



IUCN and the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

Eleventh Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), New York, 7th-18th May 2012

Mr. Chair,

The International Union for Conservation of Nature - IUCN would like to express its support of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples set to take place in 2014 to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples, and to pursue the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

IUCN recognizes that further efforts are required for raising awareness of indigenous peoples' issues and for enabling action to address them at a global level to ensure that their rights and needs are met and valued in times of rapid global environmental and socio-economic changes. This platform will provide a timely and strategic opportunity to build united efforts by indigenous peoples' organizations, NGOs and States for enhancing and securing indigenous peoples' well-being in the context of multiple and complex challenges.

IUCN takes this opportunity to provide some suggestions to the Permanent Forum and the Global Coordinating Committee for the Conference regarding key issues it believes should be given prominence on agenda. As a global environmental organization, IUCN is aware of the important role that indigenous peoples play in managing lands and natural resources in a sustainable manner and the need for securing their rights and access to these resources for livelihood and food security. It recognizes that inappropriate or poor governance and associated insecure land tenure threaten indigenous peoples' well-being. It therefore advises those involved in preparations of the Conference to place environmental governance, especially in indigenous peoples' customary lands and territories, high on the agenda. IUCN would welcome outcomes from the Conference that propose mechanisms and measures to improve environmental governance for indigenous peoples' well-being and sustainable management of their lands, territories and resources.

Another relevant issue for both IUCN and indigenous peoples is that of climate change impacts and associated mitigation and adaptation measures, including REDD+. IUCN is keenly aware of the land tenure issues, socio-economic risks and other challenges that indigenous peoples would face if these measures do not, from the onset, integrate rights into policies and implementation. Furthermore, IUCN would like to encourage indigenous peoples' organizations and others to work before the Conference on documenting and promoting the role of traditional knowledge and customary land management in reducing human vulnerability to and risks of climate-related and other natural hazards.

Permanent Observer Mission
For the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to the United Nations
551 Fifth Avenue, Suites 800 A&B
New York, NY 10176
Tel. +1 212.346.1163

IUCN World Headquarters
Rue Mauverney 28
1196 Gland
Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 999 0000
Fax: +41 22 999 0002
mail@iucn.org
www.iucn.org

For more information, please contact:

Gonzalo Oviedo
Senior Advisor, Social Policy
Gonzalo.oviedo@iucn.org

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects all over the world; and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network. IUCN is a democratic union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and some 10,000 volunteer scientists in more than 150 countries. IUCN's work is supported by 1,100 professional staff in 62 countries and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world.

IUCN would like to inform the Forum and those involved in Conference preparations that the 6th IUCN World Parks Congress will also take place in 2014. This will be an important opportunity to revisit the state of conservation measures in indigenous peoples' lands and territories. It will provide a valuable platform for discussing indigenous peoples' issues in the context of protected areas globally and allow for strategic and productive synergies between indigenous peoples and others concerned with the state of the environment. IUCN considers that the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the World Parks Congress can, where relevant, have complementary outcomes and extends its support to facilitate this.

IUCN suggests that, as part of preparations for the Conference and in order to feed into dialogues on these topics, a study be carried out on the state of indigenous peoples' participation in environmental governance and decision-making at regional levels to provide examples of both good and inappropriate

practices as well as clear recommendations for addressing arising issues. This would provide a solid basis for productive discussions and inputs into a Plan of Action or other outcome of the Conference.

IUCN is interested in engaging in regional preparatory meetings for the Conference. It will be present at the EMRIP meeting in Geneva and looks forward to discussing the Conference with indigenous peoples' organizations and Members of the Forum then.

Mister Chair, IUCN looks forward to further collaboration with the Permanent Forum and is prepared to engage with preparations of the Conference to ensure that indigenous peoples' issues as related to environmental management and conservation are given due prominence.

Thank you.