



Geothermal Indigenous People’s Declaration – October 2024

We, an international representation of Indigenous Geothermal Peoples attending the inaugural Indigenous Geothermal Symposium 2024 held in Waikōloa, Hawai‘i, shared and discussed our respective experiences, learnings and issues regarding geothermal resource use and development occurring within our respective areas of ancestral land including its impacts on, and potential benefits for, Indigenous Geothermal Peoples’ communities. Representing Indigenous Geothermal Peoples from 4 countries, we gathered with a common purpose to advocate for the protection of indigenous rights, lands, social equity, cultural integrity, inclusivity, full and effective participation and shared prosperity of Indigenous Geothermal Peoples, while fully acknowledging that sustainable geothermal resource use and development will play a critical role in achieving the energy transition and in addressing the climate crisis.

We collaboratively identified 6 priorities that underscore what we are collectively concerned about. We also agreed what we are “calling for” from the wider geothermal community to help address these concerns. In this context, the wider geothermal community includes, as relevant, government at all levels, geothermal investors, geothermal developers, energy utilities and energy and environmental regulators.

Our 6 priorities and respective requests of the wider geothermal community are set out below



Indigenous Geothermal Peoples' Priorities	Our Calls to the Wider Geothermal Community
1. Indigenous peoples' rights and sovereignty over their lands and natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recognize, respect, guarantee and protect Indigenous Peoples' rights as enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other internationally recognized rights, including in the context of renewable energy. • To recognize Indigenous Peoples as rights holders, owners and decision-makers rather than mere stakeholders in the development of geothermal projects.
2. Communication and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make the commitment to undertake meaningful and transparent consultation as early as possible, well before the commencement of any project development phase, to gain, from the outset, a deeper understanding of what is important to Indigenous Peoples' and why. This is critical for developing mutual trust and relationship building. • To recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples' right to say "no" and to accept any non-negotiables they may have. • To strive to find consensus, establish integrated partnerships or other solutions that benefit both parties, and secure the free, prior and informed consent from Indigenous Peoples. • To provide adequate funding for all of the above.
3. Community Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reciprocate the benefits of geothermal development by implementing equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms, such as co-ownership, co-management and co-equity models, that respect Indigenous Peoples' rights and contributions and result in early and ongoing internal capacity building, employment opportunities and the promotion of Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination.
4. Cultural Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To acknowledge and respect Indigenous Peoples' as stewards and guardians of their land and geothermal resources and provide tangible ways to enable them to carry out their duties in this respect. • To protect the cultural knowledge of Indigenous Peoples' and look for opportunities to incorporate it into developments so it can be celebrated and enhanced.
5. Law and Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the development or review of any geothermal related laws, policies, procedures or decision-making criteria prioritises Indigenous Peoples' rights, social equity, cultural integrity, and environmental protection and, as far as possible, is agreed across the political spectrum to minimise future amendments and, in turn, maximise certainty for Indigenous Peoples. • To provide for, and fund, decision-making roles for Indigenous Peoples in respect of the development of geothermal related laws, policies or procedures and in respect of geothermal development project proposals.
6. Values and Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support, promote and facilitate the development of a set of guiding values and principles on Indigenous Rights for businesses, developers and multinational enterprises in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).

