

**Statement by the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IIFBES), Plenary, session 1, Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2018**

Thank you Mr Chairperson

This is a statement on behalf of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFBES).

We thank the government of Colombia for hosting this important meeting, the IPBES secretariat for organising it. We also thank the indigenous peoples and local communities of Colombia for their millennial role in caring for Mother Earth.

We applaud the journey undertaken by IPBES to respect and recognise the role of indigenous and local knowledge (ILK), alongside Science and other knowledge systems. We particularly welcome IPBES5 adoption of the Approach paper on recognizing and working with ILK, whilst recognising this came late in the first work programme, and requires operationalization, and its implementation is an evolutionary process.

The proposal to put in place a participatory mechanism for the inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK) is highly favourable but this must happen with our full and effective participation. Therefore, to ensure this, we recommend that IPBES-6 ensures a clear process for the finalisation and implementation of the participatory mechanism. This can include a call for inputs from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), as well as consultations with them to draw lessons about experience with other participatory mechanisms.

One particular component of IPLCs' participation we see as an existing barrier is the nomination process for experts to participate in IPBES activities such as the various assessments that are being discussed here this week.

Whilst we very much welcome the opening of the door to engage in IPBES, we call on the governments and all stakeholders to commit to resolving blockages and barriers at all levels to facilitate and ensure IPLCs' participation.

We also note the progress being done through the Fellowship programme and we would like to explore how IPLCs can participate in it.

Lastly, another major barrier has been the lack of financial resources to effectively participate in IPBES. We encourage governments, donors and all the stakeholders to support IPLCs participation in activities at local, national and global level and we propose the establishment of a Voluntary Fund.