

CHAPTER I



POVERTY AND WELL-BEING

- By Joji Carino

As long as we have waters where the fish can swim
As long as we have land where the reindeer can graze
As long as we have woods where wild animals can hide
we are safe on this earth

When our homes are gone and our land destroyed
– then where are we to be?

Our own land, our lives' bread, has shrunk
the mountain lakes have risen
rivers have become dry
the streams sing in sorrowful voices
the land grows dark, the grass is dying
the birds grow silent and leave

The good gifts we have received
no longer move our hearts
Things meant to make life easier
have made life less

Painful is the walk
on rough roads of stone
Silent cry the people of the mountains

While time rushes on
our blood becomes thin
our language no longer resounds
the water no longer speaks

(Paulus Utsi, "As long as...")

Introduction

Paulus Utsi, the Saami poet,¹ echoes the lament of many indigenous peoples about the ravages caused by industrial development upon nature and traditional cultural values. He describes a longing to maintain traditional lifestyles close to nature and the ensuing loss of meaning when engulfed by modern economic development. Captured in the poem are underlying cultural values and definitions of what constitutes indigenous peoples' well-being and sustainable development and, in its absence, indigenous peoples' despair.

¹Paulus Utsi was born in 1918 and died in 1975. His poem "As long as..." is translated by Roland Thorstenson and reprinted in *In the Shadow of the Midnight Sun: Contemporary Sami Prose and Poetry* (1998), Harald Gaski (ed.).

From the Asian region, John Bamba, an indigenous Dayak from Kalimantan, similarly summarizes the underlying principles for living a good life, based on the Dayak's traditional cultural values. They are the values of sustainability, collectivity, naturality, spirituality, process-orientation, domesticity and locality. These are contrasted with prevailing modern values — productivity, individualism, technology, rationality, efficiency, commercialism, and globalization — that have become predominant principles in present-day social and economic development that can undermine a balanced human-nature relationship. The ensuing chaos is seen as cultural poverty, defined from a Dayak perspective as arising from the inability to practice customary principles and values, and to live a good life.

Cultural poverty: A Dayak perspective

The following seven principles summarize the way in which the Dayak achieve their ideal of life, based on their cultural values and how they compare with modern values:

- ◆ Sustainability (biodiversity) versus productivity (monoculture)
- ◆ Collectivity (cooperation) versus individuality (competition)
- ◆ Naturality (organic) versus engineered (inorganic)
- ◆ Spirituality (rituality) versus rationality (scientific)
- ◆ Process (effectiveness) versus result (efficiency)
- ◆ Subsistence (domesticity) versus commerciality (market)
- ◆ Customary law (locality) versus state law (global)

Failure to achieve these ideals is believed to result in *barau* (Jalai Dayak): a situation when nature fails to function normally, and thus results in chaos. *Barau* is a result of *Adat** transgression—a broken relationship with nature. “Poverty” for the Dayak is linked directly with failure to exercise the *Adat* that governs the way in which the people should live.

* *Adat*: set of local and traditional laws.

Source: Bamba (2003).

These insights from two indigenous intellectuals underline the central importance of cultural values in defining the social and economic well-being of indigenous peoples. Any measures of indigenous peoples' social and economic development must necessarily start from indigenous peoples' own definitions and indicators of poverty and well-being.

Indigenous leaders addressing the UN General Assembly's Special Session, five years after the Rio Conference on Environment and Development, stated, “Sustainable development and self-determination are two sides of the



sustainable development and self-determination are two sides of the same coin

same coin.”² This echoes a statement on poverty adopted in May 2001 by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which recognizes that poverty constitutes a denial of human rights and defines poverty as a human condition characterized by the deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.³

This chapter presents an overview of issues linked to modern economic development and the impoverishment of indigenous peoples, the status and trends in the practice of traditional occupations, indicators relevant to indigenous peoples’ well-being and sustainable development, and corporate globalization and sustainability of indigenous communities. It also contains some core findings of selected thematic or country case studies relevant to the subject of indigenous peoples and development.

“If a villager had cut trees in this place, the elders would have fined them so much. But because it is the Government, they will not dare say anything”. — a villager, Cambodia⁴

New threats of globalization

The global ascendancy of neo-liberal economics and the entrenchment of corporate power in international and national affairs have deepened inequalities between and within nations and largely undermined efforts toward sustainable development. Based on a belief that the market should be the organizing principle for social, political and economic decisions, policy makers promoted privatization of state activities and an increased role for the free market, flexibility in labour markets, and trade liberalization. The benefits of these policies frequently fail to reach the indigenous peoples of the world, who acutely feel their costs, such as environmental degradation and loss of traditional lands and territories.

“At present, villages do not have serious problems of land use. But the next generation of indigenous peoples will not have enough land for their field and paddy rice agriculture”. — a farmer, Cambodia⁵

Since the 1980s there has been a global trend to liberalize Mining Codes. This is aimed at increasing foreign investment into the extractives sector and providing increased assurance of profit on investment for mainly British, Canadian, US

² Statement made at the 19th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly 1997 on Earth Summit + 5. Reproduced in Posey (2000).

³ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2001). Statement on Substantive Issues Arising in the Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Poverty and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Adopted on 4 May 2001.

⁴ Asian Development Bank (2002)

⁵ Asian Development Bank (2002).

and Australian financed mining companies. Investors were given commitments against nationalization and the previous trend, especially in the global South to regard resource industries as strategic national interests in need of protection. Many nationalized mineral extraction enterprises were sold to transnational corporations. According to Professor James Otto then of the Colorado School of mines by 2003 more than 105 countries had liberalized their Mining Codes along these lines. Countries such as the Philippines and Colombia revised their mining codes, facilitating large-scale mining by foreign companies, which intensified the pressure on indigenous lands and weakened or overrode the legal protections previously enjoyed by indigenous peoples.⁶

According to the recently concluded meeting of the African Initiative on Mining, Environment and Society: “In recent times, international investment agreements and contracts with African governments in the extractive sector in particular have significantly increased. By the middle of 2008, more than 2600 bilateral investment treaties have been signed between individual African governments and private corporations and northern governments. Despite their intent to clarify and codify rules around expropriation, these treaties tended to reinforce structures of exploitation and Africa’s peripheral status in global political economic order. They have been effective in protecting the interest of foreign direct investment (FDI), constraining public policy space, limiting environmental protection, undermining human rights including labour and community livelihood, and ultimately legalizing capital flight out of the continent.”⁷

In Australia the Native Title legislation has provided some increased negotiating powers to indigenous peoples, obliging mining companies to consult with communities and to recognize some wider social responsibilities. This has resulted in some improvements in the proportion of Indigenous Peoples employed in mining within indigenous areas. However disputes over and resistance to mining projects remain common. In Panama, the San Blas Kuna territory is constitutionally protected, as is the Yanomami territory in Northern Brazil. Nevertheless, mining companies and other extractive corporations tend to have few requirements to consider the environmental or social impact of their activities on indigenous peoples. This is especially the case in southeast Asia and many African countries due to the non-recognition of customary land rights. Even where some legislation protecting indigenous peoples’ land rights exists, it is frequently not implemented or is overpowered by conflicting legislation that is designed to attract foreign investment. Whether it is gold mining in Guatemala, nickel extraction in Indonesia, the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline, or the gas pipeline in Camisea in the Peruvian Amazon, the effects have been devastating on the indigenous peoples whose territories are destroyed by highly polluting technologies and disregard of local communities’ right to the environment. “The widespread practice of dumping toxic waste in indigenous territories has been the cause of many abortions and cases of cancer and other diseases among indigenous women”.⁸ Such practices are found on indigenous territories both in the global North and South including for example

indigenous peoples bear disproportionate costs from resource-intensive and resource-extractive industries

⁶ Tebtebba (2005).

⁷ African Initiative on Mining, Environment and Society (2009)

⁸ Stavenhagen (2007), para. 52.



the Navajo territories in the south-western United States which is both a location for uranium mining and nuclear waste disposal.

As the pressures on the Earth's resources intensify, indigenous peoples bear disproportionate costs from resource-intensive and resource-extractive industries and activities such as mining, oil and gas development, large dams and other infrastructure projects, logging and plantations, bio-prospecting, industrial fishing and farming, and also eco-tourism and imposed conservation projects. These pressures also accelerate some unsustainable economic activities undertaken by indigenous peoples themselves, notably where indigenous rights have not been respected, thus leaving communities with insufficient land and resources. According to one observer, "In particular, many indigenous peoples have been gravely affected as environmental and social crises—such as the displacement of communities, the deterioration of health and severe environmental degradation—have increasingly disrupted and brought chaos to their lives".⁹

the implementation of privatization policies has had a profound effect on the economic practices of many communities

The effects of privatization on Russian reindeer herders

Since the break up of the Soviet Union in 1991, Northern Russia has undergone considerable changes. One of these changes has been the privatization of the economy, leading to significant economic decline in northern regions. The implementation of privatization policies has had a profound effect on the economic practices of many communities, in particular in the north-eastern regions, including Yakutia, Chukotka, Magadan, and Kamchatka. These communities specialize in breeding reindeer. As a result of the central government's disinvestment, the domestic reindeer population fell by more than one-third between 1991 and 1999, from 2.2 million head to 1.4 million. One result of the reduction of this economic activity has been a more settled way of life, instead of following the reindeer.

However, in certain areas, where the supply networks that supported production and distribution were cut off or became intermittent, people have actually had to make greater investment in hunting, fishing and trapping activities in order to support themselves. Among the Dolgan and the Nganasan, more isolated now than in the past 30 years, the main source of protein comes from subsistence hunting, fishing and harvesting.

Although privatization has destabilized many communities in Northern Russia, it has also created more variation among areas, with some seeing a resurgence of traditional subsistence means of economic support and so reaffirming the continuing need for understanding and treatment of indigenous conceptions of economy and relations to the land.

Source: Arctic Human Development Report (2004), 80.

⁹ Sawyer and Terence Gomez (2008), 16.

Agriculture and food security

The WTO Agreement on Agriculture, which promotes export competition and import liberalization, has allowed the entry of cheap agricultural products into indigenous peoples' communities, thereby compromising their sustainable agricultural practices, food security, health and cultures. The view has been put forward that small-scale subsistence production, which characterizes many indigenous economies, does not contribute to economic growth. That "... economic growth will only come about if subsistence lands are rapidly converted into large-scale, capital intensive, export-oriented commercial production. This takes the form of huge agricultural monocrop plantations, commercial mines and/or plantation forest projects, all of which drive people from their lands".¹⁰

"Once you sell land, it means hunger for your family. There is nowhere to go to clear land anymore". — former indigenous landowner, Vietnam¹¹

Thus, small-scale farm production is giving way to commercial cash-crop plantations, further concentrating ancestral lands in the hands of a few agri-corporations and landlords. The conversion of small-scale farming to cash-crop plantations has further caused the uprooting of many community members from rural to urban areas.

National legislation that is compliant with WTO agreements, combined with the liberalization of trade and investment regimes promoted by the donor community since the early 1980s, are undermining national legislation and regulations protecting indigenous rights and the environment. Indigenous Peoples have put forward these examples of the adverse impacts of WTO agreements.¹²

The WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AOA) requirements for the liberalization of agricultural trade and the deregulation of laws which protect domestic producers and crops has resulted in the loss of livelihoods of indigenous corn producers in Mexico because of the dumping of artificially cheap, highly subsidized corn from the USA. The contamination of traditional corn varieties in Mexico by genetically modified corn is also a very serious problem. Indigenous vegetable production in the Cordillera region of the Philippines has been similarly devastated by the dumping of cheap vegetables. The drop in commodity prices of coffee has impoverished indigenous and hill tribe farmers engaged in coffee production in Guatemala, Mexico, Colombia, and Vietnam. All these are made possible due to high export subsidies and domestic support provided to agribusiness corporations and rich farmers in the United States and the European Union.

There has been an upsurge in infrastructure development, particularly of large hydroelectric dams, oil and gas pipelines, and roads in indigenous peoples territories to support operations of extractive industries, logging corporations, and export processing zones. For example, infrastructure development under Plan Puebla Panama has destroyed ceremonial and sacred sites of indigenous peoples in the six states of southern Mexico and in Guatemala.

The General Agreement on Services (GATS) allows privatization of basic public services such as water and energy, and coverage is being expanded to include environmental services (sanitation, nature and landscape protection), financial services, and tourism, among others. This has spurred massive general strikes and protests such as those led by indigenous peoples in Bolivia.

¹⁰ Tauli-Corpuz (2006), 39.

¹¹ Asian Development Bank (2002).

¹² The International Cancun Declaration of Indigenous Peoples, 5th WTO Ministerial Conference - Cancun, Quintana Roo, Mexico, 12 September 2003.



The patenting of medicinal plants and seeds nurtured and used by indigenous peoples, like the *quinoa*, *ayahuasca*, Mexican yellow bean, *maca*, *sangre de drago*, *hoodia*, etc. is facilitated by the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). This contains requirements for national legislation to protect copyrights, patents, trademarks and other forms of intellectual property, allowing the patenting of life forms for micro-organisms and non-biological and microbiological processes of production of plants and animals. This constitutes a threat to the protection and promotion of indigenous knowledge. Furthermore, these policies have subjected indigenous peoples to the uncertainties of the marketplace, thus decreasing their food security and threatening their traditional livelihoods as illustrated by the discussion on Greenland and Northern Russian communities.

“They now even charge for domestic animals such as cats or dogs, which they used to give away for good luck”. — a woman interviewed, Viet Nam¹³

large dams have disproportionately impacted indigenous peoples

The above discussion points to the fact that neo-liberalism has frequently been imposed on indigenous peoples, and that under structural adjustment programmes, multinational corporations have extracted resources from indigenous territories without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples involved, providing little or no compensation for the communities with adverse impacts on their livelihood and cultural/spiritual life. As a result, the indigenous peoples are made worse-off beyond what is evident in the quantitative (monetary) indicators of poverty and well-being.

Large dams and indigenous peoples

Large dams became symbols of modern development in the twentieth century, and recently have also epitomized the unequal economic, social and environmental impacts of “unsustainable development”. The World Commission on Dams (WCD) knowledge base revealed that large dams have disproportionately impacted indigenous peoples and that future dam building also targets their lands disproportionately. They have suffered from loss of lands and livelihood, cultural losses, fragmentation of political institutions, breakdown of identity and human rights abuses.

Dam planning and projects are characterized by serious procedural failures that relate directly to indigenous communities. The distinctive characteristics of affected peoples are often ignored in project planning, as are customary rights. Environmental and social assessments are either absent or inadequate. Resettlements are frequently ill-planned.

¹³ Asian Development Bank (2002).



Compensation and reparations are tardy and inadequate. Participatory mechanisms are typically weak, with no negotiations or prior informed consent. Within national societies, indigenous peoples are often subject to social exclusion and prevalent discrimination, exacerbating these failures.

WCD's detailed study of the water and energy sectors exemplifies the underlying problems with externally-imposed development projects that fail to respect the rights of indigenous peoples. Such top-down decision-making processes have impoverished indigenous peoples wherever they live, in developed and developing countries throughout the world, paving the way for demands to gain the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples to any programmes and projects affecting them.

Source: WCD (2000), 97-130.

Impoverishment of indigenous peoples

Indigenous peoples suffer from the consequences of historic injustice, including colonization, dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, oppression and discrimination as well as lack of control over their own ways of life. Their right to development has been largely denied by colonial and modern states in the pursuit of economic growth. As a consequence, indigenous peoples often lose out to more powerful actors, becoming among the most impoverished groups in their respective countries.

“Before the plantation came in, our lifestyle was prosperous. If we needed fruits, we just went to the forest. It was the same if we needed medicines, we just went to the forest. But since this company came in and burned our forest, everything has gone. Our life became difficult. The forest fire has been a disaster for us”. — a member of the Adat community, Indonesia¹⁴

Indigenous peoples continue to be over-represented among the poor, the illiterate, and the unemployed. Indigenous peoples number about 370 million. While they constitute approximately 5 per cent of the world's population, indigenous peoples make up 15 per cent of the world's poor.¹⁵ They also make up about one-third of the world's 900 million extremely poor rural people.¹⁶

“If you go to visit a household and cannot meet them for two weeks or a month, you can be sure that they are poor people.”

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¹⁴ Asian Development Bank (2002).

¹⁵ IFAD (2007).

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Only poor people cannot afford to work near the village, as there is often no fertile land left. They often stay in the forest for weeks with their children”. — a district indigenous officer, Viet Nam¹⁷

Indigenous peoples also face huge disparities in terms of access to and quality of education and health. In Guatemala, for example, 53.5 per cent of indigenous young people aged 15-19 have not completed primary education, as compared to 32.2 per cent of non-indigenous youth.¹⁸ Although infant and child mortality has been steadily decreasing throughout Latin America over the last four decades, child mortality is still 70 per cent higher among indigenous children. Furthermore, malnutrition is twice as frequent among indigenous children in the region.¹⁹ In Nepal, while some indigenous peoples, such as the Thakali, Byasi and Hyolmo, have literacy rates that surpass the national average, 30 of the country's indigenous peoples still fall far below it.²⁰

Indigenous peoples also suffer from discrimination in terms of employment and income. According to the ILO, indigenous workers in Latin America make on average about half of what non-indigenous workers earn. Approximately 25-50 per cent of this income gap is “due to discrimination and non-observable characteristics, such as quality of schooling”.²¹

In different parts of the world, differential progress is being made by indigenous peoples in their social and economic development, reflecting specific national legal and policy frameworks with regard to recognizing, respecting and promoting their rights. Historical and ongoing colonialism has trapped many of them in conditions of deepening impoverishment, even as others have made important advances in asserting recognition of their distinct identities as indigenous peoples and promoting models of development with cultural identity and integrity, applying a human rights-based approach. It is clear that the advancement of indigenous peoples' social and economic development is predicated on international and national recognition of their human rights and on pursuing development strategies based on their own definitions and indicators of poverty and well-being.

Statistics on the situation of indigenous peoples are not readily available because few countries collect data disaggregated by ethnicity. Nonetheless, it is possible to build a picture of indigenous peoples' social and economic development through the use of selected national and regional information, and through analysis of information gleaned from the Human Development Index and the Human Poverty Index.

The following information from countries where national statistics are available is indicative of the poverty situation of indigenous peoples in different countries and regions.

Living conditions of indigenous peoples in Australia, Canada New Zealand and the United States

Poverty and well-being of indigenous peoples is an issue not only in developing countries, as it is often thought. Even in developed countries, indigenous peoples consistently lag behind the non-indigenous population in terms of most indicators of well-being. They live shorter lives, have poorer health care and education and endure higher unemployment rates. Those indigenous persons who do enjoy full employment earn significantly less than their non-indigenous counterparts. A native Aboriginal child born in Australia today can expect to die up to 20 years earlier

¹⁷ Asian Development Bank (2002).

¹⁸ ECLAC (2005), 101.

¹⁹ ECLAC (2007), 191.

²⁰ UNDP (2004), 63.

²¹ ILO (2007), 27.



than his non-indigenous compatriot.²² Obesity, type 2 diabetes and tuberculosis are now major health concerns amongst indigenous peoples in developed countries. Smoking and substance abuse are more common amongst indigenous peoples, while suicide rates, and incarceration rates are significantly higher. These problems are more pronounced in urban areas, where indigenous peoples are detached from their communities and cultures, yet never fully embraced as equal members of the dominant society. Indigenous peoples are also more likely to suffer from violent crime.

A recent study, applying UNDP's Human Development Index²³ to indigenous peoples in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, showed clearly that indigenous people lag significantly behind the general populations in these countries. This discrepancy is particularly pronounced in Australia, where Australian non-indigenous HDI scores rose steadily in the 1990s but remained stagnant amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. According to the study, the HDI of Australia's indigenous peoples is similar to that of Cape Verde and El Salvador. Although the gap has narrowed in Canada, New Zealand and the United States, there is still a significant HDI gap in all three countries between the indigenous and non-indigenous population.²⁴ In 2001, Australia ranked third; the United States, seventh; Canada, eighth; and New Zealand, twentieth in the HDI rankings, while U.S. American Indian and Alaska Natives ranked thirtieth; Canadian Aboriginals, thirty-second; New Zealand Maori, seventy-third, and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, one hundred third.²⁵ In all four countries, predominantly English-speaking settler cultures have supplanted indigenous peoples to a large extent, leading to enormous indigenous resource losses, "the eventual destruction of indigenous economies and a good deal of social organization, precipitous population declines and subjection to tutelary and assimilationist policies antagonistic to indigenous cultures".²⁶

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Australia. These HDI scores are mirrored by other indicators. In Australia, the indigenous unemployment rate was 15.6 per cent in 2006, or just over three times higher than the non-indigenous rate, while the median indigenous income was just over half of the non-indigenous income.²⁷ Although some progress has been made in Australia in recent years, particularly in education, the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples' quality of life by virtually all standards is still very significant. Indigenous households are half as likely to own their own

²² Cooke, Mitrou, Lawrence, Guimod & Dan Beavon (2007).

²³ The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary composite index that measures a country's average achievements in three basic aspects of human development: health, education, and a decent standard of living. Health is measured by life expectancy at birth; education is measured by a combination of the adult literacy rate and the combined primary, secondary, and tertiary gross enrolment ratio; and standard of living is measured by GDP per capita (PPP USD).

²⁴ Cooke, Mitrou, Lawrence, Guimod & Beavon (2007).

²⁵ Cooke, Mitrou, Lawrence, Guimod & Beavon (2007).

²⁶ Cornell, Stephen (2006).

²⁷ Altman, Biddle & Hunter (2008).



homes, (34 per cent of indigenous households owned their homes, compared to 69 per cent of the non-indigenous population), and they are more likely to live in overcrowded conditions (in 2006, a quarter of the indigenous population of Australia was reported to be living in overcrowded conditions). The situation is particularly serious in rural and remote communities where people frequently do not have access to affordable adequate food, water and housing and have poor access to basic services and infrastructure. In 2001, for example, nearly half of all aboriginal communities (46 per cent) with a population of 50 or more had no connection to a town water supply.²⁸ Indigenous adults in Australia are twice as likely as non-indigenous adults to report their health as fair or poor, are twice as likely to report high levels of psychological stress, and are twice as likely to be hospitalized. Ultimately, indigenous Australians' life expectancy is around 20 years lower than non-indigenous life expectancy.

Canada. Canada recognizes that key socio-economic indicators for Aboriginal people are unacceptably lower than for non-Aboriginal Canadians. Aboriginal peoples' living standards have improved in the past 50 years, but they do not come close to those of non-Aboriginal people. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) reports that following:

- ◆ Life expectancy is lower and illness is more common. In 2000, "life expectancy at birth for the registered Indian population was estimated at 68.9 years for males and 76.6 years for females. This reflects differences of 8.1 years and 5.5 years respectively, from the 2001 Canadian population's life expectancies". Moreover, the rate of premature mortality (when a person dies before the age of 75 due to suicide or unintentional injury) is almost four-and-a-half times higher.²⁹
- ◆ Fewer children graduate from high school, and far fewer go on to colleges and universities. Many indigenous communities have poor access to schools. About 70 per cent of First Nations students on-reserve will never complete high school. Graduation rates for the on-reserve population range from 28.9 per cent to 32.1 per cent annually. Just about 27 per cent of the First Nations population between 15 and 44 years of age hold a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree, compared with 46 per cent of the Canadian population within the same age group.³⁰
- ◆ Aboriginal people have poorer access to jobs. In 2005, for example, the unemployment rate of Canada's western provinces of Manitoba, British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan was as high as 13.6 per cent among indigenous people, but only 5.3 per cent among the non-indigenous population.³¹
- ◆ Many more spend time in jails and prisons. Aboriginals make up about 19 per cent of federal prisoners, whilst they are 4.4 per cent of the total population. Between 1997 and 2000, they were 10 times more likely to be accused of homicide than non-aboriginal people. The rate of indigenous in Canadian prisons climbed 22 per cent between 1996 and 2004, while the general prison population dropped 12 per cent.³²

The restrictions put on Aboriginal peoples' ability to protect, meaningfully benefit from and freely dispose of their land and resources constitute the main obstacle to real economic development among First Nations, Métis and Inuit. As a result of land loss and severe limitations set by the various levels of government on the free use of and continuing benefit from their natural resources, Aboriginal people have become increasingly dependent on

²⁸ Bolstridge, Jill A. (2008).

²⁹ Health Canada (2007)

³⁰ Assembly of First Nations (2009).

³¹ Statistics Canada (2005)

³² Gorelick (2007)

welfare measures undertaken by the federal or provincial governments. This accounts for the large disparities between Aboriginal people and other Canadians.³³

The Canadian Council on Social Development identified poverty as one of the most pressing problems facing Aboriginal peoples, particularly in cities, where 60 per cent of Aboriginal children live below the poverty line. In Winnipeg, 80 per cent of inner-city Aboriginal households reported incomes below the poverty line, a much higher percentage than for poor non-Aboriginal families.

Housing is a major problem confronting Aboriginal people, with the RCAP reporting that houses occupied by Aboriginal people are twice as likely to be in need of major repairs as compared to houses of other Canadians. Aboriginal homes are generally overcrowded, and are 90 times more likely to be without piped water. On reserves, more than 10,000 homes have no indoor plumbing, and one reserve in four has a substandard water or sewage system. Approximately 55 per cent live in communities where half of the houses are inadequate or sub-standard, manifested in deteriorated units, toxic mould, lack of heating and insulation, and leaking pipes. On the other hand, some negotiated agreements between the Government and First Nations have provided resources for repairs and the building of adequate new homes, as in the case of Mistissini, a Cree community in Québec.

United States. In the United States of America, an evaluation of the 2000 census and a study in January 2005 by Harvard University³⁴ showed that socio-economic conditions for Native Americans had improved between 1990 and 2000. The authors of the study stressed that the most important reason for the improvements was self-determination, allowing tribes to break away from the overall pattern of intractable poverty. It allows Native American tribes to have decision-making power in their own lands and to be able to exercise this decision-making power efficiently.³⁵

Despite these trends, the average income of Native Americans is still less than half the average for the United States overall.³⁶ Almost a quarter of Native Americans and Alaska Natives live under the poverty line in the United States, compared to about 12.5 per cent of the total population.³⁷

Native American life expectancy is on average 2.4 years lower than that of the general population. Moreover, Native Americans and Alaska Natives have higher death rates than other Americans from tuberculosis (600 per cent higher), alcoholism (510 per cent higher), motor vehicle crashes (229 per cent higher), diabetes (189 per cent higher), unintentional injuries (152 per cent higher), homicide (61 per cent higher) and suicide (62 per cent higher).³⁸

Dropout rates from primary schools are significantly higher among Native American Students compared to their non-indigenous counterparts and the performance of those who stay in school, lags behind others. This pattern is also visible in higher education, where only 7.6 per cent of Native Americans have a bachelor's degree, compared

³³ RCAP estimated that, since Confederation (1867), two-thirds of the lands in the possession of indigenous peoples—lands essential to indigenous peoples' enjoyment of their basic human rights— have been "whittled away" through appropriation, theft, encroachment and the environmental consequences of policies and activities imposed on indigenous peoples without their consent. According to RCAP, this has been a central factor behind pervasive problems of impoverishment, ill health and social stress afflicting indigenous communities across Canada.

³⁴ Taylor and Kalt (2005).

³⁵ Cornell, Stephen (2006).

³⁶ Taylor and Kalt (2005).

³⁷ United States Census Bureau (2005)

³⁸ Indian Health Service (2006).



with 15.5 per cent of the total population.³⁹ This education deficit clearly has an impact on economic outcomes. While the total unemployment rate in the United States declined from 6.5 to 5.9 per cent between 1994 and 2003, during the same period, it increased from 11.7 to 15.1 per cent among American Indians and Alaska Natives.⁴⁰

The 2000 census estimated 18 per cent of all Native American households on Native American land being crowded (more than one person per room), compared to 6 per cent nationwide. 13 per cent of Native American and Alaska Native homes lack safe and adequate water supply and/or waste disposal facilities, compared to 1% of homes for the United States general population.⁴¹

A 1999 study of the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that rates of violence in every age group among Native Americans are higher than those of other ethnicities in the United States and that nearly a third of all Native American victims of violence are aged between 18 and 24.⁴² Indigenous women are also particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. Native American women, for example, are 2.5 times more likely to be raped or sexually violated than women in the United States in general.⁴³

New Zealand. New Zealand is another country ranking high in global comparisons of human development, but where there exist persistent disparities between Maori and non-Maori in areas such as paid work, economic standard of living, housing, health and justice.

A recent survey by the Ministry of Social Development showed that in all but four basic socio-economic indicators, Maori were worse off than European New Zealanders. Comprising just under 15 per cent of the New Zealand population, Maori account for 40 per cent of all convictions in the courts and 50 per cent of the prison population. The unemployment rate for the Maori is over twice as high as the national average (7.7 per cent vs. 3.8 per cent).⁴⁴ Household income is 70 per cent of the national average. Maori life expectancy is nearly 10 years lower than non-Maori; they are four times more likely to live in an overcrowded house (since 1991, the proportion of Maori who own their own home has fallen from 61.4 per cent to 45.2 per cent).⁴⁵

Educational improvements have been made as recently as the 1986-1996 period, as New Zealand's official Statistic Agency states: "The proportion of Maori with a post-school (tertiary) qualification increased from 16.1 per cent in 1986 to 22.6 per cent in 1996. The comparable increase for non-Maori was from 33.3 per cent to 35.5 per cent". However, in "1996, a higher proportion of non-Maori had a post-school qualification than a school qualification or no qualification, whereas Maori were more likely to have no qualification".⁴⁶

As stated by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, at the end of his visit to New Zealand in 2005: "All these issues are considered by Maori the result of a trans-generational backlog of broken promises, economic marginalization, social exclusion and cultural discrimination".⁴⁷

³⁹ Tsai & Alanis (2004).

⁴⁰ Freeman, C., and Fox, M. (2005), 122.

⁴¹ Indian Health Service (2009).

⁴² Bureau of Justice Statistics (1999).

⁴³ Amnesty International (2007), 2.

⁴⁴ New Zealand Department of Labour (2008).

⁴⁵ Housing New Zealand Corporation (2008).

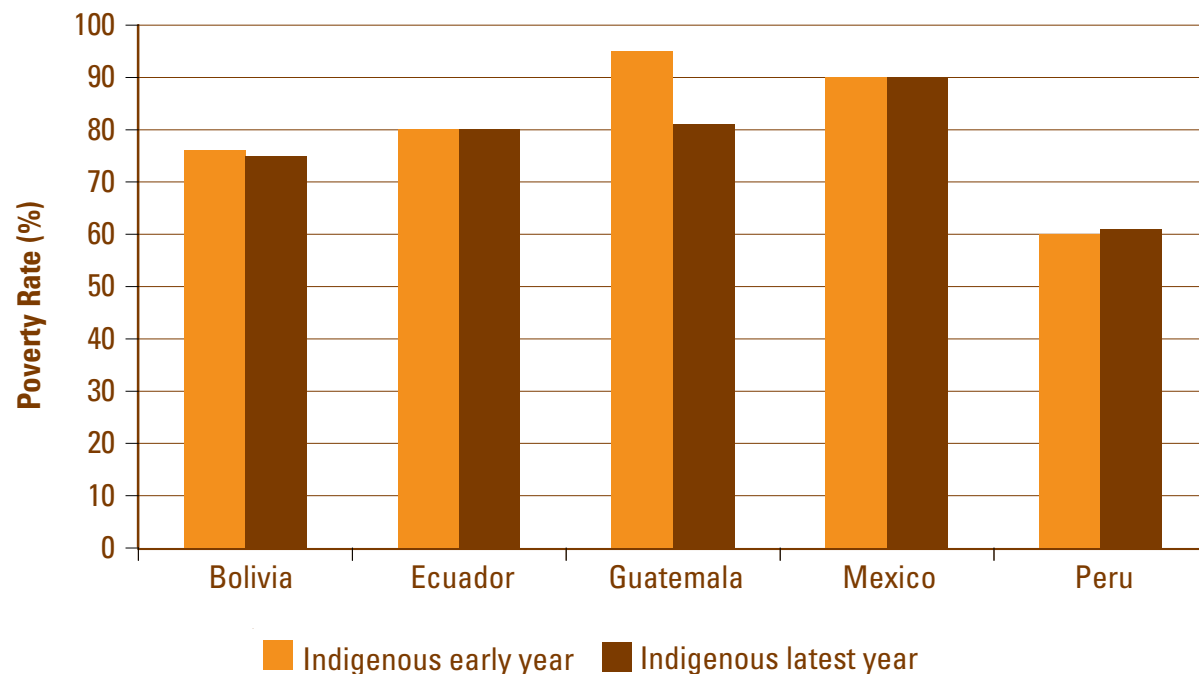
⁴⁶ Statistics New Zealand (1998) p. 51.

⁴⁷ Stavenhagen (2005).

Poverty and land rights in Latin America

A World Bank study on indigenous peoples and poverty in Latin America concluded that “poverty among Latin America’s indigenous population is pervasive and severe”.⁴⁸ This study, which documented the socio-economic situation of around 34 million indigenous people in the region, representing 8 per cent of the region’s total population, showed that the poverty map in almost all the countries coincides with indigenous peoples’ territories. A similar study in the region by the Inter-American Development Bank observed that being poor and being indigenous were synonymous. Its report on Mexico concluded that indigenous peoples live in “alarming conditions of extreme poverty and marginality...Virtually all of the indigenous people living in municipalities with 90 per cent or more indigenous people are catalogued as extremely poor”.⁴⁹ The difference between the indigenous and non-indigenous is often striking, where, for example in Paraguay, poverty is 7.9 times higher among indigenous peoples, compared to the rest of the population. In Panama, poverty rates are 5.9 times higher, in Mexico 3.3 times higher, and in Guatemala, indigenous peoples’ poverty rates are 2.8 times higher than the rest of the population.⁵⁰ As can be seen from Figure I.1, despite significant changes in poverty rates overall, the proportion of indigenous peoples in the region living in poverty did not change much in most countries from the early 1990s to the early 2000s.

Poverty for indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Latin America, 1980s to 2000s



Source: World Bank (2007).

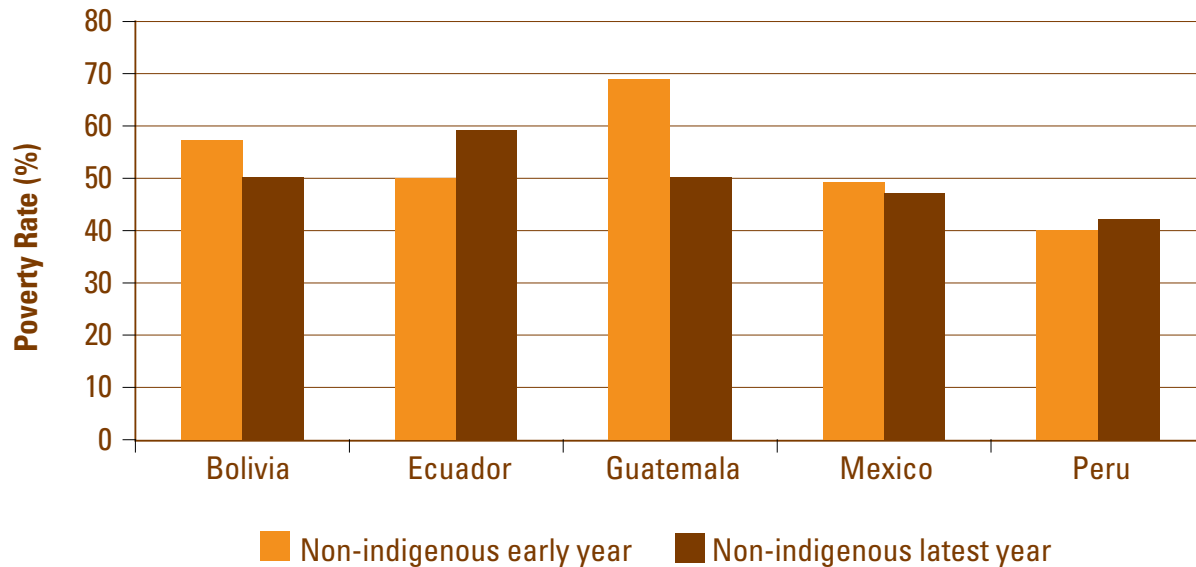
Studies of socio-economic conditions of indigenous peoples in Latin America show that being indigenous is associated with being poor and that over time, that condition has stayed constant. Studies also show that

⁴⁸ Hall and Patrinos (2005).

⁴⁹ Plant (1998).

⁵⁰ ECLAC (2007), 152.





Source: World Bank (2007).

indigenous peoples' poverty has not diminished over time, including over the period of the first International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, 1994-2004.⁵¹ Indigenous peoples also suffer from many other disadvantages. Even when they have access to secondary or higher education, they are frequently unable to convert that to significantly greater earnings or to reduce the poverty gap with the nonindigenous population. This finding holds for countries where indigenous peoples are a small fraction of the overall population, such as Mexico⁵² and Chile,⁵³ as well as in countries where a large portion of the population is indigenous, such as in Bolivia.⁵⁴

studies also show that indigenous peoples' poverty has not diminished over time

Over the past 20 years or more, indigenous organizations in Latin America have put great efforts into safeguarding their land rights through mapping, demarcation and titling of their territories. This process, which began in the 1980s and reached its peak in the 1990s, has led to an increased, albeit varying, degree of recognition of indigenous lands in national laws. In Colombia, indigenous peoples comprising 2 per cent of the population have gained the legalization of indigenous territories corresponding to one-third of the national territory. In 2004, Brazilian State had recognized over 15 million hectares as indigenous reserves, while in Peru the indigenous peoples of the Amazon had achieved the titling of 7 million hectares of land, or approximately 10 per cent of the Peruvian Amazon. A total of 18 million hectares are under claim by the indigenous peoples of Peru. In the south of the continent, the recovery of indigenous territories has been more difficult and the colonial structures more ingrained.

Although land titling has been a fundamental step and a great achievement for the indigenous communities in Latin America, they are still far from having real

⁵¹ Hall and Patrinos (2006)

⁵² Ramirez (2006)

⁵³ Hopenhayn (2003).

⁵⁴ Feiring (2003).

control over their territories. Land titles and deeds do not always correspond to the communities' full areas of use and subsistence. In many countries, indigenous lands and territories face serious threats from the activities of oil and lumber companies. In Colombia, the armed conflict has driven thousands of indigenous peoples from their lands.⁵⁵

India: Poverty among the Scheduled Tribes

Research by the Institute of Human Development, India, has shown how official statistics could shed light on the discrimination experienced by indigenous peoples.⁵⁶ Analysis of official data on Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes⁵⁷ from the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) and the Planning Commission of the Government of India showed that while the caste system discriminates against the poorest caste – the *Dalits* – the level of poverty among Scheduled Tribes is deeper, despite the constitutional rights that apply uniquely to them. It was also found that while poverty among the general population had declined between 1993-1994 and 1999-2000, there had been little change in poverty levels among indigenous peoples. The Scheduled Castes have fared better than Scheduled Tribes in terms of poverty reduction. The poverty gap between Scheduled Castes and other groups in India has decreased while that between the Scheduled Tribes and other groups has widened.

Similar results were found using the Human Poverty Index (HPI). Whilst India is considered a middle-ranked country in the UNDP HPI ranking of countries, the indigenous communities as a group are comparable to Sub-Saharan countries, which are ranked in the bottom 25. By taking into account the poverty of indigenous peoples, the MDG goal of halving poverty by 2015 may not be achieved in India.

Scheduled Tribes also score lower in education, health and other social and economic aspects measured by the HDI. Indigenous communities in India are typically rural, and poverty among rural communities is higher than that in urban areas. There are few people without land among the Scheduled Tribes, but their lands have low productivity. The more productive lands, especially in low-lying areas, have been taken over by other communities. There is also less job diversification among Scheduled Tribes. Deprived of formal education and with little access to capital, they fail to find work, either self-employed or within regular jobs, ending up in casual employment or in agriculture.

On the status of and trends in the practice of traditional occupations

A narrow focus on income levels, while providing useful information on disparities within countries between indigenous peoples and the rest of the population, cannot capture the entire picture of indigenous peoples' poverty and marginalization, nor measure their well-being. A major criticism of mainstream poverty and human development indicators is their standard application for culturally diverse groups and their non-inclusion of domains or themes which are considered significant or important for indigenous peoples. The emphasis on quantitative measurements and the considerably less attention given to subjective judgments and cultural perceptions make these measurements less insightful and relevant.

One interesting indicator proposed for traditional knowledge, innovations and practices is the *status of and trends in the practice of traditional occupations*. This indicator tries to capture the continuity and change in

⁵⁵ Wiben Jensen (2004).

⁵⁶ Sarkar, Mishra, Dayal and Nathan (2006).

⁵⁷ Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are Indian communities that are explicitly recognized by the Constitution of India as requiring special support to overcome centuries of discrimination by mainstream Hindu society. SCs are also known as Dalits, and STs as Adivasi. Ed.



indigenous peoples' relationships and access to ecosystem resources and services over time. When combined with information about changes in land-use patterns, including percentage of lands and resources under local control as well as demographic changes, this indicator can begin to measure changes in the livelihoods of indigenous peoples. Degradation of ecosystems, landscapes and resources in indigenous peoples' territories will clearly affect their exercise of traditional occupations and, hence, their economic and social well-being. The contribution of subsistence activities to individual and household consumption and to income is another indicator of social and economic change.

Because indigenous peoples define happiness as closely linked with the state of nature and their environment, indigenous peoples' well-being necessarily encompasses their access, management and control over lands, territories and resources under customary use and management, all of which are critical for their own sustainable development. The following examples highlight indigenous peoples' vulnerabilities while also demonstrating their vitality and the benefits of their traditional occupations and livelihood.

Pastoralists

Pastoralism is a livelihood strategy and management system based on raising and herding of livestock. It has been estimated that pastoralism is practised on 25 per cent of the global land area, providing 10 per cent of the world's meat production⁵⁸. Pastoralism is common in areas where rainfall and climatic patterns are erratic and generally dry, necessitating mobility in search of fresh pasture and water. Pastoralists who specialize in livestock breeding include the Quechua and Aymara llama and alpaca breeders in the Andes, Mongol horse breeders in central Asia, Saami reindeer herders in northern Europe and Siberia, and the Bedouin in Arabia. Today, most pastoralists are in Africa, including the Tuareg camel breeders in the Sahara, the Maasai cattle breeders of Eastern Africa or the Fulani cattle breeders of the West African savannah. Pastoralism is particularly important in sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for about 20 per cent of national GDPs.⁵⁹ Pastoralism accounts for 80 per cent of the agricultural GDP of Sudan, 84 per cent in Niger, and 50 per cent in Kenya. Ethiopia's pastoralist-dominated leather industry is second only to the country's coffee industry in terms of foreign trade. In the former Soviet Union, pastoralist products of Kazakhstan supplied 25 per cent of Soviet lamb and 20 per cent of Soviet wool. China-sourced cashmere (65-75 per cent of the world's cashmere fibre) comes from the western and northern pastoral zones of Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang and the Tibetan plateau.⁶⁰

Pastoralism is a sophisticated system of production and land management, proven to be an economically viable, environmentally sustainable and remarkably effective livelihood in the world's drylands. Pastoralists are also custodians of rich biological diversity, both in terms of their livestock and managed ecosystems. The grazing, browsing and fertilization associated with livestock production, supports and maintains, significant floral diversity. Where pastoralism has been abandoned, it has resulted in the disappearance of grasslands and their associated diversity, replaced with desertification. Moreover, pastoralism is the source of identity, culture, heritage and traditions for some 200 million people.

Nevertheless, pastoralists are often minority groups in their countries far removed from the political elites, and whose occupations are undervalued in the modern economy. Their territories often lie

⁵⁸ Nori, Taylor & Sensi (2008), 5

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Hatfield & Davies (2006), 10

across national borders, giving rise to significant jurisdictional and political problems, such as restrictions on trans-border movement, and militarization. Pastoralists and their livelihoods are under constant and persistent threat from economic modernization.

Colonial governments considered pastoralist lands as unoccupied ownerless lands, while post-colonial governments have seen these as under-utilized and poorly managed. Such discriminatory public policies have justified State expropriation of pastoralist lands for sedentary agriculture, resource extraction or infrastructure development, national parks or nature reserves, with devastating effects on both the environment and on the pastoralist peoples themselves. These negative approaches are beginning to provide some lessons:

Indeed, both government and privatization of lands have demonstrated poor effectiveness in pastoral areas. In his satellite imagery assessments of grassland degradation under different property regimes in parts of central Asia crossed by international boundaries, including northern China, Mongolia and southern Siberia, Sneath (1998) revealed large differences in degradation processes under different resource access rights patterns. Grazing resources in Mongolia— which have allowed pastoralists to continue their traditional group-property institutions involving large-scale movements between seasonal pastures— were much less degraded than those administered through Russian and Chinese policies involving state-owned agricultural collectives and permanent settlements.⁶¹

Studies from Africa have in fact shown that pastoral systems are two to 10 times more productive than ranching alternatives in the drylands. “Despite gross underinvestment and neglect, both in the production system and in the producers themselves, pastoralism continues to contribute healthily to national economies and export earnings”.⁶²

Pastoral ways of life are threatened not only by the direct actions of states, development practitioners and environmentalists, but also by climate change. It is notoriously difficult to predict the effects of increasing greenhouse gas emissions, but rising global temperatures will certainly bring about severe changes to pastoralists’ territories in the medium and long term. It is nevertheless very likely that a great number of pastoralists will have to deal with increasingly dry and less fertile lands. In addition to changing rainfall patterns, other major effects include biodiversity shifts, changing wind patterns, more frequent floods and droughts, heat waves

pastoralism is practised on 25 per cent of the global land area

⁶¹ Nori, Taylor and Sensi (2008)

⁶² Hatfield and Davies (2006), 5





and tropical cyclones. Therefore, it is essential that their primary coping tool—mobility—be respected rather than restricted.

In recent years, pastoralists have been making their voices heard at the international level, such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and meetings related to the Convention on Biological Diversity. United Nations agencies such as IFAD, FAO and UNDP have also, in recent years, improved their understanding of pastoralism and developed working relationships with pastoralists. At the world gathering of nomadic and transhumant pastoralists in Segovia in 2007, the participants adopted the Segovia Declaration of Nomadic and Transhumant Pastoralists, which welcomed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Furthermore, the Declaration contains 16 policy recommendations aimed at respecting and promoting pastoralists' rights. These recommendations include the need to respect pastoralists' customary laws and leadership, assuring their access to healthcare, education and markets and their right to cross-border mobility. The Segovia Declaration also highlighted some of the major concerns of pastoralists.

Despite the crucial contribution of nomadic and transhumant pastoralism to livelihoods and to national economies and its role in preserving the fragile ecosystems of the planet, in many countries we are not receiving the necessary attention and support. We are subject to discrimination and social exclusion. In some countries, we are subject to dispossession of natural resources, forced or induced sedentarization and displacement, ethnic cleansing and ethnocide, in direct violation of human rights, and as a consequence of conflicts and adverse and ill-designed policies, legislation and development programmes. Both privatization and government confiscation ("nationalization") of common resources usually lead to land use change having dramatic effects on the overall viability of pastoral systems and on the environment—both in terms of land degradation and pollution. These policies and changes exacerbate poverty of people and erosion of biological diversity, force people into migration, and deprive our peoples of their subsistence base, cultural values, spirituality and dignity.⁶³

Arctic region, including Russia and Northern Europe

In Greenland, the political and economic changes of the post-war period led to crucial changes in traditional Greenlandic fishing/hunting culture, as well as in traditional social structures. Industrialization, the transition to a cash economy, educational mobility and increased urbanization have transformed Greenlandic society away from the subsistence production of extended families in small, closed communities and toward wage earning in a more globalized and open society. Today, most people in Greenland, and in the Arctic in general, have adapted their lifestyles, mixing traditional activities with paid jobs. These changed relationships with the living and the non-living resources affect family structures, diets, consumption patterns, occupations and sources of income, housing, health, education, attitudes, values and aspirations. In 1945, it was estimated that 66 per cent of the Greenlandic labour force, out of a population of 21,412 individuals, was involved in hunting and fishing. In 1996, this proportion had decreased to approximately 25 per cent, including people working in the modern fishing industry.⁶⁴

⁶³ Segovia Declaration of Nomadic and Transhumant Pastoralists (2007)

⁶⁴ Andersen and Poppel (2002), 191–216.



Despite this, traditional methods for producing food have proved to be resilient. The symbolic value of hunting, fishing and herding has been maintained or has even increased,⁶⁵ as these are a key part of identity.⁶⁶ Furthermore, it is known that customary harvesting practices still form a significant part of the dietary intake of households and communities in many parts of the Arctic. In Alaska, recent studies indicate that rural villages have an annual production that generally varies between 69.5 and 301.8 kg per capita. For the Canadian Arctic, the annual harvest in edible weight varies between 84 and 284 kg per capita. The latter value would be equivalent to production before other sources of food were available. In Greenland, a majority of the households eat traditionally-produced food five times or more per week.⁶⁷

Food from land and sea is one of the few substitutes for imports in the Arctic and, in several regions, its contribution to food intake is central, especially when international commodity prices fluctuate and the price of imported food increases. It is also important for its contribution to the meaning of life because customary activities create links both between past and present and between people living in the same community.

Arctic economies of all sorts have a narrow economic base predicated on the raw natural resources available. Economies are not diversified, and there is only a narrow range of viable means of economic support in a particular location. As such, many Arctic communities are subject to boom-and-bust cycles, due to either the volatility of the world markets for raw materials (for instance, oil and gas in Arctic Canada and Arctic Russia) or to specific actions or consumer trends (for instance, bans on the import or sale of seal products and sudden change in the rules governing the use of whales and other marine mammals). This same characteristic of narrow dependence on nature also demands a sharper focus on the impacts of climate change, which are already observable in the Arctic, a place where the continuing effects of climate change are likely to be especially severe.

traditional methods for producing food have proved to be resilient

Following years of negative lobbying campaigns by conservation organizations in Europe, the sealskin industry has collapsed, with devastating impacts on the Inuit. The sale of sealskins was once the main source of cash income for many Inuit families, and seal hunting was central to traditional culture and values. The loss of this revenue has been catastrophic beyond its economic impacts, including negative social, cultural, nutritional and psychological effects.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Condon, Collings, and Wenzel (1995).

⁶⁶ Ingold (1995), 41-68.

⁶⁷ Arctic Human Development Report (2004), 74.

⁶⁸ Kuptana (1996).



Forest Peoples of Africa

There are between 250,000 and 300,000 Forest Peoples, or “Pygmies”,⁶⁹ in the Central African rainforests whose ways of life as hunters and gatherers are in rapid and critical decline.⁷⁰ These are the Mbuti (or Bambuti) and Efe of the Ituri Forest in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); the Baka of South-eastern Cameroon and Northwestern Congo Brazzaville; the Aka (or Ba-Aka) of Northern Congo Brazzaville and the Central African Republic; the Batwa in Rwanda, Burundi, Eastern DRC, and South-western Uganda; the Bakola of Southwestern Cameroon and the Basua (numbering only perhaps 65 to 70 people) in Western Uganda. The ongoing marginalization of these groups has particularly been accelerated by the political upheavals and civil war in the region.

Their forest territories extended over thousands of hectares, but have never been formally recognized

Traditionally, “Pygmy” peoples lived in small nomadic bands in the forest, hunting and gathering forest products and exchanging them with settled farming communities for salt, metal tools and other items. Their forest territories extended over thousands of hectares, but have never been formally recognized, either in state law or the customary laws of farming communities. “Pygmy” peoples are now facing unprecedented pressures on their lands, forest resources and societies, as forests are logged, cleared for agriculture or turned into exclusive wildlife conservation areas. They are becoming outcasts on the edge of dominant society as they become settled in villages, increasingly dependent on the cash economy but unable to enjoy the rights accorded to other citizens, and marginalized from policies and decision-making. As these pressures intensify, “Pygmy” peoples are suffering increasing poverty, racial discrimination, violence and cultural collapse. Throughout Central Africa, their traditional way of life is disappearing, and their incomparable knowledge of the forest is being lost.

The Batwa peoples are among those who have been completely dispossessed of their forest lands through clearance of forests for development projects and conservation areas, and they can no longer practice forest-based livelihoods. Of the estimated 70-87,000 Batwa in the Great Lakes region, probably less than 7,000 have direct and regular access to forest today. There is a second, smaller group of Batwa in the region: fisher folk who live mostly on the shores of Lake Kivu; they are unlikely to number more than 3,000 and are today prevented from openly fishing because they do not have fishing licences.

The remaining group of 60,000 to 76,000 Batwa in Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo no longer have access to forests, have little or no land, and are desperately poor. A great many are now dependent

⁶⁹The term “Pygmy” is a generic term used to describe all the distinct hunter-gatherer indigenous peoples living in, or originating from, the forests of Central Africa. All of them, however, designate themselves by their own specific names (for instance, Mbuti, Efe, Twa, etc.). As some people consider “Pygmy” to be a derogatory term, it is used in this publication in quotation marks.—Ed.

⁷⁰This section is based on Kenrick (2000). See also the Web site of the Forest Peoples Programme at <http://www.forestpeoples.org>

upon their neighbours for their livelihoods, which leads to situations where Batwa must work on villagers' fields at just the times of year when they should be planting or harvesting their own small farm plots. They may have to borrow food to survive, creating a culture of debt whereby they form a ready source of cheap labour. The Batwa in Rwanda, whose forests have been destroyed, are referred to as "potters", as that occupation has become the main source of income and even identity for the Batwa as a people. This source of income is now increasingly threatened by industrialized pottery. Between 1978 and 1991, there was a 40-per cent fall in the Batwa population of Rwanda, compared to a 50-per cent rise in the population of other Rwandans. Although research is very limited, it is likely that this population decline is due to extreme poverty, poor access to health care and the loss of land and traditional livelihoods. It is estimated that under 2 per cent of the Batwa population have sufficient land to cultivate, very few own livestock, and most are either squatters or tenants on other peoples' land.⁷¹ Rwandan authorities refuse to recognize the Batwa as indigenous or even as a separate ethnic group, claiming to do so would undermine the country's reconciliation process.

Batwa living in the Democratic Republic of Congo have also lost their territories and thus their traditional livelihoods. A majority of the Batwa in the DRC are not documented as citizens, like other Congolese, preventing them from legally owning land, as land entitlements are tied to Congolese nationality.⁷² The livelihoods and well-being of the few Batwa who still live in the forests have further been threatened by conflict and the militarization of their territories and by natural resource extraction, such as logging and mining, not only in Rwanda and the DRC, but throughout Central Africa.

As a result, what used to be mainly a nomadic group that moved across long distances in the forest in pursuit of game and plants is gradually settling down. Most members of pygmy communities now work as day labourers and servants on farms that do not belong to them, or practice small-scale, informal mining activities. Some resort to begging.⁷³

In recent years, Batwa organizations and communities working with non-governmental organizations like the Forest Peoples Programme have been organizing and struggling to secure land and regain access to forest resources, engaging with government and donors to improve policies and laws and uphold their rights as citizens. This is taking place alongside work to improve livelihoods through pottery enterprises and new ways of earning money to pay for health care, schooling and housing, and to build up reserves of money and livestock.

In other parts of the region, "Pygmies" still have access to forests, although this is decreasing every year. These peoples include the Mbuti and Efe (of which there are 35,000 - 40,000); the Aka or Ba-Aka (25,000 - 30,000); the Baka (35,000 - 50,000), and the Bakola or Bagyeli (3,000 - 4,000). All of these groups continue, to varying degrees, as hunter-gatherers; however, significant sedentarization is taking place, and many "Pygmies" work for long or short periods for outsiders such as logging companies, meat traders and conservationists.

In these countries, indigenous communities and organizations are working to secure their lands and increase their access to forest through dialogue with neighbouring Bantu farming communities and with conservation agencies, governments and regional forest planners. Support NGOs are helping indigenous peoples to document and formally map their customary land use in order to support their land claims and are providing legal advice on how to secure their land rights. By providing information and facilitating community meetings, isolated "Pygmy" groups are able to meet and develop new forms of representation in order to engage more effectively with outside agencies and defend their rights.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Mugarura and Ndemeye (2003).

⁷² IRIN (2006), 9-10.

⁷³ IRIN (2006), p. 8.

⁷⁴ See Forest Peoples Programme at <http://www.forestpeoples.org>



East and South East Asia: Rice culture in Ifugao, Philippines

Indigenous peoples' traditional livelihoods are threatened not only by extractive industries or huge development projects, but also by efforts that are aimed at preserving and celebrating indigenous peoples' cultures and the environment. In some cases, indigenous peoples have been forced off their lands for the establishment of natural parks, whilst even the World Heritage designation can have unintended consequences.⁷⁵

in some cases, indigenous peoples have been forced off their lands for the establishment of natural parks

The Ifugao rice terraces in the Central Cordillera, Philippines, have been widely recognized as an outstanding cultural heritage. They became a "national landmark" in 1973, were declared "living cultural landscapes" and put on the UNESCO list of World Heritage in danger in 1995, and were listed as one of the world's best examples of soil and water conservation technology by the American Society of Civil Engineers in 1996.

However, the protection of the terraces for their aesthetic and ethnological importance fails to support their function as an ongoing sustainable economy. Indeed, the attention attracted by the labelling of the terraces as "heritage" can compromise the continued sustainability of management by introducing requirements, seen by many in the community as static and confining. At the same time, the heightened attention has stimulated tourism and associated risks to traditional management.

The growing market for wooden handicrafts and cash crops leads to intensified forest harvesting, and there has also been an increase in the construction of buildings to accommodate the needs of the tourists. These buildings exemplify the clash between the land management values under traditional practices as compared with the "heritage sites" of the UNESCO list. Whilst land management of the past placed most importance and protection on the forested areas above the terraces in their roles as water sources and soil stabilizers, the "heritage" view delineates the terraces from the rest of the landscape as the places of greatest importance and protection, hence more recent houses are built for the most part in the "*muyong*"⁷⁶ zone of the mountain, above the terraces.⁷⁷

Pacific: Traditional fishing in Vanuatu

One of the fundamental aspects of the traditional indigenous fishing practices in Vanuatu is the way in which the traditional resource management practices are intimately interspersed with area-specific cosmologies.⁷⁸ Marine resource management was never formally compartmentalized outside the context of culture and religion.

⁷⁵ Guimbatan and Buguilat Jr. (2006), 59-67.

⁷⁶ *Muyong* is the local name for a traditional system of forest use and management.

⁷⁷ Guimbatan and Buguilat Jr. (2006), 59-67.

⁷⁸ This section is based on Hickey (2007), 147-169.

This is expressed in a system of taboos placed on areas to be fished prior to harvesting, preventing people from disturbing the water in order to encourage fish to enter the area. The system of taboos is multifaceted and parallels many of the strategies in resource management based on Western scientific principles, including privileged-user rights; species-specific prohibitions; seasonal closures, protected areas and behavioural prohibitions. The enforcement of these taboos, now called “*bans*” so as to differentiate them from the older spiritual practices, is largely managed by indigenous law systems, such as the village leaders and the village court.

The traditional practice of protected areas offers “a mosaic of refugia or sanctuaries for mobile marine life” which has, led to economic opportunities for the communities. In some areas, abundant marine life has been used to attract tourists wishing to see sea turtles or dugongs that have become unwary and even tame after having been protected for several years by the closure system.

Many taboos now used are contemporary expressions of earlier traditional practices, adapted flexibly to maintain a sustainable economy. However, it has to be noted that contemporary taboos tend to be less firmly rooted in tradition and are less ritualized, and there is decreased reliance upon supernatural sanctioning. Consequently, they command less respect than traditional ones, which is a matter of concern. This is a situation made more acute by the influence of the Church, particularly in its characterization of traditional beliefs as “heathen and uncivilized”.

a growing number of indigenous peoples are today living in urban areas

Indigenous Peoples living in urban areas

A growing number of indigenous peoples are today living in urban areas. This is the result of, among other things, the deterioration in and dispossession of lands, the forced evictions, and the lack of local employment opportunities that many indigenous people experience. ECLAC has estimated that in one in three indigenous individuals in Guatemala and México live in urban areas.⁷⁹ In Bolivia, Brazil and Chile, more than half of the indigenous population lives in urban areas. Cases studies from a UN-Habitat-OHCHR⁸⁰ report reveal that indigenous peoples in urban settings live in dismal conditions, frequently experiencing extreme poverty. Many of these people live in informal settlements and slums that often occupy territories susceptible to inundations, erosion, land- and mudslides, or are located in the vicinity of garbage dumps and polluting factories. Most slums and informal settlements are severely overcrowded, insecure and unsanitary, and without any urban infrastructure such as potable water, electricity, proper sanitation or garbage collection. It is common in many

⁷⁹ ECLAC (2007), 168.

⁸⁰ UN-Habitat and OHCHR (2005).



the underlying racism and discrimination toward indigenous peoples is felt every day

cities of the world to see increasing numbers of indigenous workers and beggars. Indigenous women in particular are affected by these conditions, as they are also often the victims of discrimination and physical abuse.⁸¹

Indigenous peoples in urban areas often become an almost invisible population because of the abstract and non-geographically clustered nature of the community, and because of the continued existence of stereotypes regarding indigenous peoples. There are several push- and pull-factors that prompt indigenous peoples to migrate to the cities, including poverty, environmental factors, the privatization of lands and territories, employment opportunities and access to health care and education.⁸²

Often, when delivering services for indigenous peoples, all indigenous peoples are classified under one label as 'special needs', and there is no undertaking to understand the complexities of difference and the need to provide services in a different way, based on the experiences of the various indigenous groups residing in the cities. Involving indigenous peoples in decision-making affecting their communities in the urban situation is extremely important as it places indigenous peoples on an equal platform in seeking solutions.

Indigenous youth and children residing in urban areas are often portrayed in a way that sensationalizes problems such as destructive behaviour or risk-prone lifestyles. Meaningful activities that achieve positive outcomes for youth are empowering and need to provide opportunities for the development and affirmation of cultural identity and cultural knowledge and skills. Cultural activities in the form of drama, music and art, for example, are being used increasingly to raise awareness about relevant social concerns and to help youth speak out on issues that affect them.

Despite a few benefits of living in urban areas, such as proximity to social facilities, in most cases indigenous peoples have substantial difficulties. The underlying racism and discrimination toward indigenous peoples is felt every day, despite the increasing multicultural nature of cities. The lack of employment and income-generating activities, limited access to services and inadequate housing continue to be the main challenges that indigenous peoples living in urban areas face. In general, disrespect for a wide range of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples is often a main underlying cause for persisting poverty among urban indigenous communities. In many cases, indigenous peoples are trying to deal with their economic and social conditions in what is often a very hostile environment.

⁸¹ UN-Habitat and OHCHR (2005), 178.

⁸² See UNHABITAT, OHCHR, SPFII, ECLAC & IOM (2007) for a detailed discussion on some of the primary issues related to urban indigenous peoples.

Many indigenous city dwellers maintain reciprocal relationships with family and their homelands and build associations and relations as a form of finding their own space and socio-cultural continuum outside of their traditional homes – a coping mechanism that helps minimize conflicts brought about by the drastic change and demands of urbanization. The livelihood and employment strategies pursued by indigenous urban dwellers build on traditional skills; but many end up in low-paying work. Some examples are marketing of handicrafts; trading of traditional herbs and remedies; as construction workers by Igorot men skilled in building rice terraces and Maasai males serving as security guards reflecting their traditional role as warriors in East Africa. Others are also exploited as tourist attractions. Many have livelihoods as petty traders, menial and domestic workers and low-paid service workers, as well as being a source of cheap labour in the city. On the other hand, indigenous urban dwellers have raised the visibility of indigenous issues through advocacy and public actions in the cities.⁸³

The Millennium Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples

The Millennium Declaration, signed by 147 Heads of State and Government in September 2000, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have provided an opportunity for a renewed focus on indigenous peoples in the international development debate. As the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues stated during its fourth session, “Indigenous peoples have the right to benefit from the Millennium Development Goals and from other goals and aspirations contained in the Millennium Declaration to the same extent as all others”.⁸⁴

The adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the General Assembly in September 2007, in particular Articles 41 and 42,⁸⁵ provides a crucial opportunity and call to action for states and the UN system to integrate indigenous visions of development into their work toward the achievement of the MDGs.

if the Millennium Development Goals are to be reached by 2015, they must be underpinned by a human rights-based approach to development that emphasizes universality, equality, participation and accountability

⁸³ UNCSD12 (2004) Indigenous People’s Discussion Paper on Water, Sanitation and Human Settlements*

⁸⁴ UNPFII (2005).

⁸⁵ Article 41 reads as follows: The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations shall contribute to the full realization of the provisions of this Declaration through the mobilization, inter alia, of financial cooperation and technical assistance. Ways and means of ensuring participation of indigenous peoples on issues affecting them shall be established.

Article 42 reads as follows: The United Nations, its bodies, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and specialized agencies, including at the country level, and States shall promote respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of this Declaration.



During the fourth and fifth sessions of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, many indigenous peoples, through their organizations, made statements about the urgent need to redefine the MDGs and approaches to their implementation so as to include the perspectives, concerns, experiences and world views of indigenous peoples. There is also a need for full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in the implementation of the Goals.⁸⁶

If the Millennium Development Goals are to be reached by 2015, they must be underpinned by a human rights-based approach to development that emphasizes universality, equality, participation and accountability. Working with indigenous peoples on the MDGs also requires a culturally sensitive approach based on respect for and inclusion of indigenous peoples' world-views, perspectives, experiences, and concepts of development.

Reviews of MDG reports from approximately 40 countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia and the Pacific have found that, with very few exceptions, indigenous peoples' input has not been included in national MDG monitoring and reporting.⁸⁷ The reviews also highlight clear gaps in data on indigenous peoples and the MDGs. Although many of the reports discuss the disparities affecting indigenous peoples, very few of them actually provide disaggregated data. Another gap identified in the reviews is the lack of mechanisms through which to ensure the input and participation of indigenous peoples themselves in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies designed to achieve the MDGs.

The following are a few key recommendations to better integrate indigenous peoples' issues into MDG programmes and policies:⁸⁸

- ◆ The human rights-based approach to development should be operationalized by states, the UN system and other intergovernmental organizations. The recognition of indigenous peoples as distinct peoples and the respect for their individual and collective human rights is crucial for achieving a just and sustainable solution to the widespread poverty that affects them.
- ◆ Policies must be put in place to ensure that indigenous peoples have universal access to quality, culturally-sensitive social services. Some areas of particular concern are inter-cultural/bilingual education and culturally sensitive maternal and child healthcare.
- ◆ MDG-related programmes and policies should be culturally sensitive and include the active participation and free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples so as to avoid loss of land and natural resources for indigenous peoples and the accelerated assimilation and erosion of their cultures. United Nations Country Teams in Bolivia and Kenya, for example, have established indigenous peoples' advisory committees to guide programming on indigenous peoples' issues.
- ◆ States and the UN System must make greater efforts to include indigenous peoples in MDG monitoring and reporting, including the production of national MDG reports, as well as in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of MDG-related programmes and policies that will directly or indirectly affect them. Improved disaggregation of data is indispensable to properly monitor progress toward MDG achievement in countries with indigenous populations and should be a key priority for Governments and the UN System. Several initiatives are currently underway to improve data disaggregation at both

⁸⁶ UNPFII (2006).

⁸⁷ These desk reviews are available online at <http://www.un.org/indigenous>

⁸⁸ These recommendations are drawn from the UNPFII's fourth and fifth sessions, as well as from the Desk Reviews of national MDG Reports carried out annually by the Secretariat of the UNPFII.

national and regional levels. ECLAC, for example, has played a key role in improving data on indigenous peoples in Latin America, and UNPFII has organized a series of regional meetings on indicators of well-being for indigenous peoples.

Indicators relevant to indigenous peoples' well-being and sustainable development

In recent years, there has been a concerted process to define global indicators for indigenous peoples' well-being and sustainable development. The global campaign to eradicate extreme poverty embodied in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has also given impetus to identifying the poorest populations in each country, including indigenous peoples, for targeted interventions. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has adopted the 2010 Biodiversity Target to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss, and one of its focal areas is the protection of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices.⁸⁹

In 2006 and 2007, various regional and thematic workshops were organized on the topic of indicators relevant to indigenous peoples. This was part of a broader effort in recent years by United Nations bodies, governments, research agencies and indigenous bodies to measure status and trends in the social and economic development of indigenous peoples using indigenous- defined and culturally appropriate indicators. The following core issues and thematic areas have been identified⁹⁰ in terms of framing meaningful indicators to measure status of and trends in indigenous peoples' well-being at global, regional, national and local levels:

- ◆ Security of rights to territories, lands and natural resources
- ◆ Integrity of indigenous cultural heritage
- ◆ Gender
- ◆ Respect for identity and non-discrimination
- ◆ Fate control and self-determination
- ◆ Full, informed and effective participation
- ◆ Culturally-appropriate education
- ◆ Health
- ◆ Access to infrastructure and basic services
- ◆ Extent of external threats
- ◆ Material well-being
- ◆ Demographic patterns of indigenous peoples

⁸⁹ CBD 2010 Biodiversity Target at <http://cbd.int/2010-target>

⁹⁰ A global synthesis report on Indicators of Indigenous Peoples' Well-being, Poverty and Sustainability was submitted to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2008, see UNPFII (2008). The report was the culmination of more than two years of effort to capture indicators, in various workshops with indigenous peoples' participation. See UNPFII (2006), (2007a) and (2008).



The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment which, in 2001-2005, carried out an in-depth study into the present state of ecosystems and human well-being, highlights in its report messages which are highly relevant when assessing indigenous peoples' well-being.

From the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

The pattern of “winners” and “losers” associated with ecosystem changes, and in particular the impact of ecosystem changes on poor people, women and indigenous peoples, has not been adequately taken into account in management decisions. Changes in ecosystems typically yield benefits for some people and exact costs on others, who may either lose access to resources or livelihoods, or be affected by externalities associated with the change. For several reasons, groups such as the poor, women, and indigenous communities have tended to be harmed by these changes.

Many changes in ecosystem management have involved the privatization of what were formerly common pool resources. Individuals who depended on those resources (such as indigenous peoples, forest-dependent communities, and other groups relatively marginalized from political and economic sources of power) have often lost rights to the resources.

Poor people have historically lost access to ecosystem services disproportionately as demand for those services has grown. Coastal habitats are often converted to other uses, frequently for aquaculture ponds or cage-culturing of highly valued species such as shrimp and salmon. Despite the fact that the area is still used for food production, local residents are often displaced, and the food produced is usually not for local consumption but for export. Many areas where overfishing is a concern are also low-income, food-deficit countries. Significant quantities of fish are caught by large distant water fleets in the exclusive economic zones of Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Sierra Leone, for example. Much of the catch is exported or shipped directly to Europe, while compensation for access is often low compared with the value of the product landed overseas. These countries do not necessarily benefit through increased fish supplies or higher government revenues when foreign distant water fleets ply their waters.

Source: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005), 13 and 62.

Concluding Remarks

The biggest challenge faced by indigenous peoples and communities in relation to sustainable development is to ensure territorial security, legal recognition of ownership and control over customary land and resources, and the sustainable utilization of lands and other renewable resources for the cultural, economic and physical health and well-being of indigenous peoples.

Indigenous peoples' economies now represent the greatest continuity with pre-industrial modes of production and traditional livelihoods in the contemporary world. These economies, representing sustained interaction and adaptation with particular locations and ecosystems, are among the longest-standing and most proven examples of “sustainable development” in the twenty-first century.

Indigenous peoples carry millennial knowledge founded in generations of hunting and agricultural practices, land management and sustainable water use, and agriculture-related engineering and architecture. The maintenance

of these cultural and spiritual relationships with the natural world is key to their survival as peoples or civilizations. The Mayans are the “Corn People”, for example, while the Gwich’in Athabascans are “Caribou People”. Traditional clan systems among Seminole people include the Bear, Eagle and even Sweet Potato clans.

The maintenance of these cultural and spiritual relationships is also vital to the conservation of biodiversity. This historical interdependence and relationship with specific ecosystems underpins the technical and scientific contributions of indigenous knowledge to critical research related to sustainable development based on an ecosystem approach. Many traditional practitioners are experts at reading indicator species that provide very early warning signals of impending environmental or food catastrophes and changes such as global warming.

Historical developments have all wrought significant changes on the social and economic position of indigenous peoples, progressively incorporating them into centralized states and privatized lands and resources. Indigenous peoples have cited the 500-year-old colonial encounter, the establishment of post-independence states, modernization and economic globalization as key milestones affecting their status and well-being.

The present crises of biodiversity loss and climate change, resulting from the fossil fuel-based industrialized economy, are wreaking serious havoc on indigenous peoples’ economies and environments, making the start of the twenty-first century a time of rapid change and adaptation for indigenous peoples.

An historical perspective and understanding of indigenous peoples’ vital contribution to sustainable development is very important so that policies and actions can be taken at the international, regional, national and local levels in order to ensure the continued well-being of indigenous peoples. The future of indigenous peoples is closely linked with solutions to the crises in biodiversity and climate change, which must incorporate respect, protection and promotion of indigenous peoples’ rights as an essential component of a global strategy. “Sustainable Development” has become the mainstream challenge of the twenty-first century— combining economic development, environmental sustainability and social equity between and within societies.

The advance of globalization has had profound impacts on indigenous peoples’ traditional resource-based subsistence economies and livelihoods. Globalization has created a bridge between the centre and the periphery and intensified the inter-linkages and interdependencies between modern and traditional societies. This deepening incorporation of indigenous peoples into global economic systems, moving toward their full integration, has serious ramifications for the diversity of economies and livelihoods.

Indigenous peoples are at the cutting edge of the crisis in sustainable development. Their communities are concrete examples of sustainable societies, historically evolved in diverse ecosystems. Today, they face the challenge of

the biggest challenge faced by indigenous peoples and communities in relation to sustainable development is to ensure territorial security, legal recognition of ownership and control over customary land and resources



extinction or survival and renewal in a globalized world. One clear criterion for sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21 must be actions taken to ensure indigenous peoples' rights and welfare.

The past 10 years have also seen an intensification of conflicting trends in addressing the imbalances in social and ecological relationships that underpin the global crisis in sustainable development:

- ◆ the rise of economic neo-liberalism and corporate globalization and the attendant commoditization and "privatization" of social and ecological values; and
- ◆ the resurgence of indigenous peoples' movements, local community and citizen's movements and transnational partnerships asserting the primacy of sustainable local communities and cultures and ecological integrity.

the future of indigenous peoples is closely linked with solutions to the crises in biodiversity and climate change

This conflict is evident in the disjuncture between global economic, financial and trade decisions, which are constricting national and local options and efforts to define flexible sustainable development paths, as encouraged by the global policy dialogue on environment and sustainable development. This lack of coherence in global policy processes is frustrating the implementation of positive measures supportive of indigenous peoples' self-determination and sustainable development.

Traditional wisdom and modern scientific knowledge confirm the unsustainability of contemporary economic relations. The economic and social systems perpetrated by colonialism, modern development and contemporary economic globalization have progressively deepened fundamental imbalances in human relationships with nature and within society. Today, we are facing unprecedented changes in natural systems caused by global warming, as well as violent social conflicts underpinned by social exclusion and inequality.

The solutions to these challenges require the utmost contribution from the entire world's peoples and members of society through open and democratic governance structures at all levels.

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