



Conservation Initiative on Human Rights

Ninth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), New York, 19-30 April 2010

Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda - Human rights

Mister Chairman,

I am making this intervention on behalf of IUCN (the International Union for Conservation of Nature), and seven other global conservation organizations: BirdLife International, Conservation International, Fauna and Flora International, The Nature Conservancy, Wetlands International, the Wildlife Conservation Society and WWF.

These eight global conservation organizations recently created an Initiative called the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights (CIHR). The participating organizations believe it is a strong reflection of the inclusive environmental goals we strive towards. As CIHR members, we unite in our efforts to promote the integration of human rights in conservation policy and practice, based on our common interest in promoting positive links between conservation and rights of people to secure their livelihoods, enjoy healthy and productive environments and live with dignity.

As part of this Initiative, we will work together to promote indigenous peoples' rights, identity and culture within the context of conservation. We believe that by working collectively we can better develop our work in this field, including through shared learning among conservation organisations, rights-holders and stakeholders, and expert groups. We envision that the increased collaboration and joint priorities will allow for further application of rights-based approaches in our work with indigenous peoples and effectively integrate UNDRIP into our agendas.

Indigenous peoples' issues are included in CIHR's specific objectives to:

- Develop and maintain a common set of human rights principles as they relate to conservation
- Identify and test management practices for implementing these principles and demonstrating compliance with them.
- Support members in implementing human rights principles and management practices, especially through shared learning among participating organisations, stakeholders and experts
- Promote integration of human rights principles in conservation and communicate relevant experience
- Report on members' activities in putting in place management practices for implementation and monitoring of their human rights principles.

Permanent Observer Mission
For the International Union for
Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to the
United Nations

801 Second Avenue,
Suite 405
New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel: +1 212 286 1076
Fax: +1 212 286 1079

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

Kaia Boe
Social Policy Associate
Kaia.boe@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.



As part of the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights, each of the participating organisations commits to uphold a set of human rights principles, enhance its capacities to ensure their implementation, and put in place appropriate accountability measures. Each organisation will also participate in and support shared learning activities, and report on their implementation actions.

Activities of the Initiative are grounded in the following **common principles**:

1. Respect human rights

Respect internationally proclaimed human rights; and make sure that we do not contribute to infringements of human rights while pursuing our mission.

2. Promote human rights within conservation programmes

Support and promote the protection and realization of human rights within the scope of our conservation programmes.

3. Protect the vulnerable

Make special efforts to avoid harm to those who are vulnerable to infringements of their rights and to support the protection and fulfilment of their rights within the scope of our conservation programmes.

4. Encourage good governance

Support the improvement of governance systems that can secure the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities in the context of our work on conservation and sustainable natural resource use, including elements such as legal, policy and

institutional frameworks, and procedures for equitable participation and accountability.

The Initiative is currently developing a programme of work to support collaborative learning on human rights principles as they relate to conservation and measures for their implementation. The anticipated focus of activities over the 2010-2012 period is shared learning among participating organisations, representatives of rights-holder and stakeholder groups (including indigenous peoples), experts and others to inform the development of implementation measures.

Activities for which the Initiative is seeking collaboration and support include workshops, analyses of issues and approaches and development of methods and tools.

CIHR is still in its beginning stages but we see it as an opportunity to further promote UNDRIP and indigenous peoples' cultures and identities in our conservation activities, particularly in relation to climate change and protected area programmes. CIHR members look forward to continued dialogue and collaboration with indigenous peoples' organisations and especially with the UNPFII, Mister Chairman, for it provides a critical platform for collaboration, open discussion and information sharing. These interactions will help strengthen the conservation and human rights agendas we require to confront the challenges we face today.

Thank you Mister Chairman.