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INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE & ENVIRONMENT

EXPERIMENTATION, INNOVATION, ADAPTATION

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE (IK), ALSO REFERRED TO AS 'TRADITIONAL' or 'local' knowledge is embedded in to the community and is unique to a given culture, location or society. The term refers to the large body of knowledge and skills, including Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP) as well as Indigenous Technological Knowledge (ITK), that has been developed outside the formal education system and that enables vulnerable communities to survive.

IK is dynamic, the result of a continuous process of experimentation, innovation, and adaptation. It has the capacity to blend with knowledge based on science and technology, and should therefore be considered complementary to scientific and technological efforts to solve problems in social and economic development as well as coping with climate change.

The dominance of the western knowledge system has largely led to a prevailing situation in which IK is ignored and neglected. It is therefore easy to forget that, over many centuries, human beings have been producing knowledge and strategies enabling them to survive in a balanced relation with their natural and social environment.

Handed down orally from generation to generation IK has the disadvantage of not being captured and stored in a systematic way. This creates an implicit danger that if not addressed IK may become extinct.

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF IK

- ✓ IK is generated within communities
 - ✓ IK is location and culture specific
 - ✓ IK is the basis for decision making and survival strategies
 - ✓ IK is not systematically documented
 - ✓ IK concerns critical issues of human and animal life
 - ✓ IK is dynamic and based on innovation, adaptation, and experimentation
- IK being linked to survival and subsistence provides a basis for local community level decision-making in the areas of:
- ✓ Food Security
 - ✓ Human and Animal Health
 - ✓ Education
 - ✓ Natural Resource Management
 - ✓ Various other Community-Based Activities.



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The unique, traditional, local knowledge existing within and developed around the specific conditions of women and men indigenous to a particular geographic area.

IK DEFINED BY LOUISE GRENIER

FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE (IDRC).



INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

THE WAY FORWARD

NICOLAS GORJESTANI



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Some of the knowledge sharing techniques and programmes developed under Mr. Gorjestani's leadership have been recognized as best practice by the American Productivity and Quality Center. His publications in the area of knowledge and development include: Capacity Enhancement through Knowledge Transfer: a Behavioral Framework for Reflection, Action and Results (World Bank, 2005); «The Way Forward on Indigenous Knowledge», in Indigenous Knowledge: Local Pathways to Global Development (World Bank, 2004); Knowledge Sharing in the Africa Region: a Results Framework (co-authored, World Bank, 2004); Innovations in Knowledge Sharing and Learning in the Africa Region: Retrospective and Prospective (World Bank, 2002); Indigenous Knowledge for Development: Opportunities and Challenges (2001); Leveraging Knowledge into the Africa Region's Quality Assurance Process – A Road Map (World Bank, 1999); Indigenous Knowledge for Development – A Framework for Action (co-authored, World Bank, 1998); Knowledge Sharing & Innovation in the Africa Region – A Retrospective (World Bank, 1998); Mr. Gorjestani has contributed papers at several international conferences on knowledge and development.

He now devotes his time to advising, lecturing and writing on development strategy, organizational knowledge sharing and learning, and leadership development issues. This article is adapted from the author's concluding chapter in Indigenous Knowledge: Local Pathways to Global Development, (World Bank, 2004).

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IN 1998, THE WORLD BANK LAUNCHED THE INDIGENOUS Knowledge for Development Program in response to the challenge articulated by governments' and civil society leaders at the Global Knowledge Conference in Toronto, Canada in 1997. At the same time, a new vision of a Knowledge Bank was formulated, recognizing that beside the role of storehouse of universally applicable and transferable knowledge, the Bank would seek to:

- ✓ Empower its clients to tap a variety of knowledge sources, including indigenous knowledge systems embedded in local communities;
- ✓ Help connect clients to each other and to other sources of experience;
- ✓ Learn from and with clients about what may works in a given setting and why.

The 'business case' for using Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is based on the following assumption: that understanding the local context allows for a better adaptation of the global knowledge; that using local knowledge sources increases ownership and eventually produces better results on the ground with higher sustainability; that learning from and building on the knowledge systems embedded in local communities helps to empower these communities and fosters a sense of equity in their interactions with governments and external development partners¹; that building on IK could only be achieved in partnership with the communities themselves, with governments and civil society, and with development partners and academia, in order to leverage scarce resources and maximize the comparative advantage of the respective partners²; and, most importantly, that investing in the exchange of IK and its integration into development programs supported by the Bank and its development partners would help achieve the main development objective, the reduction of poverty.

A decade of experience in that sector has led us to the following observations: the successful indigenous practices have a huge potential to enhance the impact and the sustainability of development efforts, and the development community should therefore increase its support to programs that reinforce

→ | THE EXPERT

“Men are not to be judged by what they do not know, but by what they know, and the manner in which they know it.”

VAUVENARGUES

the ability of local communities to share and apply IK. In the following, a six-point agenda for enriching the development programs with the integration of effective IK practices is outlined.

THE WAY FORWARD

Over the past few years IK has been progressively put on the agenda of development, as people are more aware of the value of IK for the development process. Although sharing IK across borders and communities is still dominated by academic circles rather than by practitioners, the integration of IK into development projects is gradually beginning to take place.

Nevertheless, to build on and to widely extend the progress to date, much more efforts are required.

The main actors are clearly the communities and the practitioners, even if governments and their development partners can play an important role by supporting appropriate policies, programs, researches, and targeted interventions.

Would it be realistic to envision that, within the next five to ten years, learning from IK and incorporating successful practices into development programs may become the standard rather than the exception? The following six-point agenda suggests both governments' and partners' actions which contribute to realize this vision.

SCALE UP SUCCESSFUL IK PRACTICES TO HELP ACHIEVE THE MDGS

According to an ample evidence, one of the best ways to empower the local communities is to let them apply their indigenous practices in development activities that affect them directly. While local institutions and governments are increasingly interested in incorporating IK into programs and projects, the degree of such interest varies from case to case. Some governments, for example, are uncertain about the commitment of external partners in supporting the activities, and raise doubts about the effectiveness of such an approach.

Table 1 highlights the potential contribution of IK to the achievement of the MDGs. These cases demonstrate that, with an appropriate adaptation and leveraging with other knowledge resources, IK can make a significant contribution in saving lives, educating children, increasing agricultural production, enhancing governance, etc. It would be therefore recommended that partners increase their support to community-driven activities that rely on IK.

ENHANCE THE ABILITY OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO DEVELOP, SHARE AND APPLY THEIR IK

One of the most effective ways to empower local communities is to help enhance their ability to exchange and apply indigenous practices (either directly or in combination with other practices). In particular, brokering knowledge and bringing together knowledge seekers and providers can increase the participative problem-solving capacity within local communities. Specific actions in this area may include:

- ✓ Development of national IK strategies and their incorporation into poverty reduction programs;

MDG	IK EXAMPLE	SOURCE
ERADICATE POVERTY AND HUNGER	In the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, farmers used their local knowledge and expertise to increase agricultural productivity and incomes by 60 per cent in about five years.	<i>IK Notes 45</i>
ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION	In West Africa, the use of local language as a medium of instruction has helped increase literacy rates among rural populations and provided gainful employment for teachers and young girls.	<i>IK Notes 5</i>
PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN	Women are playing an active role as agents of social change throughout Africa. In Senegal, the women of Malicounda empowered themselves to put an end to the local practice of female genital mutilation.	<i>IK Notes 3</i>
REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY	Throughout Africa, local communities use traditional child rearing practices to supplement the diet of infants. In Ethiopia, traditional medicine is used to treat common infant diseases.	<i>IK Notes 35</i>
IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH	In Uganda, traditional birth attendants have collaborated with district health centers, using modern ICTs, to help reduce maternal mortality reportedly by over 50 per cent in three years.	<i>IK Notes 40</i>
COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES	In Tanzania, traditional healers have successfully treated opportunistic infections of over 4000 AIDS patients, prolonging their lives.	<i>IK Notes 51</i>
ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	Rural Communities in Mozambique manage control of forest exploitation along the country's shoreline through myths and traditional rites, maintaining these resources for the next generations.	<i>IK Notes 46</i>
BUILD A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT	A team of IK experts from East Africa visits counterparts in South Asia to develop a partnership for South-South cooperation on IK-related activities.	<i>IK Notes 55</i>

TABLE 1. POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF IK
TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE MDGS

SOURCE: *Indigenous Knowledge: Local Pathways to Global Development*, World Bank, 2004. *IK Notes* is a monthly publication reporting on IK-based practices.
See <http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ik>.

- ✓ Brokering South-South cross-regional IK learning exchanges;
- ✓ Facilitation of intra-regional community-to-community learning exchanges;
- ✓ Building of IK professional associations, standards and ethics; and
- ✓ Supporting communities to develop businesses related to IK.

The governments should take the lead in creating the appropriate policy environment for the evolution of these activities. On the other side partners could provide the resources required for brokering, for the facilitating functions and for the dissemination of lessons of experience (e.g., in the form of tool kits and guidelines, some prototypes of which have already been developed). Projects, intermediaries and government agencies could be supported in providing opportunities for exposing traditional practitioners to the scientific research community and other professional associations. At the same time, the private sector could be encouraged through appropriate policies to invest in the development of products derived from indigenous practices, or develop appropriate community – private sector partnerships².

DEVELOP INNOVATIVE PROTOCOLS
FOR THE VALIDATION AND
PROTECTION OF IK

Existing international protocols governing intellectual property rights (IPR) are essentially based on the concept of patent. Similarly, protocols for validation of traditional medicine are essentially based on discovering the effect of single substances on a specific disease or illness. In the case of traditional medicine, given the multiple ingredients in a herbal treatment, the application of such protocols appears problematic. Accordingly, more appropriate approaches are needed to address the issues of IPR and the scientific validation of IK.

While a start in this direction has been observed, a more concerted action is called for. Governments can help by designing appropriate policies and legal covenants. The partners, led by WIPO in the case of IPR issues and by WHO in the case of traditional medicine, could contribute by promoting the use of appropriate international protocols and disseminating them through an information campaign that reaches the local practitioners and the communities, associations researchers etc.

DEVELOP A RESULTS FRAMEWORK
FOR MONITORING IK AND MEASURING ITS IMPACT

Thanks to an increasing of number of projects and activities incorporating IK, a considerable body of evidence, useful for expanding IK applications across countries, is being formed. It is therefore important to identify effective approaches to monitoring and evaluation of results in projects that incorporate IK, and to establish a larger database of quantifiable results of IK-driven activities. Sector-specific sets of indicators need to be developed, to demonstrate how the incorporation of useful IK (or addressing harmful practices) in development has made a difference. Such a framework would also help distill successful approaches for replication and scale up. The framework

should be referenced against the MDGs, indicating how IK can contribute to achieve them. Finally, such an approach would help also address the issues related to validation and IPR associated with IK. Governments could ensure that national IK strategies contain appropriate arrangements for measuring the results. The partners could help by developing common methodologies based on successful country practices and disseminating them to the communities of practice.

ESTABLISH AN INNOVATION FUND
TO PROMOTE SUCCESSFUL IK PRACTICES

Even if IK is typically passed on from generation to generation, such heritage is not rigid, and each generation can adapt and improve the earlier practices. Local communities have the potential for creativity and innovation. It is

evidenced that enabled impoverished communities and traditional practitioners are actually capable of developing new problem solving approaches, building on their intellectual capital (i.e., their IK systems).

Evidences also suggest that an innovation fund supporting such activities can impressively stimulate further creative thinking among the impoverished communities. For example, the GTZ has evaluated a series of small scale innovation projects funded by Germany and found them to be particularly useful in promoting community-based initiatives, micro-enterprise development and local

innovations. Similarly, the World Bank's Development Marketplace has spurred several very creative community-based solutions, some of which have involved IK³. An innovation fund dedicated to IK could be modeled on the latter and provide a platform for partners to provide resources as "venture capital" for IK-related innovation⁴.

ORGANIZE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS AND EVENTS
TO PROMOTE THE ABOVE AGENDA

Despite the recent progress, the awareness of the role played by IK in development is generally limited. Yet, a growing body of evidence suggests that successful indigenous practices can effectively contribute to the development agenda. In this context, it is time to establish a high level advocacy group composed by global leaders and other eminent personalities to help raise said level of awareness.

In addition, it appears appropriate to organize a global conference in order to bring together policy makers, representatives of IK communities of practice and other community-based organizations, the development partners, and other possible actors, to help generate a stronger commitment to implement the above agenda. Year 2010 would be a realistic and ideal target for such a conference, giving still a suitable springboard for the IK's role in the remaining five years before the target date of the MDGs in 2015.



Such a global event would underline the commitment of development partners to promote the use of IK in the development process.

FINAL REMARKS⁵

We have learned that IK is a critical factor for sustainable development and empowerment of local communities. The integration of IK into the development process will help to enrich it and make it more equitable. Like any other knowledge, IK needs to be constantly used, challenged, and further adapted to the evolving contexts.

Supporting local and regional networks of IK practitioners and facilitating community-to-community knowledge and learning exchanges will help to enable the communities to participate more actively in the development process as protagonists of their own development. While innovative mechanisms for the validation and protection of IK need to be developed, many indigenous practices can at the same

² There are good examples: in South Africa, tea-growing farmers of Suid Bokkeveld have used indigenous practices (adopted from farmers in Wupperthal in West Cape Province) to improve their post-harvest processing and set up a cooperative which has succeeded in securing export orders to Europe. In Uganda, the authorities are supporting the marketing of toothpaste based on indigenous plants.

³ In fact, the Bank's IK Program was launched with a grant from the Bank's Innovation Marketplace, which preceded the Bank's Development Marketplace concept, then limited to proposals from Bank teams. The Development Marketplace expanded the concept to include proposals from civil society groups in participating countries. At each marketplace, (several such events have been organized to date), the Bank provides innovation grants (about \$100,000 on average) to several innovation projects selected from thousands of proposals. For example, the marketplace held in December 2003, awarded about \$6 million to 47 proposals from 27 countries.


⁴ For a review of approaches to supporting grass-roots innovation see *Supporting Local Innovation for Rural Development: Analysis and review of Five Innovation Support Funds*, Danish Institute for International Stud-



time be adapted and scaled up within local, national, and regional development efforts.

To proceed on these fronts, a stronger commitment from governments, partners, community-based organizations, and other interested players to work together is required. Finally, we need to promote a strong partnership to harness IK for development in a process of learning from communities and helping communities to learn.

ies, June, 2006. This study was commissioned by the IK for Development Program and supported by a Danish Trust Fund.

⁵ For further information on the IK for Development Program please consult: <http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ik> 

¹ For example, WIPO would concentrate on IPR issues; IFAD on agricultural topics; NGOs would provide the link to communities, etc. Before the launch of the IK Program, the following initial partners were consulted in the context of PICTA (Partnership for ICT in Africa): ECA, CISDA, IDRC, ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, and WHO. Subsequently, the IK Program collaborated also with others, including CIDA, CIRAN at NUFFIC (Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education), FAO, GM/CCD (Global Mechanism of the Convention to Combat Desertification), GTZ, IFAD, ILO, Netherlands Development Cooperation, NORAD, Swiss Development Cooperation, UNCED, UNCTAD, WIPO, and numerous NGOs, CBOs and centers of excellence, mainly in Africa and South Asia.



RECOGNITIONS OF LAND RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

A STRUGGLE AGAINST STATE LEGAL SYSTEMS AND ENFORCEMENT BARRIERS

LEBO MOFOLO

LEGISLATIONS AND LEGAL SYSTEMS HAVE POSED COUNTLESS struggles to indigenous people, such as failures to effectively recognise and protect their identity, culture and language(s), and difficulties to enforce and uphold the existing laws. It is in relation to indigenous peoples' land rights that the failures of legal systems are the most evident, although the reasons are greatly dependent on contextual factors such as the individual community, the nature of the rights sought and the pressure of the State for the available natural resources. Additionally, the countries inhabited by the majority of the indigenous population are historically states having a weak rule of law in the social or political arenas, and where the legislative and judiciary systems, even today, are fraught with loopholes and barriers to an effective justice. Despite all the challenges, several indigenous communities have successfully gained legal recognition of their land rights, and some states have even integrated indigenous people's rights into their legal system. Most indigenous communities, however, must still fight against the time in order to gain a basic legal recognition, before their culture and society – which is highly dependent on land – are irreversibly eroded.

The effects of the colonisation by European settlers are the source of the initial hurdle faced in establishing land rights. In the states colonised or administered by the British Empire, for example, traditions and customary laws of indigenous communities were somehow recognised. In Manipur, a state in Northeast India, homeland of the large community of *Naga*, the British colonialists “did not disturb the hill villages. Instead they recognised their Headmen (chieftans) and entrusted them with the village administration”¹. In Mizoram and Meghalaya, similar provisions were implemented². Antony Allott distinguishes between this British system of ‘Indirect Rule’ and the French colonialists’ system of progressive assimilation, the latter recognising that “the native populations were best administered through and under their own institutions”, with some exceptions pertaining to penal laws³. In most colonised

indigenous communities, however, the governing institutions were exact copies of those of the colonising State. As a result, the nature of the relationship between the indigenous communities and their land was not properly recognised, and the

enacted laws had often the consequence of deteriorating the quality of life of the affected communities. The effects of the past colonial administration are still felt by many indigenous communities worldwide.

A major issue of the latter stages of colonisation is indeed represented by land reform laws, against whose effect most indigenous communities are attempting to find legal recognition of land rights. The British in Kenya instituted a “land register” similar to the British one, where the customary ownership of land was transformed into recordable titles. This procedure spread gradually throughout Kenya, and was then applied in other African states. Although considered as a legal equivalent to customary rights, the land registration system had the effect of alienating indigenous communities from the traditional relationship they had with their land, characterized by a unique and relevant nature of their customary rights system⁴.

Other land reforms were more blatant in their object to dispossess and steal the land from indigenous communities. The ‘San’ or ‘Khoi’ hunter-gatherer indigenous communities of southern Africa have been subject to large abuses of their human rights, instituted through forced eviction from their traditional territories and forced settlement in camps⁵. The settlers established farms in the territories inhabited by the San, fencing off this land and denying any access to the migratory indigenous communities⁶. Natural resources essential for the San population, such as water and certain plants, were then used to support the farming industry. Additionally, reserves were also introduced, leading to further land dispossession⁷. These reforms remain today the main barriers to land right recognition amongst the San community in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia and represent the primary source of the social problems – relating to health, education and welfare – which currently plague the San.

→ | DISCUSSION

“There is an
ABC ignorance
which precedes
knowledge and
a doctorial
ignorance that
comes after it.”

MONTAIGNE

For the majority of indigenous communities, the end of colonisation did not result in an improvement of their legal status. The issues of displacement and land alienation have in fact worsened in the past fifty years, as population increase and environmental degradation put pressure on land and natural resources, problems which developing states are often poorly equipped to deal with. As a result, indigenous people striving to have their land rights acknowledged and enforced are placed in conflict with the interests of the State and global industries such as those of mining, logging and agriculture⁸.

In the North-eastern region of India, homeland of a large diversity of indigenous populations covering seven states, there are two main causes of land alienation. Firstly, there is an increasing demand of land for economic development, either from the State or private entities. Secondly, there is the issue of encroachment by immigrant populations, whose number the local and national authorities have effectively failed to curb. These issues are exacerbated by a legal system that fails to take into account the principle of customary land ownership, and by the lack of real access and integration into the legal system⁹. Similar causes of land alienation are also present in South America, where the massive flux of workers attracted by the large industries has increased the pressure on shared natural resources, and Amazonian indigenous people now “constitute a minority population in relation to other Amazonian inhabitants”¹⁰. In Cambodia, Jeremy Ironside notes nine causes of land alienation amongst indigenous communities, including lack of awareness of legal rights and representation, absence of a clear legislative framework, registration and enforcement mechanisms, intimidation and land grabbing by powerful people, officials and military, forest clearing, in-migration into indigenous areas and forced land selling¹¹.

Tackling the causes of land alienation has proved to be beyond the capacity of many developing states, whose resources are often limited by other obligations or otherwise woefully mismanaged. In Kenya, it has been the Maasai indigenous population itself who struggled to keep the issue of land alienation as a priority in the political agenda. They have met resistance from almost all sectors of the political administration and judiciary, both pre- and post-independence. In 1912 they pursued a civil case suing the British colonial administration for damages resulting from the 1904/1911 Anglo-Maasai Treaties, which resulted in most of the traditional Maasai land being fraudulently transferred to the British¹². Although the case was dismissed by the Court of Appeal on points of technicality, the Maasai were not deterred and brought the issue

up at the 1923 and 1933 East Africa Royal Commission¹³. Post-independence, the Maasai have used civil society organisations in order to continue raising awareness of their plight. In spite of the positive reaction of the media and a large sector of Kenya’s population, the government remains unwilling to assist the Maasai and has on occasion used brutality to suppress their movement¹⁴.

Not all the struggles for land rights of indigenous communities stem from land alienation. In the northern hemisphere, in particular the indigenous communities of the Circumpolar North, Canada and Scandinavia land alienation is only a relatively recent phenomena, coinciding with the discovery of oil and mineral deposits in parts of this region. Previous exploitation of local resources by non-indigenous people was limited to fishing, whaling and hunting of wildlife, since the harsh climate made any settlement by non-indigenous communities nearly impossible¹⁵. The indigenous communities in these regions have generally been quite successful in establishing land claims. The Inuit and First Nation indigenous groups in Canada managed to settle claims in the past decade which have granted them extensive land rights. Both

the Saami of Scandinavia and Russia’s indigenous communities have seen the approval of legislation in which certain land rights are acknowledged. Their main challenge has been the enforcement and the recognition of these legal rights, facing an increasing interest in the exploitation of the Circumpolar North¹⁶.

As mentioned before, the legislation enacted in order to protect the land rights of indigenous communities is often rigged with caveats and fails to capture the real nature of the relationship between indigenous communities and their land. In most indigenous societies, land is not considered as an absolute property of one individual, like

in the contemporary or colonially-introduced notions of property, but a communal resource, held jointly by all the people and governed by the principle of intergenerational equity¹⁷. This principle decrees that the present generations should use resources to meet their needs without limiting the same possibility for future generations¹⁸. This model of land ownership runs counter to contemporary or colonially-introduced notions of property, whereby land is titled to an individual (traditionally male) who holds it absolutely¹⁹. Even if such communal land ownership is not practiced by all indigenous societies²⁰, the majority of legislation regarding indigenous land is conflicting with the interests of the community, is ineffective and prone to abuse or misapplication²¹. In a number of countries, this issue has been addressed with different degrees of success.

The indigenous communities of Northeast India have a huge variety of customary land tenure systems, which



reflect the lifestyle and means of sustenance of each community²². These unique land tenure systems often derive from indigenous knowledge about the land and its resources, resulting in an harmonious relationship between the indigenous community and their environment²³. This area of India is governed by a number of laws, with the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution preventing the sale of tribal land to non-tribals and the Sixth Schedule covering several states, in addition to specific laws and regulations of other states in the region²⁴. The Sixth Schedule recognises customary laws, and by virtue of this, communal land ownership systems valid in indigenous communities²⁵. However, this recognition does not apply to the entire North east region, and other laws offer only minimal protection of customary rights²⁶.

Indigenous people's land rights are often established via a claim procedure or registration. These processes are the most problematic for indigenous communities who cannot navigate the complex arena of the regional or national administrative and judicial systems. Furthermore, the criteria for a successful land claim are often beyond the means and capacity of many indigenous communities; in some cases, the claims mechanism is entirely counterproductive, as it requires information not traditionally documented by the indigenous tribes. However, with the help of third parties in the form of NGO's and other regional and international bodies, many indigenous groups have found support in making claims either through the established procedures or via the judiciary route.

The Philippines enacted the Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) (Aka Republic Acts 8371) in 1997. Its objective is to ensure the "recognition of land a resources, rights and titling of indigenous lands and territories"²⁷. This legislation established a titling procedure for either ancestral lands (Certificate for Ancestral Land Title or CALT) or ancestral domains (Certificate for Ancestral Domain Title or CADT) claims involving, *inter alia*, petition for delineation and delineation proper, submission of supporting documents, notice and publication, issuance of a CALT or CADT²⁸. However, this mechanism has proved difficult to apply in practice, and the rate at which applications have been made since the introduction of the legislature far outweigh the pace at which titles are awarded²⁹. Lourdes Amos notes that this backlog indicates the "government's reluctance to fully recognize the indigenous people' land and resource rights" resulting from

conflict of interest over resources and overlapping policies in addition to lack of political will and insincerity towards full recognition of rights³⁰.

In South America, indigenous Amazonian communities have faced similar challenges in terms of establishing land rights through the existing state mechanisms. In their case, the main issue pertains to the recognition of territorial rights as opposed to just land rights. There has been a reluctance expressed by most Amazonian states³¹ to recognising broad territorial claims, with Bolivia being the only state applying the "territorial method" of titling³². The result is that most of the land claims held by Amazonian

indigenous communities cover sporadic patches of forest which increases the risk of exploitation and displacement³³. Additionally, Pedro García Hierro notes that "the procedures for legalising lands are generally unnecessarily complex, long and costly, and highly vulnerable to administrative and legal chicanery"³⁴ and this problem is exacerbated by a land registry system which is badly managed³⁵.



The Canadian land claim boards are perhaps the best example of successful procedural mechanism for establishing land rights. The claim boards were established in response to the need to address 'comprehensive land claims' in territories where indigenous peoples had not previously signed treaties with the Canadian government³⁶. The system by which these boards function is essential to their success, in that they are independent public bodies composed of candidates appointed by the federal government from a pool nominated by one of the parties to the claim³⁷. This allows for indigenous people to represent the majority of the board members, and not to feel accountable either towards their nominators nor the federal government; such independence ensures that the validity of the claims board is not undermined.

The problems pertaining to the land rights of migratory indigenous communities are particularly critical. Their means of sustenance often require access to a land that cannot be legally claimed, due to their temporary settlement. As a result, most of the San community of southern Africa have been dispossessed of their land, and only recently begin to see some remedial action from the State. Government initiatives include parallel efforts to integrate the San community into the countries larger social and economic network via education and employment programmes³⁸. In Botswana, the First People of the Kalahari

San organisation have been instrumental in the effort of the San to have their rights to access to the Central Kalahari Game Reserve recognised, and in 2003 they brought a legal action against the government of Botswana, claiming that they had been illegally removed from their land³⁹. Three years later the High Court of Botswana ruled in their favour by a majority of two-to-one, and this landmark decision heralds a new chapter in the development of land rights for indigenous peoples⁴⁰.

Enforcement of land rights remains a critical issue for both indigenous communities and the states in which they reside. As aforementioned, the quality of the legislation enacted to protect indigenous peoples' rights is often dire, with contradictory, unclear and incomplete stipulations. This makes it easier for third parties to break laws without fear of being caught or punished, demonstrated by the sheer volume of illegal logging that takes part in lands rightfully occupied by indigenous peoples. In addition to this, the institutions whose responsibility is to manage

indigenous community issues are often poorly equipped to deal with the myriad of challenges they face, and often have to compete with larger state institutions (for instance economic or agricultural) which creates additional barriers to enforcing indigenous community rights. The situation with judicial enforcement is equally problematic, not only due to the legislation, but also to additional factors, such as a weak or non-existent rule of law culture, a scarce funding and inadequately trained legal professionals.

The situation with indigenous communities in South America shows enforcement problems across several areas. Firstly, despite the existing regulations for legalising lands of Amazonian indigenous communities, the procedural structure is unnecessarily burdensome, costly and lengthy⁴¹. Furthermore, as Pedro García Heirro notes, "the procedures for revision and recovery of lands are not duly considered in any of the legal regulations"⁴². The existence of land rights does not necessarily correspond to their respect by state institutions, so that logging concessions are periodically granted in respect of land that has already indigenous people's rights attached⁴³. In terms of judicial enforcement, the courts are often unsympathetic to the plight of the indigenous people, and lack of court access continues to form a barrier to legal remedies⁴⁴.

In Asia, indigenous people face continuous hurdles in their efforts to have their land rights respected. Despite the

Indigenous Peoples' Land Rights Act, the Philippines have failed to prevent the grant of land which is part of the ancestral domains or has no concurrent conflicting rights attached thereto⁴⁵. The National Commission of Indigenous Peoples – the government agency responsible for implementing indigenous policies and legislation – is often embroiled in internal political conflicts, with corrupt officials and a lack of political will or commitment towards enforcing legislation⁴⁶. In Cambodia, land rights are undermined by both the local authorities and the manipulative actions of third parties seeking land. The latter can conclude illegal land transactions with indigenous people,

whose basic understanding of legal terminology or notions makes almost impossible any legal review or challenge. Local authorities and powerful officials are also known to illegally appropriate land rightfully occupied by indigenous communities, offering them neither compensation nor justification⁴⁷.

In those countries where the rule of law is a fundamental institution in

the legal system, enforcement is mostly unproblematic. Indigenous communities in the circumpolar north, including those of Canada and Scandinavia, are strongly represented within civil society, and are consulted by public and private institutions in relation to proposed measures⁴⁸. However, recent mining and oil gas exploration have led to an increased disregard of the enforcement and respect of the rights of indigenous communities including circumvention of legal stipulations⁴⁹. Indigenous communities in these areas can no longer take it for granted that the regulations and institutions in place to protect them from land displacement will be continue to be effective⁵⁰.

For the vast majority of the world's indigenous communities, the legal system within which they belong has both helped and hindered their pursuit of the right to live in a traditional way. A number of binding international legal instruments such as the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (1946)⁵¹ and the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)⁵² recognise certain rights of indigenous communities and have highlighted the need to integrate them within the international legal forum. Furthermore, the recently adopted United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), although not binding on states, has focussed on the core issues facing indigenous communities and recognising their role in the global community⁵³. Articles 25 to 30, in particular



consider the breadth of land rights held by indigenous people and establish the notion that “land rights” is not simply synonymous of titling; but rather covers a broad spectrum of rights, relationships, entitlements and similar issues.

Land rights continue to be one the most contentious issue facing indigenous people despite the progress made at domestic, regional and international levels, because unlike social or cultural rights, there are often resource matters, and thus economic opportunities, to take account of. When these conflicts of interest arise in developing states, indigenous communities are often the first to lose out, and despite the efforts of NGO's and other bodies, ranging from village to global level, legal recognition and enforcement of indigenous land rights are still far from being achieved. This problem is exacerbated by the meantime exploitation of resources in indigenous lands, without consideration to sustainability or compensation. The ability of indigenous people to continue existing according to their chosen lifestyle closely depends on whether the global community can effectively consolidate their rights within the legal environment, and within a timeframe that will not render those rights obsolete.

¹ SHIMRAY, U. A., “Tribal Land Alienation in the North Eastern Region: Laws and Land Realitions” (Guwahati, 2006) p. 10, available on <http://www.iwgia.org/graphics/Synkron-Library/Documents/publications/Downloadpublications/Books/Tribal%20Land%20Alienation.pdf>.

² *Ibid.* p. 11.

³ ALLOTT, A., “The Limits of Law” (London Butterworths, 1980) p. 182.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 183-184.

⁵ VANDERPOST, C., JORAM/USEB, and CRAWHALL, N., “Traditional Knowledge and Emancipation of Hunter-Gatherers in Southern Africa” in *Indigenous Affairs: Land Rights, A Key Issue* (2004)36-41 (36) available on <http://www.iwgia.org/graphics/Synkron-Library/Documents/publications/Downloadpublications/IndigenousAffairs/1A42004.pdf>.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 38.

⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 38-40.

⁸ TAULI-CORPUZ, V. and TAMANG, P., “Oil Palm and Other Commercial Tree Plantations, Monocropping: Impacts on Indigenous Peoples’ Land Tenure and Resource Management Systems and Livelihoods” (Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples Sixth Session, May 2007) E/C19/2007/CRP6, available on http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/en/session_sixth.html.

⁹ *Supra note 1*, p. 9.

¹⁰ GARCIA HIERRO, P., “Governance, the Territorial Approach and Indigenous Peoples” in *Indigenous Affairs: Land Rights, A Key Issue* (2004)8-13 (10-11).

¹¹ IRONSIDE, J., “Securing Land Tenure Rights for Cambodia’s Indigenous Communities” in *Indigenous Affairs: Land Rights, A Key Issue* (2004)14-19 (15-16).

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¹³ SIMES, J.O., “The Century-Long Displacement and Dispossession of the Maasai in Kenya” in *Indigenous Affairs: Land Rights, A Key Issue* (2004) 41-46 (43).

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 45.

¹⁵ AHLENIUS H., JOHNSEN, K., NELLEMAN, C., Vital Arctic Graphics “*People and Global Heritage in our Last Wild Shores*” (2005) UNEP GRID-

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¹⁶ WIBEN JENSEN, M., “Editorial” *Indigenous Affairs: Land Rights, A Key Issue* (2004)4-7 (4).

¹⁷ *Supra note 1*, p. 8. *Supra note 10*, p. 14.

¹⁸ Principle 3, Rio Declaration, 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

¹⁹ *Supra note 1*, pp. 25, 27.

²⁰ *Supra note 1*, pp. 18, 22-24.

²¹ *Supra note 1*, pp. 14, 22, 24-25.

²² *Supra note 1*, pp. 9, 18-19.

²³ *Supra note 1*, p. 8.

²⁴ *Supra note 1*, p. 10-12.

²⁵ *Supra note 1*, p. 15.

Supra note 15, p. 6.

²⁶ *Supra note 1*, p. 20.

²⁷ AMOS, L., “Titling Ancestral Domains: The Philippine Experience” *Indigenous Affairs: Land Rights, A Key Issue* (2004)20-25 (21).

²⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 21-22.

²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 22.

³⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 22-24.

³¹ Amongst others Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela etc.

³² *Supra note 9*, pp. 8-9.

³³ *Supra note 9*, p. 9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Supra note 9*, p. 10.

³⁶ WHITE, G., “Strengthening Indigenous Peoples’ Influence: ‘Claim Boards’ in Northern Canada” *Indigenous Affairs: Land Rights, A Key Issue* (2004)26-30 (26).

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 29.

³⁸ *Supra note 5*, pp. 40-41.

³⁹ <http://www.iwgia.org/sw9940.asp>.

⁴⁰ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6174709.stm>.

⁴¹ *Supra note 9*, p. 9.

⁴² *Supra note 9*, p. 10.

⁴³ *Supra note 9*, p. 11.

⁴⁴ *Supra note 9*, p. 9.

⁴⁵ *Supra note 26*, pp. 22-23.

⁴⁶ *Supra note 26*, p. 24.

⁴⁷ *Supra note 10*, pp. 15-16.

⁴⁸ *Supra note 35*, pp. 2 6-30.

Of particular note are the Saami Council and the Inuit Circumpolar Council.

⁴⁹ <http://www.artictpople.org/2008/02/25/undermining-saami-rights-in-sweden/>.

<http://www.iwgia.org/graphics/Synkron-Library/Documents/Notice-board/News%202007/Artic/SwedenSamistuggleoverlandrights.htm>.

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⁵⁰ *Supra note 15*, p. 4.

⁵¹ Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling, <http://www.iwcoffice.org/conservation/aboriginal.htm>.

⁵² Preamble and Article 15, 16 and 19.

⁵³ http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf. ■



A silly remark can be made in Latin, as well as in Spanish.

CERVANTES, *The Dialogue of the Dogs*.



ENVIRONMENTAL REFUGEES

FLEE A CHANGING PLANET

LIAM OSBOURNE

THE REALITY THAT THE WORLD'S CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT is changing due to harmful human activities is a widely accepted scientific fact. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stated in 2007 "most of the observed increase in globally averaged temperatures since the mid-20th century is *very likely* due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations, which has *very likely*... contributed to a rise in mean sea level¹." However, even though it is certain that global warming over the past 50 years can be attributed to human activity, and that certain countries are more culpable than others, it is hard to establish legal causation making the question of what to do with environmental refugees a difficult one. The current definition for refugees as is expressed in the Refugee Convention sees refugees as, "people outside of their own country because of a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a social group or political opinion, and where there is a failure of state protection in the country of origin or habitual residence²."

This definition reflects its post World War II context, seeing as it only covers those peoples who have fled or been forcefully exiled from their countries to other states. The definitional requirement of exile poses a huge problem for environmental refugees many of whom are 'internally displaced people' (IDPs). While the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the main agency in charge of IDPs it only covers those that are forced to move because of violent conflict. One only needs to look at the case of Darfur to see how the lack of attention given to environmental refugees can lead to greater conflict. As UN Secretary-General Bai Ki Moon said, "the situation in Darfur began as an ecological crisis, arising at least in part from climate change³," with food shortages and drought leading to population movement and subsequent conflict. Had the UNHCR had the mandate to deal

with environmental refugees at an earlier stage perhaps conflict could have been avoided.

A second problem with the current refugee label is that it requires a certain level of persecution. Even though storms, droughts, and landslides are harmful to humans they are not persecuting individuals per se. Closely linked to this is the third hurdle which is the fact that even if it was possible to establish legal causation of Mother Nature persecuting people it has to be on the account of a certain characteristic whether it be an individual's race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion⁴. Climate change and its effects on groups of people is cruelly indiscriminate, affecting people from all backgrounds with no discretion.

However, just because there is no formal legal recognition of environmental refugees does not mean that they do not exist. For Brian Gorlick, a senior policy advisor in the New York office of the UNHCR, environmentally displaced people cannot be ignored. They are defined by him as groups of

people "who are displaced from or who feel obliged to leave their usual place of residence, because their lives, livelihoods and welfare have been placed at serious risk as a result of adverse environmental, ecological or climatic processes and events⁵." When the statistics are examined their situation is quite alarming. Worldwide, approximately 188 million people were adversely affected by natural disasters in the 1990s, six times more than the 31 million whom where directly or indirectly affected by war⁶. The UNHCR reports that there were 2.4 million refugees globally in 1975. This figure rose to ten times that over following decades with a high of 27.4 million global refugees in 1995 dipping to a still alarming 19.2 million refugees in 2005⁷. And while these are only the numbers for political refugees if one compounds this with the forecasted trends for environmental refugees the picture painted is a frightening one. The Tokyo based United Nations University recently reported that there will be up to 50 million more environmental refugees globally by the end of this decade

OVERVIEW

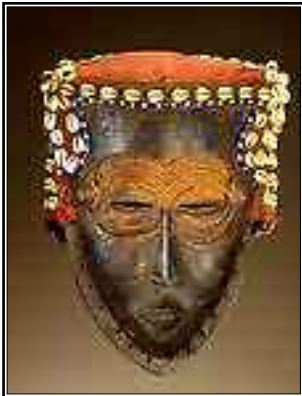
"Knowledge is little; to know the right context is much, to know the right spot is everything."

JOSEPH JOUBERT

because of rising sea levels, desertification, dried up aquifers, weather-induced flooding and other serious environmental changes⁸. A study by Oxford academic Norman Myers predicts that by 2050 up to 150 million people will be displaced due to global warming with 73 million being displaced in China, 26 million in Bangladesh, and some 20 million in India⁹.

Yet, despite this alarming picture, not much is being done. Because of this many of the worlds' indigenous people, who are already marginalized and disproportionately face the adverse effects of climate change, have voiced their frustrations. In March 2007 the Inuit people of the Arctic regions of the US and Canada sought a declaration

from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights holding the US responsible for "irreparable changes to their



environment¹⁰." In a 200 page document the representatives of the Inuit peoples outlined how animals that they relied on were disappearing, thawing permafrost was leading to landslides, travel was becoming increasingly difficult because of unpredictable weather, and how traditional knowledge was becoming unreliable in the warmer temperatures¹¹. All of these climate changes make the forced movement of the Inuit a very real scenario for the future. For other groups of indigenous peoples the inevitability of moving has already come upon them with the inhabitants of Papua New Guinea's Carteret Islands having already begun the process of moving to the mainland. The reason for the move is because rising sea levels have made their traditional homeland uninhabitable, with saltwater contamination, severe storms and overall ecosystem destruction occurring. Apart from these facts such a move is necessary since the islands are expected to be completely submerged by the year 2015¹². While the Carteret Islanders are seen as the world's first environmental refugees Hurricane Katrina, which hit the south-eastern coastal states of the US in August 2005 causing over 1,000 deaths, displaced over one million people, and cost an estimated US\$125 billion in damage provides another example¹³. And as pointed out before Mother Nature does not discriminate, the plight of environmental refugees is as much an issue for the wealthiest country in the world as it is for those living on the tiny Carteret Islands.

How can this all be dealt with? Many raise this question, and the usual answer is to rely on the UN system to combat

the problem. As UN Under-Secretary-General Anwaral Karim Chowdhury says, "I believe it is high time that the United Nations take the lead in addressing this matter that threatens to affect the lives of so many, particularly those living in the coastal areas in the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS)¹⁴." Being the UN High Representative for LDCs, Landlocked Developing Countries and SIDS Chowdhury says that the UN is ready and willing to take on a bigger role in assisting environmental refugees since they recognize the large scale of the problem. He goes on to state "we [the UN] need to prepare ahead of time to know what kind of support they [environmental refugees] would need, and what could be offered¹⁵."

As a region the Asia-Pacific faces a great deal of changes due to global warming. Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) conducted a recent study which forecasted temperature increases throughout the region of 0.5°C to 2°C by 2030 and up to 7°C by 2070, this linked with the subsequent rise in sea levels they expect some 2.3 million environmental

refugees in the near future. Many of these environmental refugees will come

from the numerous low-lying atoll countries in the Pacific such as Kiribati (population 94,000), the Marshall Islands (population 58,000), Tuvalu (population 9,000), and Tokelau (population 2,000)¹⁷. The nation of Kiribati, a grouping of 33 coral atolls, presents an interesting case for the entire environmental refugee problem since they, unlike Tokelau and Tuvalu who have negotiated rights to enter New Zealand, and the Marshallese who can settle in the US, have no such agreement. The Kiribati people also eschew the label of refugee. This is due to the fact that not only does refugee have tied to it the implication of an eventual return (which cannot happen with a submerged nation), but it also carries with it a negative connotation of a group of people that are unwanted by any state. As Kiribati President Anote Tong said recently, "We like to move with dignity. We like to come to our new countries with dignity and this is our way of doing it. We would come as skilled, professional, needed people with a contribution to make¹⁸." By



flipping the refugee label on its head, President Tong hopes that by showing his population as a potentially useful resource neighbouring Australia will be enticed into letting Kiribati nationals in.

In order to break into so called "Fortress Australia" (labeled because of its harsh immigration policies) President Tong made a tour of the country in June 2008 meeting with Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, and Climate Change Minister Penny Wong to discuss the future fate of his nation¹⁹. As President Tong stated "it's a humbling prospect when a nation has to begin talking about its own demise²⁰", yet that is the reality that Kiribati faces. Tong goes on to reiterate the fact that "it is important that if our people were to relocate, they should do so as trained, skilled people rather than people coming here and adding to the problems, their own problems and to the national problems²¹." Australia, however, for the moment remains reluctant to agree to a full-fledged reassignment plan with Kiribati. What the Australian government has agreed to is a US\$150 million program to help Kiribati along with other Pacific islands cope with climate change. Yet, with the prospects of islands being wiped off the map this is not seen as a big enough gesture. As a report titled *Australia Responds: Helping Our Neighbours Fight Climate Change* states, Australia having one of the highest rates of greenhouse gas emissions per capita in the world "makes a disproportionate contribution to climate change and has a moral obligation to take action²²." Viewed in this light Australia should do more to help its neighbours in their time of need. And especially as nation of migrants, having accepted numerous waves of people from many different countries in the past, the new additions will only add to Australia's multicultural society.

The issue of environmental refugees is one that will only become more pressing as time goes on. Climate change and global warming will displace millions of people worldwide and more needs to be done to ensure that such movements do not lead to conflict. While currently ignored by the international legal framework, the issue of environmental refugees has been noted by the UN who seeks to do more on their part to assist such peoples. Taking matters in to their own hands the nation of Kiribati seeks to rebrand themselves, shaking off the helpless and hopeless label of refugee in favour of being seen as skilled peoples who will benefit the country that they resettle in. Hopefully Australia will recognize this fact and the future of the people of Kiribati will be safeguarded.



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³ BAN KI MOON, 16 June 2007, "A Climate Culprit in Darfur," *The Washington Post*, A15.

⁴ MCADAM, JANE, *op. cit.* p. 5.

⁵ DEEN, THALIF, 2007, "U.N. Braces for New Breed of Environmental Refugees," *World Institute for Asian Studies* 7(1), p. 2.

⁶ FURNASS, BRYAN, 2007. "Climate Change and Environmental Refugees," a discussion paper for Doctor for the Environment Australia, p. 2. Accessible on: <http://www.dea.org.au/node/159>

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 3.

⁸ DEEN, THALIF, *op. cit.* p. 3.

⁹ FURNASS, BRYAN, *op. cit.* p. 3.

¹⁰ Petition to the Inter-American Commission in Human Rights Seeking Relief from Violations resulting from Global Warming caused by Artic Omissions of the United States. 7 December 2005. Accessible on: http://www.earthjustice.org/library/legal_docs/petition-to-the-inter-american-comission-on-human-rights-on-behla-of-the-inuit-circumpolar-conference.pdf

¹¹ MCADAM, JANE, *op. cit.* p. 3.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ FURNASS, BRYAN, *op. cit.* p. 2.

¹⁴ DEEN, THALIF, *op. cit.* p. 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ BARTSCH, PHIL, 9 October 2006, "Pacific Exodus Likely," featured on Climate IMC International. Accessible on: <http://www.climateimc.org/en/announcements/2006/10/09/pacific-exodus-likely-australia-should-take-environmental-refugees>.

¹⁷ FURNASS, BRYAN, *op. cit.* p. 2.

¹⁸ *LIVE NEWS*, 20 June 2008, "Rudd talks climate change with Kiribati." Accessible on: http://www.livenews.com.au/Articles/2008/06/20/Rudd_talks_climate_change_with_Kiribati.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *THE NEW ZEALAND HERALD*, 6 June 2008, "Doomed Kiribati needs escape plan." Accessible on:

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story.cfm?c_id=1&objected=10514735

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² Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. 28 July 1951.

MANY STRONG VOICES: UNITING TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE ARCTIC AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

JOHN CRUMP

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Our rights, our human rights that we share with all of you – to live as we do and to enjoy our unique culture as part of the globe's cultural heritage, are at issue. The Arctic dimension and Inuit perspectives on global climate change need to be heard in the corridors of power¹.

INTRODUCTION

TThere is no equity in the effects of climate change. The majority of historical greenhouse gas emissions have come from the developed world's wealthiest countries. These nations have built economies based on access to cheap fuel and cheap commodities, the latter often coming from the developing world. The impacts of climate change and the current petroleum focussed economic model are being felt the most in the regions that have traditionally produced the least greenhouse gases. Among these, two of the most vulnerable regions are the Arctic and Small Island Developing States² (SIDS). Within these regions, the most affected populations tend to be Indigenous Peoples.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was unequivocal in its 4th assessment report last year: unless there are deep cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions, there will be dramatic effects on water, ecosystems, food supplies, coastal areas and human health. The number of unpredictable extreme weather events will continue to increase.

But the signals that something is wrong have been with us for some time. In 1988, James Hansen, head of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies at NASA, warned about

the dangers of climate change. His research reinforced what Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic and other parts of the world were saying – that the environment was changing in an unprecedented ways; it just took the rest of the world a while to catch up.

This article explores some of the similarities between the Arctic and SIDS as they confront the challenge of climate change. The Arctic and SIDS are considered barometers of global environmental change and, as such, they will be critical testing grounds for processes and programmes aimed at strengthening the adaptive capacities of human societies. Lessons learned through the Many Strong Voices Programme will support policy processes at the local, regional and international levels, and will provide decision-makers both in the Arctic and SIDS with the knowledge to safeguard and strengthen vulnerable regional social, economic and natural systems.

LINKS BETWEEN THE ARCTIC AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

At first glance, the Arctic and SIDS appear to have little in common. One is cold, the other is mostly hot. One is seen as an empty and pristine wilderness, untouched by human activities or, alternatively, as a storehouse for vast

mineral wealth, ripe for exploitation. The other is portrayed in vacation posters as a gentle, tropical paradise where the living is easy, the sun always shines, and the beaches are endless.

But a closer examination reveals some interesting and important similarities. Both regions are homelands to a diverse number of indigenous peoples who, to varying degrees, have been colonized over the last few centuries. People in both regions continue to rely on natural resources – animals, fish and plants – and the environment. In both regions, traditional knowledge continues to inform decision-making and many people retain a connection to the environment through a body of traditional knowledge developed over the centuries.

→ | ON FOCUS

“The end of all knowledge is to understand what is fit to be done, for to know what has been, and what is, and what may be, does but tend to that.”

SAMUEL BUTLER

Another more unfortunate similarity is that the effects of climate change are perhaps greater and more noticeable in the Arctic and SIDS than in many other places around the globe. The 2005 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) predicted that the Arctic will feel the effects of climate change sooner and more severely than other regions of the earth³. It also emphasized the relationship between Arctic climate change, Arctic biophysical processes and global climate. The 2007 Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change echoed and amplified the ACIA findings:

“Arctic human communities are already adapting to climate change, but both external and internal stressors challenge their adaptive capacities. Despite the resilience shown historically by Arctic indigenous communities, some traditional ways of life are being threatened and substantial investments are needed to adapt or re-locate physical structures and communities⁴.”

The report also identified similar effects on small islands:

“Small islands, whether located in the tropics or higher latitudes, have characteristics which make them especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change, sea-level rise and extreme events. Sea-level rise is expected to exacerbate inundation, storm surge, erosion and other coastal hazards, thus threatening vital infrastructure, settlements and facilities that support the livelihood of island communities⁵.”

In the SIDS, the adverse effects of sea level rise and continued climate change seriously threaten sustainable development. Many small islands are already confronting risks from environmental hazards including coastal flooding, cyclones and storm surges. And on the near horizon is the spectre of populations being forced to abandon their homes for refuge in other countries.

INDIGENOUS OBSERVATIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE ARCTIC AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

While the scientific consensus on the impacts of climate change on vulnerable⁶ regions like the Arctic and SIDS has been building over the last few years, people who live there have long observed environmental changes.

In the Arctic, the nature of these observations are well-illustrated by *Voices from the Bay*, a groundbreaking study which looked at Inuit and Cree experiences in the huge watershed of Canada's Hudson Bay and published by the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee and the Community of Sanikiluaq in 1996. It found that indigenous peoples had been noticing “highly variable” weather in the northwest corner of the bay since the 1940s.

“There used to be more clear, calm days, winters were colder, and low temperatures persisted longer. By the early 1990s, weather changes were quick, unexpected, and difficult to predict. Blizzards, for example, would occur on clear days in the Chesterfield Inlet area, but on days when environmental indicators suggested a blizzard, it would not materialize⁷.”

The dilemma of traditional knowledge failing in the light of changing environmental conditions was summed up by Helen Atkinson from the Cree community of Chisasibi, Québec:

“We cannot make predictions anymore. We don't know if the water is going to freeze or not. We used to know what was going to happen at certain seasons but, with all the changes in the climate and different qualities of water, we can't make those predictions anymore⁸.”

SIDS have always been vulnerable to extreme weather events and other environmental disasters and there is increasing recognition of the threat posed by climate change⁹. Like Arctic residents, people in the South Pacific know that climate change is not a future event but a present reality.

“The effect of global warming is now being felt in every aspect of the lives of people who live in the Pacific. Reliable statistics now show

that the western Pacific is becoming progressively drier while the eastern Pacific is becoming progressively wetter. Where once we could expect steady rainfall throughout the year, we now receive most of our rainfall in a short period often resulting in floods. These floods, followed by droughts, ruin our food supplies and hurricanes leave us without crops for up to three months. They also cause sedimentation in our lagoons¹⁰.”

Ben Namakin is in his mid-20s

and works for the Conservation Society of Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia. He observes:

“During my childhood days in Kiribati, we never experienced severe sea flooding. There were storms, but they weren't that bad. As the sea levels continue to rise in Kiribati, several king tides hit the island. Saltwater intrusion affects the quality of water in wells, floods taro patches, gardens, and puts stress on plants/trees which are very important to the life and culture of an I-Kiribati. [...] Serious storm surges cause coastal erosion, floods grave yards, and in 2006, led to the collapse of the beautiful Dai Nippon causeway. This incident bore huge costs on the people of Kiribati. They had to build new homes with their own finance, and dig up their deceased relatives from their graves and bury them further inland¹¹.”

This kind of local knowledge and observation is important to developing a complete picture of what is happening in vulnerable regions. The ACIA report, sponsored by the Arctic Council, recognized this and was a landmark study in two significant ways: first, it brought together the latest scientific research and analysis and looked at the implications of climate change on a single region of the



Earth. Second, it incorporated the observations and traditional knowledge of the Arctic's indigenous peoples.

Indigenous peoples' observations were systematically integrated into the ACIA, making it the first such study to recognize the value of indigenous knowledge. The report's authors ensured that local voices were heard and local information was incorporated in the final results. From northern Russia to Alaska to the Canadian Arctic, Greenland and Sapmi, where the indigenous Saami have traditionally herded reindeer throughout the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula in Russia, people were reporting changes that were affecting the very structure of their lives and threatening their economic and cultural survival.

MANY STRONG VOICES – THE ARCTIC AND SMALL ISLAND
DEVELOPMENT STATES WORKING TOGETHER

There are voices always heard, and voices seldom heard, in the discussions about climate change. People in vulnerable regions are usually among the latter. "Given the similar levels of impact, peoples of the Arctic are working together with people in the small islands of the South Pacific, Caribbean and elsewhere to cooperate on ensuring that the moral imperative of taking action on climate change is heard¹²."

In 2004, discussions between a number of groups, including representatives of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, SIDS and UNEP/GRID-Arendal began on the need for a joint effort to raise awareness about the effects of climate change in the world's most vulnerable regions. Although small in number, the people of the Arctic and SIDS had participated vigorously in a number of international negotiating processes, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In August 2005, Premier Hans Enoksen of Greenland urged Environment Ministers from twenty-five countries meeting in Ilulissat to "bring vulnerable regions of the globe together so that we may learn from each other and work with each other internationally"¹³. Premier Enoksen went on to say that "the Arctic, the Small Island Developing States, low lying states, and sub-Sahara states in Africa need to help each other"¹⁴.

These discussions and concerns led to the development of the Many Strong Voices (MSV) programme¹⁵. With seed money from the Government of Canada and support from the government of Norway, the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation in Canada, the UN Foundation, the US National Science Foundation, and The Christensen

Fund, the MSV programme focuses on the similar concerns and needs of the Arctic and SIDS.

Many Strong Voices is a consortium of indigenous peoples' organizations, researchers, policy-makers and community organizations¹⁶. Over the next five years it will:

- ✓ Carry out comparative climate change vulnerability and adaptation research in the SIDS;
- ✓ Exchange knowledge to help develop regionally-appropriate climate change adaptation strategies;
- ✓ Produce communications, outreach and education tools that will raise the profile of the regions, highlight concerns and enable communities to outline their own solutions; and
- ✓ Combine regional research, the design of adaptation strategies, and communications efforts to increase the visibility of these regions, enhance their influence over global dialogues on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and facilitate the articulation of their adaptation needs.



enhance their influence over global dialogues on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and facilitate the articulation of their adaptation needs.

An important, though not the only, focus of attention is on negotiations leading to a post-2012 climate change accord to replace the Kyoto Protocol. Participants in MSV are working together to ensure that their voices are heard in discussions on emissions reduction and adaptation in the process outlined in the Bali Action Plan¹⁷, which was negotiated at the December 2007 UNFCCC Conference of the Parties.

The Bali Action Plan calls for "long-term cooperative action, now, up to and beyond 2012" in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and assist the most vulnerable regions to adapt to climate change effects already being felt. For the participants in the MSV Programme, the way ahead calls for concrete actions which, in turn, are grounded in

the latest scientific research. At the global level, MSV participants are calling on the developed nations to:

- ✓ Reach a global agreement that keeps temperature increases as far below two degrees Celsius as possible by ensuring large cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.
- ✓ Learn from the experiences of indigenous peoples and islanders with regard to adaptation and assist these communities to build upon their traditional knowledge in this area.
- ✓ Appreciate that there are limitations to their capacity to adapt in the context of runaway climate change. The world's richest countries must help the vulnerable to adapt to climate change by providing adequate financial and technical assistance. For the SIDS and other particularly vulnerable developing countries, this means living up to

existing adaptation funding commitments. Arctic peoples need a commitment from their own countries to fund local adaptation efforts in their regions.

Despite the imminent threat that climate change poses to communities in the Arctic and SIDS, the voices of people living in these two vulnerable regions are often marginalised or overlooked. MSV supports the efforts of people in these regions to make sure their voices are heard in international negotiating processes, and to have access to fora for exchanging the latest information on climate change adaptation. This includes combining scientific and traditional knowledge to ensure that those most in need of help for climate change can be certain of acting on the best information available.

CONCLUSION

MSV participants from the Arctic and SIDS concur with the conclusion of the 2006 Stern Review, which said: “An effective response to climate change will depend on creating the conditions for international collective action”¹⁸.

Action is needed on a number of fronts. For vulnerable regions and peoples, it means lobbying at the UNFCCC negotiations, focussing on the equity and human rights implications of climate change, and grounding their informed arguments in the latest research. It means pushing for a post-Kyoto agreement that recognizes the special circumstances and needs of the people in the Arctic and SIDS. The ACIA referred to the people of the Arctic but the words can be applied to all vulnerable regions. For people “whose future is at stake, having the ability to make choices and changes is a matter of survival, to which all available resources must be applied”¹⁹.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has called climate change “the moral challenge of our generation”. At the plenary session of the Bali conference, Ban told assembled delegates that “the situation is so desperately serious that any delay could push us past the tipping point, beyond which the ecological, financial, and human costs would increase dramatically”²⁰.

Unless the world embraces this moral challenge, the burden of climate change will fall on the most vulnerable regions: areas like the Arctic and SIDS. The call for moral clarity echoes what people in some of the world’s most vulnerable regions have been saying for some time, that there needs to be a recognition that the impacts of climate change are being felt by parts of the world that currently lack the resources to cope with the rapid change they are experiencing. The evidence is clear; it is now time to make the right choices.

little to no opportunity to create economies of scale. Currently, fifty-one small island/developing states and territories are included in the list used by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in monitoring the sustainable development of SIDS. A list of SIDS is available at <http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrrls/sid/list.htm>

³ ACIA (2004), *Impacts of a Warming Arctic: Arctic Climate Impact Assessment* 24-31 (Cambridge Univ. Press 2004).

⁴ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change: Summary for Policymakers* 15 (2007), available at <http://www.gtp89.dial.pipex.com/spm.pdf> (last visited Apr. 8, 2008) [hereinafter WORKING GROUP II].

⁵ WORKING GROUP II, *id.*

⁶ Vulnerability is determined by the level of exposure to a risk, how sensitive the region is to it, and what capacity is available to adapt.

⁷ *Voices from the Bay: Traditional Ecological Knowledge of the Inuit and Cree in the Hudson Bay Bioregion* 29 (Canadian Arctic Resources Committee 1997) [hereinafter *Voices from the Bay*].

⁸ *Voices from the Bay*, *id.* at 28-29.

⁹ See UNEP, Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, A/CONF.167/9, part I, Annex I (1994), available at:

<http://islands.unep.ch/dsids/poa.htm#1.%20CLIMATE%20CHANGE%20AND%20SEALEVEL> (last visited Apr. 1, 2008).

¹⁰ IMOGEN P. INGRAM, *Pacific islands already affected by climate change* (Nov. 2004), available at <http://www.unesco.org/csi/smis/siv/inter-reg/climate.htm> (last visited Apr. 1, 2008).

¹¹ BEN NAMAKIN, *Climate Witness: Ben Namakin, Kiribati and Micronesia* (May 7, 2007), available at:

http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/oceania/index.cfm?uNewsID=100800 (last visited Apr. 17, 2008).

¹² PATRICIA COCHRAN & TAITO NAKALEVU, *Stopping the Slow Wave of Destruction* (Dec. 6, 2007), (last visited Apr. 20, 2008).

¹³ HANS ENOKSEN, Premier of Greenland, *Opening speech to The Greenland Dialogue* (Aug. 16, 2005), available at http://www.nanoq.gl/English/Nyheder/Opening_speech_by_Premier_Hans.aspx (last visited Apr. 16, 2008).

¹⁴ —, *id.*

¹⁵ See also *Many Strong Voices* website, <http://www.manystrongvoices.org> (last visited Apr. 16, 2008).

¹⁶ Some partners include the Arctic Athabaskan Council, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, Center for International Climate and Environment Research – Oslo (CICERO), New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), UNEP/GRID-Arendal, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), Climate Law and Policy Project (US), Conservation Society of Ponapeh, Federated States of Micronesia, WWF South Pacific Programme, Organization of American States Department of Sustainable Development, Overseas Countries and Territories of the European Union (OCTA).

¹⁷ (Accessed 27 May 2008)

¹⁸ STERN REVIEW on *The Economics of Climate Change*, at xxii, (HM Treasury 2007), available at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/4/3/Executive_Summary.pdf (last visited Apr. 1, 2008).

¹⁹ ACIA, *supra* note 4, at 95.

²⁰ Spiegel Online International, *Ban Ki-Moon Warns of Climate Change ‘Oblivion’* (Dec. 12, 2007), available at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,522929,00.html> (last visited Apr. 1, 2008). ■

¹ PATRICIA COCHRAN, Keynote Address at the Many Strong Voices Stakeholders Workshop (May 28, 2007).

² According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, small island/developing states (SIDS) are low-lying coastal countries that share similar sustainable development challenges, including small population, limited resources, remoteness, susceptibility to natural disasters, vulnerability to external shocks, and excessive dependence on international trade. Their growth and development is also held back by high transportation and communication costs, disproportionately expensive public administration and infrastructure due to their small size, and

ADAPT OR DISAPPEAR

LIAN OSBOURNE

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS NEGATIVE IMPACT ON many of the world's numerous ecosystems is an unfortunate reality facing our planet today. Indigenous peoples in particular are the most vulnerable to the harsh developments of climate change due to the fact that they are already marginalized in their societies, lacking the resources needed to effectively cope with the many obstacles to their continued survival. Recognizing this fact the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) seventh session's² final report highlighted the necessity for the need to combine the current and historical knowledge of indigenous peoples with the scientific analysis of climate change in order to create effective adaptation strategies³.

What however is meant by adaptation? According to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adaptation options are those that "allow or encourage human and ecological systems to adjust or adapt to new global climatic conditions or events, to offset negative impacts and to take advantage of positive impacts that could result from global climate change⁴." In simpler terms adaptation is a coping mechanism, a way for populations to come to terms with an ever-changing planet so that they can continue to live. Tied to the notion of adaptation is the concept of resilience, which "refers to the capacity to recover after disturbance, absorb stress, internalize it, and transcend it⁵." There is no escape from it, the world's indigenous people's must remain resilient to climate change and adapt to its many changes.

Australia's Aboriginals are one such group of indigenous peoples that has a great deal to overcome. One needs only to take a brief overview of Australia's environmental problems to see that what the Aboriginal community faces is quite severe. Firstly, although Australia is already an arid continent it is expected to get even hotter with the average temperatures likely to increase by 1.3°C by 2010 and by a swelter-

ing 6.7°C by 2080 according to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)⁶. In recent years the entire country has experienced reduced rainfall leading to severe drops in reservoir levels and the shrinking of the Murray and Darling rivers⁷. Understandably this development has

had a negative impact on agriculture with farmers experiencing reduced crop yields and rising irrigation expenses⁸. The reduced rainfall has also led to a decrease in the overall animal and plant diversity on the continent⁹, a sad development considering the many unique species that call Australia home. Climate change also spells disaster for many of Australia's national treasures such as the Great Barrier Reef, the upland rain forests, and the alpine snow country¹⁰. The threat posed to these ecosystems is tremendous and the tourism dollars tied to such attractions, which is the welfare for many Australians, is in peril. Increases in the frequency and the intensity of storms and cyclones as well as rising sea levels serve to endanger the lives and well being of many of Northern Australia's island inhabitants¹¹. It is clear to see that there are many problems presently facing climate change in Australia, and more specifically its indigenous peoples, yet what can be done to combat these climate change problems?

Perhaps the secret weapon in the fight against climate change is the concept of effective adaptation. As Claude Lévi-Strauss said, "the physical world is [often] approached from opposite ends

[...] one is supremely concrete, the other supremely abstract¹²." The concrete approach that Lévi-Strauss is referring to would be the scientific and analytical method, which is the dominant approach in understanding climate change today. While grounded in empirical facts and figures, this singular approach will not effectively combat all of climate change's problems. In order to do this a more holistic approach needs to be undertaken, one that involves the abstract approaches that Lévi-Strauss alluded to. Traditional ecological knowledge, "a cumulative body of knowledge,

→ | ALTERNATIVES

"I am convinced that climate change, and what we do about it, will define us, our era, and ultimately the global legacy we leave for future generations. Today, the time for doubt has passed¹."

BAN KI-MOON

practice and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment¹³, is one of these abstract approaches. It is only by combining traditional indigenous knowledge with modern scientific technology, as the 2008 report of the UNPFII stated, the problems that indigenous people face because of climate change can be solved. As expressed by anthropologist Alexander Alland Jr. organic systems have two forms of adaptation¹⁴. The first, internal adaptation, stresses the entire system as a singular unit, with all of the component parts of the system working together as one striving for homogeneity. The second form is external adaptation. This last form focuses on the fit of the system in to the greater global context and stresses variation. It recognizes that many different tactics need to be employed in order to combat climate change. This lends further support to the two-pronged approach to addressing climate change, the so-called effective adaptation apparatus that involves indigenous and scientific knowledge bases.

Examples of effective

subscribe to certain policies that will preserve their environment. Any behavior that is potentially destructive to the group has to be approved by the group's decision makers before it is undertaken. Due to the special knowledge that is ascribed to those that hold positions of power in the group their decisions are seen as final. Another step is to increase the importance placed on symbols and group identity because it is hoped that by doing this a stronger group consciousness will emerge that will be able to surmount any obstacles that are put in its way. For indigenous people in particular there is a close linkage to their environs since many

of their cultural practices and religious practices are rooted to aspects of their immediate surroundings. Thus stressing certain rituals has a twofold purpose, attempting to rectify environmental changes and brining the group together.

The Torres Strait Islands, in Northern Australia, present a wonderful opportunity to showcase how effective adaptation methods can work in practice. As a region, Northern Australia's 100,000 aborigines face a great deal of climate change related problems¹⁸. Many of them are

health issues such as the rise in cases of



adaptive policies would be when concerned parties construct policies that are locally crafted and continuously socially reinforced by those who will use and implement the policies; or when locals use policies that come out of a traditional ecological knowledge base helping them to respond positively to any environmental feedback¹⁵. It is when the marriage is made between the indigenous and the scientific that lasting, positive and beneficial policies will be created.

Linked to the process of effective adaptation is the need for psychological balance. The field of environmental sociology recognizes the fact that "physical environments can influence (and in turn be influenced by) human societies and behavior¹⁶." The relationship between the land and the people is a symbiotic one, with each impacting the other mutually shaping the development of both. When indigenous societies feel threatened by environmental changes they can at times adopt defensive structuring in order to protect themselves and their beliefs¹⁷. One step of defensive structuring is the subordination of the individual to the group. In times of hardship it is far easier to have authoritarian control over members to make sure that all group members

malaria, dengue and heat stress. Populations

also face severe loss of food sources due to flash floods, spells of drought, as well as more intense incidents of brush fires. The Torres Strait Islands, a grouping of over 270 islands dotted across 22,000 square kilometers between Australia and Papua New Guinea are home to some 8,000 inhabitants¹⁹. The majority of the Torres Strait islanders live only metres away from the beach, sometimes less than one metre above sea level. This means that the expected rise in sea levels of between 1-2 metres would be disastrous, wiping out dozens of populated homelands and islands²⁰. As a York Island, one of the Torres Strait Islands, Chairman Mr. Donald Mosby said in response to climate change skeptics, "You don't have to be a scientist, not when you see metres of beach disappearing every week²¹." Over the next fifty-year period the rising sea levels would also flood over four million hectares of costal freshwater wetlands ruining the livelihoods of the barramundi fishers and the communities they support²².

If things are as bad as they appear what is being done? As one Australian climate expert said, "Indigenous people don't see the land as distinct from themselves in the same way as

maybe society in the south-east (of Australia) would. If they feel that the ecosystem has changed it's a mental anxiety to them. They feel they've lost control of their "county" – they're responsible for looking after it²³." Thus the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) was created out of a need "to integrate indigenous considerations into actions about the management of Aboriginal owned lands and waters within the institutional and political framework of the Australian nation state²⁴." NAILSMA accesses resources that match the practical needs of the region to ensure that the management of land and seascapes by Aboriginal people in the north are carried out in partnership with relevant businesses, institutions, and supporters. This reliance on a variety of parties complements Alland's external adaptation model's multi-tactic approach to climate change. And like the UNPFII's findings, NAILSMA's philosophy is to "sustain the capacity of indigenous people in the north to live on and remain in their traditional estates using the intellectual knowledge of tradition and that of the modern and innovative research and technology²⁵." NAILSMA seeks to create a balance between old

and new knowledge to ensure the survival of the Torres islanders and other Northern Australian Aboriginal groups.

One of their most successful programmes is the Dugong and Marine Turtle Management Project (DMTP), which focuses on the cultural management of turtles and dugongs by recording catch sizes, monitoring nesting sites, as well as providing training and education to the local population on the management of these and other ocean resources²⁶. The DMTP is revolutionary for the county since the basis of the project's goals and aspirations come directly from the traditional owners of the resources, the aboriginal people. So far it has been extremely successful in raising awareness for the plight of the animals by having outreach groups, including community elders, visiting local schools to educate the next generation on better resource management. Another program that falls under the NAILSMA umbrella would be the Indigenous Water Policy Group (IWPG), which was created to represent indigenous rights, responsibilities and interests

in water across Northern Australia²⁷. By having this group liaise with the Australian government it is hoped that any water polices that are made for the region would be successful since all concerned stakeholders would have a direct interest in policy formation. Yet another program is found in the Arnhem region of Northern Australia, the Arnhem Land Fire Abatement Program (AFLA)²⁸, that seeks to understand

the indigenous knowledge of land management such as the lighting of small or patchy "cool" fires, which lead to far less damage to unburnt vegetation when the seasonal wild-fires come around. It is hoped that by mastering this technique new strategies will be developed that could reign in the trouble wreaked by destructive bushfires that blaze across the rest of the country. Showing just how much modern science has to learn from traditional environmental management strategies.

The psychological impact of climate change on the Torres islands peoples cannot be underestimated as well. The threat posed to numerous graveyards, monuments, and sacred sites by storm surges is real, and if destroyed would severely crush the spirit of the islanders. As pointed out before, the link that the aboriginals

feel by living 'on country' makes them have a heightened sensitivity to environmental change due to the impacts they experience on their mental and physical wellbeing because of the disturbance of their cultural practices²⁹. Once such practice that faces change is *Ailan Kastom*, a unique Torres Strait culture that combines traditional island beliefs with Christianity. *Ailan Kastom* dictates how the islanders manage the land and sea by governing how and who harvests natural resources, as well as placing seasonal and age restrictions on the hunting of certain species³⁰. Of particular concern to *Ailan Kastom* is the continued care of the dugong and turtle populations since the two animals appear frequently as totemic animals, in folk stories, and in numerous songs. The creation of a Torres Strait Ranger Force³¹ linked with the DMTP has ensured the continued safety of the precarious turtle and dugong populations; not only safeguarding the species but also protecting the belief system of the island's aboriginal peoples.

QUICK FACTS

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Indigenous Peoples have a critical role in the global efforts for climate change, they

- ✓ Are custodians of natural resources critical for carbon sequestration
- ✓ Are repositories of traditional knowledge on climate change adaptation
- ✓ Have a proven capacity to adapt to local climate changes
- ✓ Number approximately 300 million people (5% of the World's population)
- ✓ Customarily own, occupy or use 22% of the World's land surface (WRI)
- ✓ Presently manage 11% of the World's forest lands (FPW)
- ✓ Maintain within their lands and territories 80% of the Planet's Biodiversity (WRI)
- ✓ Are located in or adjacent to 85% of the World's Protected Areas (IUCN).

Indigenous peoples

- ✓ Have contributed the least to global warming by traditionally leading a "low carbon" way of life
- ✓ Historically and currently, play a fundamental role in the protection of forests and conservation of biological diversity
- ✓ Have a customary set of institutions, rules and practices for the use of land and natural resources in a sustainable manner
- ✓ Have cultural as well as political mechanisms to restore sustainable use of land and natural resources when practices are unsustainable
- ✓ Are among the poorest people globally
- ✓ Are heavily dependent on lands and resources for basic needs and livelihoods: food, fuel, shelter, clothing, medicine, etc.
- ✓ Live in ecosystems particularly prone to the affects of climate change: polar regions, humid tropics, high mountains, small islands, costal regions, and semi-arid deserts
- ✓ Are becoming the first wave of "climate change" or "environmental" refugees.

In order to prepare the world's indigenous people's to adapt to climate change a great deal needs to be done. Yet, what should be kept in mind is that any programmes or projects created must be a partnership between priceless traditional knowledge and modern scientific advances. It is only with a balance of these two parts that adaptation policies will be effective. As Stephanie Long, a spokesperson for Friends of the Earth International said, "Adaptation should be pro-poor, and protect ecosystems, livelihoods, and human security. Community-based adaptation provides the best opportunity to ensure that adaptation projects are culturally, technically and socially appropriate³²." NAILSMA and its many initiatives highlights this statement beautifully, by seeking to harmonize the indigenous with the scientific to create truly beneficial and equal partnerships that aim to ease the transition of Australia's Northern aboriginal people's into the reality of a climate changed world. Hopefully other indigenous communities around the world can replicate the lessons learned in Australia so that they too can properly adapt to climate change while maintaining as much of their traditional ways of life as possible.

SELECTIONS FROM THE
*Declaration of Indigenous Peoples
on Climate Change*

THE HAGUE, NOVEMBER 11-12, 2000

1 ~ Earth is our Mother. Our special relationship with Earth as stewards, as holders of indigenous knowledge cannot be set aside. Our special relation with her has allowed us to develop for millennia a particular knowledge of the environment that is the foundation of our lifestyles, institutions, spirituality and worldview. Therefore, in our philosophies, the Earth is not a commodity, but a sacred space that the Creator has entrusted to us to care for her, this home where all beings live.

2 ~ Our traditional knowledge on sustainable use, conservation and protection of our territories has allowed us to maintain our ecosystems in equilibrium. This role has been recognized at the Earth Summit and is and has been our contribution to the planet's economy and sustainability for the benefit of future generations.

3 ~ Our cultures, and the territories under our stewardship, are now the last ecological mechanism remaining in the struggle against climate devastation. All Peoples of the Earth truly owe a debt to Indigenous Peoples for the beneficial role our tradition subsistence economies play in the maintenance of the planet's ecology.

4 ~ Climate change is a reality and is affecting hundreds of millions of our peoples and our territories, resulting in famine, extreme poverty, disease, loss of basic resources in our traditional habitats and provoking involuntary displacement of our people as environmental refugees.~ Concepts, practices, and measures such a plantations, carbon sinks and tradable emissions, will result in projects which adversely impact upon our natural, sensitive, and fragile ecosystems, contaminating out soils, forests and waters. In the past, even well intentioned development policies and projects have resulted in disastrous social and ecological consequences. We cannot accept any concepts, projects or programmes that ravage our territories or deny, limit, or restrict our fundamental rights and freedoms.

Change 2007: *Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. p. 515. Accessible at: <http://www.ipcc-wg2.org>.

⁷ Friends of the Earth International. November, 2007. "Climate Change: Voices From Communities Affected by Climate Change," p. 5. Accessible at: <http://www.foeorg.au/resources/publications/climatjustice/climat-testimonies.pdf>.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 6.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 7.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 6.

¹² BERKES et. al., *Rediscovery of Traditional Knowledge as Adaptive Management*, p. 1251.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 1252.

¹⁴ ALEXANDER ALLAND JR., 1975, "Adaptation," in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 4(1), p. 69.

¹⁵ BERKES et. al., *op.cit.*, p. 1259.

¹⁶ DUNLAP, RILEY E. and WILLIAM R. CATTON, Jr., 1979, "Environmental Sociology" in *Annual Review of Sociology* 5(1), p. 244.

¹⁷ SIEGEL, BERNARD, 1970, "Defensive Structuring and Environmental Stress" in *The American Journal of Sociology*, 76(1), p. 11.

¹⁸ BEEBY, ROSSLYN, 26 November 2007, "Australia's northern Aboriginal communities will bear the brunt of climate change, with increases in water-borne diseases and loss of tradition food sources, and international report says" in *The Canberra Times*. p. 1.

¹⁹ Friends of the Earth International. *op. cit.* p. 6.

²⁰ BEEBY, ROSSLYN, *op. cit.* p. 2.

²¹ Friends of the Earth International, *op. cit.* p. 6.

²² BEEBY, ROSSLYN, *op. cit.* p. 2.

²³ Friends of the Earth International, *op. cit.* p. 6.

²⁴ NAILSMA, 19 April 2008, "NAILSMA Discussion Paper 2020 Summit," p. 4. Accessible at: http://www.nailsma.org.au/nailsma/downloads/nailsma_2020_0408.pdf.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ NAILSMA, 2007, "Dugong and Marine Turtle Management Project Overview and Update" in *Kantri-Laif*, p. 6. Accessible at: <http://www.nailsma.org.au/nailsma/downloads/Kantri-Latif-issue-3.pdf>.

²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 12.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 22.

²⁹ GREEN, DONNA, 2006, "Climate Change and Health: Impacts on Remote Indigenous Communities in Northern Australia" in *Climate Change Impacts and Risk*, CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research Paper 012 (Melbourne: Climate Impact Group, Division of Atmospheric Research, CSIRO).

³⁰ GREEN, DONNA, 2006, "How Might Climate Change Affect Island Culture in the in the Torres Strait?" in *Climate Change Impacts and Risk*, CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research Paper 011 (Melbourne: Climate Impact Group, Division of Atmospheric Research, CSIRO).

³¹ NAILSMA, 2007, *op. cit.* p. 30.

³² BEEBY, ROSSLYN, *op. cit.* p. 3.

¹ United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, 24 September 2007.

² The UNPFII was held between April 21st and May 2nd 2008, with the theme of "Climate Change, Bio-Cultural Diversity and Livelihoods: The Stewardship Role of Indigenous Peoples and New Challenges."

³ UNPFII, 2 May 2008, "UNPFII: Report on the Seventh Session," in *Economic and Social Council Supplement* no. 23. Accessible at: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/unpfii_7session_report_advance.pdf.

⁴ BRAAF, R., HOWE, W., and R. TAPLIN, 1995, "Climate Change: Integrated Assessment Process," in *Climate Impacts Assessment: Development and Application of Climate Change* (Melbourne: Climate Impact Group, Division of Atmospheric Research, CSIRO).

⁵ BERKES, F. COLDING, J. and C. FOLKE, 2000, "Rediscovery of Traditional Knowledge as Adaptive Management," in *Ecological Applications*, 10(5), p. 1252.

⁶ Relative to 1990 temperatures; refers to areas 800 km from the coast; central Australian increases are expected to be greater. (IPCC. 2007. Climate

LAND ALIENATION

THE STRUGGLE OF THE BALUCHI PEOPLE

HANNA FARZIN

CRIBAL PEOPLES ARE TOO OFTEN LINKED WITH THE WORD 'alienation'. Frequently these groups are alienated from their land, their resources, their homes, access to knowledge, and overall, deprived of their freedom to basic equal and civil rights. Focusing

on the Baluchi tribe, it is evident that the linguistically and culturally united peoples, which are geographically split into three countries – Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan – continuously face alienation from the central governments of the country they reside in. For example, in Iranian Baluchistan, the Baluchis are a religious minority being Sunni Muslims in a Shia Muslim country where additionally their cultural, social, economic, and political rights are denied¹. In Pakistani Baluchistan, the history of struggle between the central government and the Baluchi tribe dates back to 1948, one year after the Baluchi tribe officially became part of Pakistan when the British Raj annexed their land. When focusing on the history of struggle and alienation of the majority of Baluchis that reside in Pakistan, it is clear as to why the Baluchi region remains one of the poorest areas of the world.

The Baluchi tribe dates back to the time shortly before Christ, migrating northward from Aleppo into what is now Syria². They eventually moved through Iran and are now settled in a large region covering 44 percent of Pakistan with a population of about 4.4 million, a population of 1 million in Southeastern Iran, and a very small population covering the southern strip of Afghanistan³. The Baluchi tribe depends heavily on agriculture, with about 77 percent of the population living in rural areas⁴. Ironically, as the Baluchi were in search of fresh lands and water sources, they now reside in an arid to semi-arid climate, with low rainfall, dry winds, cold winters, and hot summers⁵.

Baluchistan while lying on the outskirts of the monsoon zone is affected by the currently erratic nature of monsoon rains and therefore cannot solely depend on them for farming needs⁶. Baluchis depend heavily on natural water sources such as springs, streams, and rivers with irrigation being essential to farming, yet in most of the province water resources are limited and uncertain⁷. To

make matters worse, due to groundwater mining, a lack of an integrated approach by the Pakistani government, the drilling of tube wells, and the overall lack of rainfall, the Baluchis are in desperate for safe drinking water⁸. Before cyclone Yemyin and the subsequent floods that

occurred in June of 2007, Baluchistan witnessed an 11-year drought causing crop failure, loss of livestock, and a rapid deterioration of health and sanitary conditions⁹.

Focusing on the district of Chagai, one of the most affected areas of the drought, it is important to note that due to the lack of precipitation and its dry climate, "famine conditions have caused the deaths of about seven million head of livestock and affected 1.3 million people"¹⁰. Overall, as Chagai, and most of Baluchistan witness, the scarcity of water they are constantly confronted with the inability to survive on their own land¹¹. Consequently, they are forced to migrate to urban areas, where they face further discrimination by the Punjab majority¹². Unfortunately, this forced migration only threatens the traditions and unity of the Baluchi people.

Historically, the only measure taken by the Pakistani government to help the Baluchi with their shortage of water was on March 22, 1978 when the Baluchistan Ground Water Rights Administration Ordinance was created in order to manage and regulate the use of groundwater¹³. However, this measure failed due to "political interference, the tribal system and a failure of government agencies to enforce the measures"¹⁴. The Pakistani central government has proven itself to be a detriment to the Baluchi water crisis. In May of 1998 Pakistan carried out a series of nuclear tests in the eastern Chagai district of Baluchistan¹⁵. Not only has this caused high degrees of radiation, leading to diseases such as leukemia and tuberculosis, but also worsening the already severe shortage of drinkable water. Therefore, Baluchis are now dealing with a lack of uncontaminated natural water since the water sources have been overexploited and polluted.

Currently, the Baluchis are still faced with the shortage of water, a search for a new home, and many other basic survival needs. As Cyclone Yemyin was a huge disaster, it finally brought about international attention to the plight of the

→ | SPOTLIGHT

"Human life is limited, but knowledge is limitless. To drive the limited in pursuit of the limitless is fatal; and to presume that one really knows is fatal indeed!"

CHUANG-TZU

Baluchis. When Cyclone Yemyin hit in 2007 1.5 million people were affected, with 250,000 people made homeless and a further 300,000 displaced¹⁶. As a result, organizations such as Concern-US, UNICEF, Red Cross, the World Health Organization and many other NGO's have been active over the past year in Baluchistan to aid them in their plight. As the effects of climate change intensify, so do the extremes of the monsoon cycle, making the Baluchi people in greater need of relief. The vast land of Baluchistan is home to a culturally rich tribal people making it crucial that organizations and governments unite in order to help the endangered Baluchi population and environment. ■

¹⁵ CONTENTA, SANDRA, 5

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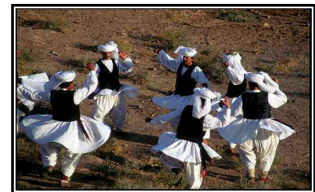
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| NEWSROOM

SPANDA

SPANDA'S NEW BOARD MEMBER



WE ARE MOST HONOURED AND DELIGHTED TO WELCOME Ms Simona Sapienza on the Board of the Trustees in her function as Secretary of the Spanda Foundation.

Simona Sapienza was born on January 19, 1973 in Rome, Italy. She was educated at the Sawyer Business School (Pittsburgh, US, 1991) and at the University of Rome «La Sapienza» where she received her MA in Law (1996). In 2000 she was called to the Bar (Rome, Italy). In 2001 she attended the University of Finance (London), and got her PhD in Rome (2004).

From 1990 to 1992 Ms Sapienza was actively engaged in supporting the Africa - Project Against Apartheid, an NGO associated with the Department of Public Information of the UN. In 1994, as Charter Member of the Association for Exchanges among Young Europeans (Rome), Ms Sapienza developed a series of projects under the auspices of the EU Commission to improve dialogue among European cultures.

From 1997 to 2002 she was tutor in Private Comparative Law at the Institute of Comparative Law of the University La Sapienza (Rome); lecturer in European Contract Law at the LUISS University (Rome) and legal consultant at the Italian National Research Council-UN International Institute for the Unification of Law (CNR-UNIDROIT) Centre for Comparative and Foreign Law Studies, (UNIDROIT Convention on the International Return of Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects.) Ms Sapienza has been legal consultant for various Italian institutes of research for the international protection of human and civil rights, among others the Centre for High European Studies at the University of Urbino (1996-2000) and the CNR institute for the Comparative Study on the Guarantees of Fundamental Rights (1999-2001).

From 1999 to 2002 she lectured in Banking and Financial law at the Postgraduate School in Banking Law of the University of Siena (Italy). Ms Sapienza is currently Senior Associate in the International

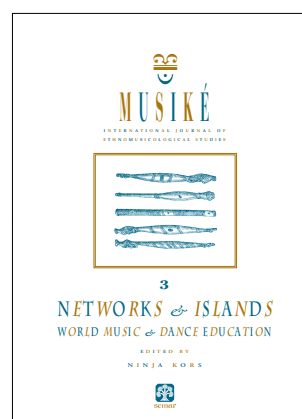
Capital Markets department of Allen & Overy (Rome), which she joined in 2000. She advises investment banks and brokers on ICM transactions and regulatory issues.

Among her publications: *The English Legal System* (London: Cameron Markby Hewitt, 1996); *Unilex on UN Convention on International Sale of Goods* (senior ed.); «Il diritto comunitario come fonte per il diritto dei contratti» [Community Law as source for the law of contracts], in *Il Diritto Privato nella Giurisprudenza* (Turin: UTET, 1999); «Mutual Funds, UCITS, Sicavs and Pension Funds in Italy», in *Securities Transactions in Europe* (London: Sweet & Maxwell, 2003); «Laws and Regulations of Italian Hedge Funds», in *Alternative Investment News* (New York, 2004). Ms Sapienza has written extensively on Geopolitic and Islamic/sharia compliant financial transactions, among others: *The financing of international terrorism* (Zone-H, 2005); «Keeping money out of terrorist hands», in *Monitor* (London: RUSI/Jane's, 2006).



MUSIKÉ

RESEARCH, RECOVERY, DOCUMENTATION, CONSERVATION
AND DISSEMINATION OF THE ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL HERITAGE



The ongoing programme of the Spanda Foundation «The Musiké Project» has just released the third volume of its *Musiké* journal: *Networks and Islands. Cultural Diversity in Music and Dance*, edited by Ninja Kors of the Rotterdam Conservatory, (Netherlands). The peer-reviewed four-monthly international journal of ethnomusicological studies is available worldwide through libraries, bookshops, specialist music shops, and by subscription to individual and academic institutions, ethnomusicological and

anthropological archives, or can be ordered from us – as well as all back issues – at publication@spanda.org.

The fourth volume of the series, *Analysing East Asian Music. Pattern of Rhythm and Melody*, edited by Simon Mills of SOAS (University of London), is due in September 2008.



DUTCH AND ETHIOPIAN PARTNERSHIP: TEFF GRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Bio-piracy is a label that few companies wish to see tied to their name, yet the plundering of natural resources by foreign companies is a reality that many developing nations face. The Dutch Company Soil & Crop (S&C) has faced public outcry on its development of the Ethiopian grain teff. Teff is an iron and calcium rich cereal similar to wheat that lacks gluten making it an attractive option for those with allergies. Academic studies have also shown that teff can boost the body's vitality and reduce fat production, making it a useful weapon in the fight against obesity in Western nations. S&C has entered a partnership with the Ethiopian government to ensure that the traditional knowledge of its farming peoples is compensated for. Under the agreement 5% of S&C's net profits would be directed into a fund to support Ethiopian agriculture. As S&C's Chief Financial Officer Hans Turkensteen said recently, «We understood teff was not ours and wanted Ethiopians, who have cultivated, conserved and refined it for centuries to benefit from its use elsewhere.» As of May 18th, 2008 money earned from the development of teff has gone to support thousands of farmers across the country namely rural cooperative unions in Modjo (16,700 farmers) and Alamata (500 farmers), as well as a Farmer Marketing Organization with 498 associated farmers in Busa Harbu. It is hoped that the S&C arrangement could serve as a model for other cases dealing between business and local peoples with sought after natural resources.



INFO

<http://africa.reuters.com/country/ET/news/usnL26892775.html>



UN

WIPO PILOT PROJECT SEEKS TO PROTECT INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

In September 2008 the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) will be starting a pilot project, which seeks to, through the usage of modern technology, digitally capture and archive the cultural traditions and knowledge of indigenous communities around the world. Part of the WIPO's Cultural Heritage Project, the programme recognizes the need for many indigenous peoples to preserve their cultures in a safe way, so that it is not exploited by those that are not in the community. The Maasai people in Laikipia, Kenya have been selected as the first group of the project. Two tribe members along with an expert from the National Museums of Kenya will fly to the American Folklife Center (AFC) and then to the Center for Documentary Studies

(CDS) in the US in order to learn the proper techniques for cultural documenting and archiving. Once this phase is done those returning to Kenya will be given computers, software, and other field equipment so that they can begin the process of effective community-based cultural conservation. As Mr. Francis Gurry, Deputy Director General of WIPO stated, "Our goal is to empower tradition-bearers to preserve and pass on their own traditional cultures if they wish to do so while safeguarding their intellectual property rights and interests. Testing these ideas through this community-led pilot programme is a big step toward that goal." If successful the WIPO will replicate the programme with other indigenous communities around the world.



INFO

http://www.wipo.int/pressroom/en/articles/2008/article_0027.html



COP9 MEETING ADVANCES TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE RIGHTS

In the German city of Bonn the ninth meeting of the conference of the parties (COP9) on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was held from the 19th to the 30th of May 2008. Some 5,000 participants gathered at the summit to discuss many important issues facing a planet rapidly losing many of its natural resources. The summit with the slogan of "One Nature, One World, Our Future" explored a spectrum of issues from the protection and sustainable use of biological diversity, to the preservation of numerous ecosystems, as well as the relationship between the

international economic system and multilateral environmental agreements. Notably the COP9 also focused on ways in which to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples around the world. The twelfth decision of the COP9 examined the issues of access and benefit sharing and realized that the CBD can become a clearing-house, disseminating information on access to genetic resources. It called for a strengthening of the Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing, creating a new special task force staffed with technical and legal experts on the issue of traditional knowledge. The decision also invited the world's governments, concerned parties, and other bodies to financially support indigenous and local communities with the creation of regional workshops who would liaise with the newly created task force.

In decision thirteen of the COP9 special attention was given to the pre-existing Article 8 of the CBD, which focuses specifically on traditional knowledge. In their decision the COP9 called on their Executive Secretariat to summarize and compile all of the information from national reports on the topic into a framework of the best conservation and sustainable-use practices at the national, regional and community levels. It is hoped that by making this text widely available that better policies will be implemented worldwide. The decision also called upon the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to take note of the implications of climate change on biodiversity-related traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities. Having ended on such a high note the parties concerned look forward to much progress being made by the time they meet again in the city of Nagoya, Japan in 2009.



INFO

<http://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop9/>

The Frontlines Forum is an Internet-based forum that was launched on the 12th of June 2008 by UNESCO's Coasts and Small Islands platform and Indigenous Knowledge systems programme in conjunction with the Secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The purpose of the forum is to be an outlet to explore the experiences of indigenous communities living in small islands, the circumpolar Arctic, high-altitude zones, low-lying coastal areas, tropical forests, desert margins and other vulnerable environments. For many the threat of climate change is perceived to be distant, but for these at risk communities it is occurring now. Small islands for example are experiencing high sea level rises, storm surges and the consequential salinization of vital freshwater reserves and agricultural lands. Indigenous peoples being keen observers of the impacts of climate change, and having coped with environmental changes in the past have built up a rich body of knowledge and skills allowing them to adapt to new situations. Despite this fact the indigenous knowledge and adaptation strategies accumulated by these communities has often not been taken into consideration by many governments and organizations that seek to combat climate change. Indigenous peoples have voiced their frustration at this, notably through protests on December 7th last year at the United Nations conference in Bali, Indonesia and at the most recent session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in May 2008 in New York City. The Frontlines Forum hopes to increase the profile of vulnerable communities in international debates while also providing a platform for indigenous peoples to share their experiences and strategies.

✓ INFO <http://www.climatefrontlines.org/>



ROLE FOR TRADITIONAL RAINMAKERS IN COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE IN KENYA

The valuable knowledge of Kenya's legendary rain making Abasiakwe clan in the Nganyi community of Emuhaya is being sought after in order to help the country with the detrimental developments of climate change. Scientists and researchers from local universities, the Kenya Meteorological Department, the Kenya Industrial Property Institute and the National Museums of Kenya have all come together in this one of kind endeavour. The US\$ 75,000 two year project funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) will combine the vast wealth of knowledge from the traditional rainmakers with more Western scientific weather forecast methods. As the project's leader Professor Laban Ogallo stated, "This will enrich Western methods to improve local communities' adaptation to climate change."

The Abasiakwe rainmakers have long been revered in Kenya for their abilities. Many have visited their shrine to make offerings for favorable weather conditions for their crops and livestock. Inhabited by a large snake that helped in feeling weather conditions the shrine was also filled with other accoutrements that helped the rainmakers communicate with ancestors to aid them with weather predictions. A host of other methods were also employed by the rainmakers such as the observation of changes in air currents, the flowering and shedding of leaves of certain trees, change in the behaviour of safari ants, and the different songs of some birds, as well as the croaking of frogs and toads. All of this amounts to a priceless quantity of traditional knowledge that needs to be properly utilized if Kenya hopes to tackle the problems of climate change. It is felt that the program will not only boost the preparedness of communities for disasters but also serves to honour previously undervalued traditional African

practices. If successful the project would be exported to other places across the continent creating an integrated African-wide system of climate forecast.

✓ INFO http://www.nationmedia.com/dailynation/nmgcontententry.asp?category_id=39&newsid=126399



THE WHITEFEATHER FOREST INITIATIVE: AN UNEASY MARRIAGE BETWEEN THE TRADITIONAL AND THE MODERN

The Whitefeather forest is an area of provincial Crown land found within the territory of the Pikangikum First Nation in Northern Ontario Canada. The Whitefeather Forest Initiative is a project that seeks to preserve the natural environment and protect the caribou herds that roam through much of the boreal forest area. However, the process of cooperation between the two parties, the province of Ontario and the Pikangikum First Nation, has not been without its difficulties. The obstacles for cooperation come out of the divergent worldviews that the two parties have, influencing how they in turn tackle problems. The province represented by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) seeks a more broad landscape-level centralized management of the forest, whereas the Pikangikum First Nation represented by the Whitefeather Forest Management Cooperation (WFMC) seeks a more decentralized and localized approach to land use planning. The Pikangikum elders are unconvinced that the planning for the Whitefeather forest should take in to account what was occurring in other jurisdictions, or that they should be responsible for the state of caribou populations on other First Nations' lands. This is due to the difference they make between more general land-based knowledge (*Ahkeeweekaytauhmuhweeneeg*), which is seen as lesser to knowledge rooted in personal experience (*Keecheeahneesheneaubay weekeekaytauhmuhween*). For the Pikangikum they are the customary stewards of the Whitefeather forestland and to be concerned with what they were not entrusted to look after by the Creator is nonsensical. As Whitehead Moose a Pikangikum elder said, "There are two different types of people: those who live off the land, that can experience the land, and those who just talk about what they haven't experienced." The OMNR, however, seeks a wide over arching approach to forest management tying in the Whitefeather forest with other regions and demarking specific land-use zones with protected areas to be managed separately from the working forest. Not all hope is lost, however, and it is felt that cross-scale and cross-level planning for the conservation of woodland caribou habitat can occur as long as respective goals are met at each level. A hybrid approach for the Whitefeather Forest Initiative would be the best way forward one that is based on community level stewardship principles yet at the same time meets provincial targets. This should work because ultimately both parties wish the same thing, a vibrant forest ecosystem capable of sustaining caribou, as long as they remain committed to a respectful cross cultural dialogue this goal can be reached.

✓ INFO <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol13/iss1/art6/>



PARTICIPATORY CONSERVATION STRATEGIES IN INDONESIA AND MADAGASCAR

A recent article in the journal *Ecology & Society* titled *Accounting for the Ecological Dimension in Participatory Research and Development: Lessons Learned from Indonesia and Madagascar* examined the varying degrees of success that participatory conservation

strategies have had in three different cases. The first case focused on the island of Yamdena in the Tanimbar Archipelago of Indonesia inhabited by long-established local communities. The second case looked at the mountainous Beforona region of eastern Madagascar, which has a mixed local and migrant population. And the third and final case was the Mahajam Delta on the eastern coast of Indonesian Borneo a region comprised of mostly migrants to the area. The study found that despite the at times conflicting view points of local populations, migrants, and governments viable conservation strategies between all groups can be reached.

On the isolated forested island of Yamdena the indigenous people view land as a communal property with ownership taking three forms: (1) household level (2) marga or clan level and (3) petuanan many groups of clans. The land and all natural resources found on it is governed by a traditional management system called *sasi*. Even though large-scale logging was banned in the area in the 1990s the effects such practices had on the environment are long lasting. Erosion, ecological decline, and decreased water availability are just a few problems that the region faces. To combat these problems the government along with a local organization called the South Yamdena Community Workgroup created a common vision of the future for common land use. Traditional resource management was incorporated into the statutory law, and because of the positive linkages made between the indigenous people and the government *sasi* was updated leading to more sustainable practices on the island.

In Beforona, Madagascar the dominant ethnic group are the Bet-simisaraka people who engage in a slash-and-burn practice called *tavy* which has been passed down from generation to generation. Such a practice on its own lends to sustainable management since it warms the soil, eradicates pests, and it spares certain useful woody plant species. In addition to this land is also left fallow or *sembotrano* for many years in order for the natural habitat to recover from human farming practices. However, modernization in the region lead to a change in the careful balance. New migrants to the area growing the cash crops of bananas and coffee increased the soil's aluminum toxicity and changed its texture making it harder to grow staple rice crops. To make matters worse ginger became a new cash crop with even more devastating effects on the environment with weed invasion and nutrient leaching occurring at high levels. In order to remedy this situation Madagascar set up nationwide programs on participatory conservation with a stress placed in giving more management to local communities. In the case of Beforona it was recognized that the economic benefits of growing ginger were too high to eradicate the crop, and after much development between farmers and scientists an ecologically friendly strain of ginger was introduced to the region. Thus far the gain in biomass has been 8 metric tons a hectare, 40% of surface erosion has been avoided, and economic returns have increased by up to 30%.

The final case in the Mahakam Delta was quite interesting since with no indigenous people there were no customary land practices governing the region. Being swamp-land the region is covered by *Nypa* palms and mangrove trees. Before the 1970s the only people who went to the delta were nomadic fishers, however all things changed when oil and fishing companies came into the region. The boom in population lead to a market for local products namely fish and seafood, by the 1980s, however, the Indonesian government recognized the dangers of resource depletion and instituted a ban on trawl fishing. This move led to the fishing communities to experiment with pond aquaculture and over time shrimp farming went from a small-scale family activity into an industrial business. By 2002, 75% of the delta was covered by productive ponds, destroying the natural habitat of the *Nypa* palms and mangroves. While economically productive the high numbers of shrimp ponds had a negative impact on the environment with soil loss, dyke erosion, and shrimp diseases all

leading to decreased pond productivity. In 1992 there were yields of 600 kg per hectare, but by 2002 this number was down to 80 kg per hectare. Recognizing the decreasing productivity of the land businesses paired up with local environmental NGOs to find a solution for the problem. What has come out of this is a united front with all invested stake holders attempting to find a more sustainable way to conduct shrimp farming. A few companies in the delta region have recently begun experimenting with fishery systems that incorporate mangrove tree species, having the plants growing in and around shrimp ponds. If successful, it will be a more balanced and eco-friendly approach to the destructive practice of shrimp farming. Ultimately this study shows the world that indigenous knowledge, environmental sustainability, and economic development can occur together when all parties involved are given a voice.

✓ INFO <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol13/iss1/art15/>



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