

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Seventh session
New York, 21 April - 2 May 2008

**Written submission by Centre for Organisation Research and
Education (CORE) with the support of Indian Confederation of
Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, North East Zone (ICITP-NEZ) and
Gender and Climate Change Network: Women for Climate Justice
(GENCC)**

Summary

The Centre for Organisation Research & Education (CORE), supported by the Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, North East Zone (ICITP-NEZ) and the Gender and Climate Change Network: Women for Climate Justice (GenCC) jointly made presentations at the inter-active Expert Panel on *Gender Perspectives on Climate Change* [Item no. 3(b)] as the emerging issue at the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, New York, 25 February – 7 March 2008. Emerging challenges derived from specific lessons and experiences of indigenous women are highlighted in this report. Recommendations are made to the seventh session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII).

Provisional Agenda Item 3: Special Theme “*Climate Change, Bio-Cultural Diversity and Livelihoods: The Stewardship Role of Indigenous Peoples and New Challenges*”

Introduction

1. The information in this paper is submitted by the Centre for Organisation Research & Education (CORE), and supported by the Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, North East Zone (ICITP-NEZ) and Gender and Climate Change Network: Women for Climate Justice (GENCC).
2. The Centre for Organisation Research & Education (CORE), a member of the Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, North East Zone (ICITP-NEZ) participated in the inter-active Expert Panel on Gender Perspectives on Climate Change at the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the emerging issue addressing climate change.¹
3. The 52CSW examined this after the adoption of the Bali Plan of Action at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Bali, in December 2007. The Bali road map affirms that addressing climate change effectively requires *mitigation* and *adaptation* action as well as *technology* and *financing*.
4. This submission identifies key emerging challenges to the stewardship of indigenous peoples in safeguarding the world’s bio-cultural diversity, the very basis of our livelihoods. The global climate change crisis and the response of the international community to address it pose a range of threats critical to indigenous peoples’ survival. Such threats have a significant bias against indigenous women.

New Challenges to Indigenous Peoples’ Stewardship Role: A Gender Perspective

5. *Intensification of discrimination against indigenous women*: In societies with strong pro-male bias there is already an escalation of extreme forms of violence against women. Discrimination also intensifies when scarce resources have to be shared by too many, leaving girls and women as the most deprived and the most heavily burdened with survival imperatives for the family and society.
6. *Shrinking bio-sphere heritage*: Extensive biosphere shrinkage is the reality of a narrowing resource base. Cultural colonization, privatization of the biosphere resources and their primary use in profit making means that the range of sub-surface terrestrial minerals, plants, animals and fossil products used by humans is rapidly narrowing. Extraction and over-use leads to the disbalancing of their place in the world with other things, living or non-living.
7. *Appropriation of indigenous knowledge*: The intensive search for new technologies for corporate expansion are now appropriating indigenous knowledge, much of which is the

¹<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw52/panels/summaries/Summary%20Emerging%20Climate%20Change%206%20MAR.pdf>

traditional preserve of women. As the biosphere degrades, such knowledge becomes less useful in the original environment or as more women are evicted or forcibly displaced this knowledge becomes disused in the community, replaced by expensive commercial products.

8. *Loss of indigenous language and cultures*: The loss of Indigenous knowledge, indigenous language and culture is an effect of the eradication of bio-diversity, including indigenous knowledge, technologies and systems for indigenous women.

9. *Loss of livelihoods*: Indigenous women are the main beneficiaries as well as anchors of traditional indigenous livelihoods. Such livelihoods are inter-dependent with the integrity of the lands and natural resource base and of indigenous knowledge systems. The erosion and loss of this integrity without their replacement by alternative sustainable livelihoods is a grave threat.

10. *Cost-Benefiting and pricing of “environmental services”*: The insidious practice of pricing at market values and cost benefit analyses of so called environmental services is fundamentally objectionable to indigenous spirituality and values. At a more pragmatic level it is inherently discriminatory, where the product of western, capitalist technocratic outputs are priced higher than efforts of indigenous peoples especially of indigenous women deriving from indigenous knowledge and processes.

11. *Present priorities to address climate change erode rights to land and natural resources*:

Commercialization of climate change response actions manifest specifically in the carbon market and emissions trading escalate the magnitude of climate disaster over even the short term. Rights of indigenous women, indigenous cultures rights to land and natural resources are victims of climate change responses under the:

- a. Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including RED/REDD (Reduce Emissions from Deforestation/Reduced Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries) the new initiative to restore forest,
- b. The World Bank’s Clean Energy Investment Framework (and the funds created under its mandate),
- c. The inclusion of forests in carbon markets including through the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and other World Bank carbon schemes,
- d. False solutions to climate change that threaten indigenous peoples and women that include agro-fuels, genetic modification, carbon offsetting, nuclear, large hydro dams, carbon capture and storage, nanotechnology and climate engineering.

12. *Privatization and commercialization of disaster response*: The privatization and

commercialization of disaster response whether post-war/conflict or after extreme natural events raises the costs of rehabilitation. Reconstruction programmes have become inadequate to the task and driven by profit rather than humanitarian concerns.

13. *Emerging new and old diseases*: Diseases are re-emerging and new diseases are also affecting human and other species, plant and animal, on which we depend for food and other necessities. Many of these affect across species with implications for the resource base that women depend on and women's health.

14. *Competition from profiteering corporate bodies*: Competition between corporate bodies and their allies, financing institutions and poor communities dependent on land and water resources is violent. Governments are constrained by trade and debt commitments or otherwise incited or coerced to support corporate takeover of these resources. Corporations use private armies or military to enforce occupation of such lands. Women are closely involved in these struggles and targeted for exemplary punitive action.

15. *Emerging conflicts and threats to human security*: climate change has increased human migration and armed conflict over resources. Threats to human security have devastating impact on women's security of person, health and livelihoods. Indigenous women are disproportionately affected, with longer term discrimination against their status and role.

16. *Anti-poor state policies*: Privatization of essential services (health, education, energy, water) and of forests, lands, natural and cultural resources, seriously undermines women's capacity in climate change adaptation. When traditional communities break up because of displacement, women lose their material and social supports and safety nets. In disasters, natural or human induced, women are most deprived and least assisted. Dwindling governmental resources, also an effect of liberal trade regimes, further limits them from offering adequate support.

17. *Exclusion from government and inter-government decision making processes*: Consultation and participation in decision making does not mean the mere listening to or recording of views of indigenous women but of integrating these into decisions. Indigenous women are consistently excluded from meaningful participation in vital on-going processes under the International Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UNFCCC, national decision making on climate change adaptation and mitigation, and biological diversity.

Recommendations

The Permanent Forum should engage with efforts undertaken under the core environment treaties of the Rio Conference of 1994 - the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the International Convention on Biological Diversity, including those of the concerned UN specialised bodies, programmes and agencies, to ensure that:

18. ***Gender perspectives, equity and indigenous women's rights*** are mainstreamed to conserve, protect restore and enhance the diversity of cultures and biosphere, to plan and implement a viable strategy to address climate change, eventually restore the biosphere, enable effective mitigation and adaptation.

a. Gender mainstreaming in all policies and interventions under UNFCCC, including Clean Development Mechanism, Technology Cooperation, Adaptation and Mitigation; the CBD and its relevant working groups, inter alia, on Article 8(j), Protected Areas.

b. Adequate support including but not restricted to financial support must be afforded for the equal participation of indigenous women in these intergovernmental and related national governmental processes and programmes at all levels of decision making and implementation.

19. ***No harm principle*** should inform stringent standards in all CDM or technology transfer projects under UNFCCC. No harm should be caused to either environment or human communities among whom such projects are implemented or technology is transferred. Projects that violate human, women's or indigenous rights or high risk technology should not be permitted, whether these are economically viable or otherwise.

20. ***Costs of CDM projects and technology transfer***, whether from developed countries or sections of society or others, must be wholly borne by developed countries or by polluting contaminating or resource exhausting industries and commercial activities. Contingent agreements for goods or services that erode the sustainability and autonomy of the concerned country or community should not be part of such projects. Financial benefit should not be a deciding consideration for initiatives necessary for environmental and human security.

21. ***Applicability of endogenous knowledge***, particularly local indigenous knowledge, technologies and systems shall be a principle.

a. Local traditional and indigenous knowledge holders to be preferred initiators, implementers and supervisors of technological introduction and dissemination.

b. External expertise to support local communities and environments shall prioritise transfer of know-how to local holding. Costs of technology transfer to cover the costs of training and sustainability.

22. ***Harmonisation and non-conflict of policies, legislation and programmes*** implicating all commercial, development and environment related aspects of human activity. This will enable effective implementation and avoid the present loopholes that permit ongoing damage to indigenous societies or to the environment

*The Permanent Forum should also engage with and advise efforts by the **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** affecting Indigenous Women and collaborate with the Commission to ensure:*

23. *Gender Perspectives and equity as a standard* informing all policies and initiatives under UNFCCC especially in regard to full and informed participation of indigenous women, the integrity of natural and cultural heritage and rights to self determined development.

24. The *CSW to be requested* to engage with the Permanent Forum and UNFCCC processes to ensure the protection of indigenous women's rights in adaptation and mitigation programmes, and to cooperation on technology. The CSW and the UNPFII should jointly engage with the UNFCCC to assure proper and gender equitable allocation of financial resources, capacity building and training.



CORE centre for Organisation Research & Education

Indigenous Peoples' Centre for Policy and Human Rights in India's Eastern Himalayan Territories

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

INT/US/nyc/unpfiisectt/7pfii_item3/coresub120308

12 March 2008

Mr. Yao Ngoran
Chief NGO Unit
Division for Social Policy and Development
2 United Nations Plaza, Room DC2-1324
New York, NY 10017

Subject: Written Submission under Provisional Agenda Item No. 3 (Special theme) of 7th session UNPFII, in accordance with ECOSOC resolution 1996/31

Dear Mr Ngoran

Greetings from Manipur!

I am pleased to transmit to you for your kind attention and appropriate action, a written submission from our organisation pertaining to Provisional Agenda Item No. 3 (Special Theme - **Climate Change, Bio-Cultural Diversity and Livelihoods: The Stewardship Role of Indigenous Peoples and New Challenges**) of the forthcoming seventh session of the UNPFII. For reasons that we wanted to transmit the most updated information from the just concluded 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, New York, 25 February – 7 March 2008, we have delayed this transmission.

Please do let me know if there is any clarification you need.

Yours sincerely

Dr. D Roy LAIFUNGBAM
Secretary/Executive Director

Attached:

1. Written Information submission under Agenda Item No. 3 of the Provisional Agenda of the seventh session of the PFII
2. Signed consents from ICITP-NEZ, India and Gender and Climate Change Network: Women for Climate Justice (GENCC), Germany

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**NGO joint written statement submission to the seventh session of the Permanent
Forum on Indigenous Issues
(21 April – 2 May 2008)**

I, (*in capital letters, indicate name of authorized representative*)

JEBRA RAM MUCHAHARY

(*indicate telephone number*) +919435026173

hereby wish to inform the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Secretariat of my organization's

Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, North East Zone (ICITP-NEZ)

to join the NGO joint written submission being delivered by (*in capital letters, indicate name of non-governmental organization in ECOSOC consultative status submitting the information*)

CENTRE FOR ORGANISATION RESEARCH & EDUCATION (CORE)

with regard to agenda item

Item 3: Special Theme

“Climate Change, Bio-Cultural Diversity and Livelihoods: The Stewardship Role of Indigenous Peoples and New Challenges”



Signature of authorized representative _____

PRESIDENT

Date: 12 March 2008

**NGO joint written statement submission to the seventh session of the Permanent
Forum on Indigenous Issues
(21 April – 2 May 2008)**

I, *(in capital letters, indicate name of authorized representative)*

Anna Pinto

(indicate telephone number) +91(832)2289318

hereby wish to inform the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Secretariat of my organization

Gender and Climate Change Network: Women for Climate Justice (GENCC)

to join the NGO joint written submission being delivered by *(in capital letters, indicate name of non-governmental organization in ECOSOC consultative status submitting the information)*

CENTRE FOR ORGANISATION RESEARCH & EDUCATION (CORE)

with regard to provisional agenda item

Item 3: Special Theme

“Climate Change, Bio-Cultural Diversity and Livelihoods: The Stewardship Role of Indigenous Peoples and New Challenges”



Signature of authorized representative _____

Date: 12 March 2008