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PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES**



IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature

Submission to the 10th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

New York City, 16 – 27 May 2011

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1. Introduction

IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature is a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists in more than 160 countries. Its Mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. It recognizes the need to respect and actively promote indigenous peoples' rights and livelihoods as fundamental components in developing successful conservation strategies to tackle the increasingly critical socio-ecological challenges during times of environmental change.

IUCN Members hold a Congress every four years where they adopt policy decisions to guide the work of the organization. At its last Congress in 2008, IUCN endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and resolved to apply its requirements to the whole of IUCN's Programmes and operations.

IUCN and its Members continue to strengthen engagement with indigenous peoples and promote their rights and roles in environmental management so that conservation activities are carried out in a socially just and equitable manner. As a democratic Union of states and civil society, IUCN offers a particularly valuable platform for indigenous peoples to express their self-determination and engage in global governance with regard to bio-cultural conservation, sustainable economics and appropriate responses to climate change.

IUCN has an array of policies relevant to indigenous peoples that help guide its programmatic work. To date, 65 policy decisions with reference to indigenous peoples have been adopted by IUCN Members. It is therefore fair to say that IUCN is committed to including indigenous peoples' rights, interests, needs and aspirations into its global conservation work.

IUCN has a small but important group of indigenous peoples' organization (IPOs) as Members¹. These IPOs are valuable partners for strengthening IUCN's work on conservation. In addition, several dozen non-indigenous organization Members are actively working on indigenous peoples' issues in a variety of contexts around the world. This vast network of experience and expertise in indigenous peoples' issues is a unique resource for IUCN and it is currently seeking ways of further collaborating with its Members to strengthen a Union-wide approach for addressing indigenous peoples' issues in conservation.

IUCN's conservation work is framed in four-yearly Programmes that are adopted by IUCN Members at their Congresses. In order to identify gaps and issue recommendations to strengthen work on indigenous issues in the 2013-2016 Programme (to be adopted at the next IUCN World Conservation Congress in Jeju, South Korea in September 2012), IUCN has begun a process of reviewing its implementation of its policies relevant to indigenous peoples.

2. IUCN and UNDRIP

a. IUCN is **consistent** with UNDRIP

In developing its policies and carrying out Programme activities, IUCN aims to adhere to the principles and provisions laid out in UNDRIP. Firstly, its Mission corresponds directly to Article 29.1 and IUCN agrees that indigenous peoples "have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and productive capacity of their lands or territories or resources". IUCN policy outlines

¹ These include : [Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin](#) (COICA); [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami](#) (ITK); [International Indian Treaty Council](#) (IITC); [Inuit Circumpolar Council](#) (ICC); [Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee](#) (IPACC); and [Centre for Maya Research and Development](#) (SOTZ'IL)

free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) as a fundamental component of activities it carries out or policies that it promotes relating to indigenous peoples and their lands, territories and resources. It respects and supports indigenous peoples' rights to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned and used and their right to determine and develop priorities in regard to any conservation activities that affect them. IUCN seeks ways to ensure participation of indigenous peoples' representatives in decision-making processes that it enables/advises and works to safeguard and strengthen indigenous peoples' institutions. Its actions do not intend to obstruct indigenous peoples' traditional activities and it supports just and equitable redress for past injustices related to conservation actions. IUCN does not take part in or support any forced relocation activities and does not advocate that indigenous peoples should lose the right to cultural expressions or traditional land use. It is also acutely aware of the need for safeguards for the protection of traditional knowledge. Finally, by endorsing UNDRIP, IUCN has articulated its dedication to ensure that indigenous peoples' rights and concerns are integrated into its Programme and identifies UNDRIP as a reference to guide engagement on the matter.

b. IUCN is contributing to UNDRIP by supporting respect for the rights of indigenous peoples at national and international policy levels and by building local capacities

As described above, IUCN itself follows a set of policies that safeguard indigenous peoples' rights in the context of its own conservation work; it also promotes them in the context of environmental processes throughout the world. Some examples of key areas in emerging international policy processes where IUCN is advancing respect for and recognition of indigenous peoples' rights follow.

i. IUCN position papers presented at UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) processes have made special mention of the need to ensure that indigenous peoples' rights and interests are taken into account in ensuing strategy and policy development (relevant to UNDRIP Articles 19, 29.1, 32.1).

ii. This is particularly the case in IUCN's interface with international and national REDD+ policy development and its promotion of social safeguards. It has advocated that without FPIC from indigenous peoples, full and effective participation in REDD+ development, equitable benefit sharing and a socially responsive long-term vision, efforts are unlikely to succeed and basic rights would be disregarded (relevant to UNDRIP Articles 10, 25, 26, 32.1, 29.1)².

iii. IUCN works with the business sector (including extractive industries) to promote multi-stakeholder dialogues where indigenous peoples' representatives have the opportunity to promote their rights and interests. For bioenergy, this includes working with global certification initiatives such as the [Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels](#) (RSB) which advocates for FPIC to form the basis of stakeholder consultations³, and promoting the use of [tools](#)⁴ that ensure equitable participation of indigenous communities for sustainable bioenergy development (relevant to UNDRIP Articles 10, 25, 26).

iv. During the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 10th Conference of Parties (COP10), IUCN encouraged the adoption of a just, equitable, transparent and effective Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Protocol which would provide direct gains to indigenous peoples and ensure their continued access to the resources they depend on. IUCN also seeks ways to promote the importance of traditional knowledge in its pursuit of strengthening resilience among indigenous

² The [UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16](#) on REDD+ refers to respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and UNDRIP.

³ [Adopted RSB Criteria and Principles: Criterion 2b](#). Free, Prior & Informed Consent (FPIC) shall form the basis for the process to be followed during all stakeholder consultation, which shall be gender sensitive and result in consensus-driven negotiated agreements. **Criterion 9a:** Biofuel operations shall respect the existing water rights of local and indigenous communities. **Criterion 12a** Existing land rights and land use rights, both formal and informal, shall be assessed, documented, and established. The right to use land for biofuel operations shall be established only when these rights are determined.

⁴ See IUCN's Compilation of Tools and Approaches to Implementing Sustainable Bioenergy Production. <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/2008-057.pdf>

peoples and local communities for livelihood security in times of environmental change (relevant to UNDRIP Articles 24.1, 25, 31.1).

v. In a number of projects on the ground, IUCN provides technical and logistical support through training programmes, multi-stakeholder platforms and wider communication and capacity-building activities that help raise awareness of indigenous peoples' rights and motivate early indigenous peoples' engagement for informed participation in decision making (relevant to UNDRIP Articles 23, 18, 20.1, 22.1, 27, 32.1, 41).

vi. IUCN promotes the implementation of rights-based approaches (RBA) to conservation. It has led the way on that subject since the Vth World Parks Congress in 2003. As part of the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights (CIHR), IUCN works closely with leading conservation organizations to explore the implementation of RBA in conservation activities.

3. Indigenous peoples' rights and livelihoods reflected in IUCN policies: IUCN and rights-based approaches

IUCN continues to develop and seek ways to implement rights-based approaches (RBA) to address the inherent social interests linked to conservation activities and provide optimal outcomes for both livelihoods and the environment. These can be understood as *integrating rights norms, standards and principles into policy, planning, implementations, and outcomes assessment to help ensure that conservation practice respects rights in all cases, and supports their further realization where possible* (Campese et al., 2009⁵). IUCN aims to ensure respect for, and where possible further fulfilment of human rights, tenure and resource access rights, and/or customary rights of indigenous peoples and local communities in conservation policies, programmes, projects and related activities.

Much of IUCN Programme work has the potential to promote and strengthen the role of indigenous peoples and local communities in conservation and some direct links have already been made in IUCN policies guiding its work on:

Protected areas: The Vth World Parks Congress in 2003 has been acknowledged as a 'paradigm shift' in the field of conservation. IUCN promoted global awareness of the centrality of indigenous peoples and local communities as stewards and rights holders in relation to natural resources and traditional territories. The 'Durban Accord' set in motion a series of influential international processes, including the articulation and adoption of the UN CBD's Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA). Element 2 of the PoWPA explicitly requires states to involve indigenous peoples and local communities in protected areas governance, decision making and equitable sharing of benefits. IUCN has subsequently worked with its Commissions, indigenous peoples' organizations and other partners to promote tools and strategies addressing participation, social assessment and governance in relation to protected areas.

IUCN has identified governance as a priority for its work on protected areas. Its Protected Areas Categories System now includes recognition of protected area governance by indigenous peoples or local communities. IUCN calls for the increased informed participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in protected area establishment and management as well as the promotion of the contribution of protected areas to human well-being. It also calls on governments and other decision-making bodies to ensure that protected areas are not established without FPIC of indigenous peoples and without mechanisms that ensure that such areas contribute to, and not undermine, local livelihoods. It is also committed to identifying and promoting approaches and

⁵ Campese, Jessica; Sunderland, Terry; Greiber, Thomas; and Oviedo, Gonzalo (eds.), 2009 [Rights-based approaches : Exploring issues and opportunities for conservation](#) , CIFOR and IUCN. Bogor, Indonesia

mechanisms to address, prevent and redress injustices against indigenous peoples resulting from conservation measures.

World Heritage sites have the potential to act as flagships for good governance in protected areas and IUCN, through its RBA, works to promote local and indigenous community involvement in nomination processes and site management and to further communicate lessons learnt.

Climate change: IUCN is mandated to carry out policy-level promotion of social safeguards in REDD and promote human rights in climate change policy development and implementation. It emphasizes that REDD and all climate change response measures must be carried out in ways that respect human rights, including indigenous peoples' rights. As part of this, RBA to REDD could enhance its political viability and reduce risks of reversal.

Mainstreaming free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) in the IUCN Programme is particularly important for developing and applying RBA to conservation, especially in consideration of activities affecting indigenous peoples. This is reflected both in internal procedures and in policies to respect and promote human rights as they relate to conservation at local, national and international levels. For example, a key [Principle in its Operational Guidelines for Private Sector Engagement](#) states that any IUCN engagement with businesses should promote the inclusion and further development of FPIC. Its interaction with private sector partners is therefore characterized by the standards they adhere to and this in turn ensures that IUCN remains accountable and responsible in relation to rights of indigenous peoples. IUCN policy also outlines the need to acknowledge Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) and ensure FPIC has been obtained from indigenous peoples before integrating their own areas into national protected area systems. In relation to the policies outlined in the above paragraph, IUCN is also mandated to promote FPIC in relation to REDD policy development and implementation.

Traditional knowledge: Traditional ecological knowledge offers fundamental contributions to biodiversity conservation. Recognizing this, IUCN has adopted a number of policies aimed at supporting communities to conserve, value, protect and apply traditional knowledge (TK). TK is an area for potential further collaboration between IUCN and IPOs to help embed TK issues in various conservation policy frameworks, including mitigation, adaptation, and protected areas.

Access and benefit sharing (ABS): Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits (and the costs) of conservation measures is required by the [IUCN Policy on Social Equity](#). IUCN's broad concern on this subject is also reflected in several of its policies and its active involvement in the development of the CBD ABS Protocol where it recommended the CBD to clearly recognize the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities and women to the genetic resources they control and associated traditional knowledge. IUCN advocates that UNDRIP should be explicitly referred to in the international regime on ABS.

Gender: IUCN has been at the forefront of promoting gender equity and equality and recognition of the role of women, including indigenous women, in conservation. IUCN has a [Policy on Gender Equity and Equality](#) and gender is mainstreamed throughout the Programme.

Participation in decision-making: IUCN has defined participation in environmental decision-making as a fundamental condition for its work with local partners in general, and with indigenous peoples in particular. This is a key feature of RBA since fair and balanced representation in decision-making processes can guide just and effective policy development.

The right to self-governance and customary rights: Although IUCN has not explicitly addressed the right of self-determination of indigenous peoples in a political dimension, it does acknowledge the aspects of such a right for natural resource management.

As mentioned above, IUCN continues to develop RBA and spread awareness of indigenous peoples' rights, identity and culture within the global conservation community through its engagement with seven other major conservation organisations in the [Conservation Initiative on Human Rights](#) (CIHR). Since 2009, this partnership between IUCN, BirdLife International, Conservation International, Flora and Fauna International, The Nature Conservancy, Wetlands International, Wildlife Conservation Society and WWF seeks to improve the practice of conservation by promoting integration of human rights in conservation policy and practice. IUCN aims to work together in enhancing understanding and capacity on rights issues, including particular consideration of indigenous peoples, in conservation, increased communication and accountability among NGOs, mainstreaming of rights integration and more effective conservation outcomes⁶. Members of CIHR intend to engage further with indigenous leaders and networks in collaborative work on human rights in the context of conservation.

4. Recent IUCN activities relevant to indigenous peoples' issues in conservation

a. Protected Areas:

i. Addressing indigenous governance and rights

The 2008 publication of IUCN's [Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories](#) emphasizes the need to take indigenous peoples' rights into account in the establishment and management of protected areas and explicitly refers to indigenous and local community management as legitimate forms of governance. In light of this, IUCN continues work to improve local governance and enable indigenous peoples to manage their own environments based on their rights and responsibilities. This approach is being actively implemented in many of IUCN's international projects. For example, IUCN has supported indigenous peoples to become key participants in discussions concerning conservation initiatives and protected area zoning and management in several cases in West and Central Africa. In Bangladesh, it is working with indigenous peoples and local communities in and around the Tanguar Haor Ramsar site to build their institutional capacity for effective wetlands management. IUCN's Nepal office is active at a policy making level in its promotion of indigenous peoples' participation and consideration of their rights in proposed and established protected area management.

Other relevant work includes efforts by the IUCN Regional Office in West Asia to determine how the traditional Hima approach (where a natural area is set aside seasonally or permanently by the local community for the public good) can be officially integrated into protected area management. In Mesoamerica, IUCN has played a role in the re-categorizing of the Chicabal protected area, an indigenous peoples' territory, from a zone of strict no-use to a Cultural and Natural Monument and helped improve management of the Maya Mountain Chiquibul Biosphere Reserve to take into account indigenous peoples' issues. It has also strengthened local capacity to influence policies regarding the establishment and management of Hawàì Area of Multiple Use. IUCN is active in Peru and Ecuador strengthening cultural and social cohesion within indigenous peoples' communities in order to maintain the traditional practices that help conserve the landscape along the Ancestral Andean Trails Network. IUCN's Regional Offices in Latin America are part of a strategic alliance with indigenous organizations on protected areas. A common agenda for regional work was developed which includes *inter alia* documentation of indigenous conservation territories (ICTs); supporting national processes for legal and policy reform on protected areas; supporting experiences of indigenous governance in selected sites; developing technical guidance for implementation of models of indigenous governance of territories, lands and resources in protected areas; and helping advance this agenda at the international policy level.

⁶ CIHR Scoping Report 2011 http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/cihr_scoping_meeting_report.pdf

From a global policy perspective, IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and Protected Areas Programme clearly outline the need to recognize and promote indigenous peoples' rights in the context of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA). As part of this, an IUCN Commission Theme on Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, Equity and Protected Areas (TILCEPA) is helping develop social indicators for good governance to be embedded into an IUCN/UN Environment Programme Protected Area Management Effectiveness Toolkit. TILCEPA recently created two new expert groups to address indigenous peoples' and local community issues in the context of mountain and marine conserved or protected areas. It is currently inviting volunteer specialists to join ([the Mountain Social Policy and Marine Social Policy Expert Groups](#)).

ii. Indigenous peoples and World Heritage sites

IUCN is the official technical Advisory Body to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention on natural World Heritage sites. It evaluates nominations for natural and mixed site proposals and monitors the state of conservation of inscribed sites for consideration by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. As many of these sites overlap with traditional indigenous lands, these processes need to consider how land tenure and access to traditional resources are properly addressed in nomination processes and management plans and how local and indigenous communities are involved in the actual management of the sites. IUCN recognizes the associated tangible and intangible cultural heritage in many natural sites and the often long-established indigenous peoples' stewardship of these environments. It therefore values the commitment, ecological knowledge and customary practices of indigenous peoples and local communities living in or around World Heritage sites. With State Parties and other actors, IUCN promotes a rights-based approach to World Heritage management that includes measures to secure indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights in the development of nomination dossiers from the start. It considers this early engagement with stakeholders to be essential for making crucial decisions in regard to the development and implementation of sound, sustainable and socially just management of World Heritage sites. These decisions include: setting boundaries, zoning, management administration, land tenure and user rights and future stakeholder involvement. In order to further advise on these procedures, IUCN is currently engaged in a review process to strengthen rights monitoring and governance issues in the nomination of natural World Heritage Sites.

The 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention in 2012 will be themed "*World Heritage and Sustainable Development: the Role of Local Communities in the Management of World Heritage*". IUCN will promote consideration of indigenous peoples' issues and their roles in World Heritage site management. It engages with the other Advisory Bodies to the Convention, ICOMOS and ICCROM, to explore ways of improving their own practice to best meet the Committee's aim to further integrate consideration of communities and inclusive conservation approaches in its processes.

iii. Sacred Natural Sites (SNS)

Although many are not formally recognized as protected areas, sacred sites represent reservoirs of biological and cultural diversity. Many sites found in and around lands inhabited by indigenous peoples have shown remarkable resilience over the years despite many varied pressures. IUCN is therefore aiming to strengthen the inbuilt resilience of these sites. Areas for action include development of policy and legal frameworks that recognize sacred natural sites as protected areas, research and demonstration of case studies and the establishment of learning sites.

In its efforts to reach local institutions, IUCN has published English, Spanish and Russian versions of its [Sacred Natural Sites: Guidelines for Protected Area Managers](#). IUCN also launched the [Sacred Natural Sites: Conserving Nature and Culture](#) publication at CBD COP 10. IUCN's TILCEPA and the WCPA Specials Group on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas (CSVPA) will continue to seek ways to enhance indigenous peoples' institutional capacity and mediate between indigenous and state institutions to promote recognition and protection of these sites and raise

awareness of their value as valid strategies for bio-cultural conservation.

iv. Territories and Areas Conserved by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (ICCAs)

IUCN defines ICCAs as areas that encompass natural and/or modified ecosystems containing significant biodiversity values, ecological functions and benefits, and cultural values voluntarily conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities- both sedentary and mobile- through customary laws or other means⁷. Their recognition can affirm indigenous peoples' rights and contribute to UNDRIP as well as safeguard large areas of effectively managed land and resources for conservation. Their importance and legitimacy were emphasized in the aforementioned [Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories](#). IUCN's Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) has played a major role in this field, and has published among others a [briefing note](#) and a [document on ICCAs](#), providing examples and analysis to advise government, civil society organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities on how to effectively integrate ICCAs into wider conservation efforts.

IUCN continues to expand work in this area. For example, the South America Regional Office has carried out a process to analyze the overlap of indigenous territories and protected areas in South America with the aim of contributing to the understanding of the complex relations between these two important forms of territoriality and use of space and natural resources in this region. In Guatemala, the Mesoamerica Regional Office has been involved in establishing and promoting recognition of ICCAs which have now been included in the national Protected Areas Act. Similar work is also carried out by offices in West and Central Africa as well as IUCN-Pakistan, among others.

b. Species: Traditional knowledge and sustainable use

Many indigenous peoples have a tradition of being intimately connected with naturally occurring species of plants and animals. Both the IUCN Species Programme and its Species Survival Commission (SSC) are working with indigenous peoples to help secure the relationship they have with species (including medicinal plants) for their livelihood security and as characteristic features of their lands, territories and waters. For example, the Species Programme voiced to relevant IUCN partners in Brazil the concerns of the Surui people from the Amazon about species conservation and land management. Its project in the Albertine Rift area of Africa assesses the vulnerability and resilience of species to climate change and implications for human vulnerability, including indigenous peoples' livelihoods.

IUCN's Species Programme and SSC also support a number of Conventions that are relevant to indigenous issues, such as the CBD with its recently adopted ABS Protocol and [Global Strategy for Plant Conservation](#) which has several targets that specifically mention preserving indigenous and local knowledge. TRAFFIC, IUCN's joint wildlife trade programme with WWF, is also engaging in indigenous peoples' issues, for example in its work with Huarani women in Ecuador to mitigate unsustainable and illegal wildlife trade and explore options for alternative incomes.

To deliver one of IUCN's flagship products, the [Red List of Threatened Species](#), the Species Programme and SSC collaborate with IUCN Member organizations that work with indigenous peoples. For example, IUCN has worked with [NatureServe](#), a Red List Partner and host institution of Red List Authorities for a number of North American taxa, which has developed the Navajo Natural Heritage Programme. This Programme collects and maintains data on threatened species and

⁷ See IUCN/CEESP briefing note: [Strengthening what works– Recognizing and supporting the conservation achievements of indigenous peoples & local communities](#)

ecosystems. Similar programmes are now being developed in Canada and many Latin American NatureServe programmes also collaborate with indigenous peoples.

Many of IUCN SSC's over 100 Specialist Groups (SG) engage with indigenous peoples or address their issues. Examples include: the South American Camelid SG ensuring that the First Article of the Vicuña Convention names Andean people as the main beneficiaries of vicuña use and developing initiatives that maximize the economic benefits of fibre trade for local communities; the IUCN Salmonid SG helping to establish watershed/salmon councils (including indigenous peoples) in the Russian Far East with a focus on species conservation and sustainable salmon fishing; the Sirenia SG providing training on West African manatee monitoring to indigenous groups in Senegal; the Reintroduction SG interacting with indigenous peoples on human elephant coexistence mitigation training in South Asia; working with indigenous Wala chiefs to conserve biodiversity and alleviate poverty in northwestern Ghana; and the Otter SG's Sea Otter Taskforce working with Inuit and Native American communities on sustainable hunting and the Giant Otter Taskforce working in South America to develop minimal impact ecotourism with local tribes.

c. Climate Change

i. Influencing international and national climate change policy and improving adaptation/mitigation strategies

IUCN's climate change work takes a nature-based approach and puts emphasis on understanding the links between social and ecosystem vulnerability. It aims to develop conceptual and policy guidance to address climate change mitigation and adaptation from a perspective of rights and equity. It thus inherently deals with considerations for the particular vulnerabilities of indigenous peoples as well as their potential contributions to effective policy implementation.

IUCN published the [Indigenous and Traditional Peoples and Climate Change](#) Issues Paper in April 2008 and a [report](#) on the topic was prepared for the European Parliament's Human Rights Subcommittee (DROI) in May 2009. The latter paper aimed to support the design of appropriate responses from EU bodies on the vulnerability of indigenous peoples to climate change, making special reference to the UNDRIP.

At a global level, as previously mentioned, IUCN continuously emphasizes the importance of indigenous peoples' participation, rights, respect for traditional knowledge and consideration for livelihoods in position papers presented at international climate change policy discussions and meetings (such as UNFCCC and CBD). IUCN is also active in promoting indigenous peoples' rights for integration into climate change related policies at national and regional levels. IUCN-Nepal for example works with the Ministry of the Environment and other government institutions and advises how to include indigenous peoples' issues in policy development.

IUCN initiatives to build adaptation and mitigation strategies work closely with the socio-ecological systems they aim to strengthen. In the Pacific, IUCN Oceania implements the Mangrove Ecosystems for Climate Change Adaptation and Livelihoods (MESCAL) project which works with local coastal communities to harness and apply traditional management of mangroves to protect the vital ecosystems that safeguard local livelihoods from adverse effects of climate change and ensuing environmental changes and natural disasters. Various projects under the IUCN Water and Nature Initiative and Landscapes and Livelihoods Strategy also focus on providing local communities and indigenous peoples with ecosystem and landscape based adaptation strategies to strengthen socio-ecological resilience.

It should be noted that IUCN has historically been influential in UN multilateral environmental agreements. Further engagement by indigenous peoples' organisations in IUCN climate policy formulation could be a useful advocacy strategy to unite biodiversity and social justice objectives and practices in the face of slow progress in treaty negotiations.

ii. Indigenous peoples and REDD

Emerging REDD policies and processes are particularly relevant to indigenous peoples as without proper consultation of indigenous stakeholders and application of specific and effective social safeguards, they are vulnerable to losing lands and resources they depend on and have their valuable traditional knowledge and management practices ignored. Seeking the meaningful FPIC of indigenous peoples is a necessary basis for developing and implementing successful and socially responsible REDD policies. IUCN carries out a “Towards Pro Poor REDD Project” in Guatemala, Indonesia, Cameroon, Uganda and Ghana that works to coordinate REDD readiness activities and organize workshops and training sessions to help local and indigenous community members be better informed about the REDD agenda and its potential benefits and risks. This project facilitates the engagement of indigenous peoples and their interests at local, landscape and national levels.

Participatory tools such as the poverty toolkit and multi-disciplinary landscape assessments

specifically focus on indigenous peoples and their capacity needs. At the policy level, the capacity of indigenous peoples and other local groups to engage with land use policy-making is increased through discussions, information sharing, and through their exposure to policy discussion forums. As an example, in Cameroon, IUCN has been involved in REDD-Readiness processes that promoted the government’s inclusion of participation and consultation of indigenous peoples and local communities in strategy development and implementation. In addition, the Pro Poor REDD Project is carrying out a study on existing participation mechanisms at local levels and a global [Briefing on indigenous peoples and REDD](#) has been completed.

The Mesoamerica Regional Office has been particularly active ensuring that indigenous peoples’ issues are reflected in the region’s various REDD processes and climate change policies. For example, it worked with four regional indigenous peoples’ networks and facilitated the development of “the Environmental Indigenous Agenda: In Defense of Mother Earth” – a document outlining actions to influence negotiations and policies relating to climate change and REDD. It was also involved in a study to identify the conditions for the establishment of REDD projects, paying close attention to the related indigenous issues; has advised on pilot sites and helped build capacities of IPOs to influence national decision-making processes related to REDD and climate change; contributed to the creation of the Alliance of Forest Peoples of Mesoamerica – a forum composed of territorial authorities from a number of different indigenous peoples groups that was convened to address issues such as indigenous peoples’ rights and REDD; and supported the National Fraternal Black Association of Honduras in developing a Strategy for Mitigating the Effects of Climate Change and Reducing Environmental Vulnerability to the Garifuna Coast in Honduras.

Furthermore, the IUCN South America Regional Office has supported REDD-Readiness processes in Ecuador by holding field dialogues that included indigenous participation and has been supporting the development of the Ecuadorian REDD National Strategy which is aligned with the *National Plan of Well Being* – a Plan that promotes the role of indigenous peoples as forest managers and knowledgeable stakeholders for their conservation.

d. Green economy and sustainable energy

IUCN emphasizes the importance of engaging with local stakeholders, including indigenous peoples, for sustainable business development. For example, the Business and Biodiversity Programme has promoted discussions relating to indigenous peoples’ rights and extractive industries with the [International Council on Mining and Minerals](#).

Support for FPIC and indigenous livelihood considerations are reflected in the IUCN-supported [Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Biofuel Production](#) of the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels

and it is an internal policy in [IUCN's Operational Guidelines for Private Sector Engagement](#). In addition, cultural values of ecosystem services, lands and seas are gaining greater recognition in the global environmental economics community and IUCN is looking into ways of integrating these into methods for some of its ecosystem valuation work. Other relevant work includes the Mesoamerica Regional Office's development of FPIC and benefit sharing protocols for mega-projects including dams, extractive industry and other commercial activities in the Central American context.

e. Natural resource governance and capacity-building

IUCN currently implements an international portfolio of 7 projects called "Improving Governance of Natural Resources for Rural Poverty Reduction" that advocates legal, policy and institutional changes for recognizing and respecting the rights of poor and marginalized natural resource dependent people, and building better linkages between local institutions/communities and government authorities. This project includes work in mountain areas of Peru and Bolivia where IUCN and partners carried out participatory analysis of indigenous peoples' practices in biodiversity conservation and an analysis of the legal framework, institutions and governance mechanisms that affect indigenous peoples' land tenure and livelihood security. This project and others in the portfolio also aim to ensure that indigenous customary laws related to natural resources and biodiversity are included in the existing local governance tools.

In northern Kenya, IUCN is currently supporting the community of Garba Tula (Boran pastoralists) to secure their rights by developing bylaws based on customary rules and regulations. This will provide a platform for stable investments and better governance and management of natural resources in a communal system. The Boran are now exploring opportunities to generate income from their ICCA, e.g. through ecotourism and/or sustainably harvesting and marketing natural products. In Uganda, the Livelihoods and Landscape Strategy project has worked with Benet communities to improve livelihood security by supporting local bylaw implementation that mitigates overgrazing and has helped build their capacities to monitor, manage and protect their resource base.

In Suriname, the South America Regional Office is building the capacity of Saramacca peoples to effectively manage their territory and conserve biodiversity. It engaged with the Saramacca to raise awareness of protected area management techniques applicable to their social context and gave information on current conservation strategies such as payments for ecosystem services and REDD.

The Forest Conservation Programme's Livelihoods and Landscapes Strategy and the Water Programme's Water and Nature Initiative aim to improve governance for sustainable natural resource use and effective local level administration through capacity-building and institutional linkages. They both employ multi-stakeholder platforms for constructive engagement between state, local (including indigenous) institutions and other stakeholders to learn about complex problems, and generate and examine options with the aim of negotiating decisions regarding natural resource use. IUCN also participates in international collaboration efforts exploring ways of strengthening local and indigenous governance such as the [Growing Forest Partnerships](#) (GFP) and [The Forest Dialogue](#) (TFD). An example activity of the GFP initiative has been the work in Peru to empower local Peruvian forest stakeholders and enable them to effectively participate in Amazon forest management and conservation decision-making processes. This initiative has also allowed for exchange visits between indigenous peoples groups and other stakeholders to share community forest management experiences and scope ways to improve participation in related policy decision-making processes. TFD recently held a [dialogue on FPIC](#) and another on [REDD readiness](#) with the aim of building relationships between various interested parties and stakeholders and provide a basis for collaborative action on these topics.

f. National and regional policy development regarding indigenous peoples' rights

Several of IUCN's regional and country offices scale up their work on indigenous peoples' issues to the national or regional policy level. This includes working with IPOs to help them engage in decision-making and influence policy and legislative processes. Examples include:

- IUCN in Mesoamerica regularly works with various IPOs to strengthen their capacities to voice their rights at policy levels and encourages their participation in legislation processes.
- In Papua, IUCN Livelihoods and Landscapes Strategy partners work to map and integrate indigenous peoples' territories into official District administrative boundaries. They have helped identify priority areas for negotiation between government authorities and communities and continue to promote mapping of customary territories as a basis for land planning.
- IUCN Nepal has worked at the national level advocating for inclusion of special considerations for indigenous peoples' rights in Nepal's new Constitution.
- IUCN's World Initiative on Sustainable Pastoralism (WISP) has lobbied for the development of pastoral friendly policies at meetings of continental bodies such as the African Union and with major donor organizations with a view to influence processes at national level.
- In 2011, IUCN West and Central African offices participated in and provided financial and technical support to the International Forum on Indigenous Peoples in the Congo Basin (FIPAC) which aims to promote indigenous peoples' rights in policy reforms in the region. As a result of the meeting, Congo basin countries agreed to move forward with policy reforms to enable greater integration of indigenous peoples' issues in forest management, notably access rights, participation in multi-stakeholder platforms, strengthening indigenous peoples' community based organizations and enabling indigenous peoples-elected indigenous parliamentarians to represent them in national parliaments. In related work, IUCN Cameroon did a comparative analysis of indigenous peoples' rights in Central Africa and provided policy recommendations and strategies for strengthening indigenous peoples' rights in the region.
- The Mekong Water Dialogues (MWD), coordinated and facilitated by IUCN, aims to ensure greater inclusion of indigenous peoples' issues in policy decision making in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam. Its strategy document provides guidelines to integrate indigenous peoples considerations into the planning and implementation of activities promoted and supported by MWD.

g. Indigenous women

Regional offices in Latin America and other IUCN offices are actively promoting indigenous gender issues within the context of conservation. The South American Regional Office is currently developing a baseline of indigenous women participation and political influence, and provides support to regional IPOs (particularly the Indigenous Women's Network on Biodiversity (RMIB)) to address this topic. It also regularly holds dialogues between indigenous and non-indigenous women to improve understanding between the two groups and to discuss key contemporary conservation issues. The Mesoamerica Regional Office has supported indigenous women to participate in multiple conservation related discussions and platforms to communicate their concerns and influence outcomes. This includes supporting their participation at the CBD meeting in Nagoya, Japan and the UNFCCC meeting in Cancun, Mexico and building their networks and capacities to engage in disaster risk reduction strategy development. IUCN Nepal is addressing indigenous women's roles as particular considerations for its governance improvement work in the Sarju Watershed. IUCN Pakistan has held trainings for indigenous women to enhance their skills for earning additional incomes so that they do not rely on the depleting forest resources.

h. Traditional knowledge, access and benefit sharing (ABS) and cultural values

As described above, IUCN promoted the adoption of the CBD Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing in October 2010. IUCN also works at national levels to promote indigenous peoples' engagement in developing ABS regimes. For example, the South America Regional Office promoted participatory processes for policy making in Ecuador to include the interests of Mesa Agraria – an indigenous peoples and peasant community collective working on agricultural matters - into the design of national legislation addressing the Multilateral System on ABS of the International Treaty

on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

Traditional knowledge (TK) is valued and harnessed by several IUCN projects including in East African drylands where indigenous peoples' TK is used as a foundation for strategic management and securing sustainable drought-resilient livelihoods in the region. TK is also relevant to IUCN work on species and its Species Survival Commission's Specialist Groups recognize indigenous peoples as valuable partners for local species identification, conservation monitoring and for information relating to effects of climate change on species' populations and habitats. Other IUCN programmes are also actively promoting TK as key components of natural resource management. For example, IUCN-Pakistan is conducting a study to help in policy advocacy for reintroducing and promoting indigenous water resource management techniques and institutional arrangements to improve water resource management in water deficit areas of Balochistan.

Cultural values of the environment are addressed among others by CSVPA and their work on sacred natural sites as well as programmes promoting and strengthening customary management practices such as the Regional Office for West Asia's support of the aforementioned Hima approach. The SSC, Species Programme and Regional Programmes have all considered traditional medicinal use of species as an important component in their work.

i. IUCN global policy engagement on indigenous peoples' issues

Since 2006, IUCN has participated in UNPFII where it presents highlights of its work with indigenous peoples (e.g. [2010 report](#)) and makes statements relevant to the agenda. In 2009, IUCN's RBA and work on gender were presented and in 2010, statements were made informing the Forum on CIHR, IUCN work with the CBD and IUCN forest conservation activities relevant to indigenous peoples. IUCN has also attended and presented at the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the Human Rights Council. In 2009 it organized a side event to present its recently adopted policies relevant to indigenous peoples with special reference to protected areas. In 2010, it organized the "[Integrating indigenous peoples in conservation decision-making](#)" side event on behalf of CIHR and presented a [statement](#) on the topic. With CIHR, IUCN is exploring ways to build a relationship with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. IUCN will be highlighting indigenous peoples' issues in its preparations for and participation in Rio 2012 and as mentioned above IUCN is regularly promoting indigenous peoples' issues in CBD and UNFCCC processes.

5. Outlook for future development of IUCN's activities relating to indigenous peoples

In January 2011, IUCN's Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy organized the [Sharing Power](#) conference in Whakatāne, New Zealand, which brought together scientists, economists, indigenous leaders, environmentalists, academics and policy makers in national governments and international agencies and others. Discussions focused on the need for policy and decision makers in governments and corporations to accommodate a greater level of inclusion of indigenous peoples and all citizens in national and international policies on the management and governance of bio-cultural resources. At this conference, IUCN was able to meet with some of its Members and indigenous leaders to propose actions to strengthen its rights-based approaches to indigenous peoples' issues in conservation. Following these discussions, IUCN submitted documents on Strengthening IUCN Work on Indigenous Peoples' Issues for its Council's (IUCN's governing body) consideration and has begun a process to review implementation of its policies relevant to indigenous peoples. This review will provide the basis for making recommendations for strengthening integration and improving implementation of current and future policies relevant to indigenous peoples in the IUCN Programme 2013-2016 which will be discussed at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in 2012.

IUCN Secretariat and Commissions, in collaboration with IUCN Members, will continue developing the Union's approach to indigenous peoples' issues and further integrating their consideration into its global Programme. These efforts will include *inter alia*: stronger engagement with its IPO Members; providing

more opportunities for collaboration with these and other Members with links to indigenous peoples' issues; providing internal guidance on integrating consideration of indigenous peoples' issues into workplans of the various components of IUCN's Programme.

Based on the review of its implementation of IUCN policies relevant to indigenous peoples, IUCN will strive to strengthen and expand its partnerships with indigenous peoples' organizations, in particular with its indigenous peoples' Member organizations, and will continue to focus on areas that include:

1. With its Members, further strengthening and promoting the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights to support the integration of rights-based approaches in international conservation programmes.
2. Further promoting indigenous peoples' rights in the global climate change agenda, including the recognition of traditional knowledge in climate change adaptation and mitigation and the need for a rights-based approach to REDD at local, national and international levels.
3. Continued work on the empowerment of indigenous women in related issues such as biodiversity management strategies, climate change, and participation in global environmental conventions.
4. Continued support to indigenous networks and promotion of regional indigenous agendas related to conservation of their lands and territories and natural resource management.
5. Strengthening the rights-based approach in IUCN's work related to governance and natural resource management, especially in forest, water, mountain and drylands areas.
6. Continued development of considerations, frameworks and indicators for social assessments of biodiversity conservation mechanisms (such as those under the CBD Protected Areas Programme of Work and Strategic Action Plan).
7. Further promoting and supporting traditionally managed conservation areas and the respect of indigenous peoples' rights in relation to protected areas.
8. Taking note of the statement made by UNPFII to the 34th Session of the World Heritage Committee (Brasilia, 2010), and in collaboration with UNPFII, seek ways to further promote consideration of indigenous peoples' issues in World Heritage site nomination and management by States, and reflecting these developments in its evaluation and monitoring practices related to the World Heritage Convention.
10. Promoting national level policy dialogues on indigenous peoples and protected areas and exploring methods for conflict resolution in specific sites based on assessments that will provide recommendations to address gaps between policy and practice and propose best practice to the international community.
11. Encouraging and facilitating indigenous peoples' participation in its upcoming World Conservation Congress in Jeju, South Korea, September 2012.

Acronyms:

ABS: Access and benefit sharing

CBD: Convention on Biological Diversity

CEESP: IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy

CIHR: Conservation Initiative on Human Rights

CoP: Conference of Parties

CSVPA: WCPA's Task Force on Cultural and Spiritual Values in Protected Areas

FIPAC: International Forum on Indigenous Peoples in the Congo Basin

FPIC: Free, prior and informed consent

GFP: Global Forests Partnership

ICCA: Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Areas

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

MWD: Mekong Water Dialogues

RBA: Rights-based approaches

REDD: Reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation

RSB: Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels

SG: Specialist Group

SSC: Species Survival Commission

TFD: The Forest Dialogue

TILCEPA: Theme on Indigenous and Local Communities Equity and Protected Areas

TK: Traditional Knowledge

UNDRIP: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

WCPA: World Commission on Protected Areas

WISP: World Initiative on Sustainable Pastoralism