

**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE  
INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE  
FOR GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH**  
Thirty-third meeting  
Asunción, Paraguay. Hybrid.  
29–30 May 2025

**Report of the 33rd meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
to the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research**

1. This document was prepared by the IAI Directorate.
2. The Conference of the Parties to the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research held its 33rd meeting (CoP-33) in Asunción, Paraguay, hybrid, from 29 to 30 May 2025.
3. The accounts of the proceedings and discussions of the meeting are provided in Section I of the report.
4. The meeting adopted 18 Decisions, which are provided in Section II of this report.
5. The report of the special session *Droughts Management: the case of Paraguay* is provided as Annex I to this report.
6. The *Declaration of Asunción by the Parties and Institutions Associated with the IAI on Water Security, Biodiversity, and Climate Resilience in the Americas* is provided as Annex II to this report.

Section I: Proceedings of the Meeting

Introduction

7. In accordance with *the Agreement establishing the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research*, Article V, *The Conference of the Parties*, paragraph 3, the 33rd meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research was held in Asunción, Paraguay, hybrid, from 29 to 30 May 2025.

XXXI/8: *The Conference of the Parties is invited to meet in person biennially and via videoconferencing during the intervening years, to increase equitable participation of*

*the Scientific Advisory Committee and the Science-Policy Advisory Committee and Parties, to begin the implementation of a sponsored delegates program for the provision of financial assistance to facilitate the participation of Parties at meetings of the Conference of the Parties, and to reduce the carbon footprint of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties.*

8. All IAI Parties, Associates and advisory committees were invited to attend. The following Parties to the Agreement attended: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, United States of America (the U.S.), and Venezuela. The required quorum was 10, and 15 Parties attended the meeting.
9. A State not party to the Agreement, El Salvador, participated as an observer to the meeting.
10. The following Associates attended the meeting: the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the Center of Climate and Resilience Science (CR2), the Center for Global Environmental Change Research (CICAG), and the Humboldt Institution.
11. The complete list of participants, including observers, is available on the [CoP-33 webpage](#) under the *participants* tab.

Opening of the Meeting
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### **Opening statements by Paraguay**

Opening statements by the Rector of the National University of Asunción (UNA), Prof. Dr. Zully Vera de Molinas

12. Prof. Dr. Zully Vera de Molinas, Rector of the National University of Asunción, extended her heartfelt welcome to all participants and acknowledged that the topics that would be addressed during the CoP were crucial to the global agenda.
13. She emphasized the importance of science diplomacy as a key element in addressing global challenges such as climate change and drought management. She referred to the IAI science diplomacy workshop held in the days prior as the result of strong regional cooperation and the development of effective solutions to the issues discussed.
14. She noted that these efforts contributed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which requires the active involvement of all countries to ensure that no one is left behind. She stated that this spirit of collaboration was reflected in the work led by the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI), which brought together governments, civil society, universities, and the private sector. This model of cooperation was highlighted as essential in the search for solutions and particularly important for advancing higher education.
15. She commended the organizing committee and all who traveled to Paraguay to work on such a critical topic. She expressed her hope that best practices and research results would serve as tools for decision making, build bridges, and lead to joint solutions based on scientific evidence.

16. She stated that science should become a common language for finding innovative answers to shared challenges. The Rector encouraged continued collective efforts and collaboration, and she concluded by wishing participants a productive meeting and success to the institutions and countries supporting the work of the IAI.

Opening statements by the Dean of the School of Exact and Natural Sciences (FACEN),  
Professor Constantino Nicolás Guefos Kapsalis

17. The Dean of FACEN expressed his gratitude to all in-person and online attendees. He extended a special welcome to the scientists and researchers participating in and supporting the event.

**Opening statements by Maria Uhle, Executive Council Chair**

18. The Executive Council Chair expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to convene at this venue, which allowed IAI delegates to gather and strengthen collaboration across the Americas to address shared challenges. She extended her special appreciation to the Rector and the Dean for graciously hosting the meeting.
19. She emphasized that coming together as a region to work on problems and solutions is of great importance. While anyone can identify issues, the focus now must be on developing actionable solutions that promote resilience and prosperity throughout the region.
20. She affirmed that no other region in the world holds as much potential as the Americas. With this in mind, she noted that the region carries a responsibility, both to itself and to the global community, to lead by example and produce innovative, inclusive solutions to today's challenges.
21. She highlighted the strength of regional collaboration, along with the immense talent, creativity, and deep-rooted knowledge found across the Americas. She called for the region to fully harness this capacity and unite efforts for the benefit of all.
22. In closing, she recognized the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) as providing a vital platform that brings together people, ideas, and initiatives, mobilizing regional talent and collective ingenuity for meaningful action.
23. She thanked everyone for their presence and participation, underscoring the importance of continued collaboration and shared purpose.

**Opening statements by Anna Stewart Ibarra, Executive Director**

24. The Executive Director of the IAI opened her remarks by greeting authorities, representatives, IAI associates, staff, and all in-person and online participants. She noted that after 33 years, the work of the Institute was more urgent than ever. In the face of global environmental change, inter- and transdisciplinary approaches were essential, and the IAI had long been a pioneer in the region, laying the groundwork for responding to some of humanity's greatest challenges.
25. She emphasized that the time of testing had arrived. "Are we prepared to respond and work together to build a more resilient, just, and equitable Americas?" she asked. "Yes and no." "In that uncertainty," she said, "we must find our strength and courage to build the future we want for our children and the planet."

26. She described the IAI as a guiding light. Reflecting on her own journey, she shared that she had participated in several regional IAI workshops since 2010 as a PhD student. There, she encountered a unique mix of individuals from across the Americas, all united by a shared purpose: using science to respond to pressing challenges. She recalled how inspiring this committed community was, and the solutions proposed were unlike those she had seen in academia. Something new was forming, which was difficult to describe in words: what she now understands as a new scientific consciousness, a new way of building solutions.
27. She said the IAI had planted the seeds and nurtured them for over three decades.
28. She noted that this year had been one of major milestones. The IAI completed its transition from Uruguay to Panama, marking the beginning of a new phase. This move allowed the Institute to both celebrate Uruguay's contributions and strengthen ties with neighbors in Central America and the Caribbean. She also announced that El Salvador was close to becoming the newest IAI Party. The process is currently in its final stages. She highlighted several initiatives, including a new call for proposals launched in partnership with the Belmont Forum and the São Paulo Research Foundation, remarkably, the first multilingual Belmont Forum funding calls co-led by two organizations based in the Global South. She noted that this initiative demonstrated the growing influence of the IAI in shaping global science and its commitment to adjusting scientific standards to meet local needs. She also shared that the third cohort of the IAI Science, Technology, and Policy (STeP) Fellowship Program was concluding. The program's success had led to an invitation for the IAI to coordinate a new global cohort of fellows focused on climate and health. Finally, she announced the creation of the IAI Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee, a milestone achieved after several years of collaborative work.
29. The Executive Director reflected on a pivotal moment in recent history, recalling that five years before, the world was entering the COVID19 pandemic; a critical moment for humanity. During that time, she collaborated with 96 authors from 26 countries who worked together to understand how to transform scientific collaboration to achieve meaningful impact. She noted that the authors emphasized the importance of recognizing inequalities and acknowledging our collective histories. She stated that we work within imperfect systems and that true transformation requires more than structures and strategies; it requires human warmth and trust. She stated that these are the real driving forces enabling us to overcome even the most daunting challenges. She noted that building and nurturing relationships is now more urgent than ever. She stressed the importance of strengthening alliances and working collaboratively to address the enormous challenges that lie ahead.
30. She concluded by reaffirming the IAI's full commitment to continue serving its Parties and fulfilling its mission and wishing all participants two excellent days of work and collaboration.

#### Election of CoP Bureau

31. Parties reached a consensus on the composition of the CoP Bureau, following a process of nomination and seconding by Parties. The following Parties were elected: Paraguay (Chair), Chile (First Vice-Chair), and Jamaica (Second Vice-Chair).

Administrative matters
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Agenda item 1: Approval of the agenda

32. Following the election of members to the CoP Bureau, the Chair invited Parties to adopt the provisional agenda to CoP-33 (IAI/COP/33/1).
33. Parties approved the agenda by consensus.

Agenda item 2: Approval of the *Report of the 32nd meeting of the Conference of the Parties*

34. Parties were invited to approve the *Report of the 32nd meeting of the Conference of the Parties* (CoP-32, 2024, videoconference) (IAI/COP/33/2).
35. Parties approved the Report of CoP-32 by consensus.

Agenda item 3: Establishment of a committee to recommend candidates for the Science Advisory Committee (SAC) for the elections, on the second day of CoP-33

36. The Parties elected the following composition for the Committee: Chile, Panama, and Venezuela.

Agenda item 4: Financial reports

4(a): Annex 1: Overview of the Financial Status for FY 2024–2025; 4(b): Annex 2: Core Budget and Country Contributions for FY 2025–2026; and Preliminary request 2026–2028, 4(c): Annex 3: Auditors report, 4(d): Annex 4: Report of the Financial and Administrative Committee (FAC)

37. The Chair invited the Directorate to provide an overview of the financial status for the fiscal year 2024–2025 and a summary of the proposal for the Core Budget and Country Contributions for FY 2025–2026 and Preliminary request for 2026–2028.
38. The Administration, Finance and Operations Officer highlighted the positive results of the Auditors' report for FY 2024–2025, which gave an unqualified opinion, confirming that the IAI's financial position was presented fairly in all material respects.
39. She informed the participants that the FAC had reviewed the IAI's operational budget and found it to be responsive to the changing nature of IAI operations, with proposed expenditures deemed reasonable and appropriate. She continued by noting the recommendation by the Financial and Administrative Committee (FAC) that the proposal for the core budget and country contributions was submitted to the CoP-33 for approval.
40. She presented the request for the core budget and contributions from countries for the fiscal year 2025–2026 and the preliminary request for fiscal years 2026–2028: The core budget contribution levels for the fiscal year 2025–2026 remained unchanged. An annual 5% increase was projected for the following two fiscal years, 2026–2027 and 2027–2028, per Decision XXXII/3. The importance of timely country contributions was strongly emphasized, as these are essential to sustaining the Institute's operations and programs.
41. During the presentation of the financial status for the fiscal year 2024–2025, several budget categories were reviewed in detail. Allocations for salaries and benefits

remained stable at their current levels. An increase in information technology -ing a new website and associated digital infrastructure. At the same time, targeted efforts were made to reduce expenditure on outreach and extension activities, reflecting a more strategic and efficient use of resources across the Directorate's operations.

42. The Chair invited the meeting to take note of the financial reports and to consider provisional decisions on the items presented.
43. The Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions no. XXXIII/2 and XXXIII/3 contained in section II of this report.

The Executive Council
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#### Agenda item 5: Report of the Executive Council

##### 5. a. Updates from the Executive Council

44. The Chair of the Executive Council shared information on the IAI's ongoing collaboration with the Belmont Forum, noting the uncertainty in financial commitments had been expected to support Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) researchers through a direct funding mechanism between the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) and the IAI. She reported that due to recent budget cuts and shifting priorities within the NSF, the anticipated NSF funds had not yet materialized.
45. The Executive Director provided additional context on the financial mechanism established between the NSF and the IAI, explaining that in 2018, the IAI started hosting the Belmont Forum Secretariat. Since then, the Belmont Forum, as a global consortium of science funding agencies that supports transdisciplinary research on global environmental change, in response to Decision XXVII/16 adopted by CoP-27, the IAI's science agenda has been closely aligned with Belmont Forum funding calls, known as Collaborative Research Actions (CRAs), thanks to financial support from the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), which has allowed the IAI to directly fund researchers across Latin America and the Caribbean, enabling its active participation in Belmont Forum supported initiatives.
46. The IAI Science Director described the impact of the NSF budgetary uncertainty on two funding calls that the IAI is involved in: the Climate, Environment, and Health CRA, and the Tropical Forests CRA. In the former, six research consortia with researchers from countries such as Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, and Uruguay had already been selected for funding and were awaiting the funds. In the latter, which is still in progress, 49 consortia were invited to submit full proposals, 65% of which include researchers from IAI Parties. These CRAs, designed through years of collaborative work involving mentoring, training, and co-design, are now at risk due to the funding uncertainty.
47. The Executive Director noted that the IAI continues to actively seek additional sources of funding for these CRAs, including philanthropic contributions. Given the current funding gap, she called upon IAI Parties to explore national- mechanisms to support research teams already formed or those invited to submit proposals in the Tropical Forest CRA. She reiterated the importance of identifying and sustaining mechanisms to fund regional science on global environmental change through the IAI.

48. In this context, Nicole Arbour, Executive Director of the Belmont Forum, announced two upcoming CRAs to be launched in June 2025, both of which align with the priorities of IAI Parties: the Oceans CRA, to be announced on 11 June during the UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in Nice, France; and the Resilience CRA, to be launched on 18 June in Chicago during the Sustainability, Research and Innovation (SRI) Congress, focusing on climate systems, droughts, and flooding. She highlighted the growing leadership of Latin American teams in these initiatives, stressing that many recent Belmont Forum projects have been led by teams from Latin America, demonstrating the strength and maturity of its scientific community. She also clarified that countries do not need to be formal members of the Belmont Forum to participate in CRAs; rather, they simply need to finance their participating researchers. Contributions may be financial or in-kind, such as dedicated staff time or laboratory space. She noted the presence of in-kind members of the Belmont Forum from Brazil, China, Jamaica, and Zimbabwe, all of whom helped shape the thematic calls with diverse global perspectives. Full membership offers the opportunity to participate in governance, shape thematic priorities, and -lead CRAs. She expressed the Belmont Forum's willingness to work directly with national science funding agencies of IAI Parties to identify viable options for participation.
49. The U.S. further emphasized that even researchers with existing national science funding programs can join international consortia in CRAs with minimal additional cost. This creates opportunities to leverage domestic investments for broader international collaboration. She encouraged all IAI Parties to actively engage with the Belmont Forum and to participate in upcoming funding opportunities.
50. Alexandra Mallett, Chair of the SAC, then shared her experience as a mentor of teams participating in the tropical forests training and seed grant program of the IAI. She praised the leadership and innovation shown by research groups from Panama and Mexico, especially their sincere efforts to integrate Indigenous cosmologies and local knowledge into scientific research. She emphasized how deeply transdisciplinary these projects were and how impressed she was by their ability to bridge Western science with traditional worldview. This approach reflects the IAI's core mission and deserves continued support.
51. The IAI Deputy Executive Director reflected on the professional journeys of various researchers and decision-makers who began their paths through IAI programs and activities, underlining the Institute's long-standing role in capacity building. She emphasized the importance of continuing to invest in emerging researchers and decisionmakers, enabling them to conduct cutting-edge global environmental change research and support evidence-informed policymaking. She also stressed that many IAI alumni are leaders in their fields and part of a growing regional network.
52. Panama highlighted the importance of continuing to support this research and training model fostered by the IAI, emphasizing that these initiatives result in more impactful outcomes than traditional research projects.
53. Paraguay emphasized the need to strengthen institutional and technical capacities within government agencies and recognized the role of the IAI as a valuable instrument for achieving this objective. The country highlighted the recent science diplomacy workshop held in the days prior, which demonstrated the power of IAI as a connector, bringing together scientists, policymakers, and institutions in a way that fostered meaningful commitment. Participants from multiple institutions have already expressed interest in hosting future science diplomacy workshops in 2026, and some of the participating institutions are well-positioned to provide significant co-funding. He noted that while political and technical institutions have different dynamics, empowering both

politicians and technical staff with scientific knowledge ultimately benefits everyone. By facilitating these bridges, the IAI can continue to serve as a vital regional platform for advancing collective solutions to global environmental challenges.

54. Participants agreed that these results underscore the value of investing in training and mentorship. In that spirit, several interventions called on IAI Parties to help identify new funding sources, whether through national science agencies, development banks, or philanthropic organizations, to sustain the region's scientific capacity. Creativity and collaboration will be key to ensuring the continuity of critical research efforts on global change. The meeting proposed encouraging Parties to work with the IAI Directorate and the Belmont Forum Secretariat to explore financial and in-kind contributions to support their national research teams participating in Collaborative Research Actions (CRAs) that align with national and regional priorities.
55. Accordingly, the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision XXXIII/4.
56. The following discussion addressed the designation process for national permanent and alternate representatives to the IAI, previously discussed during the EC-59. The Executive Director explained that traditionally, representatives had been appointed by individual name. She explained that this practice has presented ongoing challenges, particularly in countries with frequent turnover: each time a new individual is appointed, the designation must be formally renewed through the relevant Ministry of Foreign Affairs or other competent authority, often resulting in delays and disruptions in communication and coordination. To improve continuity and operational efficiency, the Executive Council proposed that the Parties consider designating their national permanent representatives based on institutional roles rather than specific individuals. This role-based designation would help ensure smoother transitions during personnel changes and enhance consistency and effectiveness in the IAI's engagement with its Parties.
57. Paraguay suggested that Parties establish a national delegation composed of multiple actors and institutions, rather than designating a single individual, if the country's structure so permits. He noted that this model would reflect a more inclusive national representation and facilitate broader engagement with the IAI.
58. The Conference of the Parties adopted Decision XXXIII/5, contained in the annex to this report.

#### 5.b. Headquarters of the IAI Directorate

59. The EC Chair provided background information on the steps taken during the past year to relocate the IAI Directorate. Reference was made to the detailed report previously presented during the Executive Council 58th meeting held in November 2024.
60. The representative of Panama reported that the agreement to transfer financial resources from SENACYT to the IAI Directorate for implementing the new headquarters agreement had been signed and was pending approval by the Comptroller's office of Panama. She explained that the agreement is structured as a multi-year commitment, intended to take effect beginning this year.

#### 5.c. Election of the Executive Council, 2025–2027

61. Parties reached a consensus on the composition of the new EC, following a process of nomination and seconding by Parties. The following Parties were elected for the following composition for the Executive Council, period 1 June 2025–31 May 2027:



Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay, the U.S. and Venezuela.

62. Afterwards, the EC Bureau was elected: Chair: Maria Uhle, United States of America; First Vice-Chair: Milagro Mainieri, Panamá; Second Vice-Chair: Fernando Méndez, Paraguay.
63. The meeting moved on to special sessions addressing the following topics:
  - Droughts Management: the case of Paraguay*
  - Launch of new products of the Directorate
  - Presentation of the Declaration by CoP-33

Special Sessions
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64. The report of the session *Droughts Management: the case of Paraguay* is available as Annex I to this report.
65. The launch of new products of the Directorate and the Presentation of the Declaration by CoP-33 were moved to the morning of the second day.
66. Day 1 of the meeting was closed at 5:40 p.m. Paraguay time.

## Day 2

### Launch of new products of the IAI Directorate

67. The Directorate officially launched three training and science communication products developed by the Directorate to support regional capacity building, transdisciplinary training, science diplomacy, and communication of science, reflecting the IAI's continued efforts to strengthen institutional frameworks and promote inclusive, actionable knowledge across the Americas. These initiatives respond to growing regional demand for integrated tools and curricula that bridge science, policy, and society in the context of complex global environmental challenges.
68. **Transdisciplinary Curriculum**  
The Science Director presented the IAI's new self-managed, open-access, multilingual virtual course, *Advances in Transdisciplinary Research on Global Environmental Change in Latin America and the Caribbean*. The [course](#) includes four modules: 1) Fundamental concepts of TD Research; 2) Lessons from Latin America and the Caribbean; 3) Capacity building for successful transdisciplinary research collaborations; 4) Project design and management for equitable and ethical TD practice. The course is complemented by a [digital case study book](#) featuring examples from eight LAC countries. The course was developed over three years by expert consultants led by California State University at Long Beach, and pilot tested with IAI fellows and participants of Tropical Forest Training Program. The curriculum is grounded in LAC experiences and aims to support inclusive, co-produced research through IAI's Transdisciplinary Academy. It is available in English and Spanish through the IAI [Virtual Campus](#), with certificates awarded upon completion.
69. 

<b>Science</b>	<b>Diplomacy</b>	<b>Curriculum</b>
The session also launched the new self-managed, open-access, multilingual virtual		

course, *Science Diplomacy and Global Environmental Change in the Americas*, developed jointly by the IAI and the University of São Paulo. It features 17 real case studies in LAC categorized by SDGs and science diplomacy types. The course is delivered via short conceptual videos accessible through the IAI's [Virtual Campus](#), with certificates for completion issued by the University of São Paulo. The curriculum addresses innovation topics including artificial intelligence (AI), quantum technology and blockchain and builds negotiation and communication skills for diverse audiences. Pilot tested with fellows and government officials, the course complements the in-person training efforts of the IAI's Science Diplomacy Center. It is designed for scientists, policymakers, civil society, and the private sector.

70. The Science Diplomacy course is accompanied by a [book](#) of science diplomacy case studies in the Americas showcasing real experiences of scientific cooperation in contexts of crisis, cross-border natural resource management, and indigenous participation in decision-making processes can be downloaded free of charge in English and Spanish at: <https://www.iai.int/en/news/detail/Science-Diplomacy-and-Global-Environmental-Change-in-Latin-America-and-the-Caribbean>
71. It was anticipated that the courses would be updated regularly with new case studies and training materials.
72. The initiative was praised by the Executive Director of the Belmont Forum for bridging regional voices with global platforms such as the CBD, UNCCD, and IPCC. The Directorate committed to ongoing updates and wide dissemination.
73. Participants were encouraged to share the courses across institutions.
74. **Biodiversity** **Compendium**  
The Strategic Advisor introduced the newly published compendium entitled *Biodiversity in Latin America and the Caribbean*, co-published with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Latinoamérica<sup>21</sup>. The publication compiles 16 editorials by scientists and community leaders, structured in four sections: 1) Biodiversity status in Latin America; 2) Importance of biodiversity for people's quality of life; 3) Towards more inclusive and effective biodiversity conservation; 4) Perspectives for biodiversity conservation in Latin America. Widely shared across media, the compendium is available in Spanish, English, and Portuguese and participants were invited to review it and share the links to the [digital version](#).

Declaration of Asunción by the Parties and Institutions Associated with the IAI on Water Security, Biodiversity, and Climate Resilience in the Americas

75. The Chair of the CoP-33 presented the draft *Declaration on Water Security, Biodiversity, and Climate Resilience in the Americas* to the Conference. The declaration aligned with the key messages of the side event held on 28 May 2025 on regional priorities for early warning systems, drought resilience, and sustainable development, with emphasis on the energy and river transport sectors. The side event was co-organized by the InterAmerican Institute for Global Change Research (IAI), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Global Change Research Center of the Universidad Nacional de Asunción, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).
76. The declaration highlighted the urgency of joint action in view of the escalating frequency and severity of climate related extreme events in Latin America and the Caribbean. A call was made to all IAI Parties, observer states, multilateral

organizations, private sector actors, research networks, civil society, and Indigenous institutions to engage in this collective effort for a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable future for the Americas.

77. The draft declaration was updated in real time during the session based on recommendations from Parties. Parties expressed general agreement with the revised language.
78. The Conference of the Parties adopted Decision XXXIII/6, contained in Section II to this report, approving the final version of the Declaration, available as Annex II to this report.

The Indigenous People Advisory Committee (IPAC), the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), the Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) and the Advisory Board of the Science Diplomacy Center

Agenda item 6: Implementation of EDI decision and the new Indigenous People Advisory Committee

79. Margot Hurlbert, a member of the SPAC and Chair of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee, acknowledged her land and ancestors. She described the goals of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy. Two key milestones were staff training and establishing the new IPAC, per Decision XXXII/19. The working group held several consultations with interested groups, and two documents were prepared: the notification to Parties and the call for applicants.
80. The Directorate issued the call for nominations to the IPAC on 5 February 2025, and she reported that 14 applications from 7 countries had been received by the close of the call. In late March 2025, the EDI working group evaluated the applications and selected the following members of the IPAC:
  - Myrle Ballard (Canada) — Anishinaabe from Lake St. Martin First Nation, Manitoba
  - Oliva Patricia Suárez Torres (Colombia) — Murui-Muina People
  - Francisco Ramiro Batzín Chojoj (Guatemala) — Maya Kaqchikel
  - Cristina Elizabeth Fures Guitarra (Ecuador) — Kichwa nationality, Panzaleo people, San Ignacio community
  - Guipsy Katherine Alata Ramos (Peru) — Quechua, Qanchi Nation.
81. She invited Cristina Fures, member of the IPAC, to share reflections on the launch of the newly established IPAC. Fures highlighted the key role of Indigenous Peoples in the development of the transdisciplinary approach fostered by the IAI.
82. Fures shared the sentiment of the other members of the IPAC. They highlighted the need for ensuring an active participation and revalorization of the collective action of Indigenous Peoples for moving towards positive local transformations and global solutions.
83. The SPAC Chair indicated that the name of the IPAC committee in Spanish (Comité Asesor de Pueblos Indígenas) should be reviewed to reflect the fact that it is the Indigenous Peoples who advise the IAI, not the opposite.
84. U.S. highlighted that establishing the IPAC is one of the main achievements of the IAI as it matures and embraces the cultural diversity of the Americas.

85. The representative of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) suggested that the IPAC model be extended to include collaboration with WMO programs. This recommendation was supported by Romina Caminada, of Peru, who expressed strong agreement with incorporating Indigenous advisory mechanisms into WMO initiatives.
86. The Chair of the Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) encouraged the IAI Directorate and national focal points to consider developing a regional synthesis report on climate change, distinct from the IPCC's regional sections. She noted that such a contribution by the IAI could focus on synthesizing existing peer-reviewed scientific literature produced in Latin America and the Caribbean over the past decade. This curated summary, organized by key themes such as mitigation, adaptation, vulnerability, and impacts, would draw from indexed journal articles that have already undergone peer review. The aim would be to provide a clear picture of the region's current knowledge, identify strengths and gaps, and outline research needs. This, in turn, could support the formulation of a regional scientific agenda, guide future funding efforts, and inform targeted initiatives to address climate challenges across the continent.
87. The U.S. representative highlighted the ongoing work within the Sustainability Research and Innovation (SRI) Congress 2025, noting the group of Indigenous Peoples and people from local communities who had previously presented a statement on equitable inclusion to SRI and who continued to be actively engaged in the Congress. They noted this as part of a broader movement to increase the participation of Indigenous people in emerging collaborative platforms.
88. The Executive Director of the Belmont Forum commended the IAI's leadership in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), and applauded the establishment of IPAC as a meaningful step.
89. Jamaica's Focal Point inquired about the possibility of expanding IPAC membership. In response, the Executive Director clarified that IPAC will operate in its current composition (5 members) for one year while defining its internal rules and procedures. Following this period, opportunities to expand membership may be considered based on the rules and procedures established by the committee.

#### Agenda item 7: The SAC and the SPAC

##### Election of SAC and SPAC members

90. The Chair invited the ad-hoc SAC and SPAC Election Committee, composed of Chile, Panama and Venezuela, to recommend candidates on this item of the agenda.
91. The Committee recommended accepting the re-nominations of eligible members for a second term. The meeting approved the re-nominations submitted by the Parties and the SAC and SPAC themselves:
  - Two members of the SAC re-nominated by the Parties, Alexandra Mallett (current SAC Chair and alternate member) and Barry Warner (full member), were elected for a second term, granting Alexandra Mallett the status of full member for her new term.
  - One member of the SPAC nominated by the Parties, Margot Hurlbert (full member),

was re-elected for a second term.

- One full member re-nominated by the SPAC itself, Amparo Martínez Arroyo (current SPAC Chair), was also elected for a second term.

#### Joint Report of the SAC/SPAC

92. The Chair invited the SAC and SPAC Chairs to present the joint report of the SAC/SPAC on behalf of the two Committees.
93. The joint report of the SAC and SPAC was presented by Alexandra Mallett, Chair of the SAC, and Amparo Martínez, Chair of the SPAC.
94. The SAC Chair began by summarizing the distinct mandates of both committees: the SAC provides scientific guidance to the Conference of the Parties (CoP), including recommendations on the IAI's scientific agenda, long-term plans, annual program, and peer review processes for IAI-funded projects. The SPAC, established in 2013, advises the CoP and the Directorate on the application of scientific knowledge to public policy and decision-making.
95. The SAC Chair then offered an overview of the current composition of the SAC and SPAC, emphasizing their disciplinary, geographic, and institutional diversity, including experts in ecology, law, biology, social sciences, health, and energy. She expressed appreciation for outgoing members Michelle Scobie and Jennifer Silva, as well as for Natalie Flores, who completed her term with the SPAC.
96. She highlighted the committees' work through various standing and ad hoc groups. These included the Open Science and Data Working Group (which contributed to the IAI's revised open data policy), the Oceans, Coasts, and Islands group (which helped draft a statement for the upcoming UN Ocean Conference and the development of the Belmont Forum Oceans 2 CRA), and the Climate, Environment, and Health group (which collaborated provided input to the CBD on indicators. Members of the SAC and SPAC also supported the development of the IPAC, contributed to the transdisciplinary curriculum, served on the Science Diplomacy Center Advisory Board, and mentored STeP fellows, among many other activities. The committees meet monthly, alternating between joint and separate sessions to ensure collaboration and inclusivity.
97. The SPAC Chair focused her remarks on three core issues discussed in the pre-CoP-33 virtual meetings of the SAC and SPAC:
  - Diversification of Funding: The committees acknowledged progress but stressed the need to broaden and strengthen funding strategies to support IAI initiatives.
  - Increasing Visibility: Greater visibility of the IAI among scientific communities and policy audiences was identified as essential for securing resources and advancing the Institute's mission.
  - Strengthening Communication: The committees emphasized the need to improve communication between SAC, SPAC, focal points, and national scientific communities across the Americas.
98. She underscored the IAI's unique role as a regional platform enabling joint learning and collaboration between governments and scientists to address global change challenges. She encouraged the Parties to:
  - Continue using and strengthening the IAI as a mechanism for regional scientific collaboration.

- Advance collaborative research and co-design capacity-building initiatives.
  - Promote long-term partnerships that turn scientific knowledge into innovative, evidence-based solutions.
  - Increase interaction between national focal points and members of the SAC, SPAC, and IPAC.
99. She also called on the Directorate to facilitate greater engagement between committee members and national stakeholders, particularly in identifying needs and connecting with local scientific communities.
100. The presentation concluded by thanking all committee members and the IAI staff for their ongoing collaboration and service.
101. The Conference of the Parties adopted draft Decisions XXXIII/7, XXXIII/8 and XXXIII/9.
102. The CoP Chair thanked the SAC and SPAC for their work and advice and closed this agenda item.

#### Agenda item 8: Report of the Science Diplomacy Center Advisory Committee

103. Amparo Martínez, Chair of the Science Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) and member of the Science Diplomacy Center (SDC) Advisory Committee, presented the recent work of the SDC, which has focused on strengthening the interface between science, policy, and diplomacy in the Americas. She noted that the SDC Advisory Committee includes representatives from the Parties, SAC, SPAC, and various experts and operates through hybrid, virtual, and in-person meetings.
104. She noted that the Committee strongly recommended expanding the use of SDC workshops and further using and disseminating its new virtual curriculum. The curriculum was described as a key knowledge platform offering tools and information to support Parties in building their skills and knowledge in science diplomacy.
105. She noted that the STeP Fellows Program is a key program of the SDC. STeP is entering a new phase in which there is greater emphasis on serving the needs of host agencies. The Committee is working to monitor the impact of these initiatives, by assessing how they enhance national capacities in science diplomacy.
106. She announced the upcoming launch of a Working Group on Artificial Intelligence (2025–2026), in response to emerging issues in global environmental change and science diplomacy. The working group will guide the SDC in designing actions to help institutions in the region understand and apply AI tools responsibly and effectively in the context of science-policy and global environmental change.
107. She informed that the SDC's Knowledge Hub is under development and will serve as a valuable platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration. She called for stronger partnerships with universities, NGOs, and the private sector, clarifying that SDC initiatives aim to respond to the priorities of the Parties. She stressed the need to bridge negotiation and diplomacy practices, recognizing that scientists often lack an understanding of policy and diplomacy, while diplomats may lack an understanding of critical science issues.
108. She underscored the importance of aligning governance structures within the IAI and collaborating with other IAI committees, an effort already underway, given that many SDC members also serve on the SAC and SPAC. She also encouraged a renewed

commitment to multilateralism as a guiding principle, despite current global challenges. She warned against the alternative of fragmented, unilateral action, advocating instead for plural leadership based on shared experience and collaboration.

109. She concluded with three forward-looking questions for the Parties: What are the most effective ways to serve their needs? What mechanisms could help reduce duplication of efforts? And how can the IAI be positioned as a science diplomacy leader across the Americas?

Report of the Directorate
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This session started with a video titled *Migration, Mobility and Global Change* and a video titled *Dialogues between Territory and Academia*. The videos were created by the Directorate with community participants from the Small Grants Program: *The role of ecosystem services in adaptation to global change for human wellbeing*, and aim to capture recommendations to improve transdisciplinary practice in the Americas. The videos are available on the [CoP-33 webpage](#) under the *videos* tab.

Agenda item 9: New Associates - Article XI: Associates of the Institute

110. The Chair informed the Conference of three proposals for new Associates: the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the American Geophysical Union (AGU), and the Venezuelan Institute for Scientific Research (IVIC).
111. The representative of Paraguay formally introduced the proposal to invite the WMO to become an Associate of the IAI.
112. He noted that the WMO had co-organized the recent side event on science diplomacy and droughts with the IAI and FACEN and mentioned over 20 previous instances of collaboration with the IAI, including an MOU signed in 2023. This strong history of partnership, combined with the alignment between the WMO's mandate and the IAI's priorities, supported the proposal to invite the WMO as an Associate of the Institute.
113. Julián Báez, Director of Regional Office for the Americas, WMO Secretariat, expressed his appreciation for the invitation and affirmed the mutual benefits such collaboration brings to both institutions and the people of the region. He emphasized the importance of scientific cooperation and outreach in weather, climate, and water, particularly through national meteorological services, and the value this collaboration brings to societies across the Americas.
114. Panama, U.S. and Venezuela welcomed the proposal, highlighting the WMO's work and the quality and utility of WMO's information for the region.
115. The Executive Director endorsed the statements made, especially by Mr. Báez, and recognized the WMO as one of the IAI's closest collaborators. She noted the extensive -training activities conducted jointly and affirmed her full support for the ongoing and future collaboration between the two institutions. She indicated that she had recently met with Celeste Saulo, Secretary-General of the WMO, to discuss strengthening the IAI-WMO partnership.
116. The Chair invited the U.S. to present the case for the second proposed Associate: the American Geophysical Union (AGU). The U.S. representative provided background information, explaining that AGU is a global organization dedicated to geoscience,

Earth and space sciences. It engages members representing over 500,000 scientists and supporters in over 200 countries, including the 19 IAI Parties. It promotes a transdisciplinary approach to understanding the state of the planet and advancing geoscience for the benefit of society.

117. She noted that AGU focuses on ensuring that geoscientific knowledge is accessible and valuable to countries, particularly through its global partnerships and open data initiatives. It is a recognized leader in Open Science, promoting the FAIR data principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable), and facilitating access to diverse sources of knowledge, including traditional and Indigenous knowledge, in a respectful and inclusive manner, ensuring equitable participation while upholding ethical standards and protecting privacy.
118. She further noted that the organization supports a range of career development initiatives, including student programs, leadership training, and professional cohorts, which align closely with the IAI's mission and could serve as complementary capacity-building platforms, particularly within the activities of the IAI Science Diplomacy Center.
119. In addition to its technical contributions, AGU has recently published a set of ethical principles for climate intervention research relevant to both the Science Diplomacy Center and IAI-supported projects. The organization maintains a strong institutional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, embedding these values across all its programs.
120. The U.S. representative emphasized that AGU's values and objectives align closely with those of the IAI, making it a strong candidate for Associate status.
121. The U.S. representative noted that the IAI Executive Director, Anna Stewart Ibarra, was part of a group that authored AGU's position statement on climate change in 2024, and a member of the IAI's Science Advisory Committee had contributed to AGU's statements on climate intervention. AGU has partnered with the IAI through the Belmont Forum on open data, which has directly contributed to the IAI's new policy on Open Access to Data and Publications Policy.
122. The Executive Director of the Belmont Forum commented that AGU actively supports the Belmont Forum and has collaborated extensively with the IAI on open data initiatives. She added that AGU is also engaging with the authors of the CARE data principles (Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, and Ethics). These principles guide the ethical engagement with Indigenous Peoples and the handling of data collected through research involving Indigenous communities. She noted that AGU's ongoing work to explore and implement these principles is a valuable contribution to the broader conversations within the IAI, especially as the Institute continues to expand its commitment to equity, diversity, and the ethical use of data. AGU's dedication to transdisciplinary research, innovation, and inclusive collaboration further reinforces its alignment with the IAI's mission and values. She strongly endorsed AGU, describing it as a vibrant, committed, and forward-thinking organization that would bring significant value to the IAI community as an Associate.
123. The Chair invited Venezuela to present the case for the third proposed Associate: the Venezuelan Institute for Scientific Research (IVIC). The Venezuelan representative described IVIC as the country's leading scientific research institution and one of the most prominent in the region, recently celebrating its 65th anniversary. He stated that the Institute comprises eight regional centers and a main campus, with a community of over 300 researchers working across nearly 100 laboratories. Research is funded with national sources as well as by key external institutions, covering a wide range of



disciplines.

124. Venezuela emphasized the high level of commitment and performance among IVIC's researchers and the strong integration of research with postgraduate education. To date, over 1,700 students have graduated from IVIC's advanced degree programs. The institution has embraced the need to adapt to global dynamics, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, during which it played a key role in delivering timely and efficient responses regionally. New research centers were created in response to emerging challenges, and IVIC has produced over 400 high-impact scientific publications. Furthermore, Venezuela announced the creation of a new "University of Science" within IVIC.
125. Panama and Paraguay strongly supported IVIC's nomination, recognizing its contributions to science in the region.
126. The SAC Chair added that climate change "knows no borders" and underscored the importance of collaborating with Associates like IVIC to advance shared goals across the Americas.
127. The Chair invited the Parties to consider adopting the provisional decisions presented under this item on the agenda to invite the WMO, AGU, and IVIC to become Associates to the IAI as per Article XI of the *Agreement Establishing the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research*.
128. The Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions XXXIII/10, XXXIII/11, XXXIII/12, XXXIII/13, XXXIII/14 and XXXIII/15.

#### Agenda item 10: IAI Directorate summary report

##### 10.a. Overview of the IAI Strategic Plan: monitoring the objectives of the annual work plan

129. The Executive Director presented a video on the Strategic Plan of the IAI and the monitoring and evaluation progress. The video is available on the [CoP-33 webpage](#) under the tab *videos*.

##### 10.b. Science

###### - Update on the IAI Science program

130. The Science Director presented an overview of the IAI's science programs, outlining current activities and upcoming actions. He highlighted that much of the recent work has focused on the Belmont Forum's Tropical Forests Collaborative Research Action (CRA), launched in June 2024. He introduced its three thematic areas of the CRA and explained that 49 global consortia had been invited to submit full proposals from an initial pool of 80 pre-proposals following the selection process conducted in March 2025.
131. In parallel, 20 research teams were trained through a transdisciplinary course led by the IAI Transdisciplinary Academy to enable them to submit stronger proposals for the CRA and other national or global funding call. This initiative complements the Belmont CRA and seeks to build skills in transdisciplinary methodologies. Additionally, nine seed grants focusing on transdisciplinary research were awarded, with co-funding from IAI, SENACYT of Panama, and the science funding agency of the state of Santa Catarina, Brazil (FAPESC).
132. Regarding the ongoing CRA on Human Migration and Global Change, three projects

are currently being funded. Key findings were showcased in a video summarizing their ongoing activities. The video is available (only in Spanish) [here](#).

133. For the Climate, Environment, and Health (CEH) CRA, 11 global consortia had been selected for funding in November 2024, and six teams included participation from IAI member states that had requested funding from the IAI. Funding for these teams is pending confirmation from the US National Science Foundation.
134. The Science Director also presented 11 climate, environment and health (CEH) seed grant projects involving 15 countries and addressing areas such as climate, health, water, agroecology, tourism, risk reduction, and energy. A video summarizing these initiatives was shared. The video is available (only in Spanish) [here](#).
135. He emphasized how the IAI operates within a multilateral framework, including its role as an observer organization at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Through this engagement, the IAI successfully nominated 13 authors from the Americas to contribute to the upcoming IPCC 7<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report
136. Additional activities included a workshop series on climate intervention techniques in the Americas and the recent launch of an [expert roster](#), which is now publicly available. Parties were encouraged to nominate additional experts by contacting the Directorate.
137. Looking ahead, the IAI is working with the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) on a proposal for the GEF-8 funding cycle. The proposal includes 7 countries and will focus on management of sargassum in the Caribbean, aiming to integrate early warning systems, assess its socioeconomic impacts, and explore sustainable uses of sargassum.
138. He shared information about forthcoming Belmont Forum CRA that would be launched in June 2025: one focused on oceans and the other on resilience. These initiatives are being shaped with input from SAC and SPAC working groups, particularly the Oceans, Coasts, and Islands group. The Science Director closed by welcoming any questions, inviting participants to contact the Directorate directly at [science@dir.iai.int](mailto:science@dir.iai.int).
139. Mercy Borbor-Cordova, member of the SAC, and a lead author of an upcoming IPCC report on cities and climate change, highlighted the importance of incorporating the regional perspective into the assessment, particularly regarding urban areas and resilience. She expressed her willingness to provide further information to interested Parties.

#### - Update on the Belmont Forum and collaborative research actions (CRAs)

140. The Executive Director of the Belmont Forum provided further details on the upcoming Collaborative Research Action (CRA) Oceans2 scheduled to be launched in June 2025 during the UN Ocean Decade Day in Nice, France. She invited delegations attending the event to contact Larisse Faroni at [larisse.faroni@dir.iai.int](mailto:larisse.faroni@dir.iai.int) for more information. The CRA will focus on biodiversity conservation and ecosystem sustainability and is being developed in collaboration with the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. She also highlighted a second CRA on Resilience, which would be launched at SRI2025 in Chicago in June 2025.
141. She emphasized that these CRAs present an excellent opportunity for Parties to participate. She encouraged Parties to connect the Belmont Forum with potential

funding agencies in their national systems that may be interested in joining the call.

Agenda item 10.c: Science Diplomacy

– Update from the Science Diplomacy Center

142. The Director of the IAI Science Diplomacy Center (SDC) presented an update on the activities of the Center, highlighting that the advisory committee meets regularly and had recently decided to prioritize AI as a thematic focus.
143. She reported on the SDC training program, noting the in-person workshops held in Panama and Paraguay during the intercessional period. In response to a request from Paraguay and in consultation with experts, the SDC also organized a side event to -CoP-33 focused on science diplomacy and droughts.
144. She noted that upcoming SD workshops are planned in Brazil, specifically in Brasília and São Paulo, in partnership with the University of São Paulo. These will focus on key concepts and methodologies in science diplomacy. Additionally, a future event in Florianópolis in 2026, in collaboration with FAPESC and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, will explore the nexus between sustainability, the private sector, and science diplomacy.
145. She shared that the SDC had participated in various international forums, including a European Union conference in March 2025, where capacity building in science diplomacy emerged as a top priority. She emphasized the importance of the new SD course, which had been launched the day prior.
146. She also noted that the SDC will lead an initiative in Argentina focused on biodiversity and sustainable agriculture in partnership with the CREA network and CONICET. She concluded by reaffirming the Center's ambition to consolidate its position as an international reference in science diplomacy.

- Update on the STeP Program

147. She continued her presentation by highlighting that the STeP program has trained over 80 fellows in the first three cohorts. Looking ahead, the program will increase its engagement with public sector institutions and the private sector to produce concrete institutional outcomes. Bioeconomy will be the next thematic focus.
148. Following the update, several Parties provided comments:
149. El Salvador expressed gratitude for the support received and confirmed that the country is coordinating its formal accession to the IAI and organizing a strategic activity. The representative emphasized the challenge of bridging the gap between science and public decision -making, acknowledging that this divide is partly the responsibility of those managing science and technology. El Salvador voiced confidence that progress could be made in this area through an alliance with the SDC. They appreciated the information shared.
150. Jamaica highlighted a growing national interest in SD and expressed the desire to bring more attention to the topic through workshops tailored to Jamaica's specific context.
151. The U.S. thanked the IAI and emphasized the critical importance of the SDC, describing it as fundamental to the Institute's growth and maturity. The U.S.

representative underlined that the SDC is a cornerstone for future progress and praised the partnerships it has fostered, particularly in strengthening collaborative networks. The U.S. expressed optimism that these initiatives would continue to expand and be recognized as flagship activities of the IAI, welcoming the program's growing alignment with leading organizations such as AAAS. They concluded by thanking all individuals and institutions contributing to its success.

152. The SDC Director added that the activities are highly adaptable to the needs of each country. She emphasized that the SDC would continue to seek resources and would adapt to meet the needs of IAI Parties.

Agenda item 10.d. Communication, virtual campus, IT, and website

153. The Strategic Advisor presented a summary of the recent communications and outreach efforts led by the IAI Directorate, including redesigning the IAI logo and producing new promotional materials in print and digital formats in English and Spanish. The process involved gathering content from across the Directorate, drafting, editing, and translating materials to ensure accessibility across IAI's multilingual audience.
154. She noted that all publications are freely available on the IAI website for download, reflecting the Institute's strong commitment to its open data policy. Additionally, materials are stored in OneDrive, organized for access by key actors, including national representatives, STeP fellows, committee members, and IAI staff.
155. The IAI Virtual Campus continues to expand, offering free, self-paced, and certified multilingual courses. -She shared that two additional courses would be launched in 2025: courses on *Satellite Data to Monitor Regional Environmental Change and Climate Change* and *Migration and Health in Latin America and the Caribbean*; a total of six courses are now available, all in Spanish and English, with one also offered in Portuguese. Since its launch in 2022, the platform has registered over 2,200 participants. Each course is supported by a team of developers, translators, and video editors and includes evaluation tools to assess learning outcomes effectively.
156. In the area of information and communications technologies (ICT), the Directorate maintains a Support Desk to provide internal technical assistance and support for online events, including multilingual formats. AI tools are now used to record meetings and generate transcripts and summaries. Additionally, the IAI's repository of funded scientific articles has been configured to allow export into the IAI's Harvard Dataverse collection, ensuring data availability and transparency.
157. She concluded her presentation by indicating that a new version of the IAI website is set to be published. It includes advanced search tools to explore scientific publications, an expert directory, and a searchable database of former and current STeP fellows by country, keyword, and topic. This feature aims to enhance the visibility and accessibility of the inter--American network of science -policy professionals and serve as a resource for IAI member countries.
158. The Executive Director highlighted the significant progress in increasing the IAI's visibility thanks to these coordinated efforts.
159. The U.S. expressed appreciation for the advances made, emphasizing that the extensive reach would not have been possible without the development of the Virtual Campus and the effective use of ICTs. While recognizing the continued value of

in-person meetings, the U.S. noted that virtual programs and networks are essential for delivering training and disseminating knowledge under budget constraints.

160. Jamaica commended the quality and detail of the information now available online and underlined the importance of sharing these resources, particularly for the benefit of STeP fellows and national representatives.

#### Agenda item 10.e. IAI's Open Data and Open Science Policy

161. The Open Data Specialist presented an update on the IAI's efforts to strengthen open science practices. He highlighted that the Institute has significantly increased the volume of data contributed by researchers, thereby enhancing the information available to support decision-makers across the region.

162. He emphasized that open science goes beyond simply making data accessible in a repository. In 2024, the IAI undertook a revision of its Open Science Policy to reflect this broader vision. The process began with a draft prepared by a working group of open science specialists. This draft was subsequently enriched by members of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC), further aligned with the Open Data Policy of the Belmont Forum and then reviewed by the Directorate. The final version was submitted to the Parties and approved.

163. He concluded by noting that the updated policy is built around four key pillars:

- Ensuring that all data produced by IAI-funded research projects meet FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable).
- Supporting compliance with CARE principles (Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, and Ethics) for Indigenous data governance.
- Promoting the open publication of all IAI-supported research outputs.
- Increasing the use and re-use of data for scientific, policy, and societal benefit.

164. The Chair then formally invited the Conference of the Parties to approve the revised Open Science Policy.

165. The IAI's data repository is now publicly available on the IAI website ([here](#)), supporting transparency and open access in line with the Institute's broader commitment to data sharing and scientific collaboration.

166. The Conference of the Parties adopted Decision XXXIII/16.

167. In closing of Agenda item 10, *Directorate summary report*, the Executive Director provided a summary of recent activities to strengthen the organizational culture and professional development within the IAI Directorate. The Directorate staff and fellows underwent a year-long process to improve the organizational climate and to improve effectiveness, through training and guidance from Inclusive Innovation, a group of expert professional coaches. Through this process, she emphasized the importance of creating safe, reflective spaces through retreats and structured time for team reflection. These activities have also helped guide the development of indicators for implementing the IAI Strategic Plan and have improved management skills within the Directorate.

168. She acknowledged the challenges of working with a growing team, noting that the Directorate's expansion has introduced new opportunities along with complexities, particularly in managing virtual and hybrid work environments.

169. On the multilateral front, the Directorate has remained highly active and engaged. A notable highlight was the IAI's full agenda during the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP16) held in Cali, Colombia. The IAI co-organized events alongside Parties and Associates from Colombia, Brazil, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI), and the Humboldt Institute. Additionally, the Directorate held preparatory activities and capacity building sessions designed for both Party representatives and the IAI Directorate's delegation.
170. The Executive Director also announced that the Directorate was accepted as a member of the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership, a biodiversity-focused initiative, aimed at accelerating engagement within the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
171. She highlighted the work of the Directorate in strengthening regional and global partnerships to elevate the visibility of the IAI key regional and global multilateral events, including those convened by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Organization of American States (OAS), focusing on data and resilience in the Caribbean, and the Central American Integration System (SICA). Other collaborative engagements include the Belmont Forum, the G20, and preparations for the upcoming UN Ocean Conference. The IAI also took part in the Climate Week held in Panama in May 2025.
172. A video with a message from the CEO of the ISC, Salvatore Arico, to CoP-33 was presented.

#### Agenda item 11: Observer status

173. The Executive Director presented this item of the agenda noting that the Formal procedures for granting permanent observer status at the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research approved by CoP-32 could be simplified and aligned with the process followed by other IGOs. She continued explaining that the Directorate had consulted with the Executive Council Chair, and the following proposition was recommended: a. States and organizations interested in being granted permanent observer status can apply directly to the IAI Directorate, without being sponsored by a Party. b. The IAI Directorate reviews the application and forwards it to the EC Chair, who will decide whether to grant permanent observer status without needing approval by the Conference of the Parties.
174. The Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions XXXIII/17 and XXXIII/18.

#### Agenda item 12: Overview of provisional decisions for approval

175. The Chair presented the 18 Decisions discussed during the meeting.
176. The Conference of the Parties adopted the 18 Decisions contained in Section II of this report.

Outstanding issues and conclusion of the meeting
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#### Agenda item 13: Determination of the time and venue of the next regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties

177. Jamaica and Colombia offered to host the 2026 CoP in virtual format.

178. Venezuela announced its interest in hosting the in -person CoP in 2027.

179. Argentina also expressed willingness to host a future CoP after 2027.

Agenda item 14: Closing remarks

180. The Chair thanked all the Parties for their participation and support of the IAI and opened the floor for closing remarks.

181. Several Parties and observers expressed appreciation for the successful organization of CoP-33 and reaffirmed their strong support for the IAI's mission. The efforts of the IAI Directorate, interpreters, and technical staff were widely recognized for their professionalism and commitment.

182. Chile, Jamaica, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela and the WMO, commended the high quality of the event, highlighting the value of regional collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the host's hospitality. Panama and Uruguay also committed to advancing -science-policy initiatives upon returning to their countries, including exploring participation in upcoming cohorts of the STeP program.

183. The Belmont Forum praised the IAI for its commitment to multilingualism and inclusivity, recognizing these efforts as a distinguishing feature of the organization's professional standards.

184. The U.S. emphasized the importance of continuity in advancing IAI's mission, thanking all those involved. The SPAC Chair echoed the need for stability and mutual learning going forward.

185. Brazil offered a personal reflection, praising the SDC and acknowledging the IAI's effectiveness in delivering co-created, impactful results. The country emphasized the IAI's high quality of work and alignment with global multilateral standards.

186. Paraguay, as host, proudly described CoP-33 as one of the most active and inclusive meetings to date. The country highlighted the strong engagement of new and returning Parties and reaffirmed its commitment to the IAI's values of service and collaboration.

187. The Executive Director closed the meeting with a message of unity and hope, encouraging all participants to carry forward the collective vision and action of the IAI and reminding everyone that this shared effort is urgently needed across the region and the planet.

188. The meeting adjourned on 30 May at 4:30 PM.

Section II: Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its thirty-third meeting.

**Decisions of the 33rd Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the  
Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research  
Asunción, Paraguay. Hybrid.  
29-30 May 2025**

**Report of the 32nd Meeting of the Conference of the Parties**

*Directed to the Conference of the Parties*

XXXIII/1. The Conference of the Parties approves the Report of the 32nd meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

**Core budget**

*Directed to the Conference of the Parties*

XXXIII/2. The Conference of the Parties approves the core budget for fiscal year 2025–2026 and the preliminary request for fiscal years 2026–2028.

**Auditors' Report**

*Directed to the Conference of the Parties*

XXXIII/3. The Conference of the Parties approves the Independent Auditors' report.

*Directed to Parties*

XXXIII/4. The Parties are invited to consider appointing a position and institution, rather than an individual by name, when issuing credentials for the designation of the permanent and alternate national representatives (Focal Points) to the IAI to help ensure continuity in representation and facilitate smoother transitions in the event of personnel changes, and to explore, where appropriate and consistent with their national governance structures, the possibility of nominating alternate focal points from other relevant national agencies, which would promote broader national participation and inclusive representation of the country delegation within IAI processes.

**Participation in Belmont Forum calls**

*Directed to Parties*

XXXIII/5. The Parties are encouraged to work with the IAI Directorate and the Belmont Forum Secretariat to explore financial and in-kind contributions to support their national research teams participating in Collaborative Research Actions (CRAs) that align with national and regional priorities.

**Asunción Declaration on Water Security, Biodiversity, and Climate Resilience in the Americas**

*Directed to the Conference of the Parties*



XXXIII/6. The Conference of the Parties approves the Asunción Declaration by the Parties and IAI partner institutions on Water Security, Biodiversity, and Climate Resilience in the Americas as an expression of joint commitment to strengthen regional cooperation, transdisciplinary science, and integrated action in the face of the challenges of global environmental change.

### **SAC, SPAC, and IPAC**

#### *Directed to Parties*

XXXIII/7. The Parties are encouraged to further utilize and strengthen this unique regional mechanism of the IAI, which facilitates direct interaction between governments and scientific communities to jointly address global change through research and policy action. This space should be leveraged to:

- Advance collaborative research on pressing regional challenges, ensuring science informs decision-making (e.g., with the Belmont Forum).
- Co-design capacity-building initiatives (e.g., workshops, training, webinars) tailored to both policymakers and scientists.
- Foster long-term partnerships that translate knowledge into innovative solutions for societal and environmental well-being, catalyzing evidence-based strategies to address global change.

#### *Directed to Parties*

XXXIII/8. The Parties are encouraged to meet with members of the Science Advisory Committee (SAC), the Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC), and Indigenous People Advisory Committee (IPAC) of their respective countries, along with the Directorate, to promote awareness of ongoing funded research and actions that mutually support national and regional priorities along with the IAI Strategic Plan.

#### *Directed to the IAI Directorate*

XXXIII/9. The Directorate is tasked with facilitating greater engagement between national representatives to the IAI, members of Science Advisory Committee (SAC), the Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC), and Indigenous People Advisory Committee (IPAC), Associates, investigators from IAI-funded projects, fellows of the Science, Technology, Policy (STeP) Fellowship Program, and other partners during the preparation for multilateral environmental conventions, and other regional and international meetings that align with the IAI's science agenda and strategic plan, to strengthen the role of science in supporting the formulation of policies and plans.

### **Invitation to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to become an Associate of the Institute**

#### *Directed to Parties*

XXXIII/10. The Conference of the Parties invites the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to become an Associate of the Institute.

#### *Directed to the Directorate*

XXXIII/11. The Directorate is tasked with sending an invitation to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to become an Associate of the Institute and preparing an Agreement of

Association which shall specify the areas of the Scientific Agenda and/or programmatic activities that will be supported by the Associate, and the modalities of such support.

#### **Invitation to the American Geophysical Union (AGU) to become an Associate of the Institute**

*Directed to Parties*

XXXIII/12. The Conference of the Parties invites the American Geophysical Union (AGU) to become an Associate of the Institute.

*Directed to the Directorate*

XXXIII/13. The Directorate is tasked with sending an invitation to the American Geophysical Union (AGU) to become an Associate of the Institute and preparing an Agreement of Association which shall specify the areas of the Scientific Agenda or programmatic activities that will be supported by the Associate, and the modalities of such support.

#### **Invitation to the Venezuelan Institute for Scientific Research (IVIC) to become an Associate of the Institute**

*Directed to Parties*

XXXIII/14. The Conference of the Parties invites the Venezuelan Institute for Scientific Research (IVIC) to become an Associate of the Institute.

*Directed to the Directorate*

XXXIII/15. The Directorate is tasked with sending an invitation to the Venezuelan Institute for Scientific Research (IVIC) to become an Associate of the Institute and preparing an Agreement of Association which shall specify the areas of the Scientific Agenda or programmatic activities that will be supported by the Associate, and the modalities of such support.

#### **Open Access to Data and Publications Policy**

*Directed to the Conference of the Parties*

XXXIII/16. The Conference of the Parties approves the Open Access to Data and Publications Policy.

#### **Formal procedures for granting permanent observer status at the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research**

*Directed to Parties*

XXXIII/17. The Conference of the Parties adopts the revised formal procedures for granting permanent observer status at the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research.

*Directed to the Directorate*

XXXIII/18. The Conference of the Parties instructs the IAI Directorate to publish the revised Formal procedures for granting permanent observer status at the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research on the IAI website.

## Annex I

### SPECIAL SESSION

#### ***Droughts in the Americas: the case of Paraguay***

*29 May 2025, Day 1 of the Thirty-third Conference of the Parties (CoP-33) to the IAI*

*This special session was convened as part of the Thirty-third Conference of the Parties (CoP-33) to the IAI. Its purpose was to examine the links between climate variability, drought, and fire regimes in the Americas, with a particular focus on Paraguay. The session offered a space to share national experiences in monitoring and managing wildfires under changing climatic conditions and to highlight the role of scientific evidence in informing risk governance and public policy. It also sought to foster regional dialogue on the development of early warning systems and the need for coordinated, transboundary responses to climate-related risks.*

*The session featured a detailed case study presented by a national expert from Paraguay, offering insight into long-term trends in fire occurrence and drought patterns, as well as associated challenges in public awareness, land management, and environmental governance.*

*It concluded with a panel on the IAI Science Diplomacy Workshop focused on droughts, held in Paraguay, the previous week.*

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The session provided a detailed overview of fire dynamics in Paraguay, highlighting the seasonal and inter-annual variability of fire events and their increasing intensity due to climate anomalies. A national expert from Paraguay presented long-term trends and shared insights from over a decade of monitoring and field research. The presentation emphasized the interplay between precipitation anomalies, vegetation type, and human activity as key drivers of the country's fire regime.

It was noted that increasingly frequent droughts led to fire patterns shifting, resulting in a rise in the number of heat sources detected. Areas experiencing greater precipitation anomalies were found to have a higher frequency of fires, a recurring pattern observed consistently since 2018.

For instance, while Paraguay has historically seen fire activity year-round, the dry season, from July to October, has grown increasingly severe. In some years, over 7,000 to 8,000 active fire points have been recorded in a single day in January or February, compared to historical averages of 2,000 to 5,000.

The expert outlined the national methodology used to monitor heat sources, based on MODIS Terra satellite data and complemented by real-time drought indicators. Daily monitoring is conducted in the early morning and late afternoon, with a strict validation protocol based on confidence levels and satellite cross verification. This robust system has shown that approximately 2 to 2.5 million hectares are burned annually, with over 20 million hectares affected since 2001.

A critical distinction was drawn between burned areas, controlled fires initiated by landowners for agricultural purposes, and burned-over areas, where fires escape beyond their intended boundaries and become wildfires. This distinction was also discussed during the Q&A portion of the session in response to a question from the representative of Chile.

The presentation emphasized the vulnerability of protected areas, particularly in the Pantanal region, where frequent fires threaten one of the world's most biodiverse ecosystems. A joint fire frequency map developed with CONAE Argentina illustrated that some zones have burned more than 15–20 times between 2001 and 2017. These recurrent fires have long-term impacts on soil quality, biodiversity, and the overall resilience of forested landscapes.

Cultural practices also played a prominent role in the discussion. The speaker explained the *caracol* method of clearing land, common in the Chaco region, where bulldozers leave tree trunks and organic material behind, which are later set on fire in rows known as *colleras*. In the Bajo Chaco, producers traditionally burn pastures in August to regenerate *espartillo* grass for livestock. However, changing rainfall patterns, now often delayed until February, have made these practices increasingly risky. As a result, some producers have shifted burning to December or January, further complicating fire dynamics.

The role of formal and informal education was highlighted as a long-term strategy to shift fire use- culture. Paraguay has incorporated risk management content into school curricula and launched a national diploma on fire governance. Public campaigns in Spanish, Guaraní, and other indigenous languages have also been implemented to raise awareness in rural communities.

The speaker praised the longstanding internship program managed by Universidad Nacional de Asunción, which plays a critical role in fire data generation and professional training. Interns, often students in forestry and environmental sciences, produce 26 maps daily, monitor satellite data, and contribute directly to national fire monitoring platforms. Many have gone on to serve in public agencies or as forest firefighters, demonstrating the transformative potential of applied scientific training.

In the open discussion, several participants provided regional perspectives. The Permanent Representative of Venezuela shared insights on the evolving ocean-atmosphere dynamics influencing South America's climate. He emphasized that traditional climate drivers such as El Niño and La Niña may no longer fully explain observed precipitation shifts, highlighting the influence of newly emergent oceanic heatwaves and decadal-scale oscillations.

The Chair of the SAC reflected on the unprecedented wildfires in eastern Canada in 2023, noting the region's general lack of fire preparedness due to its typically humid conditions. She raised the issue of cultural adaptation, infrastructure gaps, and the urgent need for regionally specific disaster planning.

A Brazilian delegate raised concerns about intentional fires in São Paulo's sugarcane regions and asked whether remote sensing could identify criminal fire behavior. The Paraguayan expert responded that while satellite data can detect temporal and spatial fire patterns, determining intent requires on-site forensic investigation by trained personnel. Still, combined analyses, including wind patterns, ignition points, and fire spread, can help flag suspicious cases.

The need for early warning systems was underscored throughout the session, not only for fire events but also for compound hazards such as simultaneous drought and flood risks. The speaker stressed that beyond technological tools, such systems must be accessible, understandable, and trusted by local communities. Communication strategies should be simple, direct, and sustained, particularly for populations with limited access to internet or formal education.

Before moving to the Panel on the Science Diplomacy Workshop, the session emphasized the urgent need for continued investment in training, regional data sharing, and transboundary cooperation. Paraguay's national campaign, "Paraguay sin llamas: Haciendo

ciencia con conciencia” (“Paraguay Without Flames: Doing Science with Awareness”) was proposed as a guiding framework for community-engaged scientific monitoring across Latin America.

#### Panel on the Science Diplomacy Workshop focused on droughts in Paraguay

The Director of the IAI Science Diplomacy Center (SDC) opened the panel by reflecting on the recent science diplomacy workshop on droughts and their cross-sectoral impact held days prior in Paraguay. She emphasized that the SDC works with host countries, such as Paraguay, to identify their priorities in science diplomacy and then convenes experts and actors from IAI Parties to share lessons learned and discuss solutions.

She noted that experts from Chile, Peru, Colombia, Mexico, El Salvador, and the U.S. participated in the workshop. The event was a platform for exchanging knowledge and strengthening synergies among science, policy, and diplomacy actors.

Other panelists shared preliminary outcomes including a policy brief in development by participants, to be presented by Agustina Salvatti (Argentina). Paraguay and Brazil collaborated on project guidelines addressing drought-related challenges. Representatives from Colombia’s IDEAM (Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology, and Environmental Studies) discussed their institutional strategy for science diplomacy. In the absence of formal structures, IDEAM focused on building research capacity and identifying opportunities for technical cooperation. The ENANDES project was cited as a successful example of institutional capacity building, policy alignment, and application of the National Framework for Climate Services. A notable feature of the project was the implementation of community agroclimatic roundtables. These allowed farmers and Indigenous peoples to understand and use climate data and forecasting for both short- and long-term decision-making. One major achievement was the recovery of native seeds better adapted to local drought conditions. Access to climate predictions enabled communities to make informed crop choices, enhancing adaptation and food security. The project’s benefits were tangible at the community level and trust building emerged as a key enabler of science diplomacy.

A Paraguayan panelist presented the national Climate Information Platform for Agroclimatic Decision-Making. This tool aims to support informed and resilient responses to climate variability, addressing vulnerabilities in key sectors such as agriculture, livestock, and river navigation. The platform contributes to national resilience-building efforts and offers the possibility of introducing government incentives for adopting adaptive practices. The panelist noted that improving climate risk management could mitigate economic losses and improve sectoral profitability.

Colombia presented an illustrative example through the Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology, and Environmental Studies (IDEAM), showcasing the role of reliable climate services in strengthening stakeholder trust and supporting informed decision-making across sectors.

IDEAM has developed and implemented strategies to translate complex climate and weather data into accessible, actionable information, enhancing its relevance for decision-makers. Notably, the institute has shifted from using technical bulletins, often understood only by experts, to producing clear, user-oriented formats tailored to different audiences, including government officials, the private sector, and the general public.

These efforts have contributed to the strengthening of early warning systems and have directly supported decisions in sectors such as energy, agriculture, transportation, public health, and

tourism. The example highlighted that effective communication and trust-building mechanisms are essential components of functional climate services.

This experience reflects the importance of institutional capacity to deliver reliable, timely, and user-centric climate information, aligned with the broader objectives of anticipatory governance and resilience planning.

A practical example of science diplomacy was shared regarding the Paraná River, which became unnavigable due to low water levels. Unlike Brazil, Paraguay relies heavily on river transport for exports. In this case, a diplomatic negotiation with Brazil enabled the temporary release of water from upstream dams, restoring river navigability for 48 hours. Accurate forecasting was critical; mistiming could have jeopardized the operation. This example illustrated the strategic role of climate science in national decision-making and regional cooperation. The integration of science into diplomacy yielded tangible benefits.

In closing, the Director of the SDC noted that science diplomacy strengthens regional cooperation by facilitating coordinated action and scientific exchange.

## Annex II

### **Declaration of Asunción by the Parties and Institutions Associated with the IAI on Water Security, Biodiversity, and Climate Resilience in the Americas**

Within the framework of the 33rd Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI), held in Asunción, Paraguay, from May 29 to 30, 2025, with IAI member countries and associated institutions, and drawing on previous events—the side event “Regional Priorities in Early Warning Systems, Droughts, and Sustainable Development” and the workshop “Scientific Diplomacy for Drought Management in the Agricultural, Energy, and River Transport Sectors”, co-organized by the IAI, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Global Change Research Center (CICAG) of the National University of Asunción, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)—guided by the principles of scientific excellence, international cooperation, open data sharing, regional resilience, and environmental governance in the Americas, we express the following:

#### *Considering:*

1. That recent WMO reports on the state of the global climate and in Latin America and the Caribbean show an increase in the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, forest fires, and heat waves, which have caused significant human and economic losses, as well as negative impacts on biodiversity in the Americas.
2. Monitoring atmospheric parameters and extreme weather events is important to reduce disaster risk and ensure a timely response to safeguard water, food, health, and energy security in pursuit of sustainable development.
3. The positive advances in the region in energy generation and transition, with a 69% share of renewable energy (WMO, *The State of the Climate in Latin America and the Caribbean 2024*) and, at the same time, the risks posed by droughts and other extreme weather events to energy sources and distribution, especially in relation to water, solar, and wind resources.
4. The relevance of the United Nations Global Initiative “Early Warning for All” (EW4All), which seeks to ensure that all people are protected by multi-hazard early warning systems by 2027, and whose implementation in the Americas requires regional cooperation, institutional capacity building, technology transfer, financial resources, and the integration of scientific, indigenous, and traditional knowledge.
5. The synergies and cooperation between the mandates of the IAI, WMO, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the World Health Assembly Global Action Plan on Climate Change and Health, and the Rio Initiative on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Drought, which strengthen coherence, complementarity, and innovation through integrated and intersectoral approaches to achieve more resilient and sustainable Americas.

*We reaffirm our commitment to:*

1. Strengthen regional early warning and response systems for extreme weather events by leveraging transdisciplinary science, including meteorology, hydrology, economics, social sciences, and other related disciplines, with key sectors such as health, water, sanitation, agriculture, energy, transportation, and other sectors linked to risk reduction and climate resilience.
2. Promote transdisciplinary approaches that integrate diverse sectors and knowledge systems— from the academic, public, private, civil society, and indigenous and traditional sectors—to generate knowledge and tools for climate risk reduction and sustainable management of ecosystems and water resources.
3. Promote scientific diplomacy initiatives that foster regional dialogue and collaboration at the science-policy nexus, the exchange of good practices, and the strengthening of cooperation mechanisms among countries, in support of national and subnational planning and commitments to multilateral agreements on the environment and climate change.
4. Promote the exchange of open and interoperable data, methodologies, products, and services related to meteorology, hydrology, the environment, social issues, and other relevant areas, and strengthen cooperation with national meteorological services and other relevant agencies to improve the flow of information and services tailored to user needs, considering national legislation and policies and international agreements and initiatives in the Americas.
5. Support governments and other actors in formulating evidence-based policies and plans to address the challenges of global environmental change. Strengthen the contribution of Indigenous and traditional knowledge to improve early warning systems, adaptation strategies, and climate resilience. Mobilize and coordinate financial and non-financial resources to implement scientific programs and projects, training processes, and other initiatives that respond to the above points.

*We call on*

The Parties to the IAI, other States, multilateral organizations, the private sector, research networks, civil society, and other relevant institutions to support and engage in this collaborative effort to advance toward a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable future for the Americas. Asunción, May 30, 2025.