**For Immediate Release**

**Māori Climate Commissioner celebrates first step for Indigenous Peoples at UN Climate Change Conference 2018**

Māori Climate Commissioner, Donna Awatere Huata, is hailing the inclusion of indigenous people at the current UN Climate Conference in Poland as a successful first step at putting indigenous people and their experiences at the forefront of the climate change debate.

"The Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform panel session at this years Climate conference is vital if we are to put First Nation voices at the centre of the climate debate."

"Indigenous peoples are amongst the poorest in most countries and it is the poor who will bear the brunt of climate change. This need to include indigenous people in decision making is an ethical and moral demand."

The three functions of the Platform for indigenous peoples are:

* The exchange of knowledge
* The capacity building for engagement in the UNFCCC process and with the Platform
* The integration of knowledge systems, practices and innovations in climate change policies and actions, internationally and nationally.

"We have much work to be done, but New Zealand needs to lead in these functions by giving broader scope for Māori involvement in decision making processes if engagement to be meaningful".

**LCIP Platform: a force for transformative change in raising ambition from natural climate solutions**: Panellists will share views on the LCIP Platform and approaches to promote inclusivity, transparency and integration of diverse Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities knowledge, practices and innovations into relevant UNFCCC processes, critical to increasing ambition from natural climate solutions.

**Speakers:** UNFCCC Secretariat; Government of Costa Rica; Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities; LCIP Platform Negotiators; Conservation International; World Bank; IUCN CEESP Commission

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