



PAIO Kayee 291

IUCN, Forests and Indigenous Peoples

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

Item (7) of the Provisional Agenda: Half-day discussion on indigenous peoples and forests

Mister Chairman,

IUCN-the International Union for Conservation of Nature congratulates you and the UNPFII for addressing indigenous peoples' issues in a holistic manner, incorporating economic, social and environmental aspects into discussions to determine priorities for indigenous peoples and their role in promoting a sustainable future. The challenges and opportunities presented by forest management illustrate the need for such an integrated approach.

IUCN acknowledges that conflicts have emerged from the fact that, in many historical cases, conservation measures such as the establishment and management of protected areas have not respected the rights of indigenous peoples and local populations. However, IUCN would like to reaffirm its position that full recognition of indigenous peoples' rights and their genuine participation in developing, implementing and monitoring conservation initiatives that affect them is necessary to achieve long term conservation and environmental sustainability. It is therefore committed to implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in its work on forests and protected areas.

Today, there is systematic consideration of the rights of indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities in the work of the IUCN Forest Conservation Programme, globally and regionally, where IUCN focuses specifically on supporting forest governance improvements based on the recognition and strengthening of rights, and on revitalizing and integrating traditional management systems in forest management.

IUCN recognizes that indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities have strong incentives to conserve local forests and typically possess extensive forest knowledge. They therefore represent logical allies for initiatives that seek to protect ecosystems and reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. IUCN aims to build better linkages between indigenous peoples, local communities and institutions and government authorities to enable appropriate implementation of conservation and climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

In support for Article 32 and Article 23 of UNDRIP, IUCN continues to stress the need for genuine free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples in the development of commercial enterprises or other uses of their lands, territories and resources, including proposed REDD projects. It aims to ensure government and enterprise accountability and develop standards and protocols for corporate social responsibility, including fair and equitable benefit-sharing.

Permanent Observer Mission
of the International Union for
Conservation of Nature and
Natural Resources (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 further information please
contact:

Gonzalo Oviedo
Senior Adviser - Social Policy
Gonzalo.oviedo@iucn.org

Kaia Boe
Junior Professional -
Social Policy
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.

IUCN is working with a range of international partners to support the integration of standards and safeguards on social equity and the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities throughout the REDD processes. Furthermore, its REDD activities are to explicitly include women when ensuring the full and effective, gender-balanced participation of all relevant stakeholders in REDD decision-making processes and action.

It has also recently undertaken an in-depth review of the concerns of indigenous peoples in relation to current international climate change and REDD policy development which is available to download from our website. (http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn_briefing_ips_and_redd_march_2010.pdf)

In addition, IUCN actively incorporates social and cultural dimensions into its work on conservation of forests and other ecosystems. It recognizes that many indigenous peoples have a deep-rooted relationship with forested areas and, in many parts of the world, value specific sites with special spiritual

significance. IUCN seeks to gain knowledge and promote awareness about these sacred natural sites and their importance for both biodiversity and cultures. It works to promote and support development of legal and policy frameworks which recognize the rights and roles of indigenous peoples and help build the capacity of those involved in the management of sacred natural sites. Further work is needed to ensure the biological and cultural integrity of these areas and IUCN has appointed a Specialist Group on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas which seeks to identify, define and provide guidelines for managing the cultural and spiritual dimensions of protected areas through its World Commission on Protected Areas.

In conclusion, Mister Chairman, IUCN continues to integrate UNDRIP and advance a rights-based approach in its conservation agenda to ensure that indigenous peoples' rights are fully recognized, and that their right to free, prior and informed consent is explicitly included in conservation strategies.

Thank you Mister Chairman