Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNSRRIP) and Executive Director of Tebtebba, Statement delivered for High Level Segment for Heads of State and Government during the COP26 World Leaders Summit, Glasgow, 2 November 2021

I am here to speak for the interests of 500 million indigenous people, in over 90 countries. The unsung heroes that protect 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity.

Where we still have forests and wetlands, it is often because these are protected by indigenous peoples – even when they are at risk of being killed or criminalized.

These places not only keep carbon in the ground. They help us remove it from the atmosphere.

Protecting the rights of indigenous peoples is fundamental to our ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change and reverse nature loss.

Industrial agriculture is encroaching into indigenous peoples' territories, driving them from their lands, destroying their ways of life, devastating forests and destroying the planet's biodiversity.

Five million hectares of forests are destroyed to grow commodities every single year. And 40 times more financial incentives are available for deforestation than to keep forests standing.

It doesn't have to be this way. There is so much we can learn from indigenous people—today's so-called "superfoods" such as quinoa, sweet potatoes, among others, are all indigenous varieties!

We know how to grow food in ways that preserve the planet's natural capital.

We've been doing it for millennia, with practices such as *terra preta* in Brazil or Mexican chinampas systems that capture carbon, prevent flooding, and produce varied food year-round.

We call it things like *Sumak Kawsay* – good life in Kichua. You now call it Regeneration. They mean the same thing. Working with nature, not against it.

Through Regen10 we can drive an agricultural transformation that respects the rights of indigenous people everywhere; a transformation that is inclusive, that leaves no-one behind.

My message is simple - Indigenous peoples stand ready to act.

Our cultures, our ancestral knowledge and practices can play a vital role in building food systems that will protect and regenerate the natural world.

We need you to act with us.