



Biodiversity: An Integral Part of Our Response to Climate Change

Editorial

By Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity



West African boy holding turtles (Photo from babasteve/www.flickr.com)

developing world, people rely more closely on nature for their immediate needs of food, shelter and medicine and hence have a more intimate awareness of what biodiversity loss will mean for their daily lives. Yet while climate change has managed to capture broad attention in both the developed and the developing worlds, biodiversity loss sadly has not.

Ultimately, hand in hand with rising global temperatures and extreme weather events life on Earth is disappearing fast and will continue to do so unless urgent action is taken.

Last summer, the Arctic summer ice shrank to its smallest on record, eclipsing the previous 2005 record by more than 20 per cent according to U.S. satellite data dating back 30 years.

There are now 41,415 species on the IUCN Red List. Some 16,306 of them are threatened with extinction, up from 16,118 last year. In our lifetime, the total number of extinct species has reached 785, with a further 65 only found in captivity or in cultivation. One in four mammals, one in eight birds, one third of all amphibians and 70 per cent of the world's assessed plants on the 2007 IUCN Red List are in jeopardy.

We are living through the sixth crisis of the extinction of living species in the history of our planet, with the rate of extinction being accelerated by 100 times or more. Scientists are warning of a looming biodiversity extinction crisis, one that will rival or exceed the five historic mass extinctions that occurred millions of years ago. Unlike these past extinctions, which were variously the

The loss of biological diversity and climate change are intrinsically linked. Since becoming Executive Secretary I have spent countless hours pondering why biodiversity loss is not as well known to the general public as the issue of climate change, and what we need to do to raise the profile of biodiversity to ensure that our mission to slow the rate of extinctions is successful.

It is quite true to say that the general public in the developed world do not have a detailed knowledge of what biodiversity is and how it affects our daily lives. Surveys in Australia and Japan have indicated that less than 10 per cent of the public have any real knowledge of the impact biodiversity loss has on human society. However, in the

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result of catastrophic climate change, extra-terrestrial collisions, atmospheric poisoning, and hyperactive volcanism, the current extinction event is one of our own making, fuelled mainly by habitat destruction (and in particular land scale conversion of habitat to agricultural lands – including monocropping and extractive over-exploitation of certain species. Looking solely at species loss resulting from tropical deforestation, some researchers have forecast extinction rates as high as 75 per cent.

Faced with this bleak future, it cannot be business as usual. Indigenous and local communities come to us with their traditional knowledge and urge humanity to

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“Indigenous and local communities are not passive victims of climate change but valuable partners in the global efforts to address climate change”

remember what we have forgotten – that we are all interconnected and what we do to one another and to Mother Earth, we in fact do to ourselves. We have to rediscover our roots and respect Mother Earth – or Pachamama, as the peoples of the Andes call her.

Recently, in finalizing work on the composite report, the Secretariat also completed some initial research on indigenous and local communities highly vulnerable to climate change. The results are disturbing. Indigenous and local communities, often among the world’s most marginalized and impoverished peoples, will bear the brunt of the catastrophe of climate change. Already indigenous and local communities, particularly in regions and situations such as the Arctic, small islands and high altitudes, low-lying lands and river deltas, semi-humid and arid lands, and especially pastoralists and semi-nomadic peoples, are experiencing accelerated climate change and should thus be considered highly vulnerable.

However, I want to emphasize that indigenous and local communities are not simply the passive victims of climate change but valuable partners in the global efforts to address climate change. Indigenous and local communities are already using their traditional knowledge to address and adapt to climate change at the local level. They have a great deal to contribute in designing and implementing solutions to address biodiversity loss, including that caused by climate change.

If we are to achieve the 2010 Biodiversity Target, to significantly reduce the loss of biodiversity, in light of the climate change crises, we must fully recognize and value indigenous and local communities as custodians of the Earth’s biodiversity. The active involvement of indigenous and local communities around the world is essential for achieving this ambitious target. As diversity contains the potential for adaptation, there must be a global effort to work together, drawing on the unique knowledge of all the peoples of the world, with a special appreciation for the knowledge of indigenous peoples.

Our lives are inextricably linked with biodiversity and ultimately its protection is essential for our very survival. As the world begins to respond to the current crisis of biodiversity loss, hand in hand with the human-induced catastrophe of climate change, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has a special role to play as a centre of excellence in international networking, information exchange and as an active and objective facilitator on inter-governmental decision-making processes and will be essential in assisting in the design and implementation of effective conservation strategies in partnership with Parties, Governments and indigenous and local communities – for the benefit of both peoples and nature.

Many times you have heard me say that the Convention is about saving life on Earth – and I mean it. Should we not succeed, life as we know it will perish. If climate change is not adequately addressed – we will inherit not only a warmer world but an empty world, devoid of colour, life and diversity, and one unable to support human civilization and future generations.

The work being carried out in the next two year period provides an opportunity for the World’s indigenous and local communities to help shape international commitments that will emerge, not just in the immediate future but in the years ahead - after the 2010 target.

To this end, I want to encourage a partnership between the Convention and indigenous and local communities to celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity (2010) and to highlight their contributions to maintaining biodiversity and providing solutions to the climate change crises.

We must join hands and energies to ensure that the loss of biological diversity does not become a poor cousin to the issue of climate change. □

International Regime on Access and Benefit-Sharing - Thoughts and Reflections from the Grassroots

by G. Chibememe



For me, there is only one freedom which is intrinsic, internally driven and which can be controlled by

the “I” or the “self” with limited external interference. This is the freedom of thought. To this end I have some thoughts about the International Regime on Access and Benefit Sharing (IRABS) which I will share in this article knowing quite well that in my Shona culture; ‘shoko harivhiki’ meaning that one can not protect themselves from a spoken word or advice. It gets to their ears whether they like it or not. What they will use it for is not anyone’s business as long as access to information has been granted to the recipient or audience. A lot of critical issues surround the International Regime on Access and Benefit Sharing (IRABS) and thus this short article is an attempt to reflect on some of the issues and is hence not an exhaustive list.

Legally Binding or Non-Binding

Although the intention of the Parties emerging from the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 8) is to consider the adoption of the international regime by 2010, it is not clear at this stage of the negotiations what form an international regime may take, that is whether it may be a single legally binding instrument (such as a protocol) or several instruments including guidelines and annexes (Young 2004). It is also unclear as to what extent it will recognise and protect the rights of Indigenous and Local Communities (ILCs) to genetic resources and traditional knowledge. This lack of clarity adds to the reservations felt by indigenous and local community organisations participating in the



Heikinpäivä 2007 Parade - drum carried by a man dressed as a Saami Shaman. (Photo courtesy of PaulOlson/www.flickr.com)

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) process regarding what elements to support (i.e. legally binding or non-binding).

However, I believe that a legally binding regime which considers enforcement is more appropriate. In such a regime, ILCs should have the right to benefit from the use of their resources and their Traditional Knowledge (TK) within the context of a legally binding legislative system. Such a regime would enable Parties to ensure compliance

terms a deliberate attempt to weaken and dilute the IRABS's strength, thereby rendering it unclear, imprecise and ineffective for implementation. The regime that truly 'regulates' gives it the much needed teeth to be effective. This would set a mandatory tone and thus the regime would have mandatory laws, which guide people on what to do and what not to do (i.e. regulative and prohibitory laws). However, voluntary elements of law could be part of the regime for example contracts, which are entered into voluntarily. A legally binding instrument needs to be clear, precise and well coordinated with administrative structures from local, national to global scale to ensure effective implementation.

The advantage of a legally binding regime is that it imposes a legal duty on the Parties to abide by the provisions of the instrument, unlike a non-binding or voluntary instrument whose force and effect is dependant upon the good will of its signatories. Furthermore, it may be a good idea

Guidelines whose ideas were designed as a starting point for national framework development processes and ABS negotiations, rather than as 'tried-and-true' recipes for implementation (Young 2004). There is therefore no need to reinvent the wheel considering that negotiations are complex, time consuming and costly (NGLS 2007).

Costs of an International Regime on ABS

When people discuss ABS they rush to talk about benefits without considering the costs. This is precisely where we miss the link as benefits should go with costs. It is vital to understand that wherever ABS transactions are taking place it is mainly the ILCs who incur costs. These include loss of TK, biological and genetic resources and land and in some cases cultural erosion and social displacement. Failure to properly and clearly address and define ILCs stake in the ABS equation is tantamount to creating an unjust social system that favours the rich and more powerful. A case in point is the protected area system and its fortress conservation approach in which ILCs are

“Every delegate participating in the CBD processes leading to the negotiation and development of the IR on ABS should be aware that they have a social responsibility not just to today’s generation but to future generations”

and would be in their own national interest. In the case of non compliance to such an IRABS, there should be a fair and transparent redress system and mechanism. It should include strict penalties, such as the revocation of patents (African ILC Position Paper 2008). The instrument (s) may be in the form of a certificate of origin/source or a certificate of compliance to national legislation which should be legally binding with provision(s) identifying ILCs as beneficiaries. A certificate of national compliance should apply both to prior informed consent (PIC) and mutually agreed terms (MAT) not just to the national level and between Parties but to the sub-national level to ensure that PIC and MAT are required where genetic resources and traditional knowledge of indigenous and local communities are accessed

To go a bit deeper, unlike some people who argue that phrases such as 'endeavour to regulate...' and 'subject to available resources...' are elements of a legally binding international instrument (Young 2004), I tend to disagree. I consider the use of such

to consider incorporating second generation and third generation rights (i.e. right to development, environmental rights) into the regime to ensure justice for affected and aggrieved local and indigenous communities in the event of a violation of their rights, particularly by non-Parties and third parties. The African regional ILCs believe that a fair and transparent redress system and mechanism should be part to the regime and it should include strict penalties, like revocation of patents (African ILC Position Paper 2008). However, the central disadvantage of a legally binding regime is that of enforcement as there may not be effective means of ensuring compliance on the part of the signatories because enforcement might be very costly for developing countries. Therefore an enforcement mechanism must be cost efficient.

Opting for a nonbinding IR on ABS will be merely duplicating the Bonn

denied access to local resources and do not derive benefits from wildlife protected areas. Benefits go to tourists (mostly foreigners) who visit these areas and who pay the government for the services rendered. Costs to ILCs also include crop damage, loss of livestock to predators, loss of land and waters on a day to day basis (Chibememe 2006). The regime therefore should have mechanisms to capture this



Kikuyu woman in Kenya (Photo from javic/www.flickr.com)

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important but highly neglected aspect. In fact the benefit sharing equation must include the costs otherwise the outcomes, in terms of benefits would be unclear.

Postponement of the Issue to a High Level or Subordinating the Regime to Other International Instruments

There is a propensity among some stakeholders to refer certain issues, of a proposed the regime, such as the protection of traditional knowledge (TK) to other entities such as WIPO or TRIPs Council of the World Trade Organization (WTO), etc. thus rendering a full and effective discus-

sion under the Convention impossible. Such positions have developed when facing critical issues such as TK, products and derivatives. By referring these crucial issues to other international instruments the Convention itself is undermined and the issues are in danger of being transferred a higher level beyond the Convention. This has a lot of advantages to those Parties and Governments who are against a full discussion of these issues under the Convention and may result in the possible exclusion of critical aspects of an IR.

different" (Ferry 1995) meaning that the knowledge of marginalised groups such as women and indigenous and local communities should be respected in this process. Indeed, indigenous and local communities must effectively participate with the aim of ensuring that both the process and the end product(s) fully respect their rights. There should be a paradigm shift in which we conduct our business in the August House. Let us be recorded in history as men and women who despite being presented with a rare opportunity to help change the world for the benefit of both humanity and biodiversity, have sacrificed the integrity of biodiversity and the lives of indigenous and local communities,

"Indigenous and local communities should have the right to benefit from the use of our resources and their traditional knowledge within the context of a legally binding legislative system"

in the quest for commercial and economic gain. We are all on a steep learning curve and hence we need to humbly accept our deficiencies and treat the negotiation and elaboration of an IR as a journey where the destination must be fair and just for all. □

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Conclusion

Every delegate participating in the CBD processes leading to the negotiation and development of the IR on ABS should be aware that they have a social responsibility not just to today's generation but to future generations. In the process of the negotiations, tolerance and respect among participants is necessary to ensure the "others" (the marginalised) can add "their voices" to the process. All stakeholders should embrace the ideology of the "right to be



(Photo from wollombi/www.flickr.com)

An Indigenous Knowledge Forum on Climate Change Impacts by Douglas Nakashima

Indigenous peoples have repeatedly voiced concern about their exclusion from ongoing climate change debates, most recently during the protests on 7 December 2007 at the United Nations conference in Bali.1 This predicament is alarming given that many rural and indigenous communities are finding themselves on the frontlines of climate change, suffering early impacts due to the particular vulnerability of their territories and their reliance upon resource-based livelihoods.

In response to this outcry, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in partnership with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (SPFII) and the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), will soon launch a grassroots climate change forum. This Internet forum will focus on the knowledge and experiences of indigenous communities and peoples living in small islands, the Arctic and other vulnerable environments. The goal of the forum is to seek community-level observations on climate change impacts, as well as local efforts to cope with and adapt to these changes. It will provide an opportunity for communities to voice and share observations, experiences and concerns, while heightening the profile of indigenous peoples and their knowledge in international climate change debates.

Frontlines of Climate Change

Indigenous peoples figure conspicuously amongst groups identified as particularly vulnerable to climate change. Many indigenous territories are located in areas where impacts from global warming are anticipated to be both early and severe. Such vulnerable environments include low-lying islands, the circumpolar Arctic, high altitude zones and desert margins. Indeed, climate change poses a direct threat to the livelihoods of many indigenous groups due to their traditional and continuing reliance upon resources harvested from their immediate environment. Indigenous peoples therefore deserve specific attention when considering this global threat.

For the same reasons that they are highly vulnerable to climate change, indigenous peoples may also be particularly well placed to observe environmental changes caused by this phenomenon. Attentiveness to fluctuations and alterations in the natural milieu is an integral part of their

ways of life, and remains of crucial cultural importance even in areas where lifestyles have been modified by colonialism and globalisation. Knowledge of specific localities may stretch back over many generations. When shared amongst elders and youth, this knowledge provides the basis for important comparisons between what is observed today, and what occurred in the past. Indigenous knowledge thus offers valuable insights into local changes in ecological processes. This knowledge can consequently supplement and add much needed detail and nuance to the broad-scale view offered by scientific research.



Cree hunter (Photo from Douglas Nakashima)

It is also important to keep in mind that indigenous groups have always been confronted with changing environments. Their strategies for coping with change have allowed them to successfully negotiate historical shifts in climate and environment, by modifying existing practice, shifting their resource bases or restructuring their relationships with the environment. While the environmental transformations engendered by climate change are expected to be unprecedented, this in-depth knowledge can nonetheless provide a crucial foundation for the new adaptation measures required to face up to this most recent chapter in global environmental change.

Finally, there is growing awareness that indigenous peoples may find themselves not only on the frontlines of climate change impacts, but also of impacts due to rapidly ex-

lands to make way for hydrological development, large-scale tree planting schemes and biofuel cropping, all of which are being pushed ahead with the justification of reducing or compensating for greenhouse gas emissions. As pressures to mitigate climate change continue to grow, it is essential that actions that aim to combat a phenomenon largely generated by the industrialised world are not carried out at the expense of indigenous groups who contribute little to the creation of this environmental hazard. Meanwhile, in northern Australia, recognition that traditional Aboriginal fire management practices serve to reduce the frequency and extent of late season wildfires, and thus reduce carbon emissions, has opened avenues for the revitalisation of this traditional practice as a climate change mitigation measure. This demonstrates that culturally appropriate mitigation plans can serve to acknowledge and enhance indigenous practices. These positive and negative consequences of climate change mitigation serve to further underline the need for indigenous peoples and communities living in vulnerable environments to play an active role in ongoing climate change debates.

Climate Change Forum

The Internet-based forum aims to encourage indigenous peoples, small island communities, and other peoples living in vulnerable environments to share their observations and experiences of climate change impacts, and their efforts to cope and adapt to sea level rise, climate variability, the increased intensity and frequency of extreme climatic events, accelerated melting of circumpolar or high altitude snow and ice, and other climate change related events. Of equal interest will be local level reporting on the negative impacts of mitigation measures, such as the expansion of tree plantations, increased production of biofuels, and the resultant loss of access to lands and resources, as well as positive effects on traditional practices through carbon trading or other climate change mitigation strategies.

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“The Goal of the forum is to seek community-level observations on climate change impacts, as well as local efforts to cope with and adapt to these changes”

panding efforts to mitigate climate change. Themes such as the gender, human rights and ethical dimensions of climate change will also be highlighted and discussed.

To stimulate debate and encourage inputs, a thought-provoking lead article, addressing a particular theme related to climate change, will be circulated by email. Highlights from the responses received will then be compiled and distributed in a series of subsequent postings at regular intervals. All responses will eventually be organised in a global database of local observations, experiences, practices and coping strategies. The forum will operate in three languages (English, French, Spanish), with possible expansion to other languages in the future.

Through the forum, UNESCO, SCBD, SPFI and OHCHR aim to deepen international understanding of the ways this global process is impacting at local levels. This will not only help to build awareness of this complex issue among and between indigenous and other rural communities, but will also provide a channel through which indigenous communities can communicate their experiences and needs to the wider international policy and research community. It

may also provide a channel whereby communities who have been largely excluded from climate change debates gain recognition for their knowledge and practices, while drawing attention to the evolving negative impacts of climate change and/or mitigation measures on their livelihoods and territories.

If you are interested in participating in this indigenous peoples and climate change forum, please send an email to: links@unesco.org.

1 see: Indigenous peoples protest at Bali Conference, New Consumer, http://www.newconsumer.com/news/item/indigenous_peoples_protest_at_bali_conference/

Indigenous people lash out at Bali climate change talks, AFP <http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM-5jGxLdAvLk2yB4MQ8D97kKBRHkl6w>

zilian Amazon). Environmental impacts have, for instance, affected water quantity and quality and have interfered with the biological diversity of mangrove and riparian vegetation, thus diminishing the natural environment for a lot of species.

There is a link between environmental impacts and the movement and migration of traditional communities and of the deterioration of their quality of life and food security. All this is detrimental to the preservation and conservation of systems that support environmental interactions and subsistence, for instance, riparian populations, fishermen, small farmers and indigenous people. Unsustainable use and over-occupation have lead to a critical situation of local lands and waters regarding social and environmental quality, which has worsened even more so due to climate change effects in recent times.



Brazil (Photo from lautsu/www.flickr.com)

Facing the Future: Acting to Minimize the Consequences of Global Climate Change

by Edna Maria Costa e Silva



Mayangna (Photo from UNESCO)



Ecossystems, which support the social-economic and cultural livelihood of traditional communities and the conservation of local biodiversity, are currently being used in a disordered, unplanned and unsustainable manner.

Environmental impacts caused by interventions undertaken without consideration of main local ecosystems such as fluvial, estuarial and coastal and of its people, have permeated all ecosystems that make up the Para state territory (Bra-

“A relation society-nature, based in the exploration of natural resources and in social exclusion exceeds the limits of sustainability”

Deforestation is among the main activities that have contributed to the reduction of biodiversity, which is in reality one of the strongest elements in fighting global climate change. These actions carried out by all land users, without due care to the preservation of forest areas for the future have not taken into account the long-term impacts nor the social, ecological and cultural costs to the traditional communities and future generations.

These social and environmental consequences include, but are not limited to:

- Soil impermeability and slopes erosion
- Reduction and extinction of habitat for numerous species

- Extinction of several fishing areas and mangrove deterioration
- Dissemination of diseases
- Riparian populations expelled from their work areas impacting their food provision
- Difficult or no access to estuaries and mangrove areas and the resources they supply;
- Exclusion of traditional communities
- Increased respiratory diseases
- Water contamination and aquifer salinization
- High demand to buy land
- Difficulty in identifying cumulative impacts
- Increased threats to biodiversity

“There is a link between environmental impacts and the movement and migration of traditional communities and the deterioration of their quality of life and food security”

and environmental education in general to stop unsustainable development, including deforestation processes, in order to preserve biodiversity which is the basis for the survival activities of traditional communities and indeed human civilization today. Traditional communities, local authorities and civil society should act together through flexible, transparent and public planning, valuing equally traditional knowledge and science to ensure sustainable development, the ongoing availability of natural resources and a positive future for us all.



Brazil (Photo from lautsu/www.flickr.com)

And some of the global consequences are already being felt locally, such as changes in:

- Frequency and quantity of rainfall
- Thermic sensation (extreme and prolonged temperatures)
- Intensity of winds
- Increase in sea levels
- Increase or reduction of water volume in lakes, wet-lands, rivers and streams.

“Water is born and reproduces in the Earth, when one clears the forest, water faces its end; it’s the forest that keeps the water alive”

The current situation of unplanned and unsustainable land use and lack of control measures for the conservation of areas needed for water and forest preservation, threatens the sustainable development within and between traditional communities and undermines their traditional knowledge.

It is important to stress that actions must be based on strengthening control and protection policies for the lands and waters of indigenous and local communities

From fighting forest fires to stopping the degradation of costal ecosystems (mangroves), using cleaner production mechanisms and ensuring responsible consumption, together we can work to prevent the consequences of global climate change, as well as enable the maintenance of the existing natural resources for future generations. □

Indigenous Peoples and Development Challenges

by Yolanda Terán Maigua



The following article is based on a speech presented at the closing ceremony of the Fostering Indigenous Business and Entrepreneurship in the Americas Conference, held in Acoma, New Mexico, United States, from 7 to 9 November 2007.

“Why the States are taking decisions over our lands, territories and resources that had been traditionally ours. What is the

meaning of access, the meaning of sharing – sharing what?” (Ecuadorian elder, December 2006)

During these two days we have been discussing and sharing our concerns related to sustainable development and business, and its implications for present and future generations. We as Indigenous Peoples do not deny the importance of development and its consequences in our lives. However we do care about the way development and business are done.

Therefore we must ask the following:

- Are we only carrying out development and business in the Western way?
- Are transnational companies concerned with how much damage is being done to our Mother Earth and Indigenous Peoples in the name of the development?

As Indigenous Peoples we do believe that any development or business have to follow the norms, principles and rules based in our philosophies, cosmo visions, our elders’ wisdom, values, protocols, cultures and languages. If we are concerned with the well-being of our Mother Earth and Peoples, then it will be compulsory to recover our ancestral roots and values to be able to see and treat our Mother Earth as a mother and the human beings as brothers and sisters.

Development and business should be for sharing, learning, caring and not for competition or destruction. Before developing projects and business; investors, States, and national and international companies should consider the following:

- Indigenous Peoples’ free, prior and informed consent, which has to be done on a clear basis, in our languages, within a frame of transparency and mutual respect
- The collective rights of Indigenous Peoples, our right to self determination, the ancestral right over our lands, territories and waters, and our right to say no
- Indigenous men and women are complements not competitors; therefore we should work hand in hand
 - Development and business profits should be used to solve Indigenous

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(Photo from Franz Dejon)

“It is critical to have sui generis systems to protect traditional knowledge and the appropriate code of ethics for business and research based on our customary law”

Therefore it is critical to have sui generis systems to protect traditional knowledge and the appropriate Code of Ethics for business and research based on our customary law.

States need to recognize and adopt the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Human Rights that was finally adopted last September after 27 years of negotiations.

On 2 November, the National Congress

of Bolivia adopted this declaration as national law. This is the first example to be followed by States in order to end the atrocities and social injustice done against Indigenous Peoples worldwide.

In this new Pachakutik, Indigenous Peoples are fully aware of the meaning of biodiversity with the inclusion of Mother Earth and Peoples (Kawsay), and the preservation of our holistic relationships towards a collective well-being (Sumak Kawsay). □

New Information and Web Based Technologies Arctic Workshop in Quebec, Canada

Indigenous Communities, Tourism and Biodiversity Workshop Series

Peoples problems due to poverty and extreme poverty. These profits should provide Indigenous Peoples with a life of quality and basic needs such as potable water, electricity, housing, intercultural education and health, good and decent jobs, food security and to protect, preserve and practice our traditional knowledge, cultures and languages

- Consider Indigenous Peoples as partners. Allow their full and affective participation and act in good faith in respecting the terms of mutual intercultural agreements
- States, together with the Indigenous Peoples, should promote the creation of sui generis systems based on our customary law to protect indigenous traditional knowledge.

Climate change and the International Regime on Access and Benefit-Sharing are directly linked with Western development and business. The International Regime is concerned with money, commerce and industries. States, in the name of development, are dividing our knowledge, resources and life into pieces. For Indigenous Peoples everything is inter-connected. We do not cut our life into pieces. Our plants, resources and traditional knowledge are for the collective use and well-being of our present and future generations and not for commercialization.



Seeking to improve how their web sites address biodiversity, 21 Arctic indigenous tourism operators and executives of tourism associations, together with staff from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), local NGOs and government officers participated in a three-day workshop in November 2007 at the Duchesnay Tourist Station situated near Quebec City, Canada.

Held in partnership with Carleton University and with the financial support of the Governments of Canada and Spain, it was the first of a series of workshops to assist indigenous communities in various regions of the world to use web-based technologies to better market their tourism products while managing their biodiversity resources in a sustainable way.

Tools such as the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development, the CBD Traditional Knowledge portal, the Akwé: Kon guidelines and various Web-2 resources were shown, discussed and adapted by participants, with a view to improving their web sites and their capacity to reflect traditional ways in conserving indigenous land, and to allow potential visitors and clients to learn about indigenous practices and cultures.

The first workshop focused on the Arctic region in recognition of 2007 as the International Polar Year, and considered the distinct challenges of remote rural Arctic destinations. Additional workshops will build on lessons learned and methodologies developed in Quebec, and will take place in Latin America, Africa, the Pacific and South-East Asia, with a focus on forest basins, islands, mountains, and dry and sub-humid areas.

Participants, who came from Canada (five Northern provinces and territories), the Russian Federation, the United States, Finland, Sweden, and the International Ecotourism Society, worked with individual computers in small groups to examine existing reference web sites, and exchange lessons learned on their own web site development and management practices. To facilitate the exchange of experiences,

participants produced quality indicators in three important areas: biodiversity, e-marketing and technological tools. These indicators were then used in a self-assessment of their web sites. Based on these self-assessments, participants worked on a plan to enhance their web sites. Facilitators from Carleton University developed a methodology specifically for indigenous people, using aboriginal design templates and socialization techniques.



Delegates participating in the 3-day workshop at the Duchesney Tourist Station, Quebec City, Canada (Photo from Oliver Hillel)

30 May 2008, as well as the sixth meeting of the ad hoc open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions, scheduled for 2009. For more information, contact chantal.robichaud@cbd.int. □



(Photo from Oliver Hillel)



(Photo from Oliver Hillel)

Indigenous Peoples, Biodiversity and Climate Change

by Viviana Figueroa

The resulting toolbox for indigenous communities to design and manage their tourism web sites in support of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity was incorporated into a "Wheel" design. It includes:

- A list of functions of tourism web sites, with examples from indigenous products
- Evaluation checklists for the effectiveness of web sites in promoting and supporting cultural and biological diversity and in marketing indigenous sustainable tourism products (quality criteria refer to Mother Earth, use of indigenous languages, etc)
- Technological tools to enhance the capacities of indigenous tourism web sites
- E-Marketing techniques.

The workshop materials, including the results of the participant's survey, techniques used, the presentations and the final report are available on the CBD Biodiversity and Tourism Network at: <http://tourism.cbd.int/events.shtml>. Additional materials can be found at www.aboriginal-ecotourism.org/spip.php?article485

Outcomes will be transmitted to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the CBD in Bonn, Germany, from 19 to



generation to generation.

The Pachamama is considered to be wise; she is represented as an elderly woman, but with the energy of a young woman, for her fertility, and because she gives to all people everything they need to live. In this vision, every being and every element of nature should be respected and one should only take what is needed to live. Mother Nature gives us what we need.

This view is not shared by all cultures. Many cultures consider that nature belongs to humans, and therefore they can extract anything they want from her. This vision is part of many occidental legal systems.

I remember a brother from the Wichi people who went to the forest to collect honey. Upon his return he found a man who asked him, "Why didn't you bring all the honey?" He replied, "Because if I bring all the honey, there will be no hon-

Indigenous people have a holistic worldview of nature and share a close relationship with Pachamama which is based on their traditional knowledge handed down from

ey left to feed the bees so they can grow and provide more honey in the future".

Therefore, it is not a coincidence that the richest areas in biodiversity today are those territories where indigenous peoples have lived for centuries. Not only are these lands and waters preserved for the present, but also for future generations.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) recognizes the value of the traditional knowledge of indigenous and local communities in the conservation of biodiversity. Traditional knowledge is what indigenous peoples have for all kinds of purposes including such things as traditional medicine, environmental management and even to forecast the weather. This recognition is in the preamble of Article 8(j), whereby the Parties to the Convention have undertaken to respect, preserve and maintain the use of the traditional knowledge of indigenous and local communities. However, it is unfortunate, that this recognition has been poorly implemented at the national level.

Climate change is a good example. Climate change affects everyone. However, indigenous and local communities are particularly vulnerable.

Climate change can affect indigenous peo-

(continued from page 9)

“Climate change affects everyone. However, indigenous and local communities are particularly vulnerable”

ples not just by the initial physical impacts but also through the secondary effects of climate change adaptation and mitigation – or responses to climate change. Recently in Argentina, an extreme climatic event (linked to climate change) produced heavy rains for a prolonged period of time, causing flooding of the Pilcomayo and Bermejo Rivers, and thus affecting hundreds of indigenous communities in the provinces of Jujuy, Salta, Formosa and Chaco.

Meanwhile, the hunters, collectors and fishermen that comprise the indigenous people of Qom (also known as Toba) experience a different side of climate change.



(Photo from Viviana Figueroa)

The Qom have a large area of forest, rich in biodiversity, known as the “impenetrable”, where they would obtain the basics for their lives, including food, medicine, clothing and spiritual development. That is until it was deforested for Soya bean plantations, biofuels and other plantations. With the destruction of the forest they also lost much of their traditional knowledge, medicine, food and cultural identity.

As a result, today the people of Qom suffer extreme cases of malnutrition, resulting in premature deaths. In addition, because the deforestation caused the landscape to be physically modified, they now have floods in many areas which were never flood prone prior to these recent changes to the landscape. What was years ago a landscape full of trees—which contained and managed the excess of water—are now flood prone, badly eroded and largely unusable lands.



(Photo from Viviana Figueroa)

Faced by the looming crises of climate change, proposals have emerged from the States on international and national politics for its “mitigation” and possible “adaptation”. These proposals are based on the premise that the economy and trade are the only possible solutions to the conservation of biodiversity. Among others are: mechanisms of clean development, carbon sequestration, agro-fuels (biofuels), avoid deforestation (REDD), and commercialization and development of gene resources and the establishment of protected areas.

“It is no coincidence that the richest areas in biodiversity today are those territories where indigenous peoples have lived for centuries”

These strategies can have a great impact on the lives, culture, spirituality and survival of indigenous peoples and the lands and waters that we have traditionally occupied and used for millennia. Our calls for the involvement and the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples throughout these processes are based on the premise that most biodiversity-rich territories are in fact indigenous territories. The interconnectedness of biodiversity and landscape and peoples is still not adequately understood and neither are their relationships to climate and climate change.



(Photo from Viviana Figueroa)

The impacts of climate change rallies us all to the need for synergies among the relevant environmental conventions, including the CBD, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Perhaps the creation of an international tribunal should be included in the international agenda to protect and preserve biodiversity.

But this alone is not enough. It requires that each human being understands that every living being should be respected. This is only possible in a world where you only take from Mother Nature what you need and not what you desire. This effort from every person is essential to achieve the 2010 Biodiversity Target, to reduce the loss of biodiversity and also to reduce the impact of climate change.

Indigenous peoples, peoples who pass on their millennial wisdom from generation to generation, have maintained their knowledge, and that may be able to help restore the balance in Mother Nature, in a framework of respect for their rights and an intercultural dialogue. □

Interesting links on Climate Change:

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

<http://www.ipcc.ch/index.htm>

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

http://unfccc.int/portal_espanol/items/3093.php

Permanent forum on Indigenous Issues

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/es/session_seventh.html

Website of the United Nations on Climate Change

<http://www.un.org/climatechange/index.shtml>

UNESCO Website on indigenous and local knowledge systems

<http://portal.unesco.org/science/es/ev.php-UR>

For each edition of Pachamama we will highlight a particular indigenous peoples or a local community who have worked with the Convention on Biological Diversity. In our first instalment, we spotlight the Mohawk people on whose traditional territories the Secretariat is situated.

The Mohawk

by John Scott

Before the United Nations there was the League of Nations and a long time before the League of Nations there was, on these lands and waters, a six member League of Nations referred to as the Haudenosaunee or Iroquois Confederacy. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is based in Montreal, on the traditional lands and waters of the Mohawk people, who are members of that ancient Confederacy.

The Iroquois legend tells of the journey of the Peacemaker who journeyed to all five nations of the Haudenosaunee - asking each to stop warring and live in peace with each other. At each stop, he brought good fortune, and the people believed him. When the representatives from the five nations reached the first League meeting, they had brought weapons. The Peacemaker had them bury their weapons beneath the Great Tree of Peace and admonished all who lived beneath the tree to always look ahead for the sake of the League.

He then gave each an arrow. He broke an arrow to show that standing apart from each other, they are easily broken. He then bundled the arrows and failed to break them, showing the strength they will have if they stand together. He then told them that in the future people will come who do not understand the Tree and will hack at its roots. When the tree begins to fall, they must hold the tree and keep it from hitting the ground. When they can hold it no longer, they must have their children hold the Tree, for it must never hit the ground. And hence was formed the Confederacy.

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy was a sophisticated political and social system. It united the territories of the five nations

in a symbolic longhouse that stretched across the present-day state of New York and well into Quebec. The five nations were divided into two groups: the Elders, (consisting of the Mohawk, the Onondaga, and the Seneca); and the Younger, (the Oneida and the Cayuga). Despite this distinction, all decisions of the Confederacy had to be unanimous and by consensus.

This decision-making process gave birth to the Great Law of Peace which prevailed for a thousand years.

The Confederacy and the Great Law of Peace, along with the Creation Story, the Two Row Wampum Treaty and the concept of the Seventh Generation, form the basis of local indigenous beliefs, values, traditions, philosophies and a unique world view.



Members of the Mohawk community of Kahnawake open the fifth meeting of the Ad-hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8 (j) and Related Provisions in Montreal, Canada (Photo from Franz Dejon)

confederacy demonstrates the value of working together in a respectful and peaceful manner; the Great Law provides a democratic model for governing; the Creation Story explains how we came to be on this Earth and what our duties are as human beings to each other and other life forms; the Two Row Wampum instructs us on how to interrelate with other governments and nations; and the concept of the Seventh Generation reminds us to be respectful of future generations.

The contemporary Mohawk community of Kahnawake, who kindly opened the 5th meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j) in October 2007, has sustained itself and

built upon this rich cultural background. The Mohawk community also provided the title of the Akwe:Kon Guidelines for the conduct of cultural, environmental and social impact assessments regarding developments proposed to take place on, or which are likely to impact on, sacred sites and on lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by indigenous and local communities. Akwe:Kon means "everything in creation".



Young Native dancer at the Kanahwake PowWow (Photo from Iman Keira)

Native American Culture – The Pow Wow

Originally held in the spring to welcome the new beginnings of life, a Pow Wow is a chance for Native American Indians to meet and join together in dancing, singing, renewing old friendships and making new ones.

Often different tribal nations would come together, and during these meetings Native Americans would settle arguments between different groups, form alliances and trade with one another.

A Pow Wow is often set up as a series of large circles. The circle is an important symbol to Indian cultures because it symbolizes the continuation of life. To the Native American people, life is never ending, like a circle, thus the Pow Wow brings the circle of the people closer together - closer to their community and their culture.

(Source: www.kahnawakepowwow.com)

Climate Change and Biodiversity in Polar Regions

by Ahmed Djoghlafl, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity



Polar ecosystems are home to an array of plants and animals that survive in some of the most extreme conditions in the world. However, the seas surrounding the Antarctic are rich in plankton, which support a rich marine food chain, while the Arctic itself supports many mammals and has an important role in the annual cycle of migratory birds. The scientific studies carried out at the occasion of the celebration of the International Polar Year have provided additional evidence of the uniqueness and richness of the marine Arctic environment.

Indeed, the biodiversity of the Arctic is unique and fundamental to the livelihoods of Arctic peoples. However, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, as well as recent reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has made us all aware that climate change negatively impacts existing ecosystems and that it is one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss. Particular attention is being paid to Polar Regions, where evidence of the impacts of climate change have been observed and widely reported. Indeed, Polar Regions are now experiencing some of the most rapid and severe climate change on Earth, which will contribute to environmental and socio-economic changes, many of which have already begun.

During the 20th century, Arctic air temperatures increased by approximately 5 degrees C. This increase is ten times faster than the observed global-mean surface temperature. An additional warming of about 4-7 degrees C in the Arctic is predicted for the next 100 years. Moreover, Polar Regions are particularly threatened by climate change since Polar species and societies have developed very specialized adaptations to the harsh conditions found at the poles, thus making them extremely vulnerable to dramatic changes in these conditions.

Observed and Projected Impacts

Walrus, polar bears, seals and other marine mammals that rely on sea ice for resting, feeding, hunting and breeding are particularly threatened by climate change. For example, studies reveal that in 1980, the average weight of female polar bears in western Hudson Bay, Canada, was 650 pounds. In 2004, their average weight was only 507 pounds. It is believed that the progressively earlier breakup of the Arctic sea ice is responsible for the fall in the polar bears' average weight, as this reduces their hunting season and food intake. For a different reason, reduced sea-ice extent is also believed to have caused a 50 per cent decline in emperor penguin populations in Terre Adélie. Populations of krill and other small organisms may also decline as ice recedes. Due to the high importance of krill in various food chains, the entire marine food web could be adversely affected.

The livelihood of indigenous peoples in the Arctic is already being affected by climate change. Losses in biodiversity affect the traditional practices of indigenous people, particularly fishing and hunting. For example, the Saami people have observed changes in reindeer grazing pastures, and the Inuit people of Canada have observed reductions in the ringed seal population, their single most important source of food.



Polar bears (Photo from Amanda Graham)



Young spotted seal (Photo from jomilo75 /www.flickr.com)

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Climate Change and Indigenous and Local Communities in the Arctic

Due to its unique nature, climate and

ing the Antarctic are rich in plankton, which support a rich marine food chain, while the Arctic itself supports many mammals and has an important role in the annual cycle of migratory birds. The scientific studies carried out at the occasion of the celebration of the International Polar Year have provided additional evidence of the uniqueness and richness of the marine Arctic environment.

Indeed, the biodiversity of the Arctic is unique and fundamental to the livelihoods of Arctic peoples. However, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, as well as recent reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has made us all aware that climate change negatively impacts existing ecosystems and that it is one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss. Particular attention is being paid to Polar Regions, where evidence of the impacts of climate change have been observed and widely reported. Indeed, Polar Regions are now experiencing some of the most rapid and severe climate change on Earth, which will contribute to environmental and socio-economic changes

sensitivity to climate changes, the Arctic is an important early warning system as far as climate change is concerned. The findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change show that eleven of the last twelve years (1995-2006) rank among the 12 warmest years in the instrumental record of global surface temperatures since 1850. In the past 100 years, average temperatures in the Arctic increased by almost twice the global average rate. Consequently the annual average Arctic sea ice extent has shrunk by 2.1 - 3.1 per cent per decade. Temperatures at the top of the permafrost layer have generally increased up to 3°C since the 1980s. It is projected that higher temperatures will contribute to continuing snow contraction and widespread increases in thaw depth over permafrost regions. The gradual melting of the Greenland ice sheet is projected to contribute to sea level rise, even beyond the year 2100.

The consequences of climate change are becoming more visible in the Arctic, and are greatly influencing the environment, animals and the living conditions of humans, especially the

alarming speed that indigenous communities have severe difficulties coping.

The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA), commissioned by the Arctic Council, provides important insight into the impacts of climate change in the Arctic region. This assessment was prepared over a period of five years by an international team of over 300 scientists, other experts, and members of indigenous communities.

and less predictable by traditional means.

The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment recognizes that further research is required to



(Photo from nick_russill/www.flickr.com)



Inuit drum dancer, Kulusuk, Greenland
(Photo from will_hybrid/www.flickr.com)



Kulusuk, Greenland (Photo from nick_russill/www.flickr.com)

indigenous peoples who strongly depend on ecosystems and natural resources. The Arctic indigenous peoples, their life, culture and traditional knowledge, are adapted to and largely dependent on the cold and extreme physical conditions of the region. The indigenous peoples of the Arctic have adapted to the challenges brought about by the Arctic geography and climate. Although the Arctic climate has always undergone change, the ongoing changes in the climate are taking place at such an

The ACIA Report identifies a range of climate change impacts, including: rising temperatures in the Arctic, with worldwide implications; shifts in Arctic vegetation zones; changes in animal species' diversity, ranges, and distribution; and increased exposure to storms by coastal communities.

The ACIA Report devotes a separate chapter to address matters concerning the changing Arctic from an indigenous perspective. Indigenous peoples have provided case studies addressing the situation in Kotzebue, the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands Region, the Yukon Territory, Denendeh, Nunavut, Greenland, Sápmi and Kola. An important common theme or observation in the case studies is that the weather in the Arctic region has become more variable

understand environmental changes occurring in the Arctic, as well as the ways in which people view these changes. It states that in both cases, there is a growing but still insufficient body of research to draw on, in particular in those Arctic areas where there are few or no current records of indigenous observations available. The assessment concludes that further research needs to detect and interpret climate change, and to determine appropriate response strategies.

Adaptation Options

The resilience of ecosystems to the impacts of climate change can be enhanced and the risk of damage to human and natural ecosystems reduced through the adoption of biodiversity-friendly adaptive and mitigative strategies. Biodiversity is essential to the maintenance and delivery of many ecosystem services including the provision of food and fodder, nutrient cycling and the maintenance of hydrological flows. As such, maintaining biodiversity is an important component of adaptation planning. Maintaining the ability of resilient species to adapt is critical since climate change will favour species which are better able to adapt to changing climatic conditions. In addition, the reduction of other stressors, such as permafrost degradation, chemical pollution, over-fishing, land-use changes (including unsustainable development), and habitat fragmentation could improve polar ecosystems' resilience to climate change.

Adaptation activities can and should make use of local and indigenous knowledge and include their full and effective participation. Indeed, indigenous peoples can contribute to the understanding of changes in

vened an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on climate change and biodiversity. The Secretariat of the Convention has also initiated an exhibition of indigenous and local communities highly vulnerable to climate change, as well as an International Expert Meeting on Responses to Climate Change for Indigenous and Local Communities and the Impact on their Traditional Knowledge related to Biological Diversity - The Arctic Region, which was held in Helsinki, Finland, 25-28 March 2008.

climate change impacts on indigenous and local communities, in particular the multiple impacts, will also have adverse consequences on the elements that the Convention on Biological Diversity identifies as their "knowledge, innovations and practices". Indeed, Article 8 (j) of the Convention acknowledges the knowledge, innovation and practices of indigenous and local communities, and promotes its wider application in the context of conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The Convention has established specific obligations for State parties to respect, preserve and maintain such knowledge, innovations and practices, as far as this is



Seal hunter, Kulusuk, Greenland (Photo from wili_hybrid/www.flickr.com)

the Arctic through their observations and perspectives on changes in biodiversity and ecosystem functioning. For example, the Inuvialuit Hunters and Trappers in Canada's High Arctic, along with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), initiated a year-long project to document Arctic climate change and communicate it to Canadian and international audiences. During the initiative, a video and several scientific journal articles were produced to communicate the negative impacts of climate change observed in the Arctic and to understand the adaptive strategies that local people are using in response.



Inuit Woman, Greenland (Photo from nick_russill/www.flickr.com)

possible, and as appropriate within the framework of their respective national legislation and subject to the approval of the knowledge holders. In light of the accelerated threats caused by climate change, it is necessary for Party States to adopt political, administrative and legal measures to protect and maintain the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities. Such measures should be developed with full

The Path Ahead

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) establishes the international framework for biodiversity conservation and very early on looked into the relationship between biodiversity and climate change. The CBD, through its cross-cutting issue on climate change, integrated climate change components within all of the programmes of work of the Convention, with the exception of technology transfer and cooperation. The Convention has also built synergies with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and con-

There remains, however, a number of challenges and opportunities for the further development of interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change. These include capacity-building, mainstreaming, communication and awareness raising and research and technology.

Indigenous and local communities' traditional knowledge, innovations and practices are an inseparable part of their culture, social structures, economy, livelihoods, beliefs, traditions, customs, customary law, health and their relationship to the local environment. It is the totality of all such elements that makes their knowledge, innovations and practices vital in relation to biological diversity and sustainable development. Consequently, serious adverse



(Photo from jurvetson/www.flickr.com)

and effective participation of the representatives of indigenous and local communities.

Conclusion

Recent scientific assessments have provided clear evidence of the impacts of climate change on the biodiversity of Polar Regions, and how this in turn affects indigenous and

local communities. A number of reports also illustrate the contribution of biodiversity to adaptation to climate change. Therefore, though its various programmes and cross-cutting issues, the Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant partners including Governments, Parties, indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs and Women.

It is also for this reason that the international community celebrated the International Day for Biological Diversity on 22 May 2007 under the theme "Biodiversity and Climate Change". In his message delivered for this occasion, the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, reminded the international community that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is an essential element of any strategy to adapt to climate change. He also stated: "Through the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the international community is committed to conserving biodiversity and combating climate change. The global response to these challenges needs to move much more rapidly, and with more determination at all levels—global, national and local. For the sake of current and future generations, we must achieve the goals of these landmark instruments."

Therefore, because every person on this planet, whether they know it or not draws on biodiversity for their daily lives and because climate change is a global problem, protecting the biodiversity of Polar Regions from the impacts of climate change requires a multi-layered web of intersecting initiatives involving all stakeholders and the CBD has a crucial role to play. The international community is called upon to redouble its effort for achieving the Johannesburg Biodiversity Target aimed at reducing substantially the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. The celebration in 2010 of the International Year on Biodiversity will offer a unique opportunity to keep the momentum generated by the International Polar Year. □

When things come together ... Indigenous and Local Communities – the Human Face of Climate Change

by John Scott



Have you ever been at the right place at the right time – or had an idea whose time was ripe – as they say?

In early 2007 the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) was taken with the idea to use the International Day for Biological Diversity to draw attention to issues related to climate change and biological diversity. Fortuitously, this coincided with the designation of 2007 as the International Polar Year and the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) World Environment Day theme of climate change.

With this in mind a programme was developed, and two activities in particular were put in motion by the Secretariat – an exhibition and an onsite media event, including a panel of indigenous experts both titled: "Indigenous and Local Communities – the Human Face of Climate Change". The text and pictorial exhibition attracted the attention of the Government of Finland which agreed to provide initial funding.

These events took place during the sixth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 14 to 25 May 2007, as part of the annual indigenous cultural exhibit facilitated by the United Nations Department of Public Information at UN Headquarters in New York .

The exhibit remained on display for approximately four months, until early September, at the public entrance of UN Headquarters, reaching out to almost 200,000 visitors as well as more than 1,000 indigenous peoples who participated in the Permanent Forum's annual meeting. The exhibition proved so successful that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) requested that it

be made available for their governing body – the UNESCO General Conference in October–November 2007 in Paris, after which the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) used the exhibition to draw attention to these issues at the IFAD Governing Council in February 2008 in Rome.

The exhibition is scheduled to appear in Bonn from 19 to 30 May 2008, for the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 9) after which it will return to Rome for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) High Level Conference on World Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy from 3 to 5 June 2008, before returning to its home in the SCBD Museum of Nature and Culture in Montreal.

The exhibition has become quite nomadic and appears to have taken on a life of its own in its global wanderings – reaching out to people from all walks of life and being translated from English into French, Spanish and Italian in the process. The story shows how the right idea at the right time can take off with great effect and with a relatively small budget.

The success of this initiative has encouraged the Secretariat to explore future activities to promote the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010 . The SCBD will host discussions during the seventh session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in April 2008, to discuss opportunities for collaboration between indigenous and local communities, the UNPFII and the Secretariat of the CBD and other relevant agencies to promote the International Year of Biodiversity. From that initial consultation, an action plan will be developed for promotional events and promotional materials (posters, exhibitions, etc.), with the overall goal of raising awareness about the International Year of Biodiversity, and placing a special emphasis on indigenous and local community perspectives. □



(Photo from Franz Dejon)

International Indigenous Caucus on Access and Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Biodiversity

by **Sofía Gutiérrez**



Effective participation of indigenous and local communities in the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is one of the pillars of the programme of work on Article 8(j). Although decisions in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP) are made by governments, a large number of other actors, such as indigenous and local communities can actively participate in the meetings and contribute information and inputs from their own perspectives.

Within this framework, thanks to the generous invitation of the Brazilian Indigenous Institute for Intellectual Property



Shamans from the indigenous village of Matis in the Amazon
(Photo from INBRAPI)

(INBRAPI), the Secretariat participated in the second edition of the International Indigenous Caucus on Access and Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Biodiversity, held in Brasilia, Brazil, from 25 to 27 March 2008, as a preparatory meeting to the Ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9) to the CBD, which takes place in Bonn, Germany in May 2008.

The workshop brought together some 70 indigenous peoples representatives from the various Brazilian regions, many of whom plan to participate in COP 9. Many of these indigenous representatives have already received some training- through the project Eg to Jykrén - on biodiversity

and protection of traditional knowledge within the framework of the CBD, with a focus on Brazilian national legislation. In general, however, the participants know very little about CBD processes, including its voluntary funding mechanism for participation of indigenous and local communities to meetings held under the Convention (www.cbd.int/traditional/fund.shtml).

The aim of the three-day workshop was twofold. Firstly, to inform and prepare participants with important background information on the CBD processes, programmes of work and cross-cutting issues, with a special emphasis on issues directly related to indigenous peoples concerns, such as protection of traditional knowledge, access and benefit-sharing and protected areas. In particular, participants considered draft decisions before the COP, and in small working groups, developed statements on issues of relevance to them that could be presented at COP.

Secondly, re-creating a real meeting of the Conference of the Parties was helpful in providing participants with a solid understanding of COP processes, including opportunities and ways to participate. This provided participants with culturally appropriate training and made for a more active, informed and fulfilling participatory experience.

Convention processes certainly benefit from building the capacity of, and ensuring full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, in order to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Convention and its goals. It also further facilitates the difficult challenge of formulating and implementing sound policies on biodiversity at the national level, in partnership with indigenous and local communities. □

Article 8 (j) CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The following is a tentative list of possible events. Please check the CBD meetings calendar regularly for updates and confirmations (www.cbd.int/meetings).

November 2008:

Indigenous Communities, Tourism and Biodiversity Workshop Series
New Information and Web-based Technologies - Pacific Workshop, Samoa, November 2008.

2008-2009:

International Workshop on National and Community Action Plans for the Retention of Traditional Knowledge relevant to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity. Venue and date yet to be determined (2008-2009).

2008-2009:

Regional Workshop on Community-friendly Communication Tools on Traditional Knowledge related to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity. Venue and date yet to be determined (2008-2009).

2009:

The sixth meeting Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-Sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions – 2009.

Pachamama

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We would like to hear from you:

We are encouraging indigenous and local communities, governments, and relevant stakeholders to send articles and digital photos on their implementation, awareness, outreach and relevant activities regarding Article 8(j) and Related Provisions. Please send your contributions to the attention of John Scott at the following email: secretariat@cbd.int

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* Pachamama means Mother Earth (pacha: earth, mama: mother) in the Quecha /Aymara languages. The earth was a divinity venerated by the Incas and other inhabitants of the Andean plateau such as the Aymara and the Quecha peoples.

