



REGIONAL FACTS AND FIGURES

AFRICA

Indigenous peoples in many African countries have been displaced from national parks and protected areas, had their lands expropriated and have been denied access to the natural resources critical for their livelihoods and survival.

Examples referenced in the report include:

- ◆ There are around 300,000 Forest Peoples – also referred to as “Pygmies” or “Batwa” - in the **Central African rainforest**. These 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 settle in villages and are increasingly dependent on the cash economy, but are unable to enjoy the rights accorded to other citizens and are marginalized from 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.
- ◆ Of the estimated 70-87,000 Batwa peoples living in the **Great Lakes** region, probably less than 7,000 have direct and regular access to forest today due to clearance of forests for development projects and the establishment of conservation areas. A smaller group of Batwa in the region -- numbering no more than 3,000 -- lives mostly on the shores of Lake Kivu. Traditionally fisher folk, they are today prevented from openly fishing because they do not have fishing licences.
- ◆ The traditional livelihood of Batwa, based on pottery, is now increasingly threatened by the modern, more mechanized pottery industry. Between 1978 and 1991, there was a 40 per cent fall in the pottery dependent Batwa population. 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. Furthermore, authorities refuse to recognize the Batwa as indigenous or even as a separate ethnic group, claiming that to do so would undermine the reconciliation process among the ethnic groups.
- ◆ A majority of the Batwa are not documented as citizens, preventing them from legally owning land, as land entitlements are tied to nationality.
- ◆ Pastoralists – such as cattle and camel breeders in the Sahara, in East Africa and in the West African savannah – account for a significant economic contribution in many African countries and pastoralism is the source of identity, culture, heritage and traditions for some 200 million people. However several factors, such as pastoral lands extending across national borders, militarization, economic modernization and State appropriation of lands have had devastating effects on pastoralists, as well as on the lands themselves.

The State of the World's Indigenous Peoples was authored by seven independent experts and produced by the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

For more information, see: www.un.org/indigenous

