



Article 8 (j): Traditional Knowledge, Innovations & Practices

Crucial to Conservation and Sustainable use of Biodiversity

Traditional knowledge refers to the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities around the world. Developed from experience gained over the centuries and adapted to the local culture and environment, traditional knowledge is transmitted orally from generation to generation. Collectively owned, traditional knowledge takes the form of stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, customary laws, local language, and animal husbandry and agricultural practices, including the development of plant species and animal breeds.

Traditional knowledge is of a practical nature, particularly in such fields as agriculture, fisheries, health, horticulture, animal husbandry, forestry and environmental management in general. Traditional knowledge is often associated with and embedded in traditional/local languages. There is a great deal of concern by the international community that humanity is losing traditional knowledge, language diversity, cultural diversity and biological diversity and studies show that all these forms of diversity seem mutually reinforcing and dependant. Why is that important? Human survival depends on humanities resilience and resilience is strengthened by diversity.

Why it is important:

- Valuable not only to those who depend on it in their daily lives, but also to modern industry and agriculture. Many widely-used products, such as plant-based medicines, health products and cosmetics, are derived from traditional knowledge. Other valuable products based on traditional knowledge include agricultural and non-wood forest products as well as handicraft.
- Can make a significant contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Research has proven that indigenous and local communities living on their traditional territories can increase the local biological diversity and genetic diversity through their traditional practices.
- Can make a significant contribution to sustainable development. Most indigenous and local communities are situated in areas where the vast majority of the world's genetic resources are found, and many of them have cultivated and used biological diversity in a sustainable way for thousands of years.
- The skills and techniques used by indigenous and local communities provide valuable information to the global community and a useful model for biodiversity policies. Furthermore, as on-site communities with extensive knowledge of local environments, indigenous and local communities are most directly involved with *in-situ* conservation and sustainable use.

What the CBD is doing:

The international community recognizes the close and traditional dependence of many indigenous and local communities on biological resources. There is also broad recognition of the contribution that traditional knowledge can make to both the conservation and the sustainable use of biological diversity, two fundamental objectives of the Convention. The Conference of the Parties has established a working group specifically to address the implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions of the Convention. Open to all Parties, indigenous and local communities' representatives play a full and active role in its



work. Traditional knowledge is considered a "cross-cutting" issue that affects many aspects of biological diversity, so it will continue to be addressed by the COP and by other working groups as well.

For more information:

Article 8(j): Traditional Knowledge, Innovations and Practices: www.cbd.int/traditional

COP decisions: www.cbd.int/traditional/decisions.shtml

Documents: www.cbd.int/cop9/doc

Pachamama Newsletter: www.cbd.int/traditional/



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