

**9th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
19-30 April 2010, UN HQ, New York, USA
Agenda item 6: Comprehensive Dialogue with UN Agencies
Convention on Biological Diversity**

Dear Chairperson, I am Jiten Yumnam and am pleased to present the Asia Caucus statement on this agenda item. Sir, I would like to draw your kind attention that this year being the International Year on Biodiversity, the Convention on Biological Diversity at its 10th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP10) in Nagoya, Japan, will adopt a revised Strategic Plan and new Biodiversity Targets. The Mission of this Strategic Plan is to ensure a coherent implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and achievement of its three objectives by promoting ***“Urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity”*** and, ***“By 2020, to reduce the pressures on biodiversity; prevent extinctions; restore ecosystems; and enhance ecosystem services, while equitably sharing the benefits, thus contributing to human well-being and poverty eradication, and to have provided the means for all Parties to do so.”***

Notably, the post-2010 biodiversity targets include:

Strategic Goal D: Enhance the benefits from biodiversity and ecosystems.

Target 14: By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, and contribute to local livelihoods, are safeguarded or are being restored, and adequate and equitable access to essential ecosystem services is guaranteed for all, especially for indigenous and local communities and the poor and vulnerable.

Target 15: By 2020, the contribution of biodiversity to ecosystem resilience and to carbon storage and sequestration is enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15% of degraded forest landscapes, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.

Strategic Goal E. Enhance implementation through planning, knowledge management and capacity development, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

Target 18: By 2020, traditional knowledge, innovations and practices are protected and their contribution to the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity is recognized and enhanced.

The Asia Indigenous peoples reiterate our commitment to protect biodiversity, our source of livelihood and survival as peoples by ensuring its sustainable use through wisdom and established customary governance. We also reaffirm our right to control and use of our genetic resources and traditional knowledge in accordance with our right to self-determination.

The Asian IP Caucus commends the CBD secretariat for the valuable and efficient information-dissemination to Indigenous Peoples which have kept us well-informed. We believe other UN bodies dealing with indigenous peoples can draw lessons from the CBD. The recognition of the

International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity or IIFB and the joint decision-making during sessions of the Working Group on 8(j) and Related Provisions dealing with traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples is exemplary. We fully support its recognition of women as key holders of traditional knowledge. The establishment of the CBD Voluntary Trust Fund to support indigenous peoples' participation in the deliberation of the work of the CBD is also important in ensuring indigenous peoples' attendance.

However, the Asia IP Caucus would also like to highlight the widespread practices by State Parties to the CBD to impose and implement unsustainable projects backed by extractive and profit-oriented policies which destroy the ways of life and relationships of indigenous peoples to their lands, forests, rivers, and other ecosystems. Projects such as dam constructions, plantations, infrastructure development and, creation of protected areas, tourism projects, continue to be introduced without the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of indigenous peoples. These projects disregard our interdependence to our lands and resources, and thus violate our rights enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The full integration and implementation of UNDRIP as the guiding principle of engagement with indigenous peoples in the CBD process is still lacking and often a cause of frustration in negotiations. The efforts to implement the CBD recommendations on protection of biodiversity in many of the Asian countries, such as drafting of National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans (NBSAP) etc has often been marred with disregard for meaningful indigenous peoples participation in the preparation.

Recommendations

The Asian IP Caucus would like to affirm that Traditional knowledge must be treated as a cross-cutting theme in the new CBD Strategic Plan and post-2010 Biodiversity Targets, and the central role of indigenous peoples in their implementation must be further enhanced. Partnerships to promote Communication, Education and Public-Awareness (CEPA) programmes on biological and cultural diversity can be jointly carried out by UN agencies, Governments and indigenous peoples.

We call upon all Parties to the CBD to fully integrate and implement the provisions of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), alongside implementation of its new Strategic Plan and post-2010 Biodiversity Targets, and monitoring of the state of traditional knowledge and community well-being.

The CBD should ensure that indigenous peoples' biological resources and traditional knowledge are accessed only with the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of indigenous peoples. The proposed protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing must recognize indigenous peoples' inherent rights to our resources as outlined in UNDRIP, and respect for indigenous peoples' governance systems - our customary laws, institutions and procedures at the local level.

We also call upon all States and Parties of the CBD to strengthen the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in all CBD decision-making processes, especially in national implementation strategies and action plans, and in conjunction with national actions on climate change, Indigenous peoples have valuable contributions to make in addressing the linked biodiversity and climate crises

The CBD process should ensure effective support for initiatives of indigenous peoples and local communities, including greater allocation of finances in support of community projects. At the

same time, safeguards should be applied to ensure that funding by the Global Environment Facility and large conservation NGOs do not bring negative impacts on indigenous peoples. We urge the use of the Akwekon Guidelines in the conduct of related socio-economic and cultural impact assessments.

We urge Parties to CBD and all parties to stop all support of agro-fuels, monoculture plantations, genetically modified organisms, dams constructions, extractive industries, mining, logging etc that destroy our biodiversity and source of our physical and spiritual survival.

The Asian IP Caucus would like to like to urge upon CBD to develop a clear cut indicators for assessing of full implementation of recommendations of CBD for the protection of biodiversity in indigenous peoples land and territories.

Thank you Chair