

The 17th commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (9 August 2011)

Theme: "Indigenous designs: celebrating stories and cultures, crafting our own future."

Message from Jan McAlpine, Director, UNFFS:

Forests are crucial because of the goods and services that they provide, on which people all over the world are dependent. Approximately 60 million people, mainly members of indigenous and local communities reside in forests. Indigenous peoples contribute immeasurably to the benefits currently derived from the environmental, economic and social functions. As a result of their close relationship and dependence on forests, indigenous communities have long sustained their livelihoods, cultures and forest resources by interweaving traditional knowledge and practices with traditional religious beliefs, customs, folklore, land use practices and community-level decision making processes. Sustainable forest management can benefit from the incorporation of the traditional knowledge of indigenous and local people which is known to have implications for forest management, the conservation of forest biodiversity and the identification of forest genetic resources.