Informal recommendations from the Indigenous Caucus at IMPAC5

February 3rd, 2023

Following the Indigenous Caucus at IMPAC5, which took place on February 3rd, 2023, we have compiled a set of recommendations for the Indigenous Leadership Committee members to review and bring to the Leadership Forum on February 9th, 2023. An initial draft of these recommendations were submitted to the facilitation team from hosts of the small group discussions at the Indigenous Caucus. The facilitation team then uploaded these recommendations onto a digital platform where participants were invited to upvote, downvote, or comment on each. Following the voting and commenting period, the recommendations were further refined and edited based on participant feedback, such as a suggestion to use “Indigenous Peoples” throughout in alignment with UN wording.

As a reminder, these recommendations are intended to be informal, arising from an ad hoc gathering, and do not constitute any formal decision making on the part of any Peoples, governments, organizations or individuals.

*Recommendations in light blue represent those that received the most “upvotes” by participants.*

1. Governments must recognize Indigenous Peoples as marine stewards.

2. All governmental and non-governmental partners must recognize that Indigenous leadership is needed to ensure that Indigenous Peoples’ perspectives and values are reflected in management objectives.

3. Ensure positions for Indigenous Peoples’ have high enough salaries, benefits, and opportunities for economic mobility to mitigate “brain drain” away from Indigenous Nations.

4. The priorities for all funded projects must be determined by Indigenous Peoples.

5. Indigenous Peoples must be recognized and involved as Rights holders in all discussions around oceans protection - “nothing about us, without us”.

6. Governments, including First Nations and other Indigenous Peoples’ governments, NGOs, and environmental organizations should create opportunities for youth training, retention, and pathways into leadership.

7. Funding should be allocated directly to Indigenous Peoples’ governments and organizations for the planning and management of marine resources and protected areas.

8. Provide education to the public on the inherent Rights and authority Indigenous Peoples have over their territories, including the authority of Guardians.

9. Governments and other relevant stakeholders should offer training and standardization (e.g. of Guardian programs), as well as develop authorities or designations for Indigenous Peoples to help enforce existing legislation (e.g. fisheries).

10. Governments must adopt financing models that reflect the tenets of UNDRIP.

11. Establish a global marine conservation fund to support Indigenous-led stewardship and governance of MPAs that strives for parity access the global North/South, and provides funding for Indigenous representation at future IMPAC gatherings.

12. Governments must acknowledge that the lands and waters are connected and that management over one cannot be done without impacting the other.

13. Governments must move to multi-year, full-time funding models with reduced reporting and administration requirements for Indigenous Peoples.

14. Governments must recognize and affirm Indigenous Title & Rights in the marine space.

15. Establish and fund a recognized organization, and provide ongoing support for existing groups, to disseminate information concerning international policies related to Indigenous Peoples at the national and local level.

16. Policy makers must seek permission from Indigenous Peoples before working in relation to their territories, in accordance with UNDRIP Article 32 and free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC).
17. Governments and other stakeholders must recognize that Indigenous Peoples’ institutions, laws, inherent Rights and Title are key for the effective establishment and management of IPAs.

18. Governments must direct funding to support more Indigenous Peoples, especially younger generations, to gain capacity at an international policy level.

19. Governments must take accountability over impacts of colonization and compensate Indigenous Nations for loss of and damage to biodiversity and culture.

20. Provide support for strong Indigenous Peoples’ leadership to ensure communities’ interests are upheld in work on marine conservation and stewardship.

21. Canada must amend or create new legislation in order to better recognize and affirm Indigenous jurisdiction & stewardship, giving full authority.

22. Governments must support a transition to a future where Indigenous Peoples have sole authority over their territories.

23. Establish opportunities for capacity building for young Indigenous champions to navigate the International arena (such as policy for example).

24. Governments and non-governmental partners must support and fund opportunities for shared learning amongst Indigenous Peoples participating in negotiations regarding marine protection.

25. Ensure sufficient resources to efficiently manage funds, and support monitoring and stewardship activities.

26. Create a forum to demonstrate Indigenous Peoples marine stewardship successes at a National and International scale to help promote innovation and secure long-term funding.

27. Governments must ensure funding translates to increased capacity and responsibility for Indigenous Peoples in marine management.

28. Seek opportunity to combine and credit Indigenous Knowledge(s) and science(s) alongside Western Science in the marine space while ensuring Indigenous Knowledge(s) are protected.

29. Apply processes such as two-eyed seeing or two-way knowing that allow for the co-creation of knowledge to the application and implementation of solutions to contemporary ocean science challenges.

30. Policy makers must uphold Indigenous beliefs and values over commodities.

31. Governments and non-governmental partners must support the improvement and innovation of mechanisms for co-management of marine protected areas.

32. Canada and the provinces/territories must resolve overlapping jurisdiction over the marine space.

33. Support the intergenerational passing down of Indigenous Knowledges in ways that protect its sacredness.

34. Draft Declaration regarding Deep Sea Mining: As Indigenous leaders and representatives gathered at IMPAC5, we call on authorities to suspend and prohibit all mineral exploration and exploitation of the seabed for the good of the planet and all humanity.
1. Leaders must recognize the Ocean as a living entity, ancestor and relative with inherent rights. We as human beings have a responsibility for care and protection. Encourage all leaders to sign the Universal Declaration on Ocean Rights.

2. Indigenous languages are critical to Ocean protection. Leaders must support Indigenous Languages in existing and new MPAs and ensure that naming protocol for protected areas aligns with Indigenous languages and does not promote neocolonialism.

3. UNDRIP must be embedded across all MPA designation and management processes ensuring Indigenous leadership is at the forefront and that Rights to Free, Prior and Informed Consent are upheld.

4. Ocean observing systems, data collection, and data governance across marine protected areas should follow Indigenous Data Sovereignty and CARE principles for Indigenous data governance.

5. Indigenous Peoples, Nations and communities are disproportionately burdened by the proliferation of deep sea mining. The activities are often occurring in violation of UNDRIP and without FPIC. Leaders must call for a ban on all deep sea mining.

6. Financing must be provided to Indigenous Peoples for remediation and restoration associated with marine debris.

7. Any new international treaties for the Ocean must include Indigenous Peoples as invited parties and signatories. There can be no high seas treaty (BBNJ) without Indigenous consent.

8. All governments must advance Indigenous Ocean Justice. Indigenous Ocean justice recognizes Indigenous Peoples are (1) rights holders and nations with sovereignty in marine environments; (2) leaders in decision making and co-management of shared ocean resources; (3) equitable beneficiaries of ocean benefits and not bearers of disproportionate burden due to ocean uses; and (4) empowered to fulfill responsibilities for ocean kinship and stewardship.