



APPROVAL OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY

COP16 in Cali, Colombia, achieved a historic breakthrough: the creation of a subsidiary body to implement Article 8J of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This achievement ensures the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making on biodiversity. After 26 years of effort, this subsidiary body sets a precedent in the history of environmental agreements. It promotes the inclusion and recognition of traditional knowledge in the protection of global biological diversity and guarantees real and effective participation in international decision-making mechanisms, allowing indigenous peoples to influence policies and generate recommendations, projects and lines of action related to Article 8(j).

This is a significant departure from passive participation spaces, ensuring that the voices of local communities are heard and valued, the creation of this body is not only a step forward under the CBD, but also sets a valuable precedent in other environmental agreements and conventions. It reinforces the role of indigenous peoples as essential stewards of the world's biodiversity, inviting other multilateral agreements to adopt similar approaches of inclusion and active participation of local communities.



However, the road to climate justice remains fraught with obstacles. The lack of consensus to establish a specific fund for biodiversity (Cali fund) - a vital resource requested by developing countries since 1992 - prevented the closure of this COP16, revealing the reluctance of certain developed countries to commit to an equitable distribution of resources. COICA denounces this incongruence and reiterates its call for coherence and a fair and committed international policy.





COICA AT COP16: LEADERSHIP FOR BIODIVERSITY

At COP16, the delegation of the Coordinating Body of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA) had a prominent presence in panels and high-level events, bringing the perspective of indigenous peoples to the biodiversity agenda. With interventions in the Green Zone and Blue Zone, COICA's delegation participated in key side events and meetings, sharing spaces with leaders such as the Vice President of Colombia, Francia Márquez, and the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia, Susana Muhamad.



One of the most relevant moments was the discussion on the generation of a Direct Funding Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples, in which Fany Kuiru, COICA's General Coordinator, presented the capacities of the organizations for its implementation, as well as the challenges and opportunities that would result from direct funding for indigenous peoples in the new Global Biodiversity Framework. This event underscored the urgency of the active participation of indigenous peoples and the recognition of their rights in environmental governance.





COICA also addressed the need for fair financing for biodiversity in Latin America, where Fany Kuiru presented the gaps and financial needs in the region. In addition, at the Daughters for Earth meeting, COICA supported the mobilization of resources for indigenous women's leadership in the protection of nature. The launching of the Pan-Amazonian network, of which COICA is now a member, and the assembly for the non-proliferation of fossil fuels, contributed to extending the voices of the delegates from the entire Amazon basin and to formulating joint plans that allow for joint work with actors, indigenous leaders from different parts of the world, organizations and activists aligned with the conservation of the Amazon territory.

With these actions, COICA's delegation to COP16 underscored the urgency of integrating the vision and solutions of indigenous peoples into the global biodiversity agenda.

In addition, COICA took a leading role in the session Amazonia Against the Clock, focused on protecting 80% of the Amazon by 2025. In this space, leaders such as Jamner Manihuari and Monika Yukuna presented a comprehensive diagnosis of the critical situation in the Amazon, calling for urgent action for the conservation of the Amazon biome.

Another significant space was the panel on Native and native seeds for life and cultures from the Global South, where COICA highlighted its work in the preservation of traditional seeds and their essential role in food security and cultural sustainability of communities.



TERRITORIAL VOICES AT COP 16

COICA brought voices directly from the territories to the international advocacy spaces, reaffirming its commitment to the authentic representation of indigenous peoples. Historically, Amazonian peoples and communities have been represented in these forums by their leaders, but on this occasion, COICA chose to bring territorial leaders, who live and face daily adversities in their territories. These leaders are the true guardians of the largest tropical forest in the world, who have kept the forest intact through conservation practices and ancestral respect.

One of the most painful and urgent issues addressed by COICA has been the increase in murders of territorial defenders. These crimes reflect the profound vulnerability and risks faced by indigenous people in their struggle to protect their territories from threats such as illegal mining, deforestation and drug trafficking. Each loss is a blow not only to indigenous communities, but also to humanity, as these defenders risk their lives to preserve the most important climate regulator on the planet.



In turn, Amazonian peoples are facing extreme challenges from climate change, such as unprecedented forest fires and floods. These events directly affect the lives of communities, putting at risk their sources of food, water and livelihoods. However, territorial leaders, far from giving up, are implementing solutions from their ancestral knowledge systems, based on resilience and sustainable land management practices and an indigenous economic model that is communitarian, respectful of life and the protection of the forest.



COICA has brought these realities to COP16, underlining that it is vital that territorial voices are heard and considered in the creation of global policies and actions. We remain steadfast in our call to the international community: to truly protect the Amazon, it is essential to act for the people who live in and protect it.



COICA demands concrete global action that respects indigenous rights and guarantees the safety of defenders, strengthening our territorial governance and access to adequate and direct funding for indigenous peoples.



INDIGENOUS ECONOMY FUND: AMAZONIA FOR LIFE

During a side event at the COP16 Blue Zone, COICA and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) presented the progress of the Amazon for Life Fund, an innovative financing mechanism that responds to the urgent call of Amazonian indigenous peoples to protect their territories. With an initial investment of US\$10 million, this fund supports conservation and sustainable development projects in the Amazon, standing out as the first of its kind designed to directly address the needs of indigenous peoples, with a focus on autonomy and self-management.

The relevance of Amazon for Life lies in its participatory governance model, developed jointly by the IDB and COICA. Unlike conventional financing mechanisms, this fund ensures that resources reach indigenous communities directly, minimizing intermediation and guaranteeing a greater impact on the territory. This approach marks a significant change in how international financing addresses the needs of indigenous peoples, prioritizing efficiency, autonomy and respect for their territorial management systems.



In the framework of COP16 in Cali, Colombia, it was announced that the first organizations to participate will be AIDSEP from Peru and ORPIA from Venezuela, who will work directly in collaboration with the IDB to implement conservation projects in their territories. Amazon for Life allows resources to be allocated to projects that the communities consider priorities, strengthening their role as guardians of Amazonian biodiversity and providing them with a tool for autonomous management in the midst of the global climate crisis.

Through this initiative, COICA and the IDB ratify their commitment to the future of the Amazon, working to strengthen the rights and capacities of its peoples to face environmental challenges in an autonomous and effective manner.



Follow us on our official networks

