

Jason McSparren: Today we are introducing Alberto Saldamando, Alberto is legal activist for the Indigenous Environmental Network. Alberto Saldamando is internationally acknowledged expert on human rights, indigenous rights, he represented indigenous peoples, organizations and communities from various countries from most region of the world, for united nation human right mechanisms as well as international labour organization, the intra America commissioner human right and the organization for economic cooperation in development.

Alberto is proud of his active participation in the negotiations leading to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples. The establishment of the United Nations permanent forum on indigenous issues, and the initial mandate for the special rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous peoples. Alberto was a credited as an expert by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization into the World Conference on indigenous peoples in 2014.

Alberto begins his climate change work with the indigenous environmental network at the Copenhagen Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2009, as well as in 2012. He accepted in 2012 the position as counsel to the IEN on climate change in indigenous and human rights. In his role, he serves as the IEN head of delegation to the UN FCCC, which is the Conference of Parties and role in related forum.

He is a member of the California Bar Association, and retired member of the Arizona Bar Association. He's on the board of rainforest Action Network in is bilingual and English and Spanish. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Alberto, Salamando to the green room today. Hello Alberto.

Alberto Saldamando: Hello.

Jason McSparren: Great to have you here today. Thank you so much for being with us. Before we get started with the questions I just want to give the audience a little bit of information about the Indigenous Environmental Network.

The organization that Alberto works for was established in 1990 within the United States. IEN was formed by grassroots indigenous peoples and individuals to address environmental and economic justice issues. IEN activities include building the capacity of indigenous communities and tribal governments to develop mechanisms to protect our sacred sites; land, water, air natural resources

in the health of both our peoples in all living things and to build economic sustainable communities. So this is some really important work you're involved with their Alberto, we're really pleased to have you with us today on the green room.

Thank you very much.

Alberto Saldamando: You're welcome.

Jason McSparren: Alberto, my first question to get us started today. I think it's really fascinating that you were working at the United Nations working on the Declaration of Rights of Indigenous peoples. I'm kind of curious if you can enlighten our audience a little bit about what that work includes, and what are some of the impacts of having this sort of recognition with the United Nations.

Alberto Saldamando: Well, as you know there's political processes within the UN. You follow certain rules to achieve a consensus result that's the way it normally works. I think it was critical about the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples was departed from those rules. Initially when the negotiation started with the Commission on Human Rights to then Commission on Human Rights. We were allowed to speak only at the end and only for two minutes, and then a couple of years, we did that for a couple of years and then people decided they didn't want to do that. So we walked out.

Jason McSparren: Okay

Alberto Saldamando: And if they were going to do something about our rights they gonna have to do it without us. And so the chairman of the working group Mr. Rooter from Argentina I think

Jason McSparren: Okay

Alberto Saldamando: change the rules. And he established a working group, and under the rules it was interesting, we had some certain debates about it. There are certain rules that do not allow for participation by non-governmental parties. My parties

Jason McSparren: Okay,

Alberto Saldamando: only allows for participations for working group by parties but doesn't says you can't. There is a really significant contribution to the UN politic, because now we're using that same procedure, a working group for the local communities indigenous peoples platform within the UN FCCC.

It was also used by human rights defenders, they negotiated through a working group. Their Declaration on the Rights of human rights defenders. So it really was a change. We really did affect the process and not because the rules say you can't, I mean that was really good. I'm very proud of it. So we worked on it from 1994 to 2007 when it was adopted by the then Commission. It took a year to convince the General Assembly. There was a process, and that same year the commission became the Human Rights Council

Jason McSparren: Okay,

Alberto Saldamando: and they gave it a 30 to report directly to the General Assembly.

But the Declaration was adopted from there was still the Human Rights Commission. So it was a lot of confusion, it took a year, but we finally had it adopted by the General Assembly again breaking the rules.

There was not by consensus. It was by four states voted against it. The United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

Jason McSparren: Interesting.

Alberto Saldamando: Yes, it was

Jason McSparren: Very vocal Indigenous groups.

Alberto Saldamando: Yes you're obviously maintained our vocality.

Jason McSparren: Yep.

Alberto Saldamando: But the position was really that with regard to the right of free prior and informed consent. The state had a duty to consult, but they could go ahead and do what they wanted to anyway, without requiring consent by indigenous peoples.

Lately, both the United States, all of them have kind of withdrawn their negative vote, so now and abstain. So now it's really majority, it is a consensus document. But again, the process was interesting, was very political, and it was interesting that we, we got in because the rules don't say you can't, you know, I thought that was really cool.

Jason McSparren: Yeah, that's very innovative way of looking at the rules, and then utilize them for your benefit. Fantastic.

Alberto Saldamando: Yeah.

Jason McSparren: So what are some of the outcome of having, so again the UN makes several declaration covering all sort of topics and issues. What is the significance of this Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous peoples, what does it actually signify in the real world.

Alberto Saldamando: In the real world and in the rules world. In the UN rules world. It is merely an aspirational document. It has no legal effect, but it has a moral effect.

Jason McSparren: Yes

Alberto Saldamando: But in reality, it's become a significant mandatory document, I think that's because of our work and other fora with regard to the convention and biological diversity. With regard to the UN FCCC, with regard to other international instruments. It is the standard with regard to relationships with indigenous peoples.

Anyway, it is a mandatory document and the states have been using it as the standard with regard to relationships with indigenous peoples, and that includes a writer for you praying for him consent in many respects. There are some

reasonable words that somehow don't reach the target that we would like, but mostly it is an operative that is an operative legal standard.

Jason McSparren: Excellent okay good to know and I asked that question because I think it's useful for somebody in our audience to understand what is the significance of these declarations because again once the United Nations approves the declaration like this, it does become part of the international law, right, so it becomes a document that can be referenced and it becomes a reference and a guide to build the norms of discussion around these issues.

Alberto Saldamando: Yes.

Jason McSparren: So Alberto, I have a second question for you. I'm curious, could you please describe for us the work that you do with the indigenous environmental network. How do you protect the environment in indigenous communities through that organization?

Alberto Saldamando: Well, I'm really into counseling, and I do work like policy work, I represent the IEN at the UN FCCC. It just a ministry that make sure people make credentials. You know, telling this year especially, it was really about the COVID rules, keeping people informed as to what we needed to do in order to maintain our presence and how to get back, and that turned out to be an issue as well, how to get home.

But we also try to raise the issue of indigenous communities in resistance, at these fora we, as you noted, we started supporting indigenous communities in resistance, to exploitation, to resistance, to extraction of a great many forms, mining, minerals, whatever. I mean, the first issue I dealt with was in the in Montana. With regard to sacred mountains, it was polarized for gold.

Jason McSparren: Okay

Alberto Saldamando: It was on the reservation and it was a sacred site and yet the Department of Interior gave permission for a gold mining company Pegasus, a Canadian gold mining company Pegasus to come in and grind it to dust. That happened also in Nevada with Shoshone company.

So we've been raising those issues internationally, we got a really good result for the Shoshone people, and really from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination with regard to the Pegasus mine in Montana, that it was embarrassing to the United States and it empowered people so the issue with mechanisms of the UN Human Rights mechanisms is not that they resolve anything. I mean nobody's going to send an army to protect the rights of the Western Shoshone.

So we do have a moral authority and it is empowering to people to know that the international community agrees with them that they're just not crazy Indians but that they have a right that is being violated. In terms of local people, it is empowering with regard to the actual result.

That's another matter though, you know there's laws against murder and murder occurs every day. There's lies international laws against killing human rights defenders and indigenous environmental defenders and that happens every two weeks and in Colombia, just Colombia alone.

So, it is in also, there's a great deal of intimidation and threats in Honduras. Everyone knows about the case of Copinh and who's absolutely. I'm having a lapse of memory here but, it is, it does help.

However, it doesn't really amount to much from a status perspective unless you can really embarrass them enough. And if you can embarrass them enough to use the urgent action network, amnesty has or the organization against torture hasn't. Excellent, excellent urgent action network.

We, I did a thing with the organization against torture for pandion, who was an activist in Guatemala, and the government called him and asked him to please stop.

Jason McSparren: Okay,

Alberto Saldamando: They were getting too many letters,

Jason McSparren: That's positive.

Alberto Saldamando: So, there are ways of dealing with those issues. Sometimes they work, sometimes they don't, then we're very fortunate they do work sometimes.

Jason McSparren: I appreciate that explanation because even with one of my classes, we talked about international politics and look at the UN system. It's really important when you think about international law, the fact that there is no Supra national law, as you mentioned, no one's going to send an army to protect the Native American populations right? But the fact is you know you get the high profile, sort of platform. You have the documents that actually laid down to set norms and practices that states are meant to follow through with in the whole naming and shaming sort of aspect of international politics. With the help of NGOs organizations like yours, the indigenous environmental network etc. Can really shine light on this and really, the more public knows about these issues, the more we can move in a positive way, in terms of protecting the environment, protecting indigenous communities, etc. So I think that's really useful.

Alberto Saldamando: I always say that silence does not protect anybody from the state.

Jason McSparren: That's a great quote. Silence is not protected anyone from the state. Yeah, I really appreciate that. With that really fine quote I just give me one minute please as we break for our first commercial break.

Alberto Saldamando: Sure.

Jason McSparren: So again today on the green room we're talking to Alberto Salamando. He's a legal activist from the indigenous environmental network. And today we're talking about indigenous activism, for better climate and global environmental justice.

Ladies and gentlemen, please visit the indigenous environmental network web page after our program is ended please, but please take a look at the web pages a lot of information there about direct issues that the IEN is involved with in the United States and elsewhere around the world. So please take a look at that the webpage is ienearth.org.

And then one thing I just like people to recognize that if you go to the green Institute website. That's www.greeninstitute.ng. You can find the director at

Adenike Akinsemolu's latest book, the Principles of Green and Sustainability Science.

This book is focuses on the Principles of Green and Sustainability Science using various case studies and contributes to the literature in the environmental science field by expanding on the natural systems and scientific aspects of sustainability.

So in your free time please visit the greeninstitute.ng there you could also have a link to the green room and see our current and previous episodes.

And certainly, please take a look at the indigenous environment environmental network. ienearth.org.

Okay, so do I have a second or third, I'm on my third question for you, please.

How is IEN uniquely positioned to address climate change crisis, or at least to bring awareness to the climate change crisis.

Alberto Saldamando: Well I think we, we covered that a little bit by supporting frontline communities and supporting their struggles. Many indigenous peoples that are that are in resistance to this exploitation aren't aware that they're contributing to the struggle against global warming.

The Oregon, an oil change International, which is another website your people might be interested in visiting, did a data study, they did a study on those amount of greenhouse gases saved by indigenous resistance to pipelines and other forms of fossil fuels.

Jason McSparren: Okay.

Alberto Saldamando: Well here it is this indigenous resistance against climate change, this and they did a study, and they found, let me get down to their findings. So that's Oil Change International.

Jason McSparren: Yes.

Alberto Saldamando: So they added up the total of the metric tons of carbon equivalent to CO2 emissions that have been stopped or delayed in the past decade, due to the brave actions of indigenous Atlanta defenders, adding up the total indigenous resistance has stopped or delayed greenhouse gas pollution, equivalent to at least one quarter of annual US and Canadian emissions.

Jason McSparren: Wow

Alberto Saldamando: So, it is an interesting study and people check out to oil change International. But that really is a part of our work and so what we try to do is try to inform people that they're not alone that they're part of an international struggle. And so it's more like act locally but think globally and there is an international movement of people in resistance to exploitation, to extraction. India for example, has several there, I'm in touch with several large NGOs that really are struggle against coal mining. For example India has these coal mines and communities are complaining about the coal mine is affecting their means of subsistence, it's affecting their right to food, it's affecting their food sovereignty, it drives away the animals, it kills the fish

Jason McSparren: Right

Alberto Saldamando: And then that's happening throughout Africa. Africa has a real problem with coal mining particularly financed by China, even though they say that they're not going to be financing Coal anymore in Africa, they are.

Jason McSparren: Right

Alberto Saldamando: They need to finance it

Jason McSparren: Sure

Alberto Saldamando: Banks do anyway. So, we do is try to build that movement and so now globally we're really trying to start out to join an international movement against climate change and point out that these people by opposing coal mining are in fact contributing to the struggle against climate change. We've got people that we've been working with in Africa, in Nigeria particularly and a pipeline there. Mr Nimo, I think I forget the name of the organization but he, he was at the COP and there was in fact the tribunal about climate change and indigenous peoples at the COP, Tom participated in.

I think it was sponsored by partially by the exhibitor group. But that really came about as a result of a global movement. So we had people there and that from Africa, from Asia. We have people right now, we're working with Nepal. And to the degree that we can be, I mean that's it's problematic but there are activists they're using technology to get the word out, even though, in order to escape detection there is a one good thing about the social media and about the internet, that these tools like signal have been developed, where you can communicate with each other and avoid the state. So, we were working there with, in fact I was talking to this guy from Arizona about China. There are activists in China effectively working against the coal mining and other environmental justice issues within China.

And so we're trying to reach out to them leave the door open. It's going to take a little while I think to really make good contact with those people.

Jason McSparren: Sure.

Alberto Saldamando: But the bottom line is, no one can escape the consequences of climate change, Russia cannot escape the consequences of flooding, of landslides and fire, they've had a civil fires. Whether or not the state allows it, people really see what's going on. They really want change and so what we're trying to do is up to those voices, try to get them to join a global network, so that we can affect more effectively struggle against climate change. It because people aren't stupid. New York City for example if the subways got flooded. It took a five \$5 billion to fix it well.

Jason McSparren: Right.

Alberto Saldamando: But people in New York City now are a lot more conscious about climate change. I mean, Chicago's the same way throughout the Midwest they've had these torrential rains and then all of a sudden big snowstorms. It's in the West obviously in California we have these tremendous forest fires that really have destroyed the radio. Australia had forest fires as well that destroyed not only a million species, I believe it was destroyed by the forest fires in Australia,

Jason McSparren: So awful.

Alberto Saldamando: It is awful but we can't escape those consequences and no matter how the state tries to ignore it. No matter how they how much they deny it. The people are going to really be important than making sure that the state does the right thing.

Jason McSparren: I agree and again it's really encouraging to hear us talk about the international network of NGOs and individuals that you're talking to, I appreciate the way that you talk about not necessarily circumventing the state but just operating without connection to the state because as we see again at the COP26 while there's plenty of rhetoric from leading states about making the changes in the necessity for these changes. The actual implementation of these policies seems to be pretty sparse. So unfortunately.

Alberto Saldamando: That's true. And they actually with regard to this press COP, even the commitments, they may be totally inadequate. So, in fact, the Paris Agreement is the problem and not the solution.

Jason McSparren: If you wouldn't mind can I please just read a couple of paragraphs from your website in about the Glasgow and then have you kind of tell us a little bit more about your observations.

Alberto Saldamando: Sure,

Jason McSparren: So right from the website it talks about. It says from Glasgow, Scotland after 30 years of the United Nations FCCC negotiations. The COP26 in Glasgow delivers a disastrous outcome overflowing into the weekend, this was written last week, the negotiations ended with the compilation of articles six of the Paris Agreement, governments will exit Glasgow with no chance of keeping the global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. There is no set process in changes made to phase out of unabated Coal, to the phased down of unabated Coal, without buying from the parties involved.

And then there's another paragraph, just very briefly, Tom B. K. go to the executive director of the indigenous environmental network stated in quotes. The outcome of the COP 26 locks us into another decade of fault solutions,

colonialism and unbridled violence against Mother Earth, full stop. The expansion of carbon markets, techno fixes and financial programs that allow historical polluters to ramp up global fossil fuel production will only intensify the climate emergency. This consequence of the COP 26 is dire, and will impact the survival of indigenous peoples in local communities across the planet. While doing little to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions at source, many countries around the world do not have time. End of quote.

That's a pretty strong statement, in its really negative and I think again with the naming and shaming without actually identifying any particular states. I think the indictment is on the international community writ large. So I was just wondering if again, I know you've already been kind of talking about this a little bit, but if you could just kind of elaborate a little bit more on the outcomes from Glasgow, as you see it.

Alberto Saldamando: Well I mean you pointed out one thing that there was consensus on that was allowing India, and they were carrying water for Russia and others but allowing India to change the language from phase out coal to phase down coal.

Jason McSparren: Right.

Alberto Saldamando: They also, Secretary Kerry or whatever his title is agreed with that.

He was part of that deal

Jason McSparren: John Kerry from the United States is that who you talking about?

Alberto Saldamando: Yes, John Kerry is the representative of the United States represented to there. He also agreed to, instead of a zero outcome interview order to preserve what is necessary to preserve the 1.5. He agreed to net zero, which is really net is implies you apply offsets before, as part of your national determined contributions or at least your promises to how much, how you're going to reduce greenhouse gases. So he said let's do a net zero and he agreed with that as well.

And then the agreement with China talked about this techno fixes and also net zero as a solution.

The fact is, the problem is emissions and there's been all kinds of studies from the International Panel on Climate Change, the International Energy Commission. They've all said that the problem is emissions, and that we need a net reduction of emissions in order to have an effective struggle against climate change, the promises that states have made in terms of their reductions of emissions with regard to their national determined contributions about, even if they came through with those promises would say haven't, we're still looking at three or three to four degrees centigrade by the mid-century, which is like seven or eight degrees Fahrenheit. I'm not sure what how it transposes but

Jason McSparren: Yeah it is about seven or eight degrees Fahrenheit, yes I guess so

Alberto Saldamando: So, what was actually the result of parents, I mean, the parents applying fast solutions. In fact, Article six itself is a fast solution by allowing markets and carbon credits and offsets to be applied against nationally determined contributions.

And that really is a contradiction, I mean if emissions are to be reduced they have to be reduced at source, and you can't pretend that your offsets are actually reduction of emissions, they are not, they do not reduce emissions so that really was the, I think the sad part about the COP. It did not do anything really to increase ambition to reduce emissions by the state parties. And that really is the bottom line. Now they did a lot of other things, they also were in fact someone detrimental. But that really is the bottom line that you have to reduce emissions if you want to effectively battle against climate change and they didn't do that. They took steps that really actually increase emissions by allowing business as usual with the use of offsets. There's one thing that really was very surprising to me. In an article six four, the article six is the markets not market and on market solutions and article six four in under the Kyoto Protocol. There was a clean development mechanism established that would that for a state or a business people, anybody could buy credits. Let's say you could buy, you could invest X amount of dollars in some so called mitigation project, like nuclear and dams, yet which I have nothing to do with a reduction of emissions, and then take credit for it and apply those credits to your limitations. So, I mean, the European trading

system is a prime example of the failure of that, well, but you still have all these cheap credits that all these polluters and all these states have in their hand and they're still generating under the clean development mechanism because the Kyoto Protocol does not lapse 2020.

Jason McSparren: Okay,

Alberto Saldamando: So, but this COP did was said, okay, you can extend those past 2020.

Those cheap credit, you can use past 2020. Well what's up with that. I mean, it's already they've already got worthless credits, until the another these worthless credits are going to be diluting whenever credits are attainable under the sustainable development mechanism.

Jason McSparren: Right,

Alberto Saldamando: So, that really is, I think, really damaging.

Also, the other one is 6.2. The cooperative approaches red plus in the reduction in emissions from deforestation, degradation of forest.

Jason McSparren: Yes,

Alberto Saldamando: It is a land grab. It's been shown to be a land grab. Like the United States is talking about allowing drilling on private lands, I mean they were, even though they say they don't, they're doing it, that the pipelines are allowing the mind three line seven pipelines, the Enbridge pipelines. Continue operation, when they could just shut them out they have the authority to the federal government has the authority to shut them out.

Jason McSparren: Right.

Alberto Saldamando: But, all of these states are in fact using reds. This is kind of important the states are not disincentive to observe the rights of indigenous peoples. States are now declaring conservation areas and state parks, so they keep title to the land, it's their land. It's not Indigenous People's land

Jason McSparren: Right

Alberto Saldamando: So they talk about co-managing with the state entity that can do whatever they want.

Jason McSparren: Right,

Alberto Saldamando: So, that's a lot, so it's a land grab. In fact, if they respect the rights of indigenous peoples they would recognize what the IPCC land report said. The secure land tenure for indigenous peoples, was a way to combat climate change and that is, let them as you noted earlier, maintains a role the stewards of the land, and not just as cohabitate so that's part of the really damaging things that came out of this COP.

Jason McSparren: Really interesting, really appreciate your insight on that. Yes, you mentioned the Enbridge line 3 San pipeline out of Minnesota, and is that's been ongoing for some time, the battle between the indigenous peoples in the corporations there. Is it just that the basic idea that the state just sides with corporations, because that's kind of the ideology of the United States that we have to privilege the economy over the land or is it there some other angle there.

Alberto: It's very difficult to assess their motivation. What we do know is that the state of Minnesota has gotten a lot and supportive the pipelines.

Jason McSparren: Okay,

Alberto Saldamando: They were using water that was really intended for 13 million people in the Mississippi headwaters watershed. They were using it to help Enbridge lay pipe, because it takes water to lay the pipe and to maintain it.

Jason McSparren: Sure.

Alberto Saldamando: And so now these people along that coastway along the headwaters are getting polluted water, and the state doesn't seem to care. They're

more in favor of the corporation, they are of their own people in this non indigenous as well as indigenous peoples

Jason McSparren: Right

Alberto Saldamando: So it really is a total lack of responsibility, total lack of their duty really as a state to protect your people from this kind of pollution.

Jason McSparren: Certainly. Well thank you very much for those insights, Alberto one moment I'm going to take another quick commercial break and then when we come back, We're going to start to take questions from our audience. So those of you out there who have something to add please put your questions, either in our chat or raise your hand and we'll do our best to call on you. Again, I'd also like to request that people in the audience. Please keep your microphones muted, unless you are asking the question. Thanks very much, Alberto be right with you after a commercial break.

Okay, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for joining the green room today. We're here today with Alberto Salamando, who is a lawyer working with the indigenous environmental network, please visit their webpage at ienearth.org. I'd also like to let you know that at the Green Institute, greeninstitute.ng, you can take interesting courses that help to promote environmental sustainability and stewardship, human stewardship of the environment. So please take a look at our courses. They are presented by renowned sustainability leaders and they are very inexpensive yet very educational. Please take a look.

Additionally, please follow the green room at the green HQ on our social media platforms, on Instagram, on Facebook, and our website is www.greeninstitute.ng. And today, again, we are in the green room talking about Environmental Justice: Indigenous Activism for Better Climate and Global Environmental Justice with Alberto Salamando, the legal activists from the Indigenous Environmental Network.

And now we'd like to take a few questions from our audience.

Do we have anyone with their hands up. Any questions. Sometimes it takes a moment for the audience to get warmed up we've got a pretty sizable audience here today so I'm expecting to get a question or two. If not, then you and I will just continue with our conversation.

Alberto Saldamando: Fine.

Jason McSparren: Any thoughts out there as I scroll through looking for questions. Any questions in the immediate audience here in the classroom. Not quite yet. Okay, very good.

All right, so as people are thinking, just give me a second here I'm going to pull up one more question for you.

Oh, I was taking a look at the website I noticed that you have a program called, it takes roots. I was wondering if you could explain to us what it takes roots delegation is about, and its role in attending the UN FCCC COP 26. And again, I believe that you probably started to tell us a little bit about this without actually identifying it takes roots. So if you wouldn't mind just giving us some background information on that, please.

Alberto Saldamando: Well, it takes roots is alliance of alliances. 'It takes roots' is composed of which is line of gay and transgender people that are working on climate justice. There's a Climate Justice Alliance, that is another organization, or an alliance that has membership, that practices, that is promoting climate justice was the same manner that we are in terms of supporting grassroots communities, GGJ and the fourth is 'Rights to the City', which is primarily a black organization and supportive worker rights.

Also, they're very much interested in, just transition and the rights of workers as we transition from petroleum or fossil fuel economy to a non-fossil fuel economy. So it's mostly alliances that work at the grassroots level to support their communities, to promote their sustainability and to look for a just transition away from fossil fuels and into a non-fossil fuel economies.

Jason McSparren: Okay, fantastic well that's good to know. It is really good to know that the indigenous environmental network has such long tentacles a lot of different connections as you were saying, not only do they operate those organizations operate here in the US or the international organizations as well.

Alberto Saldamando: I mean I didn't get that

Jason McSparren: The partner organizations are they, operating in the United States are they, international as well.

Alberto Saldamando: They're US,

Jason McSparren: US based,

Alberto Saldamando: US based Yeah.

Jason McSparren: Okay, fantastic.

So they just take a look here to see if there any questions. Yes, I do. We have a question from Judy Varga Tough. And she's asking, she says how do settlers Canadians engage respectfully with indigenous stakeholders. And then she says For example, in a pan Canadian initiative, the focus on sustainability is committed to bringing in indigenous expertise and perspectives meaningfully. So I think what she's asking is, how do settlers Canadians engage respectfully with indigenous stakeholders, and how might indigenous stakeholders, better inform people in the community.

Alberto Saldamando: Well, I don't want to be rude. Indigenous peoples are not stakeholders, they are rights holders.

Jason McSparren: Right holder

Alberto Saldamando: They have rights, and respectful relationship with indigenous peoples is a recognition that they have rights primarily to their land.

Jason McSparren: Yes

Alberto Saldamando: But and that brings in the land is connected to everything, to language, culture, world views, its sustainability and so that that are respectful relationship would be a recognition of that. I'm not sure what the pan Canadian initiative is but if it's intended to focus on or is committed to bringing in indigenous expertise and perspectives. It should have done that already. And

perhaps you should focus on doing that with regard to keeping in mind the rights of indigenous peoples.

So, I mean that would be my quick response to that.

Jason McSparren: Okay, great. So what are some of the greatest challenges that IEN is facing in the post COP 26 era, even though the era is just beginning just a few days ago with what's on the agenda for IEN going forward.

Alberto Saldamando: Well, we talked about the movement, we talked about the movement that where we really started in 1992.

Jason McSparren: Right,

Alberto Saldamando: or 1990s supporting and raising the voices of indigenous peoples and others really now in resistance to a carbon economy to carbon colonialism and promoting their sustainability and we just continuing to do that. We also have other programs that you may be aware of in visiting the website. We have a keep it in the ground campaign that focuses on really actions against banks. We know that the oil companies are not going to give up. They're just not gonna, I mean they're there, they're going to exploit oil to the end of time until it's all gone, and then they might give it up after it's all gone.

Jason McSparren: Right.

Alberto Saldamando: But then the rest of the world is all gone too. What we were doing is focusing on their enablers. We're focusing on the banks that finance them. And we have these divestment campaigns like keep it in the ground that calls for people. I think in demonstrations, we have a newspaper effect newspapers are writing about it now. We're now mainstream, we used to be kind of like folkloric, but we haven't changed. But now we're mainstream and people are writing about us and writing about these divestment campaigns. The Financial Times in London wrote a full page ad on keeping it in the ground.

Jason McSparren: Right.

Alberto Saldamando: So, going after the enablers that are really causing climate change. We have a divestment campaign in Enbridge that really worked. I think the Canadian government had to buy the pipeline. Yeah, I don't think the Enbridge owns the pipelines any longer.

Jason McSparren: That's good news.

Alberto Saldamando: Well I'm somebody was it in the bank to break the Royal Bank of Canada now, is it so now we turn our attention to the Royal Bank of Canada, you know, we do I've also on the Rainforest Action Network board of directors and I also write for them.

Jason McSparren: Okay

Alberto Saldamando: and I do an essay. And it's really directed against the banks, and we're trying to get them to see that even though their portfolio is so large that pipelines and oil projects are really a very small portion of your portfolio they could focus on, they could focus away. Right now, without damaging anything they just, they have trillions and trillions of dollars you know. But, they haven't done so at least the major banks, we still have dealing with Goldman Sachs, with Chase and I think Wells Fargo are still financing carbon projects. So we go after them, we go after the board of directors, we try to tell people you don't have to invest and I would tell your students to or whoever's watching. You don't have to really invest your money to work against you.

Jason McSparren: There you go.

Alberto Saldamando: So you can just divest, you can enter asking not only individuals to put their money in a credit union, invest in the community, sustainability of the community, in that invest in carbon and carbon economies. And that's been relatively successful. We also talking to retirement funds, and in fact in San Francisco we're taking to the city to divest from their carbon, the carbon investments, and they're doing so gradually over time which is really not what we had in mind but it's better than nothing.

But that's what we're doing, we're going after the fetal and those companies that are snack companies that are heavily invested in Palm oil and in soya and ask them to find out tremendous healthy alternative that do not require massive plantations and in the poisoning of the chemical intensive agriculture, that they normally not use to produce a potato chips and whatever else they're doing. And I think McDonald's has already started some form of that.

Jason McSparren: Good news

Alberto Saldamando: And we're also really focusing now on the Amazon, and the deforestation. And there are a number of companies, there are, I mean, essentially what we do at random is tell us who your oppressor is and will tell you who's financing them.

Jason McSparren: Okay,

Alberto Saldamando: So that's what we do.

Jason McSparren: Okay, I like that.

Alberto Saldamando: But that's what we do and it really is, again, it's embarrassment. It's a shaming, but it's a good way to shame and to really tell people, tell your friends don't invest your money in something is working against your interest. Find a credit union or other form of banking that can and does not in fact invest in in climate change. That's it.

Jason McSparren: I appreciate that, that's really a good way of going. Finishing up this conversation as we were rounding off with our last 10 minutes. Yeah, I like that statement. Tell us who is oppressing you and we'll go talk with them and try and change the investment portfolio. That makes a lot of sense again in academia that's been a discussion for quite a while with student activists at several different universities trying to get the their endowments to divest from hydrocarbon and fossil fuel programs, in investment as well.

So yeah, I think that's really important, especially in the wake of COP26 ending last week, and then just this week, the United States, opening up I think it is 80 million acres of land to two new drilling leases.

So again a couple of my students brought that up today in an earlier discussion and talking about their disappointment in the administration for allowing that to happen.

But as we see the administration attempted to block those concessions to be opened, yet because they were already in the pipeline, the court decided against the administration, and now those leases are available for oil and natural gas companies to exploit, which is unfortunate. But one of the things I was thinking about and what I wonder about is, it's going to take time, even if they are and I'm curious what you think about this. It's going to take a little bit of time for any of those new leases to actually ramp up, matter of a few years you know in order to build the equipment, the oil dices, etc.

Could it be that there is enough? Do you see enough momentum with the transition to green and renewable technologies to eventually kind of cut those new oil at least off at the past, do you think that there's enough momentum in for the green economy, as opposed to the hydrocarbon economy right now, or is it still kind of a neck and neck sort of race

Alberto Saldamando: No, well that's the whole, I think it's the by the administration is true to its word and cuts off societies that they're just giving away. These leases and then So if they just stop subsidizing petroleum, and an oil and fossil fuels and really I think the market is headed toward a non, I mean it's a loser, you know, oil is a loser, fossil fuels are a loser in the long run. This investment in oil is barely begun. So the hope is as you're right it doesn't necessarily have to work out but the hope is that the market itself will make that correction.

Jason McSparren: Sure,

Alberto Saldamando: I mean you'd be a damn fool to invest in fossil fuels at this point in time, I mean it's not in the future, it's just not part of the future.

Jason McSparren: No, it just can't be that we just don't have the room for it. No, we don't. And in closing, Alberto would you just tell our audience a little bit, how might people from the audience who may be interested in contributing in assisting IEN mission, how might somebody get involved.

Alberto Saldamando: Well, I think. Find out who you're, you know there's groups all over the country and in large cities and small that are taking actions against the banks that are financing, join a group. Go out there and use your voice, divest, but really is the voice, join groups make the movement larger, make the movement more vocal. I think that the bigger the movement we have in terms of objecting to a fossil fuel economy, the better off we all are.

There may be a labor union that I think the nurses have been very vocal in terms of support for no fossil fuels. There are green, what is it called, Anyways, there's federal legislation pending too with regard to climate change,

Jason McSparren: Green New Deal

Alberto Saldamando: The green new deal that's it.

Jason McSparren: Yeah,

Alberto Saldamando: So if you have an interest in that kind of politics, contact your representative, find out where he or she is, it in the gutter there on the right track and join up with them and but really raise your voice and join your voice to other voices. And that'll help us all.

Jason McSparren: We really appreciate it Alberto. Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank you for joining us today on the green room, want to also thank with a very big round of applause. If you don't mind clapping virtually for Alberto Saldamando, who is an activist, legal activist for the Indigenous Environmental Network. In our discussion today was titled indigenous activism, for better climate in global environmental justice. Thank you very much for joining us today. We're really pleased to have you today thank you so much for your time. Best of luck with your work, and we hope to have you again on the green room in the future.

Alberto Saldamando: Thank you very much. It was a pleasure been with you. Thank you.

Jason McSparren: Fantastic best wishes to you and everyone with your work. Thanks so much and goodbye.

Alberto Saldamando: Goodbye.

Jason McSparren: Goodbye. Ladies and gentlemen, please, keep your eye on the Green Institute website. That's www.greeninstitute.ng for future green room events and episodes, also take a look at the recent videos from the World Environment Day conference in the world sustainability conference that was just broadcast a couple of weeks ago, can also be found on our website.

Thank you very much for joining us today. Please again thank you very much, Alberto Sadomando, and we hope to see you again in the future. Best wishes.

Alberto Saldamando: Thank you.