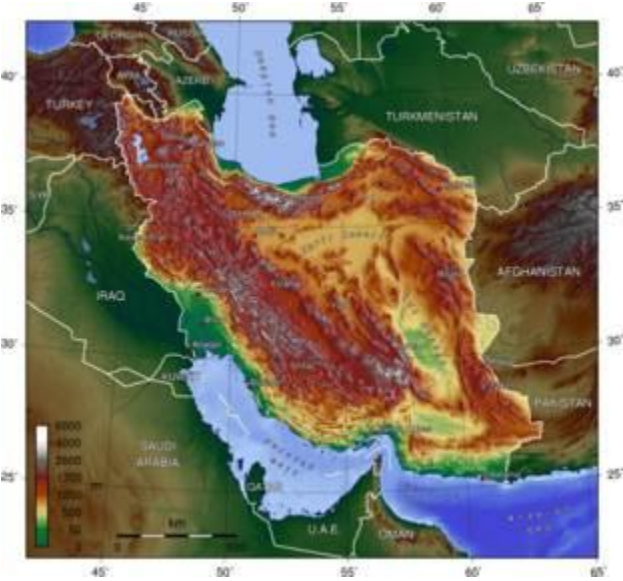


# Community Bio-cultural Diversity Registers & Protocols in Iran



- Forest steppe/Steppe arborée
- Forests and woodlands/Zones arborées
- Semi-desert/zones semi désertiques
- Desert lowlands/plaines désertiques
- Steppe
- Salted alluvial marshes/Marais saumâtres alluviaux

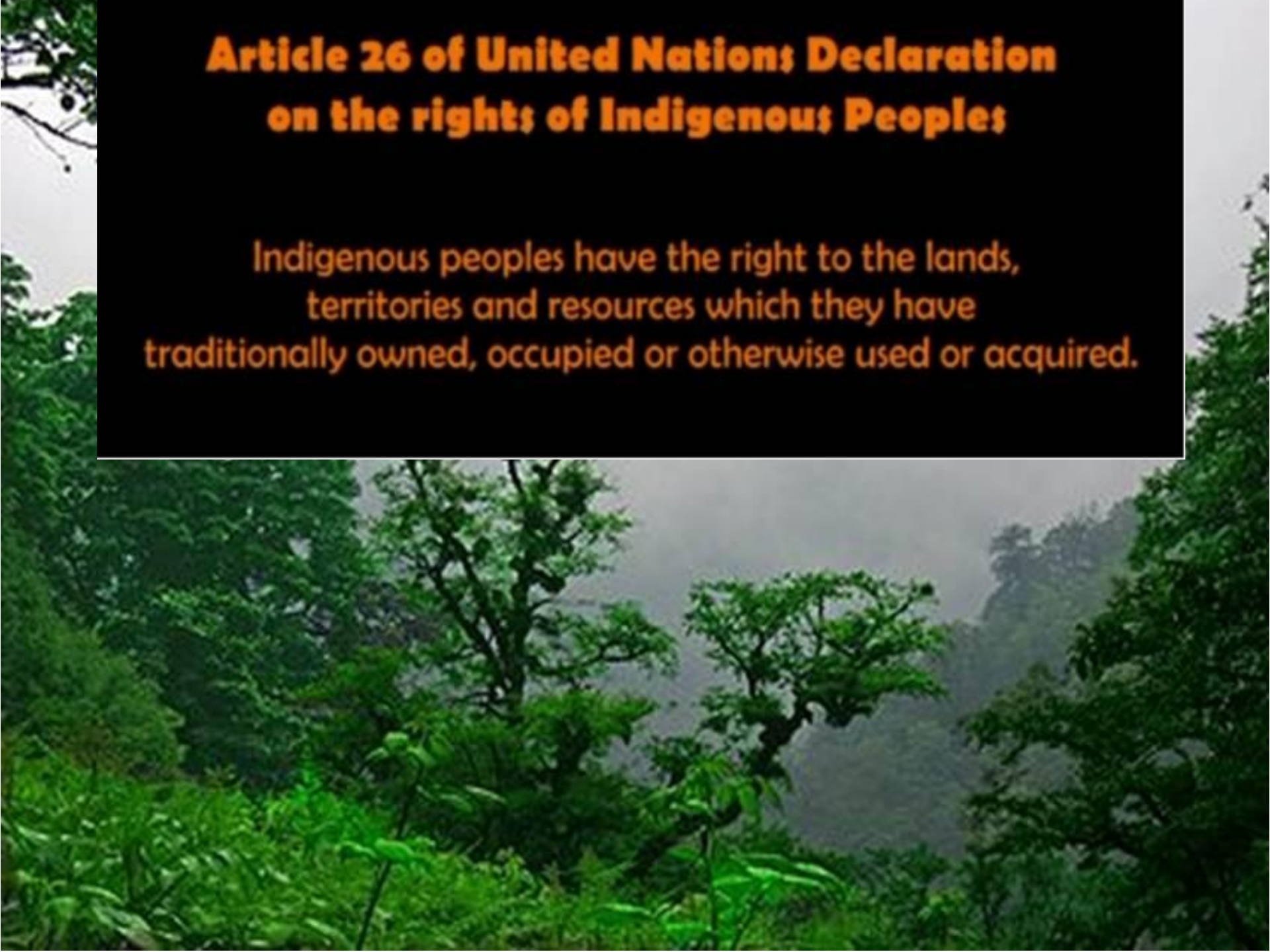
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 and  
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Some 700 indigenous nomadic pastoralist tribes have roamed Iran since they first domesticated livestock 10 or 12 thousand years ago.



## **Article 26 of United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands,  
territories and resources which they have  
traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.



Since 2003, the tribal communities of Iran with the support of CENESTA and IIED, have focused on the key problem which the tribes themselves identified: the weakening of customary institutions of the tribal communities as well as takeover by government of their communal rangeland territories.



Twelve tribal confederacies and independent tribes of Iran have embarked on an initiative aiming at defining their own ABS protocol.



The following were discussed and agreed upon in order to secure their material and intellectual property rights:

- Preparation of community biodiversity registers (at various tribal levels);
- Understanding of CBD and ABS (Access and Benefit Sharing) issues relevant for the rights of nomadic pastoralists over their territories and biodiversity;
- Setting the stage for reversing the loss of biodiversity.

two workshops were held in Lazur and Shevidzar in July and September 2010 in preparation for CBD COP-10 in Nagoya



**Participatory Planning  
and Learning Workshop  
Lazur, July 2010**



**One month later...  
Second Participatory Planning  
and Learning Workshop  
Shevidzar (Fars)**

field activity facilitated by a professional botanist who worked with the team on standardization of methods for collecting, preparing, labeling, pressing, photographing, and preserving the plants and recording them in the database form agreed by all.





This is the first time in the country that indigenous and local communities have been ahead of the game and are engaging in dialogue and negotiation with the government over their rights to biodiversity resources.



## Lesson 1

- To do justice to a community bio-cultural diversity *protocol*, the IP or local community concerned must first do a robust participatory community biodiversity *register*.

## Lesson 2

- The IP or traditional community possesses extra-ordinary knowledge of elements of the biodiversity they have lived with for centuries, but in order to give them the credibility and self confidence needed, the integration of modern scientific know-how is highly desirable.

## Lesson 3

- The work must be done over a long enough period of time (we think two years are the minimum).

## Lesson 4

- The collection work must cover the different seasons of the year, and the specifics of the mobility (the various seasonal grounds, the migration seasons and routes) of the tribal grouping.

## Lesson 5

- Wild biodiversity—especially the plant cover which is the foundation of the ecological realities on which the community's livelihoods are based—seems to us to be an indispensable component and the starting point for the elaboration of the community biodiversity register. We plan to include the other three components (wildlife, and domesticated animals and plants).

## Lesson 6

- Since our goal is to provide a community basis for an eventual national biodiversity protocol, we believe the work must be done in a large enough set of communities, tribes and indigenous peoples. They have decided to do the work together in order to arrive at a collective community bio-cultural diversity protocol.

## Lesson 7

- The collective work can then form the foundation of a lobbying effort to use this work as a basis for arriving at a national biodiversity regime.

## Lesson 8

- The work should not be left at the level of a study, even though a fully participatory one, and should inform a community effort to elaborate an action plan to conserve the biological diversity and to use it sustainably for community well being and wealth.

## Lesson 9

- While the very outputs of the *registers* and *protocols* are potentially useful products in their own right, it is already being realised that the very strong sense of solidarity, unity and capacity that the collective work is engendering, may indeed end up being the most valuable outcome of this exercise that will lead to more significant realities in the achievement of rights.

# Future plan

1. Continuing to complete the Community Biodiversity Register;
2. Completing the CBR sections for wildlife, livestock breeds and crops used by indigenous nomadic pastoralists;
3. Elaborating the Community Biodiversity Protocol;
4. Establishing a decentralised system of community herbariums (aiming at 5000 specimens to achieve internationally recognised status and code);
5. Working with the government towards a national community-based ABS strategy and protocol;
6. Using this experience to strengthen the credibility of the nomadic tribes and their organisations;
7. Exchanging experiences with other indigenous peoples and traditional communities;
8. Turning their traditional knowledge and the community ABS protocol into useful collective economic activities for the tribes.

*(Agreed by the National Union of Indigenous Nomadic Tribes of Iran)*