

Table 1: A Selection of Key International Commitments addressing the protection of indigenous peoples’ rights and knowledge, particularly as they relate to indigenous ties to conservation/environmental protection.

Year	Agreement	Commitment
1957	the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 107	The right of ownership, collective or individual, of the members of the populations concerned over the lands which these populations traditionally occupy shall be recognised (Article 11)
1989	the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169	<p>Governments shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop, with participation of the peoples concerned, coordinated and systematic action to protect the Rights of indigenous Peoples and guarantee respect for their integrity (Article 2.1); • support the full “realisation” of indigenous social, economic & cultural rights (Article 2.2b); • adopt special measures to safeguard persons, institutions, property, labour, cultures and environments of Indigenous Peoples (Article 4); • consult peoples through appropriate procedures and representative institutions (Article 4); • respect the integrity of indigenous social, cultural, religions, and spiritual values (Article 5); • guarantee peoples the right to make their own decisions, establish their own priorities, and control all economic, social and cultural development that affects them (Article 7.1); • ensure that assessments of cultural, spiritual, social and environmental impacts are made for planned development activities, and that these impacts become the “fundamental criteria” for implementation of these activities (Article 7.3, 7.4); • ensure peoples have the right to retain their customs, customary laws and institutions, and no one is subjected to arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence (Article 12); • respect the collective aspects of land, territory, and culture and the special relationships Indigenous Peoples hold with these (Article 13.1); • guarantee that peoples have the right to participate in the use, management and conservation of natural resources pertaining to their lands (Article 15). <p>Articles 8–10 recognize the cultures, traditions, and special circumstances of indigenous tribal peoples.</p>
1992	Rio Declaration	Indigenous people and their communities and other local communities have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should <i>recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation</i> in the achievement of sustainable development (Principle 22)
1992	Agenda 21, Article 15	<p>Governments at the appropriate level, with the cooperation of relevant groups and organizations should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and foster the traditional methods and the knowledge of indigenous people and their communities, emphasizing the particular role of women, relevant to the conservation of biological

		<p>diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources, and ensure the opportunity for the participation of those groups in the economic and commercial benefits derived from the use of such traditional methods and knowledge (Article 15.4.g)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to national legislation, take action to respect, record, protect and promote the wider application of the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources, with a view to the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising, and promote mechanisms to involve those communities, including women, in the conservation and management of ecosystems (Article 15.5.e)
1992	Agenda 21, Article 17	<p>Coastal States should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and facilitate the organization of education and training in integrated coastal and marine management and sustainable development for scientists, technologists, managers (including community-based managers) and users, leaders, indigenous peoples, fisherfolk, women and youth, among others. Management and development, as well as environmental protection concerns and local planning issues, should be incorporated in educational curricula and public awareness campaigns, with due regard to traditional ecological knowledge and socio-cultural values (Article 17.15); • Take into account traditional knowledge and interests of local communities, small-scale artisanal fisheries and indigenous people in development and management programmes (Article 17.75.b); • Support the sustainability of small-scale artisanal fisheries. To this end, they should, as appropriate: (b) Recognize the rights of small-scale fishworkers and the special situation of indigenous people and local communities, including their rights to utilization and protection of their habitats on a sustainable basis; and (c) Develop systems for the acquisition and recording of traditional knowledge concerning marine living resources and environment and promote the incorporation of such knowledge into management systems (Article 17.82); • Ensure that, in the negotiation and implementation of international agreements on the development or conservation of marine living resources, the interests of local communities and indigenous people are taken into account, in particular their right to subsistence (Article 17.83); • Provide support to local fishing communities, in particular those that rely on fishing for subsistence, indigenous people and women, including, as appropriate, the technical and financial assistance to organize, maintain, exchange and improve traditional knowledge of marine living resources and fishing techniques, and upgrade knowledge on marine ecosystems (Article 17.95.b); • Promote exchange of data and information resulting from scientific research and systematic observation and from traditional ecological knowledge and ensure its availability to policy makers and the public at the national level (Article 17.100.b);
1992	Agenda 21, Article 26	In full partnership with indigenous people and their communities, Governments and, where appropriate,

	<p>intergovernmental organizations should aim at fulfilling the following objectives:</p> <p>(a) Establishment of a process to empower indigenous people and their communities through measures that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Adoption or strengthening of appropriate policies and/or legal instruments at the national level; (ii) Recognition that the lands of indigenous people and their communities should be protected from activities that are environmentally unsound or that the indigenous people concerned consider to be socially and culturally inappropriate; (iii) Recognition of their values, traditional knowledge and resource management practices with a view to promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development; (iv) Recognition that traditional and direct dependence on renewable resources and ecosystems, including sustainable harvesting, continues to be essential to the cultural, economic and physical well-being of indigenous people and their communities; (v) Development and strengthening of national dispute-resolution arrangements in relation to settlement of land and resource-management concerns; (vi) Support for alternative environmentally sound means of production to ensure a range of choices on how to improve their quality of life so that they can effectively participate in sustainable development; (vii) Enhancement of capacity-building for indigenous communities, based on the adaptation and exchange of traditional experience, knowledge and resource-management practices, to ensure their sustainable development; <p>(b) Establishment, where appropriate, of arrangements to strengthen the active participation of indigenous people and their communities in the national formulation of policies, laws and programmes relating to resource management and other development processes that may affect them, and their initiation of proposals for such policies and programmes;</p> <p>(c) Involvement of indigenous people and their communities at the national and local levels in resource management and conservation strategies and other relevant programmes established to support and review sustainable development strategies, such as those suggested in other programme areas of Agenda 21 (Article 26.3).</p> <p>Governments should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Consider the ratification and application of existing international conventions relevant to indigenous people and their communities (where not yet done) and provide support for the adoption by the General Assembly of a declaration on indigenous rights; (b) Adopt or strengthen appropriate policies and/or legal instruments that will protect indigenous intellectual and cultural property and the right to preserve customary and administrative systems and practices (26.4).
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		<p>United Nations organizations and other international development and finance organizations and Governments should incorporate their values, views and knowledge, including the unique contribution of indigenous women, in resource management and other policies and programmes that may affect them.</p> <p>To do so they should:</p> <p>(a) Appoint a special focal point within each international organization, and organize annual interorganizational coordination meetings in consultation with Governments and indigenous organizations, as appropriate, and develop a procedure within and between operational agencies for assisting Governments in ensuring the coherent and coordinated incorporation of the views of indigenous people in the design and implementation of policies and programmes. Under this procedure, indigenous people and their communities should be informed and consulted and allowed to participate in national decision-making, in particular regarding regional and international cooperative efforts. In addition, these policies and programmes should take fully into account strategies based on local indigenous initiatives;</p> <p>(b) Provide technical and financial assistance for capacity-building programmes to support the sustainable self-development of indigenous people and their communities;</p> <p>(c) Strengthen research and education programmes aimed at:</p> <p>(i) Achieving a better understanding of indigenous people's knowledge and management experience related to the environment, and applying this to contemporary development challenges;</p> <p>(ii) Increasing the efficiency of indigenous people's resource management systems, for example, by promoting the adaptation and dissemination of suitable technological innovations;</p> <p>(d) Contribute to the endeavours of indigenous people and their communities in resource management and conservation strategies (such as those that may be developed under appropriate projects funded through the Global Environment Facility and the Tropical Forestry Action Plan) and other programme areas of Agenda 21, including programmes to collect, analyse and use data and other information in support of sustainable development projects (Article 26.5).</p> <p>Governments, in full partnership with indigenous people and their communities should, where appropriate:</p> <p>(a) Develop or strengthen national arrangements to consult with indigenous people and their communities with a view to reflecting their needs and incorporating their values and traditional and other knowledge and practices in national policies and programmes in the field of natural resource management and conservation and other development programmes affecting them;</p> <p>(b) Cooperate at the regional level, where appropriate, to address common indigenous issues with a view to recognizing and strengthening their participation in sustainable development (Article 26.6).</p> <p>Governments should incorporate, in collaboration with the indigenous people affected, the rights and</p>
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1992	Convention on Biological Diversity	<p>Subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices (Article 8j)</p> <p>Protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements (Article 10c)</p> <p>Such exchange of information shall include exchange of results of technical, scientific and socio-economic research, as well as information on training and surveying programmes, specialized knowledge, indigenous and traditional knowledge as such and in combination with the technologies referred to in Article 16, paragraph 1. It shall also, where feasible, include repatriation of information (Article 17.2)</p> <p>The Contracting Parties shall, in accordance with national legislation and policies, encourage and develop methods of cooperation for the development and use of technologies, including indigenous and traditional technologies, in pursuance of the objectives of this Convention. For this purpose, the Contracting Parties shall also promote cooperation in the training of personnel and exchange of experts (Article 18.4)</p>
1995	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries	<p>Conservation and management decisions for fisheries should be based on the best scientific evidence available, also taking into account traditional knowledge of the resources and their habitat, as well as relevant environmental, economic and social factors. States should assign priority to undertake research and data collection in order to improve scientific and technical knowledge of fisheries including their interaction with the ecosystem. In recognizing the transboundary nature of many aquatic ecosystems, States should encourage bilateral and multilateral cooperation in research, as appropriate (Article 6.4)</p>

		<p>When deciding on the use, conservation and management of fisheries resources, due recognition should be given, as appropriate, in accordance with national laws and regulations, to the traditional practices, needs and interests of indigenous people and local fishing communities which are highly dependent on fishery resources for their livelihood (Article 7.6.6)</p> <p>States should investigate and document traditional fisheries knowledge and technologies, in particular those applied to small-scale fisheries, in order to assess their application to sustainable fisheries conservation, management and development (Article 12.12)</p>
1999	World Conference on Science (WCS)	<p>... that traditional and local knowledge systems, as dynamic expressions of perceiving and understanding the world, can make, and historically have made, a valuable contribution to science and technology, and that there is a need to preserve, protect, research and promote this cultural heritage and empirical knowledge (WCS Declaration on Science, paragraph 26)</p> <p>... Governments should support cooperation between holders of traditional knowledge and scientists to explore the relationships between different knowledge systems and to foster interlinkages of mutual benefit" (WCS Framework for Action, section 3.4, paragraph 87)</p>
2002	Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development	<p>We reaffirm the vital role of the indigenous peoples in sustainable development (Article 25)</p>
2002	Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development	<p>Develop policies and ways and means to improve access by indigenous people and their communities to economic activities and increase their employment through, where appropriate, measures such as training, technical assistance and credit facilities. Recognize that traditional and direct dependence on renewable resources and ecosystems, including sustainable harvesting, continues to be essential to the cultural, economic and physical well-being of indigenous people and their communities (Article 7 e.)</p> <p>Provide access to agricultural resources for people living in poverty, especially women and indigenous communities, and promote, as appropriate, land tenure arrangements that recognize and protect indigenous and common property resource management systems (Article 7 h.)</p> <p>Develop and utilize indigenous energy sources and infrastructures for various local uses and promote rural community participation, including local Agenda 21 groups, with the support of the international community, in developing and utilizing renewable energy technologies to meet their daily energy needs to find simple and local solutions (Article 20 g)</p> <p>Encourage the dissemination and use of traditional and indigenous knowledge to mitigate the impact of</p>

		<p>disasters and promote community-based disaster management planning by local authorities, including through training activities and raising public awareness (Article 37 f.)</p> <p>Support initiatives to assess the consequences of climate change, such as the Arctic Council initiative, including the environmental, economic and social impacts on local and indigenous communities (Article 38 i.)</p> <p>Promote programmes to enhance in a sustainable manner the productivity of land and the efficient use of water resources in agriculture, forestry, wetlands, artisanal fisheries and aquaculture, especially through indigenous and local community-based approaches (Article 40 d.)</p> <p>Enact, as appropriate, measures that protect indigenous resource management systems and support the contribution of all appropriate stakeholders, men and women alike, in rural planning and development (Article 40 h.)</p> <p>Promote the conservation, and sustainable use and management of traditional and indigenous agricultural systems and strengthen indigenous models of agricultural production (Article 40 r.)</p> <p>Promote full participation and involvement of mountain communities in decisions that affect them and integrate indigenous knowledge, heritage and values in all development initiatives (Article 42 e.)</p> <p>Develop programmes, including education and training programmes, that encourage people to participate in eco-tourism, enable indigenous and local communities to develop and benefit from eco-tourism, and enhance stakeholder cooperation in tourism development and heritage preservation, in order to improve the protection of the environment, natural resources and cultural heritage (Article 43 b.)</p> <p>Provide financial and technical support to developing countries, including capacity-building, in order to enhance indigenous and community-based biodiversity conservation efforts (Article 43 h.)</p> <p>Subject to national legislation, recognize the rights of local and indigenous communities who are holders of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, and, with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices, develop and implement benefit-sharing mechanisms on mutually agreed terms for the use of such knowledge, innovations and practices (Article 43 j.)</p> <p>Encourage and enable all stakeholders to contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the</p>
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2004	Addis Ababa Guidelines and Principles	<p>Adaptive management should be practiced, based on: Science and traditional and local knowledge (Practical principle 4.a)</p> <p>The needs of indigenous and local communities who live with and are affected by the use and conservation of biological diversity, along with their contributions to its conservation and sustainable use, should be reflected in the equitable distribution of the benefits from the use of those resources (Practical principle 12)</p>
2007	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	<p>Fourth Assessment Report (AR4)</p> <p>Acknowledged indigenous knowledge as ‘an invaluable basis for developing adaptation and natural resource management strategies in response to environmental and other forms of change’.</p>
2007	UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)	<p>Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature (Article 11)</p> <p>States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution, developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples, with respect to their cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and</p>

		<p>customs (Article 11)</p> <p>Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals...(Article 24)</p> <p>Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions. In conjunction with indigenous peoples, States shall take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of these rights (Article 31).</p>
2010	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Cancun Agreement Framework	<p><i>Recognizes</i> the need to engage a broad range of stakeholders at the global, regional, national and local levels, be they government, including subnational and local government, private business or civil society, including youth and persons with disability, and that gender equality and the effective participation of women and indigenous peoples are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change (Article 7)</p> <p><i>Affirms</i> that enhanced action on adaptation should be undertaken in accordance with the Convention, should follow a country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional and indigenous knowledge, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate (Article 12)</p> <p><i>Also requests</i> developing country Parties, when developing and implementing their national strategies or action plans, to address, inter alia, the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure issues, forest governance issues, gender considerations and the safeguards identified in paragraph 2 of appendix I to this decision, ensuring the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, inter alia indigenous peoples and local communities (Article 72)</p>
2010	Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising	<p>In accordance with domestic law, each Party shall take measures, as appropriate, with the aim of ensuring that traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that is held by indigenous and local communities is accessed with the prior and informed consent or approval and involvement of these indigenous and local communities, and that mutually agreed terms have been established (Article 7)</p>

	from their Utilization	<p>Parties shall consider the need for and modalities of a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism to address the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from the utilization of genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that occur in transboundary situations or for which it is not possible to grant or obtain prior informed consent. The benefits shared by users of genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources through this mechanism shall be used to support the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components globally (Article 10)</p> <p>1. In implementing their obligations under this Protocol, Parties shall in accordance with domestic law take into consideration indigenous and local communities' customary laws, community protocols and procedures, as applicable, with respect to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources.</p> <p>2. Parties, with the effective participation of the indigenous and local communities concerned, shall establish mechanisms to inform potential users of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources about their obligations, including measures as made available through the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House for access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge.</p> <p>3. Parties shall endeavour to support, as appropriate, the development by indigenous and local communities, including women within these communities, of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Community protocols in relation to access to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of such knowledge; (b) Minimum requirements for mutually agreed terms to secure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources; and (c) Model contractual clauses for benefit-sharing arising from the utilization of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources. <p>4. Parties, in their implementation of this Protocol, shall, as far as possible, not restrict the customary use and exchange of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge within and amongst indigenous and local communities in accordance with the objectives of the Convention. (Article 12)</p>
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