



GIYSCC

**Global Indigenous Youth
Summit on Climate Change**

Strategic Plan 2026–2031

Empowering Indigenous Youth with Climate Action

PREAMBLE

In an era defined by climate uncertainty and unprecedented environmental challenges, Indigenous youth rise with courage, carrying ancestral wisdom, cultural resilience, and shared commitment to safeguard the Earth - our common home. The *Global Indigenous Youth Summit on Climate Change (GIYSCC)* was born from this spirit of unity, inclusivity, innovation, and hope - a global dialogue *by, for, and among* Indigenous youth who stand as custodians of the Earth and catalysts for change.

GIYSCC embodies a movement that transcends borders, languages, cultures and generations. Since its inception in 2023, GIYSCC has united nearly 3,000 registrants from over 140 nations and 350 languages, producing landmark contributions such as the *Nature* Commentary "*Indigenous Youth Must Be at the Forefront of Climate Diplomacy*," which has become a global call to action for inclusive and Indigenous-led climate governance. GIYSCC is reimagining climate leadership through Indigenous perspectives rooted in reciprocity, respect, and responsibility toward all living systems. From the frozen Arctic to tropical forests, from island nations threatened by rising seas to arid lands enduring desertification, Indigenous youth share a common determination to safeguard our shared planet for future generations.

This Strategic Plan 2026–2031 charts a collective pathway to empower Indigenous youth as agents of change, fostering global partnerships and embedding Indigenous knowledge systems within global climate governance. It envisions GIYSCC as a global platform for dialogue, capacity building, and equitable collaboration to shape solutions that are just, inclusive, and sustainable.

The GIYSCC calls upon the international community- governments, academia, civil society, and the private sector to recognize and invest in Indigenous youth leadership. Together, we can co-create a future that honors traditional knowledge, uplifts emerging voices, and ensures no one is left behind in the quest for a sustainable planet.

Disclaimer:

This Global Indigenous Youth Summit on Climate Change (GIYSCC) strategic plan was developed following a workshop (GIYSCC Strategic Development Plan Workshop) held with Indigenous peoples and youth leaders from the GIYSCC, as a side event during the Sustainability Research and Innovation (SRI) Conference in Chicago, USA, in June 2025. The workshop was co-designed and co-facilitated by Maggie Duggan from Inclusive Innovation. The co-design and facilitation were provided in-kind by Inclusive Innovation, while the venue and accommodation were funded by SRI. This draft version of the Strategic Plan will be circulated to partners and GIYSCC Indigenous youth leaders for their review and feedback prior to finalization.

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GLOBAL INDIGENOUS YOUTH SUMMIT ON CLIMATE CHANGE (GIYSCC) STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2031

1. GIYSCC BACKGROUND

Climate change is a global environmental challenge driven majorly by human activities since the industrial age. According to IPCC reports, if significant efforts are not made across various socio-ecological contexts, and onboarding people of all ages, the earth may no longer be habitable by the end of the 22nd century. In response to the escalating global climate crises, a crucial narrative emerges, focusing on climate action by and for Indigenous youths and peoples. Drawing upon the diverse knowledge, traditions, and stewardship practices of various Indigenous cultures and practices from various parts of the world, the **Global Indigenous Youth Summit on Climate Change (GIYSCC)** aims to amplify the voices and experiences of Indigenous youths and Peoples who are leading the charge on climate action.

The GIYSCC vision is revealed by its initial application as a “*virtual dialogue by, for and among Indigenous youth with global inclusion*” that took place on the 9th of August 2023, circling the Earth with the Sun across three 8-hour time zones in 24 hours (00:00 GMT – 24:00 GMT) on the United Nations [International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples](#):

Region 1 (00:00-08:00 GMT) – Asia / Oceania

Region 2 (08:00-16:00 GMT) – Africa / Europe / Middle East / Arctic

Region 3 (16:00-24:00 GMT) – South America / North America / Arctic

Initiated in 2023 through the Science Advice Skills Development Program (SASDP) led by INGSA-Africa, the **Global Indigenous Youth Summit on Climate Change (GIYSCC)** was first hosted by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), with coordination support from the Science Diplomacy Center, Inc. (SDCI). The second edition was co-hosted by Future Earth and the SDCI, and Future Earth committed to serving as the official host for two years. GIYSCC-2025 was supported by Future Earth and the SDCI, in collaboration with INGSA-Africa and INGSA-Asia.

The transdisciplinary approach adopted by GIYSCC, integrates insights from environmental science, social justice, Indigenous studies and various non-academic publics such as policymakers, practitioners, civil society and media to shed light on the innovative strategies, obstacles, and successes of Indigenous-led climate initiatives. Indigenous youths from these cultures and groups are critical to ensuring the sustainability of Indigenous knowledge, perpetuation, participation and contribution to climate change adaptation. The GIYSCC facilitates the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) mantra of ‘leaving no one behind’.

1.1 GIYSCC Vision and Mission

The GIYSCC's mission is to mobilise inclusive partnerships among Indigenous youths through dialogue for climate action to make our voice count. The main objectives are:

- **Providing a 'one of a kind' platform** to accelerate global engagement with Indigenous youth communities, cultures, languages, ethnicities, countries and continents across the world;
- **Sharing youth perspectives**, approaches, observations, concerns, interests and strategies to address the local impacts of climate change across Indigenous communities on Earth;
- **Stimulating lifelong learning** among Indigenous youth to contribute with knowledge and skills in the evolution of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and related global agreements that have regular Conferences of the Parties;
- **Enhancing intergenerational synergies** in view of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and other Indigenous declarations;
- **Inspiring Indigenous youth leaders** to think short-to-long term across their lifetimes into the 22nd century to empower progress with sustainable development at local-to-global levels.

1.2 GIYSCC Guiding Principles and Core Values

The Indigenous youth leaders-driven work of the GIYSCC to realize its vision and mission are guided by the following core values. These values build the foundation of all actions by the GIYSCC and its members, in working towards the strategic targets outlined in this document:

- **Indigenous-Led:** GIYSCC is led by Indigenous youth, empowering them as agents of change. It values intergenerational leadership while ensuring youth voices are central in all decision-making processes.
 - **Inclusivity and diversity:** The GIYSCC prioritizes inclusivity and diversity by valuing different perspectives and languages, ensuring respectful participation across backgrounds, and fostering active Indigenous people engagement.
 - **Responsibility:** GIYSCC Youth Leaders and members are committed to addressing global challenges through collaborative and ethical approaches. They hold themselves and others accountable for acting with integrity, ensuring that all activities and research are responsible, transparent, and impactful.
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- **Bridge-Building through Science Diplomacy:** GIYSCC envisage to serve as a bridge between Indigenous knowledge and global science-policy processes with respect to culture, climate change and one health among others, using diplomacy as a tool for mutual understanding and shared solutions.
- **Openness:** GIYSCC is committed to cultivating a culture of openness. It fosters open dialogue, inclusiveness in decision-making, and transparency in all its operations to build trust and shared ownership.

2. GIYSCC KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Building on its mission to empower Indigenous youth as leaders in climate action, GIYSCC has made significant contributions in the past 3 years since its inception, to global climate diplomacy and knowledge sharing:

- **GIYSCC-2023, GIYSCC-2024 and GIYSCC-2025** that have stimulated nearly 3000 registrants from 140 nations representing 350+ languages;
- **GIYSCC Indigenous Youth Leaders** are the decisionmakers about the agenda and invitees, who are operating with inclusion, including with individuals who are neither Indigenous nor youth.
- **Legacy contribution from GIYSCC-2023** is the invited *Nature* Commentary, *Indigenous Youth Must Be at the Forefront of Climate Diplomacy*, which emphasizes building a Global Partnership of Indigenous Youth in the spirit of SDG 17, with a planetary focus on Climate Action (SDG 13).
- **Participation as key speakers** in the workshop titled “*Global Discussion on the Socio-Economic Impact of Climate Change for Small Island Developing States*,” held in March 2025 in Mauritius. The roundtable discussion was conducted in a hybrid format and funded by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission.
- **Representation at the SRI Congress** 2023, 2024 and 2025 as panelists, moderators, and storytellers, including a dedicated session highlighting GIYSCC initiatives.
- **Publication of two books** under contract with Springer (in progress):
 - (i) *Climate Action with Global Inclusion – Youth Leadership, Indigenous Knowledge and Climate Resilience*
 - (ii) *Climate Action with Global Inclusion – Social, Historical, and Governance Dimensions of Climate Change in Indigenous Territories*
- **High-level participation** in the 12th Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-12), held in March 2026, in the United Kingdom.

3. STRATEGIC TARGETS

The GIYSCC has identified strategic targets across key domains to guide its vision and mission for the years 2026–2031. Within these domains, the GIYSCC seeks to empower its Youth Leaders to make more meaningful contributions to the Summit and to the broader GIYSCC initiative.

3.1 GIYSCC Structure

Moving forward, the overarching objective is to transform the GIYSCC into a sustainable and long-lasting initiative. To achieve this, the following structural components will be adopted (Figure 1).

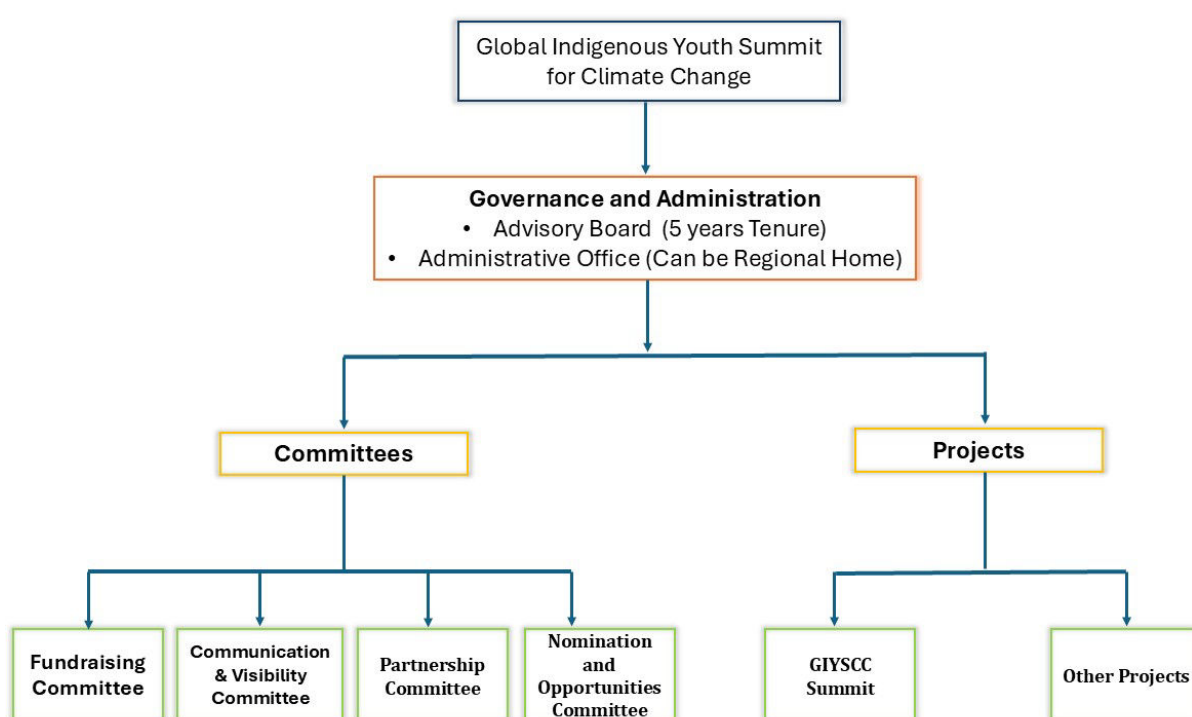


Figure 1: Governance Structure of GIYSCC

3.2 GIYSCC Regional Homes

First Phase - Register the GIYSCC as a non-profit organization and establish its Secretariat, with regional homes in each 8-hour time zone to support the long-term vision, growth, and operational foundation of the GIYSCC (Figure 1).

(Region 1) International Institute of Science Diplomacy for Sustainability (IISDS) at USCI University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia;

(Region 2) University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria; and

(Region 3) Science Diplomacy Center, Inc. (SDCI), Massachusetts, United States.

The GIYSCC Secretariat will serve as the operational, administrative, technical and coordination hub of the initiative, ensuring coherence, efficiency, and alignment across all committees and activities.

Second Phase - Through the INGSA network, we aim to establish at least one regional hub or “home” in each continent to strengthen global representation, coordination, and collaboration within the GIYSCC. This structure recognizes the diversity of Indigenous cultures, languages, and governance systems, while fostering local ownership, inter-regional collaboration, and shared learning.

The three regional homes will function under the guidance of the Global Secretariats hosted by the UNIALG, Nigeria; IISDS, Malaysia; and SDCI, United States. Each region will tailor its initiatives to reflect local ecological, social, and cultural realities, while contributing to the overall strategic targets of GIYSCC.

3.3 Building GIYSCC Partnerships

Partnerships are at the heart of the GIYSCC’s long-term sustainability and impact. The consortium partners have been instrumental in initiating GIYSCC and amplifying its impact by making it a truly inclusive global initiative. To strengthen its global reach and ensure inclusive participation, GIYSCC will adopt a multi-layered partnership model inspired by transdisciplinary collaboration and the principles of co-design, mutual respect, and shared ownership. The aim is to foster collaboration between Indigenous youth, communities, researchers, policymakers, and institutions across the globe.

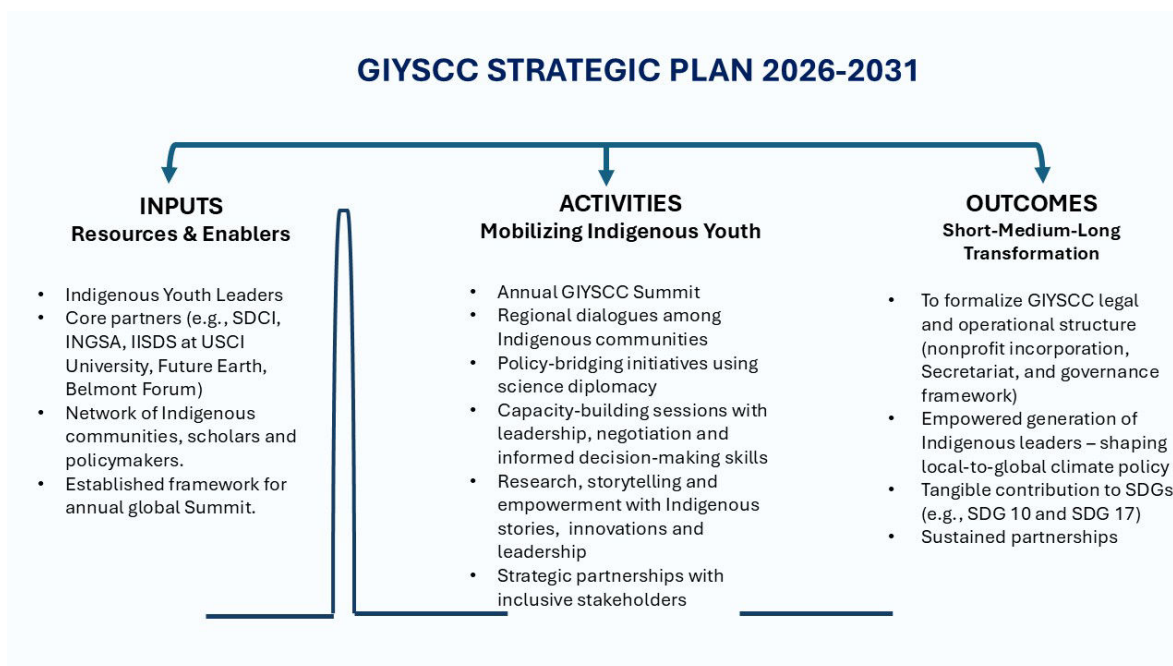
3.4 GIYSCC Capacity Building

To strengthen Indigenous youth leadership in global sustainability efforts, the GIYSCC aims to equip its Youth Leaders with the knowledge, tools, and platforms necessary to create meaningful impact. This will be achieved through the establishment of programmes/courses by experts within GIYSCC network or with partners focusing on leadership, science diplomacy, sustainability, and policy engagement.

3.5 GIYSCC Communication and Outreach

The GIYSCC is committed to amplifying the voices of Indigenous youth in global dialogues on climate action and sustainability. To achieve this, the initiative will develop a comprehensive communications strategy and strengthen its digital presence to enhance visibility and engagement. The GIYSCC will ensure active representation at key international forums such as the UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties (COPs) and the Sustainability Research and Innovation (SRI) Congresses.

4. PATHWAY TO GIYSCC IMPACT



5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

GIYSCC will establish a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to assess its progress and ensure accountability. This will include:

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** such as youth engagement metrics, policy contributions, and partnerships formed;
- **Annual reporting** and impact dashboards to measure outputs and outcomes;
- **Periodic reviews** led by Indigenous youth representatives and partner institutions to refine the strategy and ensure relevance;
- **A learning platform** (e.g., videos, book series or interviews) to capture stories of change and facilitate knowledge sharin

ANNEX 1:

GIYSCC COMMITTEES

Fundraising Committee

The role of the Fundraising Committee to secure funding for the operations and activities of GIYSCC. Its members are responsible for identifying and pursuing potential funding opportunities to ensure the sustainability and growth of the initiative. The committee may also actively engage youth leaders by encouraging them to contribute fundraising ideas and collaborate in reaching out to suitable funding bodies.

Operational expenses may include, but are not limited to, staffing costs, technical resources (such as website maintenance and development), and administrative support. Activities requiring funding encompass the annual Summit, projects, and participation in relevant national and international conferences.

Communication, Visibility, and Impact Committee

The Communication, Visibility, and Impact Committee plays a critical role in amplifying the reach and influence of GIYSCC. Working closely with the Technical Lead, the committee is responsible for creating and disseminating content that highlights GIYSCC's initiatives, events, and achievements.

Key responsibilities include managing social media accounts, developing communication materials, and ensuring consistent messaging to enhance the visibility and public profile of GIYSCC. The committee also plays a strategic role in showcasing the impact of GIYSCC's work across platforms and audiences.

Nomination and Opportunities Committee

The GIYSCC may be invited by partner organisations to nominate candidates to serve on international committees, participate in panel/events/conference, or participate in high-level international meetings. The role of this committee is to ensure that the process of nominating GIYSCC representatives is fair and transparent. The GIYSCC may also proactively seek to nominate members for other interesting opportunities. Committee members may help to map relevant opportunities and actively seek out for Indigenous Youth leaders who may be nominated for them.

This committee is also responsible for selecting the Global and Regional Leads/Co-Leads for the Summit on an annual basis. Furthermore, it may provide letters of recommendation to Indigenous Youth leaders applying for external opportunities, upon request. Nominations will occur throughout the year.

Partnership Committee

The success of GIYSCC relies heavily on strong and strategic partnerships. The Partnership Committee is tasked with identifying, engaging, and building relationships with key organizations that work with Indigenous peoples.

A core objective of this committee is to connect with governmental bodies, NGOs, and private sector stakeholders to explore meaningful collaborations. This includes formalizing partnerships through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), when appropriate, and jointly developing projects, co-creating activities, and pursuing funding opportunities.

Projects Committee

Going forward, activities undertaken by the GIYSCC and its members should align with the vision and mission of the GYA as well as its strategic perspectives.

If funding becomes available in the future, any proposal seeking recognition as a GIYSCC project must be submitted to the Technical Board for internal peer review. Proposals should include a clear timeline, objectives and expected outputs, a detailed budget plan, demonstrated benefits to the GIYSCC, and any additional requirements outlined in the call and specified in the proposal template.

Each project should have designated GIYSCC lead(s) and co-lead(s).