

Indigenous women and the Convention on Biological Diversity

Work of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity with indigenous women (2000-2005)

The Convention on Biological Diversity¹ in its preamble, recognizes “the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity” and affirms “the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policymaking and implementation for biological diversity conservation”.

A specific framework for the participation of indigenous women is found in the programme of work on the implementation of article 8 (*j*) and related provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity² regarding participatory mechanisms for indigenous and local communities. In this regard, task 4 of the first phase of the programme of work urged:

Parties to develop, as appropriate, mechanisms for promoting the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities with specific provisions for the full, active and effective participation of women in all elements of the programme of work, taking into account the need to:

- Build on the basis of their knowledge
- Strengthen their access to biological diversity
- Strengthen their capacity on matters pertaining to the conservation, maintenance and protection of biological diversity
- Promote the exchange of experiences and knowledge
- Promote culturally appropriate and gender-specific ways in which to document and preserve women’s knowledge of biological diversity

In order to ensure the full involvement and participation of indigenous women in the work being carried out under the Convention on Biological Diversity with regard to traditional knowledge, the Secretariat

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

² Contained in the annex to decision V/16, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its fifth meeting, held in Nairobi from 15 to 26 May 2000 (see document UNEP/CBD/COP/5/23, annex III).

takes into account gender considerations when selecting participants for meetings, when undertaking research work, when creating experts groups and, in general, when engaging in all activities related to policy-creation and implementation of the provisions of the Convention. In addition, given that traditional knowledge is a cross-cutting issue within the Convention, the promotion of the participation of indigenous women is applicable to meetings regarding each work programme and decision of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

In light of the recognition of the role of women in the Convention of Biological Diversity and, in particular, in the work programme on the implementation of article 8 (*j*), the Secretariat is pleased to participate in events related to indigenous women and biodiversity. In this regard, for instance, the Secretariat delivered a presentation at a workshop for indigenous women on biodiversity and traditional knowledge held in New York, on 6 May 2004. The workshop was organized by the Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network (IWBN), an open network of indigenous women interested in environmental issues, initiated in May 1998 at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Bratislava.

Finally, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity continues to cooperate with the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, among other relevant organizations, and with women representatives of indigenous and local communities, to ensure that the perspectives and strategies of indigenous women in biodiversity-related issues are taken into account in the work being done under the Convention with regard to traditional knowledge.

Documentation/bibliography

The programme of work on the implementation of article 8 (*j*) and related provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity is available from:
www.biodiv.org/decisions/default.aspx?m=COP-05&id=7158&lg=0

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