

# CO-OP4CBD



INDIGENOUS  
SCIENCE

Training Session - Engaging and improving capacity-building for  
civil society in view of CBD COP17  
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## Recognizing Indigenous Science in Global Biodiversity Governance under the CBD

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Indigenous Science





## Indigenous Peoples and their role in biodiversity conservation

- Spread in over 90 countries across continents.
- Manage over a quarter of the world land surface.
- Protect the most important biodiverse areas of the world.
- Precise knowledge and understanding of the natural world.
- Spiritual connection to nature.
- Excluded from national biodiversity planning.
- Minimal role in shaping goals or decisions.
- Despite calls for full and effective Indigenous participation, gaps remain in policy, implementation, and inclusion.
- Consulted superficially rather than treated as equal partners in national biodiversity strategies.



# Indigenous Knowledge



- **IP have their own systems of knowing the world for observing, collecting, categorizing, using, recording, disseminating, revising information and concepts that explain how the world works. (López-Maldonado, 2025)**
- **This information (including the values and practices), should enrich global scientific discourse and policy-making by integrating Indigenous perspectives, thereby fostering a more inclusive, comprehensive, and culturally sensitive approach to addressing the world's challenges. (López-Maldonado, forthcoming)**



- López-Maldonado, Y. (2025). "Why don't we know about Indigenous science? Key concepts, some myths and frequent misconceptions of Indigenous knowledge", in Styres, S. and Neepin, R. (eds) The Bloomsbury Handbook of Indigenous Education and Research. Bloomsbury Publishing: New York, NY. ISBN: 9781350373877.

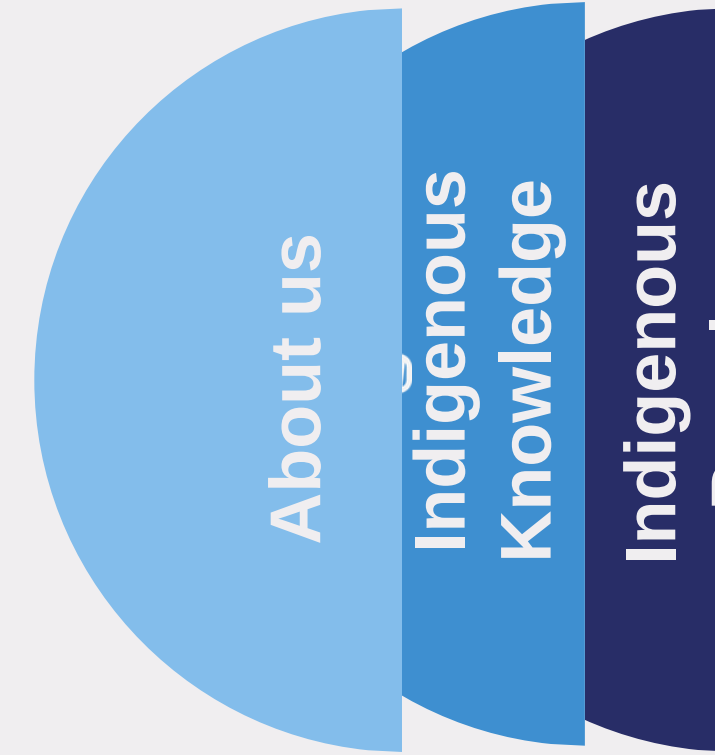
*Indigenous Peoples were among the first to observe and understand complex processes on Earth, to notice changes in natural phenomena, and to gain critical knowledge to adapt to environmental and climate changes (López-Maldonado et al., 2024)*



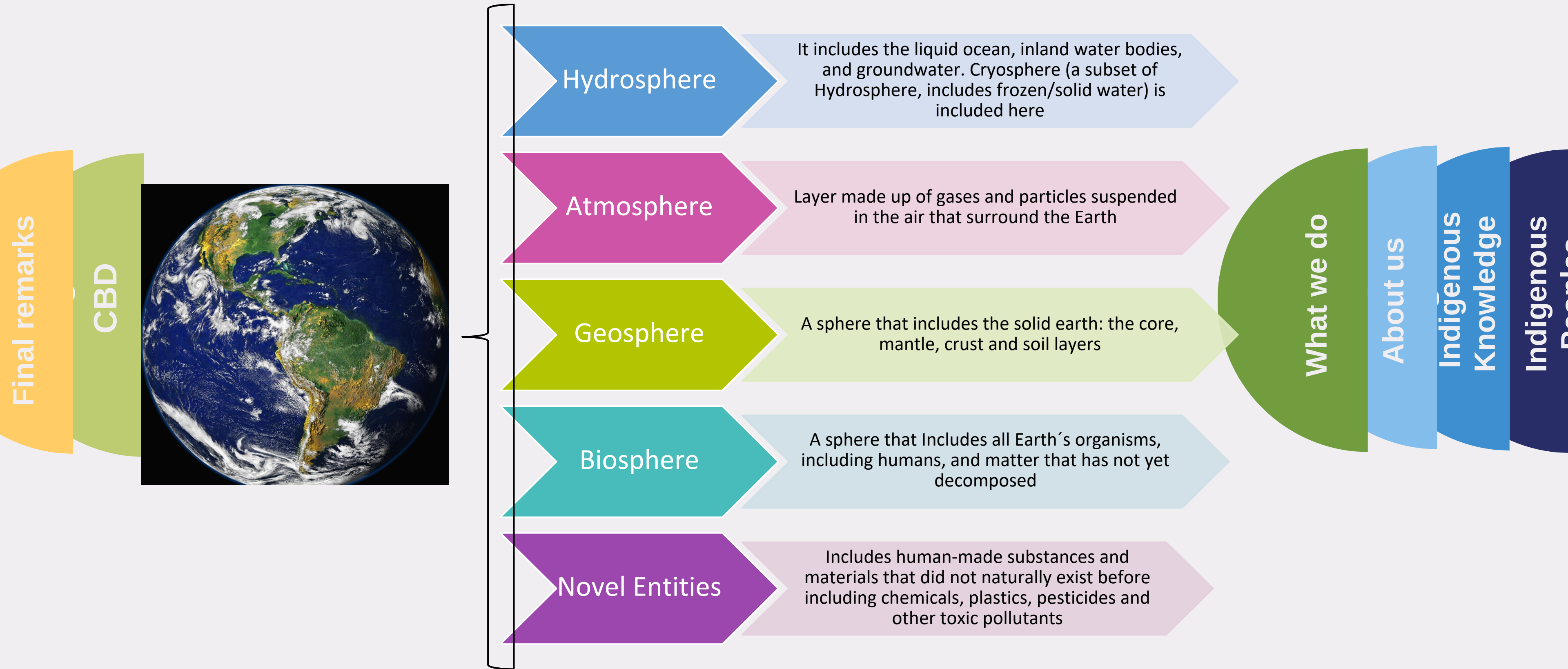
# Indigenous Science



- Indigenous-led organization, established in 2018 and fully operational since 2023.
- Our mission:
  - Recognize and promote Indigenous knowledge and science as a rigorous, distinct and precise knowledge system.
  - Seamlessly recover, advance and incorporate Indigenous methods, frameworks, tools, and approaches into scientific and policy-making spheres.
  - Foster mutual respect and understanding between diverse knowledge traditions.
- We reject superficial ‘knowledge integration’ (co-production, co-creation, etc.), advocating instead for epistemic co-governance.



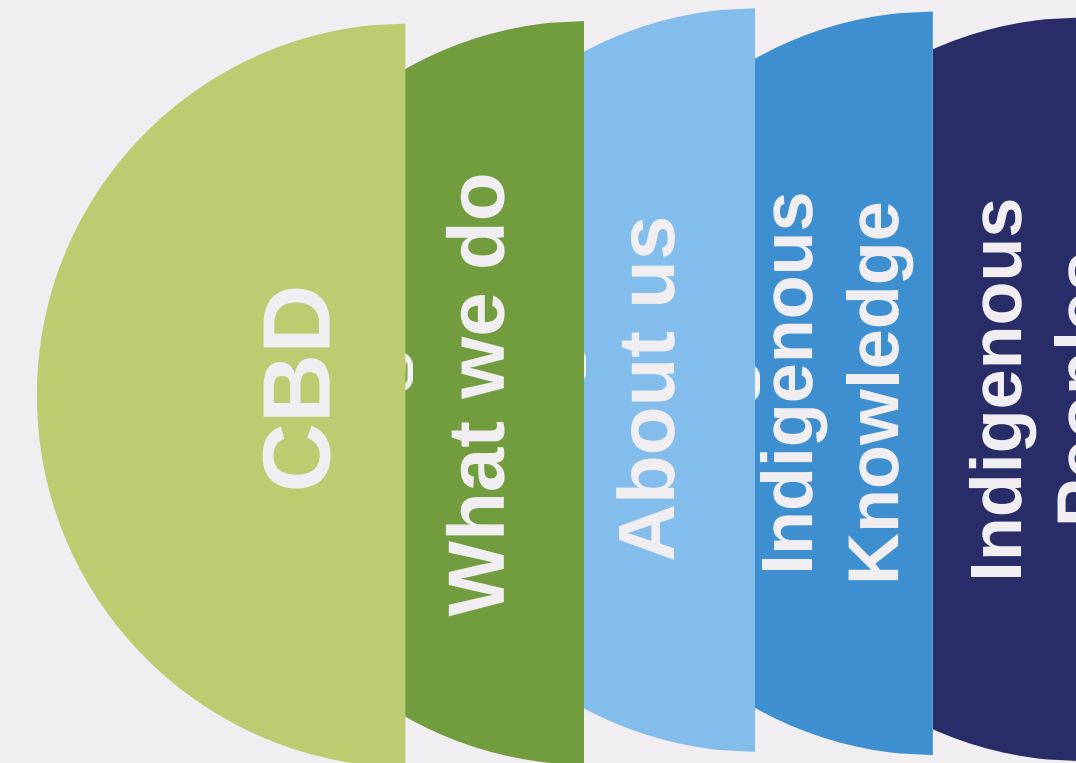
# What we do



# Meaningful participation in CBD processes?

- **The CBD:** shapes decisions that affect biodiversity, territories, livelihoods and knowledge systems. It recognizes the importance of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.
- **Key spaces:** Article 8(j) and related provisions, IIFB as the Indigenous caucus, plenary interventions, contact groups, side events; informal coordination with allies and delegations.
- **Challenges:** Technical language and complex procedures; limited access to rooms, time, and resources; unequal power between governments and civil society need for translation, coordination, and follow-up.
- **IK:** remains insufficiently integrated into equitable decision-making, financing, and implementation; IK is treated as a supplementary input rather than a foundation for governance.
- **Presence means attending.** Participation means contributing. It's about rights, influence, and accountability.

Final remarks



# Participation is not just about attending meetings: engage effectively in COP processes

## HOW TO PREPARE BEFORE COP

- Read the agenda and identify priority issues.
- Agree on shared messages and red lines.
- Coordinate speakers and note-takers.
- Map allies, partner governments, and find possible moments of influence.
- Do your homework: read and download material to learn about the issues to be discussed.
- Ask questions, discover answers: information is everywhere.

## HOW TO ENGAGE DURING COP

- Attend coordination meetings every day.
- Deliver short, clear interventions.
- Avoid injecting your opinion on interventions.
- Track agenda shifts and negotiation text.
- Build relationships with delegations and the Secretariat.
- Be on time.
- Avoid tokenism.
- Keep momentum.



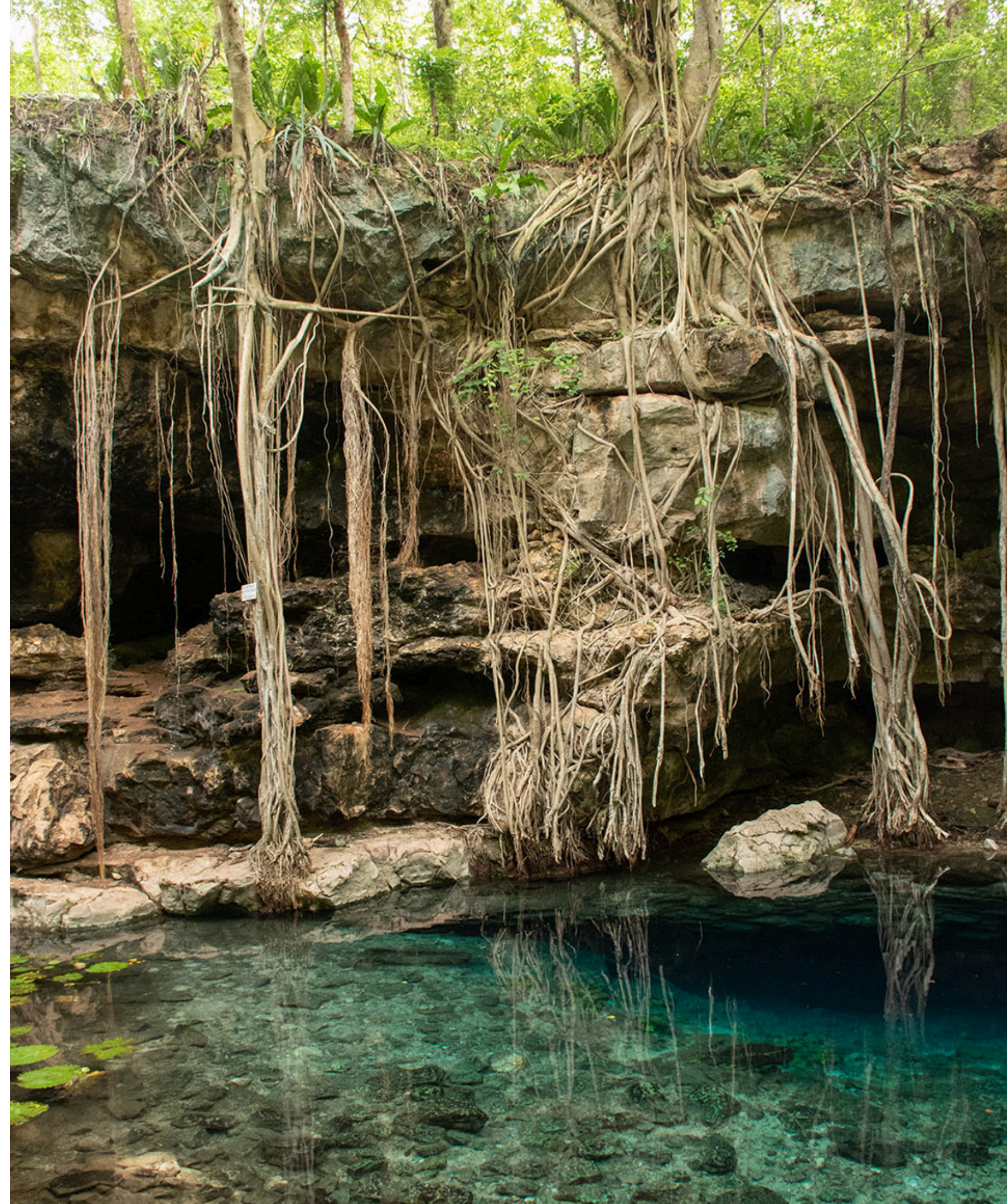
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## CBD: an entry point but not the only one

- CBD meetings are important, but they represent only one avenue for engagement.
- Indigenous Peoples can also contribute through UN forums, science-policy platforms, and technical working groups.
- Such engagement can help shape language, implementation, funding priorities, and accountability mechanisms.
- A strategic approach combines global advocacy with local and regional action.
- The objective is to move from participation in meetings to influencing agendas.



## Final Remarks

- Effective participation in the CBD requires more than being present. It requires preparation, coordination, and the ability to turn rights and knowledge into influence.
- Strengthening Indigenous participation in the CBD is essential for more just, effective, and accountable biodiversity governance.
- **Indigenous Science** was created to influence global processes, moving from symbolic inclusion of Indigenous Peoples to full-fledged decision-making agents.
- The goal is to move from passive actors to active shapers of the future.



# THANK YOU

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