action, biodiversity protection, and a just transition.

Target: By **Year**, achieve a minimum representation of 35 percent women and 25 percent youth in all national and subnational climate governance, finance, and technical committees; and by **Year**, ensure sustained government-supported capacity-building on finance, project management, and climate monitoring for Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community women and youth organizations engaged in NDC implementation.

Notes

¹ Just transition approaches within NDCs consider a human rights framework for combating climate change that considers the most vulnerable people and incorporates cross-cutting priorities such as the rights of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities, as well as intersectional gender and youth considerations.

² Although the deadline was September 30, 2025, only 59 of the 195 members of the Paris Agreement have updated their NDCs as of October 6, 2025. For more information, see <https://climateactiontracker.org/climate-target-update-tracker-2035/>.

³ Walker, Wayne S. et al. 2020. The Role of Forest Conversion, Degradation, and Disturbance in the Carbon Dynamics of Amazon Indigenous Territories and Protected Areas. *PNAS* 117(6): 3015–3025. doi:10.1073/pnas.1913321117.

⁴ See Rights and Resources Initiative. 2018. A Global Baseline of Carbon Storage in Collective Lands. Rights and Resources Initiative, Washington, DC. doi:10.53892/NQNN6499; Robinson, Beatrice E., Daniel M. Holland, and Leah Naughton-Treves. 2015. *Climate Benefits, Tenure Costs: The Economic Case for Securing Indigenous Land Rights in the Amazon*. World Resources Institute, Washington, DC: World Resources Institute, 2015. Available at: https://files.wri.org/d8/s3fs-public/Climate_Benefits_Tenure_Costs.pdf; and Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia. 2020. The Role of Forest Conversion, Degradation, and Disturbance in the Carbon Dynamics of Amazon Indigenous Territories and Protected Areas. IPAM, Belém. Available at: <https://ipam.org.br/bibliotecas/the-role-of-forest-conversion-degradation-and-disturbance-in-the-carbon-dynamics-of-amazon-indigenous-territories-and-protected-areas/>.

⁵ Shrestha Sangat, Sushma, Martha Rosero, Erik Olsson, A. Justin Nowakowski, Jonathan Drescher-Lehman, Patrick R. Roehrdanz, Monica L. Noon, Nickolas McManus, Stephen G. Perz, Marcela Angel, Joana M. Krieger, Cameryn Brock, Bruno Coutinho, Christian Martinez, Leo R. Douglas, Curtis Bernard, Loes Trustfull, Daniela Raik, Sebastian Troëng, and Kelvin Alie. 2025. Afro-descendant Lands in South America Contribute to Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Change Mitigation. *Communications Earth & Environment* 6(1). doi:10.1038/s43247-025-02339-5; Instituto Socioambiental. n.d. *As Pressões Ambientais nos Territórios Quilombolas no Brasil*. Instituto Socioambiental, São Paulo. Accessed October 6, 2025. Available at: <https://acervo.socioambiental.org/acervo/documentos/pressoes-ambientais-nos-territorios-quilombolas-no-brasil>.

⁶ World Resources Institute. 2023. *Indigenous Forests Are Some of the Amazon's Last Carbon Sinks*. World Resources Institute, Washington, DC. Available at: <https://www.wri.org/insights/indigenous-forests-are-some-amazons-last-carbon-sinks>; Rights and Resources Initiative. 2016. *A Global Baseline of Carbon Storage in Collective Lands: Indigenous and Local Community Contributions to Climate Change Mitigation*. Rights and Resources Initiative, Washington, DC. <https://rightsandresources.org/publication/global-baseline-carbon-storage-collective-lands/>; Blackman, Allen, Leonardo Corral, Eirivelthon Lima, and Gregory P. Asner. 2020.

Collective Property Rights Reduce Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon. *PNAS* 114(29): 7571–7576. doi:10.1073/pnas.1606055114; Fisher, Meredith R., Robin M. Reid, et al. 2021. Satellite-Based Deforestation Alerts with Training and Incentives for Patrolling Facilitate Community Monitoring in the Peruvian Amazon. *PNAS* 118(29). <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2015171118>.

⁷ The study analyzes the latest submitted NDCs of Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, DRC, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Republic of Congo, and Thailand as of September 9, 2025.

⁸ See Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil. 2025. “APIB Launches Indigenous NDC: Our Territories are the Answer to the Climate Crisis.” APIB Oficial, August 4. Available at: <https://apiboficial.org/2025/08/04/apib-lanca-ndc-indigena-nossos-territorios-sao-a-resposta-a-crise-climatica/>; See the Brazzaville Declaration: Our Commitment to Peoples, Our Territories, the Planet, and Partnerships: A Unified Path Towards COP30 and Beyond, June 10, 2025. Available at: https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/EN_Brazzaville-Declaration.pdf; the Political Declaration of the Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon Basin and of All Biomes of Brazil for COP30, June 5, 2025. Available at: <https://example.org/declaracao-politica-povos-indigenas>; the Declaration of the Regional Meeting of Indigenous Peoples and of Traditional Peoples and Communities of Brazil and the Amazon Basin for COP30, April 25, 2025. Available at: <https://example.org/declaracao-encontro-regional>; Demarcation is Mitigation: Brazilian Nationally Determined Contributions from an Indigenous Perspective, November 15, 2024. Available at: <https://example.org/demarcacao-e-mitigacao>; Afro-descendant Peoples’ Coalition. 2025. Los Pueblos Afrodescendientes de las Américas y el Caribe y la COP 30 sobre el Cambio Climático: Comunicado a las Partes, April 1–4 and May 28, 2025. Afro-descendant Peoples’ Coalition, Brasília; and COIAB et al. n.d. Propostas dos Povos Indígenas da Bacia Amazônica e de Todos os Biomas do Brasil para a COP30: Acesso Direto aos Fundos e aos Mecanismos Financeiros da Convenção-Quadro das Nações Unidas sobre Mudança do Clima (CQNUMC).

⁹ Democratic Republic of the Congo. 2021. Updated First Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, December 28, 2021, 46. Accessed October 7, 2025. Available at: <https://unfccc.int/documents/497407>.

¹⁰ Rights and Resources Initiative. 2017. Power and Potential: A Comparative Analysis of National Laws and Regulations Concerning Women’s Rights to Community Forests. Rights and Resources Initiative, Washington, DC. doi:10.53892/PMYV6840.

¹¹ Forest Management Directorate, and Community Forestry Division. 2025. “Community Forest Database.” Accessed April 2, 2025. Available at: <https://rdc.geocfcl.org/applications/>.

¹² National GHG inventories are comprehensive annual reports that countries prepare to track greenhouse gas emissions and removals across all economic sectors, submitted to the UNFCCC according to IPCC methodological guidelines as part of international climate reporting obligations.

¹³ Recognition as “particularly vulnerable groups” under the Paris Agreement strengthens claims to priority access to climate finance (Article 9), adaptation support (Article 7), capacity-building (Article 11), and mechanisms for loss and damage (Article 8). It also enhances participation in transparency frameworks (Article 13) and reinforces rights-based claims under complementary instruments such as the UNDRIP and international human rights treaties.

¹⁴ Refer to Escazú Agreement in the context of Latin America.

¹⁵ Rights and Resources Initiative. 2022. “The Land Rights Standards.” Rights and Resources Initiative, Washington, DC. Available at: <https://landrightsstandard.org>.

¹⁶ Benefit-sharing mechanisms are institutional arrangements designed to ensure that communities and stakeholders equitably receive social, economic, or environmental benefits arising from the use of natural resources, traditional knowledge, or climate-related initiatives.

¹⁷ Social and environmental Measuring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems are frameworks that track, assess, and disclose the social and environmental impacts of climate-related actions. In the Paris Agreement context, they complement MRV of emissions by ensuring transparency, accountability, and safeguards in areas such as REDD+ (Article 5) and cooperative approaches under Article 6. These systems support implementation of the Cancún Safeguards (UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16), which provide essential social and environmental protections for forest-related climate actions.

¹⁸ Social and environmental safeguards are policies and measures that prevent or mitigate unintended harm to people, communities, and ecosystems from development or climate-related activities. In the Paris Agreement context, they are particularly relevant to REDD+ (Article 5) and cooperative approaches under Article 6, ensuring respect for human rights, equity, and environmental integrity in line with international standards.

¹⁹ Grievance and Remedy Mechanisms are procedural safeguards that provide accessible channels for individuals and communities to raise concerns and seek redress regarding adverse impacts from climate actions. Under the Paris Agreement, Article 6.4 establishes an Appeals and Grievance Procedure for affected persons. While not explicitly mandated for all climate actions, these mechanisms are integral to REDD+ safeguards implementation (UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16, Appendix I) and are increasingly integrated with Safeguard Information Systems (Decision 12/CP.17) to ensure accountability and remedy pathways that align with human rights principles referenced in the Paris Agreement Preamble.

²⁰ Transition minerals (also known as critical energy transition minerals) are essential components in clean energy technologies, from wind turbines and solar panels to electric vehicles and battery storage. Key minerals include copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt, and rare earth elements, with consumption potentially increasing sixfold by 2050 according to the International Energy Agency. As countries implement NDCs and climate strategies requiring massive deployment of renewable energy and electrification, the surge in mining for these minerals poses significant risks to local communities, including displacement, environmental degradation, water contamination, and violations of Indigenous Peoples' rights, highlighting the need for just transition approaches that protect affected populations.

²¹ In particular, the Paris Agreement (Preamble; Article 7.5 on using traditional and Indigenous knowledge in adaptation), UNDRIP (Article 31 on traditional knowledge), the CBD (Article 8(j)), the Kunming–Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the ILO Convention No. 169 on participation, consultation, and protection of collective rights.

²² The Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) is a unified reporting system established under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement that requires all countries to regularly report their GHG emissions, climate actions, and progress toward their NDCs using common standards and guidelines.

²³ The Escazú Agreement is also relevant in the context of Latin American countries. See United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement). March 4, 2018. Available at: <https://www.cepal.org/en/escazuagreement>.