



**JPAC Public Forum on Environmental Education  
“Stories and lessons learned from North American communities and youth”  
14 July 2022 Merida, Mexico.**

**Summary Record**

**ITEM 1: Blessing Ceremony**

Cessia Esther Chuc Uc, member of the CEC Traditional Ecological Knowledge Expert Group (TEKEG), performed a traditional Mayan Blessing Ceremony and recited a brief poem in Mayan. She then proceeded to greet everyone and expressed her excitement at bringing together different voices working toward a common goal.

**ITEM 2: Opening Remarks by Louie Porta**

JPAC Chair Louie Porta opened the meeting by acknowledging all the attendees and the organizers who made the meeting possible. He expressed his great pleasure at being with his colleagues from Canada, Mexico and the United States and to be hosting the Forum. He then presented the agenda and introduced Richard Morgan, the CEC Executive Director.

**ITEM 3: Welcoming Remarks by Richard Morgan**

Mr. Morgan thanked all the JPAC members for their continued commitment to the CEC and for their unfailing support and valuable advice over the last three years. He also recognized the participation of the TEKEG members and thanked them for their contributions. Mr. Morgan then highlighted the CEC's achievements since the last Council session that took place in September 2021.

**ITEM 4: Round table: Community-based approaches to Environmental Education and Climate Action: Hearing from North American Communities**

Ms. Felicia Marcus, JPAC member and round table moderator, presented the structure of the round table and introduced the speakers. The speakers then presented the initiatives being implemented in their communities:

- Canada: *Breathing Lands and Birthing Place* by the Mushkegowuk Council by Vern R. Cheechoo, Director of Lands and Resources, and Lawrence Martin, Marine Region Manager. Mr. Cheechoo and Mr. Martin presented their community-led conservation efforts in Northern Ontario and emphasized the importance of the wetlands and peatlands ecosystems located on the territory of the Omushkego Nation. During their presentation, they underscored the importance of creating partnerships and teamwork to successfully protect this area.

- Mexico: *Integrated Forest Resource Management in the Ejido Nuevo Becal* by Lucio López Méndez, President of the *Consejo de Vigilancia del Ejido Nuevo Becal*. Mr. López Méndez presented the community-led integrated forest management initiative in the *Ejido Nuevo Becal*. He pointed out that the extensive area (52,000 ha) contains the largest protected area in Mexico and is recognized for its community-led forest management and conservation activities.
- United States: *Indigenous Food Sovereignty: Restoring Traditional Foodways to Support Indigenous Self-determination, Wellness and Culture* by Lilian Hill, Executive Director of the Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance (NAFSA). Ms. Hill presented the work being done by the NAFSA, focusing on bringing together stakeholders and communities to rebuild relationships involving the land, water, plants, and animals. She also presented the Indigenous Seed Keeper Network, a food and culinary mentorship program and a grant program for Indigenous-led initiatives.
- Reflections from the Workshop: *Knowledge Dialogue: Shared Values on Environmental Stewardship in North America* by Rosa Esther Peña Soto, Advisor to the coordinator of farmworker organizations and Indigenous Peoples of Huasteca Potosina and by Pedro Moctezuma Barragán, JPAC member. Ms. Peña Soto and Mr. Moctezuma Barragán presented the results from a multistakeholder workshop on environmental stewardship that took place prior to the Public Forum. They highlighted the need for a more sustainable way of life and for the social, academic, public, and private sectors to increase experience exchanges as well as for governments to help support these intersectoral dynamics.

#### **ITEM 5: Moderated Questions and Answers Period**

During the moderated question and answer period, panelists were asked which lessons learned they would like to share with the public as well as what do they need the most from governments or outside third parties to expand their work. The panelists highlighted the importance of developing partnerships with private and federal sectors and of consulting with elders. They also stressed the importance of social recognition of the value of natural resources for conservation efforts. In terms of needs, the panelists identified the need for:

- Project financing, investment, and capacity building
- Social and governmental recognition of the importance of projects
- Data availability and data collection
- Changing human behaviour regarding environmental consciousness
- Enforcement of laws and regulations
- Lack of Indigenous representation in decision-making
- Encouraging and involving youth participation in projects

#### **ITEM 6: Overview of SEM Process an Update on Current Submissions**

Mr. Paolo Solano, CEC Director of Legal Affairs and Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM), presented the status of SEM and the current status of submissions.

#### **ITEM 7: Report from the National and Governmental Advisory Committee Representatives**

Mr. Andy Carey, NAC Chair and Marina Brock, GAC Chair, presented the US National Advisory Committee and the US Governmental Advisory Committee, and provided an update on their 2021 activities. They highlighted that both committees have been instrumental in advising the US Government on the creation of various CEC initiatives.

#### **ITEM 8: Intergenerational Round Table: Living Under Crisis: Sharing Knowledge to Generate Opportunities for the Creation of More Sustainable Communities.**

Mr. Brock Dickinson, Assistant Director, Economic Development Program, University of Waterloo, Canada, and round table moderator, introduced the round table and invited speakers. He highlighted the importance of bringing together knowledge and wisdom with the energy, passion, and innovation of youth in this age of crisis. Each panelist explained how they have been affected by recent challenges and emergencies and also shared insights on how they have been turning crisis into opportunities to build more sustainable and resilient communities.

Samantha Montano, Co-founder of Disaster Researchers for Justice, and Centre for Climate Adaptation Research, shared her experience, lessons learned and challenges in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. She highlighted the importance of having equitable policies to address any crisis or natural disaster.

Brook Thompson, Environmental Engineering Graduate Student from the Yurok tribe in California, spoke about intergenerational hopefulness when it comes to solutions for climate change. She further stressed the importance of including traditional knowledge into current policies.

Ricardo Gonzalo, Biologist at the National Autonomous University (UNAM) and president of the organization *Proyectando un Ambiente y Sociedad Verde*, highlighted the importance of assessing and identifying needs for knowledge relevant to social problems and of meeting those needs by creating intersectoral knowledge networks.

Irasema Ayala Alcántara, researcher and former Director of the Institute for Geography and professor at the National Autonomous University (UNAM), highlighted the importance of understanding that natural disasters are often consequences of unsustainable development practices and that their effects hit vulnerable communities the most.

#### **ITEM 9: Moderated Question and Answer Period**

The panelists participated in a moderated question and answer period where they discussed the importance of:

- Including Traditional Ecological Knowledge in current policies to address climate change
- Investing in quality educational programs for kids and youth
- Acknowledging that disasters do not affect everyone equally
- Sharing and applying knowledge between different sectors



- Supporting local NGOs with funding and financing
- Creating policies that emphasize projects that help to reduce (natural) risks
- Improving data collection related to the natural losses that are due to disasters

**ITEM 10: Closing Remarks**

Mr. Porta closed the meeting by thanking the public for their participation and highlighting the importance of members of the public raising their voices and sharing their communities' concerns.