

**STATEMENT BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO IPBES1 PLENARY**  
**General Statement and AGENDA ITEM 4 (b) - Policy and Rules for the Admission of Observers**  
Delivered by Joji Carino, Tebtebba Foundation

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. This is a joint statement of indigenous peoples and local communities participating at this meeting, who are very encouraged by the start of IPBES work.

One of the biggest challenges relating to the loss of biodiversity and ecosystems today is the associated decline of indigenous, traditional and local knowledge: those uniquely adapted relationships and management systems which have sustained cultural landscapes and seascapes over millennia. The same drivers and underlying causes which result in biodiversity loss also underpin threats to diverse cultures - which are among humanity's richest and tested ways of caring for and sustaining the intrinsic values and ecosystem services from the natural world. IPBES needs indigenous and local knowledge and can support its dynamic revitalization and continuing relevance, more than ever today.

Indigenous peoples and local communities, do see ourselves as distinct partners in the work of IPBES, as major contributors and participants in its work programme, and also as ultimate decision-makers and implementors on the ground. IPBES offers this historic opportunity to address the marginalization of traditional knowledge through its respect, promotion and safeguards, including upholding our human rights and cultural rights, consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

IPBES needs to become a truly diverse knowledge platform, transcending sciences and embracing multiple expertise and knowledge holders. Such a platform cannot be operated as a top-down structure, driven by inflexible rules of procedure, but requires skillful and innovative partnerships with the existing knowledge networks from local-global scales, including those of indigenous peoples and local communities.

Participants from indigenous peoples and local communities, present at this meeting ask the IPBES Plenary to:

1. Admit indigenous peoples and local communities as full observers and equal participants in the plenary and work programme of IPBES, respecting our self-organisation and self-representation and deleting existing qualifications in the draft text;
2. Enable our full and effective participation through supportive mechanisms, including through funding for those needing such assistance;
3. Adopt appropriate safeguard policies for the protection and promotion of traditional knowledge, and mechanisms for inter-cultural collaboration between knowledge systems, including respect for our free, prior, informed consent;
4. Include indigenous and local knowledge expertise in the MEP, taking into consideration our nominated experts.

Indigenous and local community delegates present here will continue to:

1. Organise dialogue workshops on the interface of indigenous and local knowledge, science and policy;
2. Establish community based monitoring, assessment and information systems based on indicators of community well-being, the state of traditional knowledge and ecosystem health;
3. Strengthen our local-global networks on indigenous knowledge, through capacity-building and information dissemination, and effective participation in IPBES work programmes.

We will ask the Chair to support our desire to address the plenary on other relevant agenda items.