



Kimat Yachay

BIMONTHLY NEWSPAPER OF PAWANKA FUND

# Kimat Yachay

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ONLINE EDITION & BLOG

A journey of storytelling, knowledge sharing, and advocacy for the rights and well-being of Indigenous Peoples around the world.

Pawanka Fund Team

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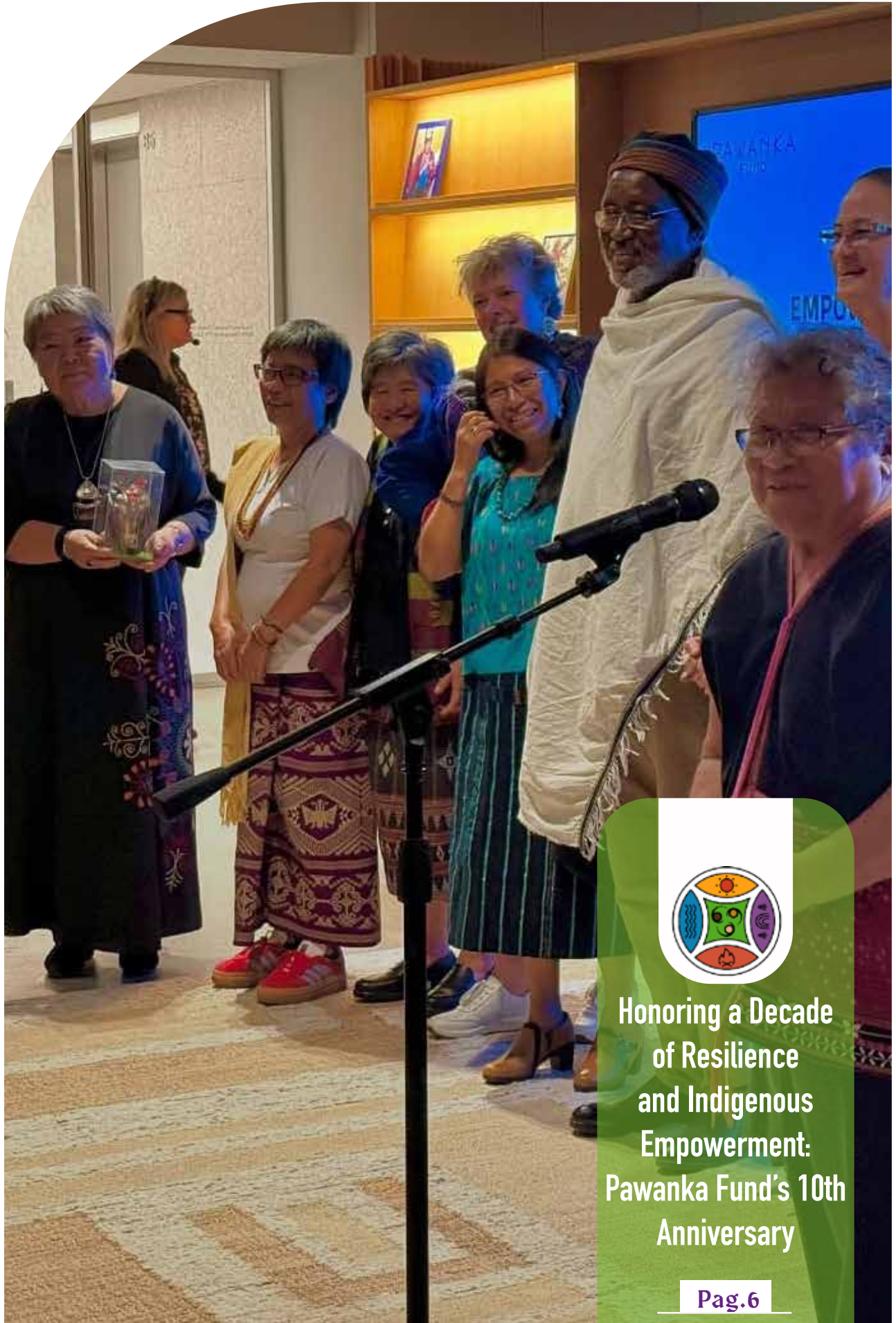
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## Pawanka Fund's 10th Anniversary

# Honoring a Decade of Resilience and Indigenous Empowerment

New York, September 25, 2024

Under the theme "Empowering Indigenous Peoples for a Better Future for All," the 10th anniversary of Pawanka Fund was celebrated. The event, held in New York, brought together donors, friends, and partners from around the world to honor a decade of commitment to Indigenous values and the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples.

The event began with an emotional land acknowledgment by Shane Weeks, a member of the Shinnecock Grave Protection Warrior Society, who recognized the importance of honoring the ancestral lands on which the event was taking place. This acknowledgment emphasized the deep respect for Indigenous territories and their significance in the identity of Indigenous Peoples.

A heartfelt spiritual ceremony followed, led by Namaka Rawlins and Teresa Zapeta, members of the Guiding Committee, inviting attendees to deeply connect with Mother Earth and the cosmos. They were joined by Indigenous filmmaker Kynan Tegar from Sungai Utik and Tom Sargent, one of the founders of Pawanka Fund. Through songs, prayers, and offerings, the ceremony highlighted the importance of preserving and revitalizing ancestral knowledge, emphasizing that unity and interconnection with nature are essential for humanity's survival.

After this moving start, Isaack Hussein and Joan Carling, members of the Guiding Committee, welcomed the audience,



María Fernanda Espinosa, Goodwill Ambassador for FILAC (Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean) and former President of the United Nations General Assembly



We celebrate 10 years of Pawanka Fund in New York with partners and donors

emphasizing Pawanka's achievements over the past ten years and the need to continue working collectively to address global challenges. Their speech reflected the spirit of Pawanka: a space of collaboration that has allowed Indigenous communities to take the lead in their own development.

Next, Mateo Hinojosa, filmmaker and member of The Cultural Conservancy, presented the first preview of an oral history documentary, which seeks to reweave the meaning of Indigenous philanthropy and explore the paths of Indigenous self-determination through the voices of its protagonists. Attendees enjoyed this exclusive preview and were invited to watch the trailer at the following link: Pawanka Event Sizzler - Oral History.

Patricia Velásquez, actress, Goodwill Ambassador for Indigenous Peoples' Rights with the Organization of American States (OAS), and a member of the Wayúu Indigenous People from northeastern Colombia and Venezuela, offered heartfelt words of gratitude, highlighting the value of Indigenous knowledge for planetary

preservation: "Thanks to the ancestral knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, we hold the key to preserving the planet. By helping us help, by supporting Pawanka, you hold that key to taking care of the Earth and the beings we love." Her message inspired those present to support Pawanka and its mission to preserve Indigenous cultures, which are essential for the Earth's wellbeing.



Tom Sargent, co-founder of Pawanka Fund and Tamalpais Trust

Following her, María Fernanda Espinosa, Goodwill Ambassador for FILAC (Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean) and former President of the United Nations General Assembly, reflected on Pawanka Fund's global impact: "The Pawanka Fund has been a bold response to the challenge of implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." Espinosa highlighted how Pawanka has empowered Indigenous communities by facilitating the exercise of their rights and promoting their self-determination, in alignment with international guidelines.

One of the evening's most vibrant moments was the performance of the dance "Black Duck", a symbolic expression performed by our colleagues from Community First Development, an Australian organization led by Indigenous Peoples and focused on supporting the Aboriginal communities of their region. This dance, filled with history and spirituality, reaffirmed the value of Indigenous culture as a living and resilient expression.

Tom Sargent, co-founder of Pawanka Fund and Tamalpais Trust, shared the story of Pawanka's creation, stating: "Pawanka was created to promote and serve Indigenous cultures, with their knowledge, traditional values, and ways of life. (...) We have learned that communities with lived experiences should be the ones to decide how to lead and support their commu-

**"We (Indigenous Peoples) do not own the land; we are the stewards of the land; we belong to the land. Thank you to Pawanka Fund for 10 years of preserving our joy and our love for our land."**

nities." Sargent reminded everyone that Pawanka was forged with a vision to respect and strengthen each community's capacity, leaving key decisions for their development in their hands.

The discussion panel, moderated by Melissa Nelson, member of the Guiding Committee, featured Indigenous leaders such as Eduardo Peralta, Denisa Levingston, Kynan Tegar, and Kimaren Ole Riamit, who shared their experiences and reflections on Indigenous sovereignty, environmental justice, and the crucial role Indigenous communities play in biodiversity conservation.



A panel moderated by Melissa Nelson featured Indigenous leaders Eduardo Peralta, Denisa Levingston, Kynan Tegar, and Kimaren Ole Riamit, sharing insights on Indigenous sovereignty, environmental justice, and biodiversity conservation.

Another highlight of the evening was the intervention of Indigenous actress Kali Reis, who moved the audience with her words: "We (Indigenous Peoples) do not own the land; we are the stewards of the land; we belong to the land. Thank you to Pawanka Fund for 10 years of preserving our joy and our love for our land." Kali reminded everyone that the relationship with the land is sacred, and that Pawanka's work is key to maintaining that connection alive.



One of the evening's highlights: the vibrant "Black Duck" dance performed by our colleagues from Community First Development

The closing remarks were delivered by Dr. Myrna Cunningham, Chair of Pawanka Fund, who expressed her deep gratitude: "We have over 1000 beautiful stories from partners who have done so much with few resources and with trust, recognizing that they make the best decisions when they can decide. That's what we have been doing, inviting our partners to exercise their right to self-determination. This celebration is on behalf of them, our partners who are changing the world." Myrna emphasized that Pawanka's true success lies in the leadership of its community partners, who have transformed their realities through their wisdom and self-determination.

The evening concluded with a vibrant musical performance by the Ecuadorian group Aya Uma, whose ancestral melodies resonated powerfully, closing the celebration with a spirit of unity and hope for the future.

This event not only celebrated the ten years of Pawanka Fund but reaffirmed the organization's commitment to the defense and promotion of Indigenous values. Pawanka Fund will continue its work, empowering Indigenous Peoples and striving for a future where ancestral wisdom guides the care of our planet and its inhabitants.

For those who could not attend the event, you can relive this celebration by watching the full broadcast on the Pawanka Fund YouTube channel. The event link is as follows: Empowering Indigenous Peoples for a Better Future for All - Pawanka's 10th Anniversary.



Dr. Myrna Cunningham, Chair of Pawanka Fund, delivered heartfelt closing remarks, expressing deep gratitude

Guardians of Life

# Indigenous Women Unite for Biodiversity at COP16



Women from around the world gathered in Cali to share their experiences in protecting biodiversity.

Indigenous women from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, the Philippines, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela gathered in Cali, Colombia, to engage in a deep reflection on the challenges they face in advocating for their demands in the negotiation spaces of the United Nations Conference of the Parties on Biodiversity (COP16). Held in Cali from October 21 to November 1, this event is crucial for discussing the future of global biodiversity.

During the international workshop titled "Indigenous Women of Abya Yala as Guardians and Defenders of Biodiversity," organized by the emblematic Indigenous Women Program of Latin America and the Caribbean (MILAC), the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC), and Pawanka Fund, an in-

tergenerational regional plan through 2030 was outlined. This plan aims to provide a robust framework for monitoring the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

COP16 will mark the first biodiversity conference since the adoption of a historic agreement at COP15 in December 2022 in Montreal, Canada, where nations committed to halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030 under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Implementing the KMGBF requires a human rights-based approach, ensuring respect, protection, promotion, and fulfillment of these rights. Additionally, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls must be prioritized to reduce inequalities. The Con-

**In this context, Indigenous women's role is of utmost importance, as they pass down knowledge about ecosystems from generation to generation, promoting conservation initiatives that integrate cultural values and traditional governance systems.**

vention recognizes the fundamental role of women in conserving and sustainably using biological diversity, emphasizing the need for their full participation at all levels of policy-making and implementation for conservation.

The convention also acknowledges the close, traditional reliance of Indigenous and local communities on biological resources and the importance of equitable sharing of benefits derived from the use of their traditional knowledge, innovations, and practices for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Myrna Cunningham, Director of Pawanka Fund, stressed, "The Indigenous women believe it's important to bring our voices so that the gender strategy discussed so far in the CBD can be enriched with the contributions of Indigenous women."

According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Abya Yala has a population of 660,269,100 people, with 58,180,000 belonging to Indigenous Peoples, representing 9.8% of the region's total population.

Indigenous Peoples, who represent only 5% of the world's population, play a vital role as custodians of rich cultural diversity and protectors of 80% of the planet's remaining biodiversity. Their traditional knowledge and profound understanding of biodiversity are essential for conservation and sustainable use of nature.

In this context, Indigenous women's role is of utmost importance, as they pass down knowledge about ecosystems from generation to generation, promoting conservation initiatives that integrate cultural values and

traditional governance systems.

"We are part of nature, we belong to it, we are one of its elements. We have the obligation to preserve and respect it. We suffer the consequences of its deterioration, and if we don't learn to protect it, everyone will suffer. Indigenous women are the true guardians of biodiversity; we safeguard seeds and the knowledge of caring for territories and communities," said Ceiza Pitaguary, National Secretary of Indigenous Environmental and Territorial Management in Brazil.

Indigenous lands encompass diverse ecosystems, from forests and wetlands to mountains and coastal areas, where they often practice sustainable techniques such as agroforestry and rotational farming. Indigenous women's knowledge is crucial for biodiversity conservation and for mitigating and adapting to climate change, as they hold wisdom on managing natural resources.

"We need unity, solidarity, and collective action so that we are heard and have the space to lead solutions to effectively address these crises," stated Joan Carling, Director of Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI).

Indigenous women, as custodians of biodiversity and traditional knowledge, are leading a vital movement to preserve our planet's ecosystems and promote sustainable development. Their unity and unwavering commitment to their communities and the environment inspire us all to recognize and support their leadership in global conservation efforts.



Joan Carling, Director of Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI), delivering a message alongside Indigenous women from Latin America.



Indigenous women leaders united in strength and solidarity to protect biodiversity and their ancestral lands.



Indigenous women leaders from Latin America came together to discuss the importance of environmental care.

**We are part of nature, we belong to it, we are one of its elements. We have the obligation to preserve and respect it. We suffer the consequences of its deterioration, and if we don't learn to protect it, everyone will suffer. Indigenous women are the true guardians of biodiversity.**

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From Red Carpets to Cultural Roots

# Kali Reis Honors the Seaconke Wampanoag Legacy



Kali Reis delivering a powerful message of pride for Indigenous communities.

Kali Reis, a proud Seaconke Wampanoag woman, stood before the audience at the 10th-anniversary celebration of Pawanka Fund, radiating strength, authenticity, and cultural pride. She began with humor, confessing that it had been challenging to focus on much else besides the Emmys lately, given her recent nomination. But despite the excitement surrounding this high-profile recognition, Kali's thoughts were never far from her roots, her people, and the purpose that grounds her.

Upon learning of her Emmy nomination, she called her mother to share the news. Her mother's first question was simple yet profound: "So what are you going to wear?" She wasn't referring to glam squads or high-end designers but asking how Kali would represent her heritage and family in a moment of such visibility. This question resonated deeply with her. She knew immediately that she would wear purple, the color of the Wampum shell, cherished by her people, a color symbolizing royalty in her ancestry. She would braid her hair, wear feathers, and choose jewelry crafted by Indigenous artisans. Every detail would speak to who she was, not as a generic "Native" symbol but as a Seaconke Wampanoag woman with her own story, lineage, and culture.

Kali reminded everyone in the room that Indigenous people are not a monolith, despi-

**So what are you going to wear?" She wasn't referring to glam squads or high-end designers but asking how Kali would represent her heritage and family in a moment of such visibility. This question resonated deeply with her...**



Kali Reis delivering a powerful message of pride for Indigenous communities.

te how often they are portrayed as such. "The very word Indigenous means you come from the land of your ancestors," she said. In every corner of the globe, there are Indigenous people, each with unique stories, traditions, and ways of life that reflect their connection to their land and heritage.

In sharing space with so many leaders and allies dedicated to preserving Indigenous cultures, Kali felt a sense of kinship and pride. She recognized the collective commitment in the room—a commitment to protecting, honoring, and preserving the essence of Indigenous identity. "I have never wanted to be anyone but me," she said. Her teachings had instilled in her that when one possesses a gift, it must be shared. For her, that gift isn't merely a platform, whether it's standing at the Emmys or speaking in a room at 7 World Trade Center, but a celebration of the joy that Indigenous people bring to the world.

"Congratulations, Pawanka Fund," she concluded warmly, "for 10 years of doing this beautiful, committed, and often unappreciated work of preserving our joy." Kali's words were a reminder that true celebration lies not just in awards or recognition, but in the quiet, steadfast work of honoring one's heritage, nurturing community, and holding space for future generations.

Clemencia Herrera Nemerayema and Her Mission:

# A Space for Empowerment and the Future of Indigenous Amazonian Women



Clemencia Herrera Nemerayema at her restaurant Copoazú, where she and many Indigenous Women preserve the traditions of Amazonian cuisine in Bogotá, Colombia.

Deep in the Colombian Amazon, where the sounds of the jungle merge with the song of rivers and ancestral wisdom is lived in every step, Clemencia Herrera Nemerayema has dedicated her life to a dream as vast as the mountains surrounding her homeland: to see her community flourish with opportunities and education in harmony with their roots. As a Uitoto woman, Clemencia has not only advocated tirelessly for her people but has worked relentlessly to open doors to education, peace, and empowerment for Indigenous women in Colombia.

For over a decade, Clemencia has led the Cultural Ecological Corporation Woman Weaving Knowledge (Mutesa), an organization that, with the support of Pawanka Fund, is transforming lives through an effort that integrates education, culture, and economy. Founded in 2004, Mutesa was born from the need to create a safe and supportive space for Indigenous women, especially those who, due to violence and displacement, have moved to cities like Bogotá. For these women, Mutesa is more than an organization; it's a home away from home, a place where they can reconnect with their roots while preparing for new challenges.

Over the years, Mutesa has expanded its efforts into various areas, offering its members a range of programs that allow them to sustain themselves and preserve their traditions. With Clemencia's vision and Pawanka Fund's



Inside Copoazú, a restaurant in Bogotá that celebrates Amazonian Indigenous culture and gastronomy, featuring handcrafted decor and vibrant traditional elements.

support, projects like the Copoazu Amazonian Food Restaurant have been developed, providing economic support and promoting Amazonian Indigenous culture through gastronomy. Through initiatives like this, Clemencia and her team have also championed the commercialization of Indigenous products, an agroecological store called La Chagra, and a program dedicated to arts and crafts — each one designed to reconnect women with the ancestral values of their people.

Under Clemencia's leadership, Mutesa has also addressed an urgent need: education. In partnership with a school in Bogotá, the organization allows Indigenous women to complete their high school education, helping them reach academic goals and offering

them a path toward personal and professional growth without losing their customs and native languages.

This effort has established Clemencia as one of the most respected leaders in the Indigenous movement in Colombia. With a focus on peacebuilding and gender equity, Clemencia continues to wisely weave a project that she hopes will transcend generations. In her dream to establish the first Indigenous and intercultural university in the Amazon region, Clemencia envisions a place that not only imparts knowledge but respects and values the Indigenous worldview — a place where young women can receive an education without having to leave their communities.

Through Pawanka Fund's support, Clemencia and Mutesa continue to move forward in this transformative mission. This collaboration represents not only financial support but a shared commitment to empowering Indigenous communities and highlighting the crucial role of women as guardians of knowledge and cultural identity.

"We want to be a bridge between the past and the future, a network that unites us with our present and allows us to move forward without forgetting who we are," Clemencia says. Her story is a reminder that the strength of Indigenous women is not only a promise of change for their communities but an invaluable legacy for the world.

# Pawanka Fund: Amplifying Indigenous Voices for Biodiversity at COP16

Pawanka Fund actively participated in COP16, held in Cali, Colombia, from October 21 to November 1. This global climate conference served as a pivotal platform for Indigenous leaders, environmental advocates, and policymakers to address the climate crisis and advocate for sustainable, Indigenous-led solutions. Pawanka Fund highlighted its ongoing efforts to support and empower Indigenous communities globally, showcasing their vital role in climate resilience and biodiversity conservation. Through impactful panels, networking sessions, and collaborative discussions, Pawanka Fund underscored the significance of traditional knowledge systems and Indigenous sovereignty in shaping effective, long-lasting climate strategies.

We showcased some of the key events we participated in throughout this important gathering.

## Panel on the care and preservation of biodiversity



Participants engage in the Panel on the Care and Preservation of Biodiversity, hosted by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), featuring Indigenous leaders and experts discussing strategies for protecting the Amazon's rich biodiversity

## Ocean Pavilion Departmental Museum of Natural Sciences of Valle del Cauca



Panel discussion at the Ocean Pavilion, Departmental Museum of Natural Sciences of Valle del Cauca, featuring Indigenous leaders and experts sharing insights on ocean conservation and sustainable practices.

## Youth camp. Organized by the Network of Indigenous Youth of Latin America and the Caribbean, FILAC



Participants of the Youth Camp, organized by the Network of Indigenous Youth of Latin America and the Caribbean (RED) and FILAC, come together to celebrate youth-led initiatives for biodiversity conservation and Indigenous empowerment.

## Long - term funding for Indigenous and Community Led Conservation



Participants of the event Long-term Funding for Indigenous and Community-Led Conservation engage in discussions during a networking session in a lush, green outdoor setting. The gathering brings together diverse stakeholders to explore sustainable financial solutions for conservation efforts led by Indigenous peoples and local communities.