



**10<sup>th</sup> Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
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the Strengthening of Partnerships between FAO and Civil Society  
New York, 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2011**

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**Agenda Item 3(b): Environment/Natural Resources**

FAO is a leading Organization in natural resource management, playing an important role in protecting the environment and those who depend on it for survival. The sustainable management of natural resources like forests, fisheries, land and water are part of FAO's daily work to reduce poverty and food insecurity.

Given the very close relationship and linkages between indigenous peoples and natural resources, many of the Organizations environmental programmes are related to indigenous peoples.

In this regard, we would like to highlight three of the most relevant experiences:

- **Natural resources and biodiversity**, in close relationship with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity, FAO through articles 8(j) and 10(c) of the Convention works to preserve the world's biodiversity, supporting the sustainable and customary use of biodiversity.

Or through other initiatives like the 2002 launched Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems, which helps in the conservation and adaptive management of unique traditional agricultural systems around the world. In this initiative, FAO empowers farmers and indigenous peoples in Peru, Chile, Kenya, Tanzania, China, Philippines, Tunisia, and Algeria, so that their traditional practices and livelihoods are not lost.

- **Fire management** like when in 2006 FAO developed Voluntary Guidelines for fire management, recognizing the critical role of fire in sustaining livelihoods as well as the dangers when miss-managed. The integrated approach of fire management promoted by

FAO includes the participation of all stakeholders, recognizing indigenous and traditional practices.

Like for example, on May 2011 during the 5<sup>th</sup> International Wild-land Fire Conference in South Africa when FAO held a specific session on indigenous fire management and knowledge.

- **The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture**, recognizes the enormous contribution of local and indigenous farmers from all regions in the conservation and development of plant genetic resources. With Article 9 of the Treaty stating that the responsibility for realizing Farmers' Rights, as they relate to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, rests with national governments and is subject to national law.

In addition, in 2010 the International Treaty launched the Benefit-sharing Fund. A call for proposals to finance projects that work with local and indigenous farmers to ensure food security. The main objective of the Benefit-sharing fund is to help farmers to adapt to climate change through conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources.

In 2011 at its 4th Session, the Governing Body of the International Treaty emphasized the need to exchange experiences to progress in the implementation of Farmers' Rights. The Treaty invited the Contracting Parties to organize consultations on Farmers' Rights together with farmers and other stakeholders.

These are three key examples of the work of FAO on Natural resource management and the relations between the environment and the local communities living in it.

Thank you very much for your attention