

ONJISAY AKI INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CALLS TO ACTION

Developed by Consensus by the Speakers of the
Onjisay Aki – Our Changing Earth – International Climate Summit
Turtle Lodge | Sagkeeng First Nation | Manitoba, Canada

The Onjisay Aki International Climate Summit was held at the Turtle Lodge in Sagkeeng First Nation, Manitoba, Canada from June 8-10, 2017. The Summit was led by Indigenous Peoples from the center of the continent of Turtle Island (North America) who steered the proceedings by following Indigenous protocols of engaging and sharing ancestral knowledges concerning relationships with the natural world. Twenty-four speakers – Indigenous knowledge keepers and international climate leaders – were invited by the Turtle Lodge to represent the diversity of the human family, highlighting in accordance with Indigenous teachings that everyone has something to contribute. These individuals came together as concerned citizens out of a common concern for the Earth and future generations.

“The Earth is our mother, we need to take care of her. That responsibility belongs to each and every one of us.” – Elmer Courchene, Anishinabe Nation

Onjisay Aki means “our changing Earth” in the Anishinabe language. *Onjisay Aki* is a word that offers hope for the future. It acknowledges the leadership of Mother Earth herself, who as a living being carries the true influence to bring birth to new life, to counter imbalances that lead to issues like climate change, and to restore balance in the world. *Onjisay Aki* also means that as Earth changes, so must we as people. This change cannot be forced, but must come from within us and be based on an understanding found through observation of the Earth itself, and ancestral and natural laws.

“Our culture has guided us how to live the right way, how to listen, how to understand the natural law.” – Miles Richardson, Haida Nation

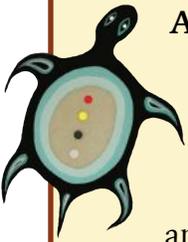
To effectively deal with climate change there must be a change of heart. This change is illustrated by the Trail of the Turtle, a body of ancestral knowledge and teachings, introduced at the Summit, that inspire us to walk a path of life that is based on values and laws of conduct.

“We are part of the generation that has created this catastrophe, therefore it is our responsibility, every day, to do something about it.” – Katherine Whitecloud, Dakota Nation

The Onjisay Aki International Climate Summit convened speakers over three days who engaged in activities that encouraged the comprehension and appreciation of Indigenous knowledge, and roundtable discussions that focused on action. Especially significant was the lifting of a special Pipe that had been commissioned by the Elders, and the coming together and sharing of knowledge from the North and South Americas, in fulfillment of a prophecy commonly identified among Indigenous Peoples as the prophecy of the Eagle and the Condor. The Summit culminated with an ancient ceremony to build a Thunderbird nest, to acknowledge and reestablish a human alliance with nature.

“There is still so much incredible knowledge that our people have that the world has never heard.” - Lawrence Nayally, Dene Nation

The roundtable discussion centered on four major themes: *ancestral knowledge, sovereignty, relationships, and transformation*. The following Calls to Action, developed at the Summit, have been established in accordance with the Trail of the Turtle. They are steps that we must take to return to a balanced way of life, founded on stewardship of the Earth.



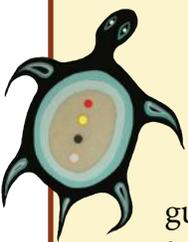
ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE is the foundation for living in balance with the Earth. The traditional wisdom of Indigenous Peoples, rooted in laws of peaceful conduct, and a love for and spiritual relationship with the land, air, water, fire, and plant, animal, human and celestial worlds, has allowed them to live sustainably within diverse homelands for millennia. Indigenous Nations were given original instructions of how to live with the land and her elements, here on this continent we call Turtle Island, and around the globe. This wisdom and knowledge of stewardship techniques is a gift from the Creator and is needed to help humanity navigate an uncertain future in an era of climate change.

Call to Action 1. *To support numerous forms of education and training disciplines throughout Indigenous homelands based on the wisdom of Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Rites of Passage are an especially important ancestral tradition of educating Youth. The ultimate goal is the training and development of Young People as true leaders who will walk a road of peace and take care of the Earth.*

Call to Action 2. *To support the development of “Ancestral Schools of Knowledge” overseen by the Elders who facilitate intergenerational knowledge transmission between Youth and Elders. The establishment of these Schools is a foundational step in our shared journey towards reconciliation and sustainability.*

Call to Action 3. *To support revitalization of Indigenous languages, which are foundational to stewardship. Indigenous languages are connected to our land-based ancestral knowledge. Critical concepts and teachings are embedded in Indigenous language, stories and songs.*

Call to Action 4. *To support ancestral knowledge being shared around the globe, beginning with North and South America, building on existing relationships and further fulfilling the prophecy of the Eagle and the Condor.*



SOVEREIGNTY for Indigenous Peoples – over ecological, cultural, political, and legal environments and communities – is fundamental for fostering stewardship. Sovereign Indigenous Nations will ensure the wisdom of their cultures remains strong and able to guide humanity into the future. We recognize that Sovereignty for Indigenous Nations is defined by Indigenous people and based upon relationships with the Creator and the Earth.

Call to Action 5. *To support Indigenous communities in defining their own Nationhood, based on their ancestral laws and understandings of the natural world, as the foundation of governance of their territories.*

Call to Action 6. *To support the Indigenous Leadership Initiative’s Guardianship Network that promotes Nationhood and stewardship over Indigenous homelands. This network supports Indigenous Peoples in taking responsibility for their traditional territories by demonstrating leadership as caretakers of these lands. This network also supports our collective duty to train young people to carry this stewardship into the future.*

Call to Action 7. *To support the right of Indigenous communities in developing and having Sovereign control over their energy systems.*



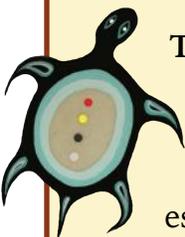
RELATIONSHIPS across the diverse ecologies, cultures and communities of the world are essential for growing and strengthening our relationship with the Earth, and our interconnections with allies that share common values of Earth stewardship. Like a forest, we stand as unique trees that are rooted in a common soil that binds us together and makes us stronger. We recognize that all of Earth's people have vision and gifts to share, and we seek to expand our relationships with Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners. True partnerships and collaborations based on trust, respect, understanding and reciprocity are essential to address the challenges we face today and into the future.

***Call to Action 8.** To support individuals in being guided by ancestral knowledge for healing and strengthening of the spirit and identity.*

***Call to Action 9.** To build alliances between Indigenous communities, government bodies, and non-governmental organizations that share common values of Earth stewardship, who are working in the area of climate and energy justice.*

***Call to Action 10.** To build alliances between keepers of both Indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge, provided this is done in a respectful manner that equally values their respective contributions to understanding the challenges and opportunities of our time.*

***Call to Action 11.** To build alliances between Indigenous communities and corporate and industrial partners working in areas related to renewable energy and clean technologies, to help usher in a social, ecological, and economically sustainable future for the Earth and its human and non-human inhabitants.*



TRANSFORMATION of our global society will be possible if the leadership of Indigenous Peoples is respected. Climate change can lead to a positive human change as we reflect on what is causing the changes in the Earth, and transform our reality through direct action. Collectively as the human race, guided by ancestral knowledge, we have the ability to establish relationships based on principles of growth and resurgence.

***Call to Action 12.** It is our sacred duty and responsibility to carry out the original ancestral instructions that we were all given, and to pass this knowledge to the Youth of today, for them to become true peaceful stewards of the Earth. Working peacefully, in alliance with ancestral and natural laws to support the above mentioned actions, will initiate a planetary transformation that creates a healthier future for our children, grandchildren and seven generations to come.*

“We have within our own power to make the changes necessary. It is not only about Indigenous peoples, it is about all people, about life itself”

– Dave Courchene, Anishinabe Nation

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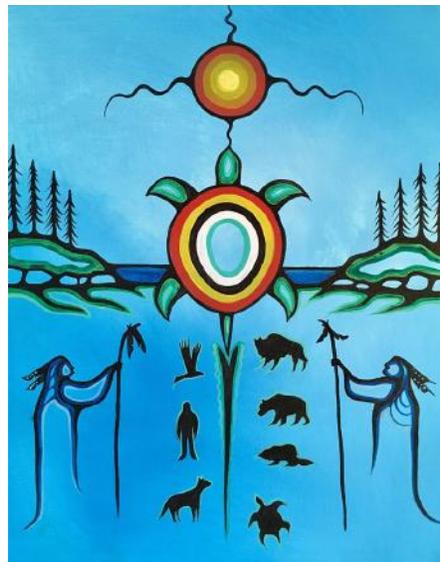
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