



PRESS RELEASE
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COP-16 in Cali

The COP of inclusion and reconciliation

Cali, November 4th, 2024 - At the end of the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-16), Parties adopted a series of important agreements to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (hereafter 'KMGBF'), although a number of key documents remain to be finalised.

After two weeks of intense work and massive and unprecedented participation by local communities, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, civil society and governments, the Parties adopted important measures aimed at inclusion and reconciliation with indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants.

Firstly, the International Observatory for the Rights of Nature (IOLN) highlighted the historic creation of an **Indigenous Peoples Subsidiary Body** "which will enable the effective participation of these peoples" and will play a crucial role in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. This body will be based in Montreal and will consist of two indigenous representatives who will be consulted on any decision or proposal relating to their ancestral knowledge, territories and values (CBD/COP16/L.6). This decision was welcomed with great joy in the plenary, where several representatives of indigenous peoples of the Americas and the world were present. Their participation during COP-16 was remarkable, whether in negotiations, workshops, conferences, music or culture. It can be said that COP-16 was marked by their involvement and participation in large numbers.

In addition, one of the documents adopted at the plenary session recognised **the contribution of people of African descent** to the implementation of the CBD. This document encourages Parties to the Convention to ensure their full and effective participation (CBD/COP16/L.7). This adoption was celebrated with songs and shouts of joy in the room, thanks to the presence of several participants from civil society of African descent.

Following the adoption of these landmark documents, the Parties, who stayed up late, were unable to reach agreement on the other items agenda on the list for adoption, by documents, in particular

on the functioning of the **Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF)**, which was established at COP-15 in Montreal as part of the KMGBF. This point was the subject of much debate, and the two weeks of negotiations did not seem long enough for the parties to reach agreement on the documents under discussion. As a result, there are still number of text passages into square 'brackets' in several documents. Faced with texts that were far from unanimous, the fatigue and the early hours, many parties left the room in the early hours of 2 November to return to their respective countries, quietly emptying the room. As a result, there was no quorum to continue negotiations in plenary. A new session will therefore have to be convened to determine the outcome of these negotiations.

Despite the suspension of negotiations on this important issue, Yenny Vega Cárdenas, President of the IONR, believes that "it is nevertheless encouraging to note that at the end of these two weeks, government contributions to the Global Biodiversity Fund have reached the sum of **163 million US dollars**. This includes contributions from a number of countries, including Germany, Norway, France, Spain and New Zealand, as well as the **government of Quebec**, which pledged 2 million Canadian dollars, making it the first provincial government to contribute to the fund. To date, the total amount has reached \$396 million.

Finally, we would like to highlight another important document that has yet to be adopted, namely the **recognition of the diversity of value systems**, such as the living well, also with concepts such as the rights of Nature and rights of Mother Earth, which are already enshrined in the KMGBF. These values were part of the Presidency text on resource mobilisation. "We note that these different value systems are inspired by the ecocentric epistemology found in the cosmology of certain indigenous peoples", adds Inès Benadda, vice-president of IORN. What's more, the text calls for these knowledge and value systems to be recognised and taken into account in decision-making and policy development in order to promote transformative change that is fair to people and Nature (CBD/COP/16/L19). Even though this document could not be analysed by the Plenary, we would like to point out that during the lively debates in the Plenary, Bolivia also pointed out the importance of avoiding, in the future, to bracket the references to Mother Earth, given that this term is already widely used in the KMGBF. This comment was warmly applauded in the room, particularly by indigenous peoples.

Before thinking about the next COP, which will take place in Yerevan, Armenia, in 2026, the parties will have to meet again to finalise the remaining documents for the implementation of the KMGBF.

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