



## IUCN, the CBD and indigenous peoples

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

**Item (6) of the Provisional Agenda: Comprehensive dialogue between six United Nations agencies and funds**

Mister Chairman,

IUCN - the International Union for Conservation of Nature enthusiastically joins the UN in celebrating the International Year of Biodiversity. Conserving biodiversity is central to our mission, and our mandate and activities are strongly linked to the Convention on Biological Diversity. We actively support its Parties, organs and Secretariat in their efforts to ensure that the appropriate decisions are made and that they are implemented as effectively as possible to achieve the CBD objectives. We congratulate the CBD for all the efforts it makes to advance conservation objectives in an inclusive manner and with particular attention to indigenous peoples and local communities.

Just as we face cultural diversity loss due to economic and social changes, the world is continuing to lose its biodiversity at unprecedented rates, and urgent action is needed to ensure the resilience of people and nature. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is the most comprehensive and authoritative inventory of the global conservation status of plant and animal species. Many of the world's threatened species remain vital not only for ecosystems but also for human livelihoods, particularly those of indigenous peoples who so greatly rely on land and natural resources, including plants and animals. IUCN has recently included a new module in its species technical assessment system focusing on the livelihood and cultural values of species for indigenous peoples and local communities, so that we can also alert about the risks of species decline for the wellbeing of local people. IUCN recognises that traditional knowledge is extremely valuable for identifying, assessing and monitoring species at risk as well as for framing appropriate responses to species loss. It is therefore looking forward to further supporting implementation of the CBD in partnership with indigenous peoples, who harbour a great reservoir of knowledge and experience about their environments and the species found within them.

In line with several articles of the CBD, notably 8 (j), IUCN works hard to incorporate indigenous issues in all of its work. IUCN supports the CBD negotiations on access and benefit sharing (ABS), and in particular provides advice to countries and communities on matters related to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources. IUCN will continue to promote an ABS regime that fully responds to the Convention's objectives, including issues of legal certainty, compliance, and traditional knowledge associated with genetic and biological resources.

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](mailto:Gonzalo.oviedo@iucn.org)

**Kaia Boe**  
Junior Professional -  
Social Policy  
[Kaia.boe@iucn.org](mailto: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 involved in many local capacity building projects throughout the world with the intention of strengthening indigenous and local community institutions to enable just, equitable and sustainable natural resource governance. This work helps them voice their social, economic and cultural rights and advocate against unsustainable developments that threaten biodiversity, ecosystems and the cultures found within them. IUCN will continue to support research on local social and economic dynamics to better understand how to implement integrated conservation strategies for environmental and social well-being.

Protected areas are one of the most important tools for biodiversity conservation under the CBD, and IUCN is a key partner in implementing the CBD programme of work on protected areas. Many protected areas of the world, including marine areas, overlap with lands, territories and resources of indigenous, traditional and rural peoples. IUCN recognises that governance, rights and participation have historically been weak aspects of protected area management. IUCN will continue to work to ensure due recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples in existing protected areas, and that protected areas which may affect indigenous peoples' lands, territories, natural and cultural resources are not established without indigenous peoples' free, prior and informed consent. To this end, IUCN is actively developing new strategies and supporting new initiatives, such as the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights, created by eight major international conservation organisations, which incorporate and engage with indigenous peoples to secure their rights and livelihoods.

In the context of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, IUCN is also working to promote approaches,

tools and measures to improve protected areas governance, participation, equity, rights and livelihoods. Understanding, monitoring and supporting local participation, governance, livelihood and equity indicators place the users of biodiversity back in the equation of successful biodiversity stewardship inside and around Protected Areas.

IUCN will also continue promoting the recognition, respect and support of indigenous and local communities' own conservation practices and initiatives, as well as the improvement of local governance systems that enable and support indigenous peoples to conserve and manage their own environments based on their own rights and responsibilities.

IUCN also works directly with the CBD and its Gender Plan of Action to mainstream gender equality and equity in its programme initiatives and secure gender-balanced access to resources, control of traditional knowledge and participation in governance and decision-making. Indigenous women are key holders of knowledge and sustainable practices and IUCN continues to work towards incorporating their perspectives, needs and rights into biodiversity and other conservation research and decision-making processes across the world.

Mister Chairman,

IUCN reaffirms its commitment to continue working hard to safeguard and promote indigenous peoples' rights and interests in its mission to conserve biodiversity, and looks forward to further collaboration and partnership with the CBD Parties, organs and Secretariat, as well as with indigenous peoples' organisations in this endeavour.

Thank you, Mister Chairman.