



For tribes, for nature,  
for all humanity

## COP28: the threat to Indigenous peoples Press briefing

Discussions at COP28 will include an area of particular concern for Indigenous peoples' rights: the possible global market for carbon offsets. Many offset projects in the existing voluntary carbon market have been shown to be [a grave threat to Indigenous peoples' rights](#), as well as of highly questionable value in tackling climate change.

Indigenous peoples' rights, lands and livelihoods must be respected and protected in any climate mitigation proposals – but this is not currently the case.

Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement, part of the section of the agreement that covers climate funding, provides for the possibility of establishing a global marketplace for carbon offsets<sup>1</sup>. Ahead of COP28, a 'Supervisory Body' has been working on proposals for how to create such a marketplace, under UN auspices. From an Indigenous rights perspective, these proposals are extremely dangerous.

- **Licence for land grabs:** the effectiveness of all carbon offset schemes is highly doubtful; but, in particular, those based on land use – often branded as [“nature-based solutions”](#) – present huge risks and threats to Indigenous peoples. Schemes that claim to increase carbon capture or avoid carbon releases by supposedly 'saving' forests, planting new forests, or altering traditional land use to store more carbon have often led to the seizing of Indigenous and local people's land, or to severe limits on hunting, gathering, grazing and other life-sustaining activities by Indigenous peoples on their own ancestral land.
- **Systems that fail to ensure quality or human rights:** current systems and mechanisms for trading in the voluntary carbon markets [are structurally and systematically flawed](#). Specifically, they do not include any adequate provisions for Indigenous peoples' rights, in practice allowing carbon trading schemes on lands seized from Indigenous peoples; and they do not do nearly enough to ensure that carbon credits represent actual reductions in carbon emissions or removals from the atmosphere. Yet Article 6.4 proposals seem largely to replicate these failed systems.
- **No real consultation or consent:** the consultation exercise carried out by the Supervisory Body for the supposed 'engagement' of Indigenous peoples in Article 6.4 implementation has been weak and far too late<sup>2</sup> - indeed, COP28 will make key decisions on Art. 6.4

---

<sup>1</sup> Article 6.2 of the Agreement also provides a mechanism allowing *bilateral* trading of what are in effect carbon credits, called Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes (IMOs). Although the precise rules for Article 6.2 have also not been completed, and no such trades have yet been formally agreed, a number have been developed 'in principle', such as between Switzerland and Ghana, Peru, and Malawi, and between Singapore and Papua New Guinea.

<sup>2</sup> The [consultation](#) was undertaken from 5<sup>th</sup> October to 5<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Numerous indigenous organisations expressed strong views challenging the development of carbon markets under PA Article 6.4.

before this process even reports. The process has entirely ignored the internationally recognised right of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for Indigenous peoples on any activities affecting their lands.

- **Weak standards:** the '[Activity Standard v01.0](#)', in the article 6.4 current proposal sets broad parameters for the kinds of projects to be allowed within a future global carbon trading scheme. The section on environmental and social impacts is wholly inadequate, and fails to include respect for Indigenous peoples' rights and FPIC.

Land-based mitigation activities, such as forestry, afforestation, 'nature restoration' and 'agricultural improvement' schemes raise red flags about the potential impact on Indigenous peoples.

**COP28 represents a critical point in the road: whether we make real reductions in carbon emissions or continue to peddle false solutions.** The recent agreements that [Blue Carbon](#), a company linked to the UAE royal family, has signed with various African countries, shows just how big an impact these false solutions could have on Indigenous peoples. They've secured an area of land the size of the UK for offset projects, and recently the Kenyan government, in just one of these deals, [signed away millions of hectares of its territory for the production of carbon credits](#).

Therefore, we are calling on all participants to ensure the following, in order to avoid violations of Indigenous rights, including evictions and destruction of their livelihoods:

- **Recognise and respect Indigenous land rights:** Indigenous peoples' rights to their land must be fully recognised and enforced, and this must precede agreement of any climate-related plans or proposals that might affect their land or use of it.
- **Exclude land-based carbon offset schemes from all global climate agreements:** in particular, Article 6.4 must exclude land-based schemes indefinitely, pending a full historical review of such schemes, meaningful consultation and consent (see below), and necessary safeguards for Indigenous rights.
- **Develop stronger systems for rights and quality:** any carbon trading system as set out in Article 6.4 must develop systems that fully integrate guarantees on human rights – including Indigenous rights – and higher standards for emissions reductions.
- **Genuine consultation and consent:** any proposals that might affect Indigenous peoples, including article 6.4, first require a properly constituted consultation, designed and implemented by and for Indigenous peoples. This must encompass (at least) respect of rights, FPIC, land tenure, and the distribution of benefits.
- **Reject weak standards:** the current Activity Standard v01.0 must be rejected.

Whether or not COP28 outcomes include these elements will help determine whether future global carbon markets add to the already existing multiple threats faced by Indigenous peoples - who remain amongst the least responsible for causing the climate crisis.

**Indigenous People explain the impact of climate mitigation proposals in Survival's Tribal Voice Project:**

[Ninawa Huni Kui, Brazil](#)

[Amarlal Baiga, India](#)

[Elias Kimaiyo, Kenya](#)

[Abdullahi Hajji Gonjobe, Kenya](#)

For further information contact: [press@survivalinternational.org](mailto:press@survivalinternational.org)