



## A Global Forest Coalition Newsletter on International Forest Policy

### CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

#### About Forest Cover

##### **Ex Silvis: The CBD and Forest Biodiversity - Monitoring Progress, Revealing Roadblocks**

*By Miguel Lovera, chairperson, Global Forest Coalition*

##### **Protected Areas are Indigenous Territories and Lands, but Working Group on Protected Areas Denies Indigenous Participation**

*By Marcial Arias, Fundación para la Promoción del Conocimiento Tradicional, Panamá*

# Forest Cover

##### **The Bracket Samba: IPO and NGO views on What Went Wrong at SBSTTA**

*By Simone Lovera, Global Forest Coalition, Paraguay*

##### **REDD: To Engage or Not? Report on the Asian IPOs' meeting on the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility**

*By Kittisak Rattanakrajangsri, International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forest, Thailand*

##### **World Bank Forest Carbon Plans set to Benefit Industrialized Countries**

*By: Onel Masardule, Comité de los Pueblos Indígenas de Conservación del Foro Internacional Indígena sobre Biodiversidad*

##### **UN International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change**

*By Estebancio Castro Diaz, Global Forest Coalition, Panamá*

##### **FCCC AHWG Long Term Cooperative Action meeting**

*By Ronnie Hall, Global Forest Coalition, UK*

#### Reports on Other meetings:

##### **Working Group on [A]BS Agrees to Disagree**

##### **Calendar of Forest-related meetings**

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## About Forest Cover

Welcome to the twenty-fifth issue of Forest Cover, the newsletter of the Global Forest Coalition (GFC), a world-wide coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs). GFC promotes rights-based, socially just and effective forest policies at the international and national level, including through building the capacity of NGOs and IPOs in all regions to influence global forest policy. Forest Cover is published four times a year. It features reports on important intergovernmental meetings by different NGOs and IPOs and a calendar of future meetings. The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Global Forest Coalition, its donors or the editors. For free subscriptions, please contact Yolanda Sikking at: [Yolanda.sikking@globalforestcoalition.org](mailto:Yolanda.sikking@globalforestcoalition.org)

## Ex Silvis: The CBD and Forest Biodiversity - Monitoring Progress, Revealing Roadblocks

**By Miguel Lovera, chairperson, Global Forest Coalition**

On 18 February 2008, the Global Forest Coalition held a side event entitled "Implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity: What progress has been made?" at the thirteenth session of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-13) to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

GFC, with the assistance of independent monitors in 20 different countries, has assessed the extent to which governments have been successful in implementing the CBD's Programme of Work. This event, held at the FAO in Rome, served as an excellent opportunity to present the findings of the draft final report to the very governments that had been scrutinized.

This was a challenging location to address forest biological diversity issues, given that the hosts, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization, have been most instrumental in precluding the adoption of a clear and coherent forest definition that recognizes forests as an ecosystem and excludes monoculture plantations. As George Orwell put it "*telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act.*" Some seriously worrying facts emerged during the monitoring process, some of which were common to most of the countries studied. For example, the fact that the Ecosystem Approach promoted by the CBD is not being taken up as a

keystone for forest management is particularly disturbing. This, along with perverse economic incentives, including financial and other support for agrofuels production, has become the fastest growing threat to forest biodiversity in the 20 countries monitored – and, perhaps, worldwide.

The fact that many governments focus only on those forests contained within limited protected areas was also identified as a principal and widespread impediment to the implementation of the CBD/POW. Thus, for example, some governments with high deforestation rates are reluctant to implement deforestation moratoria and bans which could apply to all their forests. This is most unfortunate, given the fact that such measures have proven to be highly successful in terms of halting forest biodiversity loss.

The question that arises here is: why the reluctance? The answer may well be that moratoria and bans are considered incompatible with in-vogue free-market economics. Corruption, privatization of land and an adherence to market-based mechanisms, also frustrate effective forest law enforcement and the implementation of forest biodiversity policy in general.

As many of the studies also demonstrated, governments' failure to recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples to manage their own territories, and to ensure their effective participation in forest policy development and implementation, is a problem worldwide.

GFC's Independent Monitoring project, which began back in 1999, has developed from a rather strict technical analysis into a broader participatory assessment, which adds real-life readings of environmental scenarios to the available scientific information and data. The overall process allows us to determine the key problems preventing effective protection of forest biological diversity, and to gauge how far apart the real forest realities are from the official forest realities. Not surprisingly, a number of delegates were somewhat defensive about the conclusions of the Independent Monitoring report, which reveals that many governments have not done their homework. In some countries, government officials do not even seem to have heard of the CBD's Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity (CBD/POW.) Other delegates, however, reacted very positively and showed clear appreciation for the analysis of both the successes and flaws in their national forest policies.



These independent monitoring processes are not witch-hunts. They are processes that allow forest peoples (as rights-holders), governments, international actors and other observers to assess how well strategies to conserve and use forests sustainably are working and thus to plan realistic, democratic and objective routes to the successful conservation of forest biodiversity.

"The GFC firmly believes that forest loss can only be addressed if governments effectively fulfil the commitments they have made under international law." This is verbatim text from the GFC's own programme of work. We share this vision with most forest communities and activists and this motivates our engagement in the CBD and independent monitoring of governments' activities, with the hope of saving the world's forests together.

For the summary report on the independent monitoring process, please visit: <http://www.globalforestcoalition.org/img/userpics/File/publications/DraftsummaryIMRome.pdf>

## Protected Areas are Indigenous Territories and Lands, but Working Group on Protected Areas Denies Indigenous Participation

**By Marcial Arias, Fundación para la Promoción del Conocimiento Tradicional, Panamá**

The second meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Ad Hoc Working Group on Protected Areas, met from 11-15 February, at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's offices in Rome. However, the chair of the Working Group failed to allow representatives from Indigenous Peoples' Organizations to make their presentations to the Working Group in a timely manner, as had previously been agreed. As a result Indigenous organizations and some NGOs elected to leave the Working Group, to protest against this violation of the principle of full and effective participation by Indigenous Peoples.

One representative, Jannie Lasimbang, an indigenous Kudazan from Malaysia stated, "We have made a considerable effort to be part of this process. However,



we have been deeply disappointed by the fact that from the beginning of this second meeting of the Working Group on Protected Areas, we have been excluded. We have been denied the chance to take part in a timely way and to discussion and were not allowed to make contributions or express our points of view. We were silenced at a critical moment in the discussion on the recommendations relating to the implementation of the Program of Work. Thus none of our recommendations have been included in the CRP2, a document that will be used as the basis for discussion at COP-9. This fact dismays us deeply, since these recommendations and the implementation of the Program of Work will impact on our lives, territories and lands".

The establishment of protected areas as national parks, national historical monuments, forest reserves, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, and so on, continues without the consent of Indigenous Peoples. Our lands, territories and natural resources are still being usurped and we continue to lose our cultures and sustenance. For these reasons we demand the recognition of our rights. We insist that governments stop creating protected areas that contravene those rights.





Therefore, the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) emphatically considers that, "Instead of establishing protected areas, governments should restore our lands and territories. Otherwise, we will get even poorer, contrary to the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals".

We call on Parties to the CBD to reform their national and international juridical and political mechanisms to ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in decision-taking processes. The IIFB emphatically rejects the proposed financial mechanisms, including carbon trading, debt for nature exchanges, water privatization, bioprospecting, payment for ecosystem services and 'REDD' – Reduced Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries. These are all extremely controversial mechanisms and processes and are contrary to the worldview and rights of Indigenous Peoples. Instead of solving our problems they make them worse. "Your development brings me poverty" stated Gilberto Arias, Kuna Indian chief .



Agriculture, cattle ranching, mining and industrial-scale fishing and forestry are also intrinsically incompatible, stemming from the rationale underlying all

industrial production (that it be specialized, simplified and short-term) and a conservationist approach to nature and its processes.

It is now universally acknowledged that under certain productive, cultural and demographic conditions, Indigenous Peoples maintain a sustainable system of natural resource management and are therefore recognized as one of the key actors when it comes to maintaining biodiversity.

Indigenous Peoples, with an estimated population of 300 million worldwide, occupy the planet's least damaged and most biodiverse lands and aquatic areas. Indigenous and local communities acquire an unquestionable value because, as has been broadly demonstrated by numerous case studies, they adopt a strategy of multiple use in which a wide range of activities can take place whilst a certain balance and interaction is maintained in their lands and territories. This includes Indigenous communities that live and shares their lands with Protected Areas.

Therefore one cannot deny the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the process of establishing Protected Areas, and in taking decisions concerning the protection of biodiversity.

*For more information, please visit: <http://www.cbd.int>*

## **The Bracket Samba: IPO and NGO Views on What Went Wrong at SBSTTA**

***By Simone Lovera, Global Forest Coalition, Paraguay***

Sometimes the sun is shining and the sky looks relatively bright, but a little later one can suddenly find oneself in the midst of a very cold shower. This was the sense of many NGO and IPO observers attending the discussion on forest biodiversity, at the recent 13th Session of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which took place in Rome, 18-22 February.

The background document prepared by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Forest Biodiversity was not so bad. The debate itself was tough from the outset, but there were many positive statements too, from a range of countries, including African countries, that urged the CBD to prolong its moratorium on genetically-engineered (GE) trees.



As Martin Kaiser of Greenpeace International wrote in ECO, "Listening to the interventions by parties on the review of the PoW (programme of work) on biological diversity in the plenary two days ago, you got the impression that the major challenges for the conservation and sustainable use of forest biological diversity are widely understood: climate change, financing of the implementation of the PoW, rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, international trade with agrofuels, illegal logging and related trade and GE trees."

However, about the subsequent conference room paper he was less positive "The CRP.2 marginalizes the CBD as a 'secretary' of other non-legally binding fora and as a source for scientific recommendations. How can parties argue that decisions based on 'urged' or 'invited' make any difference to previous decisions and strengthen implementation?...Since SBSTTA12, there has been strong and new evidence regarding the negative environmental and social impacts of the production of many biofuels. Therefore the SBSTTA recommendation XII/7 that only used action words like 'invite', 'identify', 'bring to the attention' is no longer adequate."

For one moment, it looked like CRP.2 might actually be improved during the next negotiating round. But then Brazil started speaking. And speaking. And speaking. NGO observers counted 51 interventions by the delegation during one forest debate, totaling one full hour. The resulting document was a square brackets monoculture!

This means the discussion at the upcoming Conference of the Parties in Bonn, is already booby-trapped - and you ain't seen the real bracket samba yet! Or, as Helena Paul of Econexus reported, "Bracket fungus spreads with remarkable speed in forest discussions...Biodiversity is in square brackets and may be deleted..."

One of the issues still on the table (thanks to an effective NGO-IPO action in front of the SBSTTA plenary hall) is the moratorium on genetically engineered trees. Yet there are even more booby-traps than ever in this discussion. As Anne Petermann of Global Justice Ecology Project cautions, "The delegations of the African group ensured that the previous COP-8 decision regarding genetically engineered trees was not watered down. In fact, African delegations proposed a strengthening of the decision, proposing language that basically called for a suspension of GE field trials until sufficient impact assessments have been carried out, including environmental, cultural and socio-economic

impacts....Brazil, on the other hand, joined Australia to push for a weakening of the COP-8 decision, specifically by inserting a reference to Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration...Principle 15 states, "In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities..."...which effectively excuses developing countries from having to use the precautionary approach....It is thus important that the mention of Principle 15 should be deleted from any text".

Other issues of major importance did not even reach the negotiating table. Amongst them is the impact of invasive alien species on forests. As Ricardo Carrere of the World Rainforest Movement writes, "Invasive alien species are a major cause of biodiversity loss in forests and other ecosystems, but the issue of invasive alien tree plantation species is rarely mentioned or addressed at the Convention on Biological Diversity level, in spite of the fact that the main plantation species - eucalyptus, pines and acacias - have already become invasive in many countries....In the case of South Africa ... 2 million hectares of land have been invaded spontaneously by plantation tree species...To make matters worse, both cases - monoculture alien tree plantations and invasive alien tree plantation species - are officially classified as "forests". According to the FAO a forest is simply an area of land covered (even partially and eventually) by trees...Going back to the South African example, this means that the invasion of local ecosystems by alien tree species and the establishment of large-scale alien tree monocultures should be welcomed because they increase "forest cover". That is absurd from an ecological point of view and particularly ridiculous from a biodiversity conservation perspective...there are three different issues that need to be addressed by the CBD:

- the adoption of a meaningful definition of forests focused on biodiversity and people
- the adoption of policies for stopping the spread of invasive tree plantation species
- the adoption of policies for preventing the promotion of large scale monoculture tree plantation."

Meanwhile, in the midst of all this controversy, the real success stories of forest management are being ignored by governments. Or, as Sandy Gauntlett of the Pacific Indigenous Peoples Environment Coalition summarized, on the basis of one of the main recommendations of the independent monitoring process of the Global Forest Coalition, "There are some clear success stories of forest biodiversity management, especially in programmes on recognized Indigenous



lands and territories, yet the global involvement of IPs in policy development remains weak. Our recommendation is the immediate commitment to the rights of IPs to manage their own territories as enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, along with the effective and full involvement of IPs in policy development."

It is hoped that recognition of Indigenous rights and their success in forest conservation, combined with a recommendation to halt invasive tree species and monocultures, the adoption of a proper definition of 'forests', the deletion of references to Principle 15 regarding GE trees and strong language that addresses the ongoing forest crisis and the ongoing biofuels catastrophe, will be amongst the main outcomes of the upcoming Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The full versions of the reports written by the NGOs and IPOs mentioned above can be found in the ECO published on the website of the CBD Alliance:

<http://www.cbdalliance.org/sbstta-13>

For more information, see also: [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int)



## REDD: To Engage or Not? A Brief Report on the Asian IPOs' meeting on the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

*By Kittisak Rattanakrajangsri, International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forest, Thailand*

REDD – short for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation in Developing countries – was one of the crucial issues on the agenda at the 13th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Bali, Indonesia, 3-14 December 2007.

REDD received mixed reactions from the different governmental groupings present in Bali and Indigenous Peoples (IPs) found themselves in a similar position, with some opposing it, whilst others were considering it. Those who favor REDD argue that it may bring some benefits for Indigenous Peoples. Those who oppose it, on the other hand, are concerned that it could result in yet more adverse impacts for their lands, territories and livelihoods.

REDD is a new initiative and many Indigenous Peoples are not fully aware of its implications. The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) declared that: '...REDD will result in more violations of Indigenous Peoples' rights. It will increase the violation of our Human Rights, our rights to our lands, territories and resources, steal our land, cause forced evictions, prevent access and threaten indigenous agriculture practices, destroy biodiversity and culture diversity and cause social conflicts. Under REDD, States and Carbon Traders will take more control over our forests.'

A number of 'pilot' REDD projects will be funded through a new Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), also launched by the World Bank in Bali. The FCPF launch inspired a critical reaction from IPs, who demanded that the Bank consult them on this issue. They insisted their concerns be fully taken into account and addressed when REDD projects are implemented on their land and territories.

This critique was highlighted in a statement made by Victoria Tauli Corpuz, chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), who said: "... consultations should be undertaken with indigenous peoples who are directly affected and pertinent documents should be translated in major



languages understood by them and these should be disseminated before the consultations take place.”

As a result of strong lobbying and criticism on REDD and the FCPF, the World Bank subsequently agreed to hold a series of regional consultations with IPs.

These were to be in:

- Asia - 28-29 February, in Katmandu, Nepal
- Central America - 5-6 March, in Mexico City and
- Africa - 13-14 March, in Bujumbura

The Asian consultation was initially planned to be held in Bangkok, Thailand. It was changed to Katmandu, Nepal and was held back-to-back with the Asian preparatory meeting on UNPFII, which took place 24-26 February. The main objective of the consultation was to learn and exchange information regarding REDD and the FCPF. This would enable IPOs to make informed decisions in relation to their future participation and involvement in REDD.

The meeting was attended by indigenous representatives from India, Nepal, Indonesia, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Bhutan, Thailand and Vietnam. It was facilitated by Victoria Tauli Corpuz, from Tebtebba.

It began with presentations from the World Bank staff, and was followed by discussions on different issues including the concept of global warming, REDD, FCPF, the Bank's BioCarbon Funds and its safeguard policies. This discussion lasted one and a half days, after which the IP participants requested a closed meeting amongst themselves, to discuss their views and positions in relation to REDD and the FCPF. These views were then presented to the Bank, at the last joint session.

After lengthy discussions, it was suggested that Indigenous Peoples should engage in the REDD process. The argument made was that REDD is already there and could become a double exclusion for Indigenous Peoples if they do not engage with it – first, from participation in the UNFCCC process and second, from participation in the REDD projects themselves.

In addition, it was argued that through such engagement, IPs could attract international support that will help them safeguard their territories and prevent them from being marginalized and/or victimized when projects are implemented.

These international benefits include, but are not limited to, the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDECRIps), a shift to a Human Rights-based Approach, and so on and so forth.

The next hurdle is how to engage in the process effectively. What risks and opportunities are there? Some significant risks identified include increasing state sovereignty over natural resources and the potential displacement of indigenous communities.

In addition, a range of issues need to be considered in more depth. These include dispute and complaints procedures, capacity building for Indigenous Peoples, a separate mechanism for Indigenous Peoples to participate in national stakeholder processes, a special / independent capacity building fund created for Indigenous Peoples' forest conservation and the FCPF's governance structure.

In conclusion, although the REDD concept sounds beautiful and may bring benefits to Indigenous Peoples in some countries, it is still a major source of concern for many. Numerous questions remain unanswered for Indigenous Peoples, particularly in relation to land and resource rights. While the World Bank may make assurances about obtaining the 'free, prior and informed consent' of Indigenous Peoples, the recent history of IPs' engagement with the Bank is not encouraging. Indigenous Peoples must remain vigilant and study all the options first, before committing to full support for REDD.

As the Asia meeting has shown, Indigenous Peoples are still grappling with the technical aspects of the discussions on climate change. So many issues need to be clarified that it is difficult to get IPOs to agree on one common position.

Before considering engagement on REDD, basic concepts need to be clearly analyzed, including the origin of the concept, who is promoting it and why, its intended objectives, etc. Without answers to these questions, Indigenous Peoples will only be further victimized if they are forced to make a collective decision on REDD at this point in time.

The immediate challenge, then, is to compile, disseminate and share readily understandable information on REDD. The information needs to be objective and should not promote one position over another. Additionally, consultations on REDD and other similar projects should be undertaken in a truly transparent and democratic process, allowing for the participation of as broad a number of IPOs





as possible. The World Bank should be challenged to support IPOs' capacity-building initiatives on climate change, in contrast to its current planned support for a handful of government REDD projects.

*For more information by the World Bank on their new facility, please visit: <http://carbonfinance.org/Router.cfm?Page=FCPF&FID=34267&ItemID=34267&ft=About>*

## World Bank Forest Carbon Plans Set to Benefit Industrialized Countries

**By: Onel Masardule, Comité de los Pueblos Indígenas de Conservación del Foro Internacional Indígena sobre Biodiversidad**

World Bank president Robert Zoellick launched the Bank's new 'Forest Carbon Partnership Facility' (FCPF) during the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, in Bali, Indonesia, last December.

The main purpose of the FCPF, according to Bank staffer Benoît Bosquet, is to kick-start markets for reducing carbon emissions from deforestation (REDD), by means of an experimental 'pilot project'. REDD proposals being discussed in the UNFCCC are based on the underlying assumption that positive incentives are needed to make forest conservation more financially rewarding than forest destruction.

The FCPF consists of two related mechanisms. The first is a 'Readiness Fund' of US\$100 million, intended to help countries create systems and processes that will enable them to prepare national strategies to participate in REDD; and build their capacity to manage and monitor their forests in a credible way. The second 'Carbon Finance Mechanism' will focus on a few key countries, piloting incentive payments for REDD policies and measures. This second mechanism is intended to have about US\$200 million at its disposal, provided by developed countries, the private sector and others.

The World Bank, however, did not think to consult Indigenous and local communities about the Facility, until strong criticisms were leveled at it during the Bali launch. It subsequently agreed to organize three consultations, in separate continents.

One of these consultations took place in La Paz, Bolivia, under the name of 'Indigenous Peoples' Custody of Biocultural Diversity: the effects of deforestation and gaseous emissions on Climate Change.' A call to attend was sent out by Coordinadora de Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA), Coordinadora Andina de Organizaciones Indígenas (CAOI), Consejo Indígena de Centroamérica (CICA), the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues (IASG) and the Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y El Caribe (Fondo Indígena). The meeting took place 17-19 March, in La Paz, Bolivia.

However, representatives from the Indigenous Peoples' Organizations rejected the World Bank's procedure in relation to these consultations. Instead, they declared the meeting in Qollasuyo an 'informative workshop' only. Any consultations undertaken should be made separately, in accordance with the procedures adopted by Indigenous Peoples.



A Qollasuyo Declaration emerged from the meeting, reiterating that climate change is the result of Western developmental patterns and voracious capitalism, with no respect for Mother Earth. Predicted average temperature increases of 1.8°C to 4.0°C over the course of the coming century will accelerate the impacts of climate change, including on Indigenous Peoples. Industrialized countries are the sole authors of

these changes that profoundly affect Mother Earth. For this reason Indigenous Peoples reject any insinuation that it is their responsibility. The Declaration also states that Indigenous Peoples, who suffer the current impacts of climate change disproportionately, are also being excluded from emerging policies and programs being developed to mitigate climate change. Participants voiced their concerns about carbon markets and other false solutions. They objected to the





implementation of mitigation policies and adaptation proposals including the expansion of monocultures, the production of biofuels, carbon sequestration and the reduction of emissions from avoided deforestation and protected areas. These false solutions, coming from multilateral institutions, the private sector, international NGOs and governments, etc, impede the exercise of Indigenous Peoples' rights and even their very existence.

The workshop recommended the following:

1. The full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in all processes relating to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, Protected Areas, etc.
2. The establishment of a group of Indigenous experts on climate change and traditional knowledge within the UNFCCC.
3. Coordination with the United Nations and its specialized agencies, including the CBD, UNFCCC, UNESCO, FAO, UNICEF, GEF, UNDP, and with the Fundacion Para la Promocion del Conocimiento Indigena and others, with the purpose of implementing direct actions and statements on climate change and Indigenous Peoples.
4. That the Permanent Forum recommends to the Office of the High Commissioner of the United Nations that the Commission on Human Rights's Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people elaborate a report on the impacts of climate change on Indigenous Peoples.
5. That projects and programs related to the mitigation and adaptation of climate change should:
  - a. give full respect to the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples.
  - b. be developed in response to consultation based on free, prior and informed consent.
  - c. be subject to the limits and rights imposed by the Declaration of the United Nations on Indigenous Peoples Rights and Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization, concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, as well as other relevant national and international mechanisms.
  - d. respond to the requirements, realities and priorities of Indigenous Peoples.
  - e. adapt and extend financial mechanisms so that Indigenous Peoples can access funds dedicated to adaptation, capacity building, technology transfer, etc.

## UN International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change

*By Estebancio Castro Diaz, Global Forest Coalition, Panamá*

Recognizing the importance of this issue, the United Nations convened an International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change, in response to a recommendation from the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PF).

The meeting took place from 2-4 April, in Darwin, Australia, and was organized by the United Nations University and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in association with the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance. It was attended by indigenous experts on climate change, United Nations staff, intergovernmental agencies, national and local governments, non-governmental organizations and academics.

Indigenous experts were requested to submit papers on one of the four themes of the meeting, which were:

1. Outlining the effects of climate change on Indigenous Peoples;
2. Mitigation and adaptation measures to climate change;
3. Carbon projects and carbon trading; and
4. Factors that enable or obstruct Indigenous Peoples' participation in climate change processes.

What became apparent from the indigenous experts is that climate change is real and its effects on their peoples and communities are devastating. This, coupled with the almost non-existent discourse in the public arena concerning the ways in which Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately effected by climate change, clearly shows the need for dialogue and discussion on these issues, firstly amongst Indigenous Peoples themselves and secondly between Indigenous Peoples and the international community.

The experts noted that discourse on climate change thus far has acknowledged Indigenous Peoples within the context of climate change, but has failed to listen to and act on their concerns. There must be a shift in perception, whereby Indigenous Peoples are not seen merely as victims of climate change but as primary participants within global climate change monitoring, adaptation and innovation processes.



### **Theme 1 – Outlining the effects of climate change on Indigenous Peoples**

The first theme was addressed by Mr Fiu Mataese of Samoa and Ms Patricia Cohran of Alaska.

Mr Mataese discussed the impact of climate change on Pacific Island states. As most of these states are small coral and reef islands, they have a low elevation above sea level. Due to man-made climate change, they have been experiencing increasingly extreme weather conditions, rising sea levels, coral bleaching, foreshore erosion and loss of fresh water sources. This has resulted in loss of land to the sea, continual damaging of infrastructure, lack of fresh water and land for cultivation and, ultimately, a loss of culture.

Mr Mataese noted that the primary responsibility for global warming and its consequences falls upon industrialized nations. Such nations must demonstrate leadership by reducing carbon emissions within their own borders. This must be the foundation for any future international agreements on climate change. Ambitious climate policy does not constitute an obstacle to economic and sustainable growth. On the contrary, climate protection makes sound economic sense and is a driving force for innovation and employment.

Ms Cochran noted that the discussion of climate change frequently tends to focus on political, economic and technical issues, rather than its human impact and consequences. Her people have noticed acute changes to their land and environment. The weather is increasingly unpredictable, the look and feel of the land is different and the sea ice is changing. As a result of these changes, hunters are having difficulty navigating and traveling safely. Governments must develop their economies using appropriate technologies that significantly limit emissions of greenhouse gases. People must take stock of whether or not consumption at current levels is ultimately sustainable.

### **Theme 2 – Mitigation and adaptation measures to climate change**

Ms Kimberley Smith of the Navajo Nation discussed the impact of mining activities in the Navajo reservation. Whilst the Western view of such mineral extraction is positive, the experience of the Navajo paints a completely different picture. The effects on the environment are disturbing, water is tainted, food resources and plants are diminished, people are forcibly removed from their lands, health ailments increase and the Navajo people are, economically-speaking, held hostage.

The abundance of minerals on Navajo land has led to the ironic situation whereby the extraction of minerals provides much needed employment for the Navajo. However, the disadvantages of this industry are water depletion, drought, relocation, toxic water and a rise in cancer and other respiratory illnesses. Mining activities have been in progress within the Navajo reservation since the 1940's. Their experience of these extractive industries is therefore telling.

For example, the Four Corners Power Plant generates power from coal. It operates without any meaningful federal, state or tribal emission limits. The Black Mesa Mine was operated until recently on the basis of a waiver of several environmental regulations, thus allowing the Peabody Energy Company to run their activities as they wanted. For the Navajo nation, drought is the most threatening effect of climate change, both for the people themselves and also for their livestock. Water on the reservation is used to move the coal to the power station. Once used the water becomes tainted and is not fit for livestock or human use.

### **Theme 3 – Carbon projects and carbon trading**

A presentation was made by Ms Jean Fenton, which focused on the experience of the North Australian Land and Sea Management Alliance. Her presentation was a case study of a carbon trading agreement between indigenous peoples, government and a private company, regarding tropical savannah fire management. Their experience to date has been a positive one, because they have been able to use their traditional knowledge and practice in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This case study is unique in that the indigenous peoples involved have been able to continue to use a traditional practice which is also now acknowledged as having a benefit from an economic perspective.

### **Theme 4 – Factors that enable or obstruct Indigenous Peoples' participation in the climate change processes**

Mr Estebancio Castro Diaz of Panama provided an overview of the current international legal standards that relate to indigenous peoples rights to their lands as well as how this right is affected by the right to development. He focused on the lack of Indigenous Peoples' participation in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and in particular the discussions on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in developing countries (REDD) discussions. Indigenous Peoples must be engaged at all levels of policy discussion that effect their livelihood and land.



Concerns over the use of carbon trading and other measures were also expressed. For example, payment for environmental schemes (PES) may impact negatively on land reform campaigns and campaigns to obtain recognition of land titles.

### Summary

The meeting focused on the very real concerns of Indigenous Peoples and their direct experiences with the outcomes of climate change, both recently and over a number of years. Indigenous peoples accept that development is part of the world in which we all live. However, they are not prepared to accept that the supposed benefits that are derived from the exploitation of natural resources and the increasing demand for land for emission initiatives will automatically benefit them. In fact, their experiences prove otherwise.

Indigenous Peoples are fully cognizant of international law. They are also aware of how important their voices are in international fora. They expect governments to engage with them on these issues in meaningful and strategic ways. However, their experiences to date show a complete lack of understanding and concern for their well being, and this in the name of progress and development.

The meeting agreed upon a number of recommendations including the following:

1. UNFCCC should establish a working group to consider the impacts of climate change on Indigenous Peoples and the role they can play in addressing climate change.
2. A global indigenous taskforce should be established to investigate and deliver an urgent report to ECOSOC on the risk mitigation and adaptation strategies required to respond to indigenous hotspot communities around the globe.
3. UNFCCC should fully include the protection of forests in measures to address climate change.
4. States should provide financial and human resources that are specifically dedicated to translating climate change projections and climate impact assessments that relate to indigenous-managed and -owned lands into plain language, thus allowing communities to decide their own priorities for developing climate change adaptation strategies.
5. Indigenous youth should be further encouraged to participate in the discussion because they have not yet been included or consulted about processes related to climate change.

The report of the meeting will be presented to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in April. The recommendations contained within the report will be considered by the members of the PF and they will decide whether or not to adopt its recommendations in their final report to the ECOSOC.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/>

## First stop on the Bali Roadmap: Bangkok

**Ronnie Hall, Global Forest Coalition, UK**

Laptops were dusted down and sleeves rolled up, as governments reconvened at the end of March in Bangkok, to map out what needs to happen between now and December 2009, when the 15th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change meets in Copenhagen to agree on a way forward post-2012.

Two working groups met in parallel in Bangkok, between 31 March and 4 April. One of these was the first meeting of the forward-looking Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA 1), which was tasked with developing a work plan for the coming months. The other was the first part of the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex 1 Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP 5). Both spent time discussing climate and forests and related financial mechanisms, although almost all detailed and controversial issues remain to be hammered out at some point in the future.

Forests and climate are key topics for discussion in both working groups. AWG-KP, for example, decided that Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) should continue to be available to Annex 1 Parties post-2012. However, some of the rules and guidelines only apply for the first commitment period (2008-2012) and most of the discussion focused on details relating to these rules, including countries' current ability to select the 'managed forests' that they wish to include in LULUCF (which was raised by both Brazil and Tuvalu). Overall, there was considerable disagreement about the extent to which LULUCF rules need to be amended or simplified; and how they might link to the planned negotiations on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in developing countries (REDD).





One key area to watch out for in forthcoming meetings of the AWG-KP is the potential inclusion of Harvested Wood Products (HWPs) as an acceptable carbon pool under LULUCF. In effect this would mean that deforestation may continue so long as the resulting wood products don't decay. Hardly a solution with the biodiversity and social 'co-benefits' so often mentioned in the parallel REDD discussions. Jim Penman of the IPCC argued that this development is necessary to create incentives to reuse and recycle wooden products.

The other working group (AWG-LCA) discussed forests in less detail, since it was focused on a more general discussion about the Bali Action Plan 'building blocks' (shared vision, mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and finance). Eventually the AWG-LCA agreed a work plan for 2008, with all of the building blocks to be considered at each meeting (rather than in turn). They will, nevertheless, be themed, and AWG-LCA 3, rumoured to be scheduled for the end of August in Ghana, is the one which will consider policy approaches and positive incentives using REDD and LULUCF.

AWG-LCA discussions on financial mechanisms were also fired up by a World Bank evening event highlighting its new portfolio of Climate Investment Funds. These will include a Forest Investment Fund with a target size of US\$1 billion, likely to favour countries participating in its Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. In AWG-LCA, the G77/China objected pointedly to such parallel financing initiatives and proposed an umbrella multilateral fund under the Convention. Mexico, Indonesia and India also proposed a multilateral fund and Argentina recommended the Montreal Protocol's Multilateral Fund as an example of how to proceed.

Many other contentious issues were raised in Bangkok, including the use of sectoral approaches, and where and how to address the problem of bunker fuels. Such issues are all deferred for later discussion. However, the AWG-KP did confirm that market-based mechanisms and the carbon market can continue to be used by Annex I countries after the first commitment period.

All in all, a small first step down what is likely to be a very bumpy road. There will be four parallel groups meeting in Bonn in the first half of June – the SBSTA, the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the two AWGs that met in Bangkok. Tracking discussions on forests and climate as they take place in up to four separate rooms will be difficult, but absolutely essential.

*For more information visit [www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int)*

## Reports on other meetings:

### Working Group on [A]BS Agrees to Disagree

The outcomes of the sixth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing of the Convention on Biodiversity, which took place 21-25 January in Geneva, had much in common with the outcomes of the last Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bali, last December.

They were both, for example, presented as a big success, when the only thing that really emerged from each, after many long and arduous days of negotiation, was a statement elaborating points of agreement and disagreement. Whether these disagreements will ever be resolved is totally up in the air. In the case of the negotiations on Access and Benefit Sharing, the list of disagreements includes a range of proposals that might actually help to stop biopiracy. Yet this failure to move forward is still seen as a major success!

Also amongst the not entirely minor points of disagreement is the question of whether the regime will be legally binding or not; and what it will actually deal with - access and benefit sharing, or just benefit sharing? That the latter - an agreement merely focusing on benefit sharing - would be in line with the Convention on Biological Diversity itself, and the agreement made by Heads of State gathered at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), turned out to be an unconvincing argument as far as most so-called 'developed' countries were concerned. They felt that they had already made a major concession by agreeing to engage in negotiations on any kind of regime, with many favouring one that supports the sale of genetic resources and Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge and rights.

Another major point of disagreement or 'bullet' (as sticking points were baptized during the meeting) is whether the regime will respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDECLIPS).

If these results constitute the potential building blocks of a house to shelter an international regime on benefit sharing, as called for at the WSSD, we had better bring our umbrellas in 2010. The roof will be leaking.

*For more information, please visit: <http://www.cbd.int>*



## Calendar of Forest-Related Meetings

More information on these and other intergovernmental meetings can be found at: [www.iisd.ca/linkages](http://www.iisd.ca/linkages)

The seventh session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on 'Climate change, bio-cultural diversity and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges' will take place 21 April - 2 May 2008 at the UN headquarters, New York, USA. For more information visit: [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session\\_seventh.html](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_seventh.html)

ITTO Expert Meeting Addressing Climate Change through Sustainable Forest Management will take place 30 April - 2 May 2008 in Yokohama, Japan. For more information visit: <http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageId=223&id=3839>

The ninth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will take place 19 - 30 May 2008 in Bonn, Germany. For more information visit: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=COP-09>

The G8 Environment Ministers' meeting will take place 24 - 26 May 2008 in Kobe, Japan. For more information visit: <http://www.do-summit.jp/en/about/summary02.php>

A High-level Conference on World Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy will take place 3 - 5 June 2008 in Rome, Italy. For more information visit: [http://www.fao.org/foodclimate/home.html?no\\_cache=1&L=7](http://www.fao.org/foodclimate/home.html?no_cache=1&L=7)

The 28th sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change will take place 2 - 13 June 2008. Bonn, Germany. Also running in parallel are the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action and the fifth session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol. For more information visit: [http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc\\_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2008](http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2008)

UNFCCC Reducing emissions from deforestation methodologies workshop will take place from 25-27 June 2008, in Tokyo, Japan. For more information please visit: [http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc\\_calendar/items/2655.php](http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php)

The G8 summit will take place 7 - 9 July 2008. Hokkaido, Japan. For more information visit: <http://www.do-summit.jp/en/about/>

An 'international conference on the adaptation of forests and forest management to changing climate with emphasis on forest health: a review of science, policies and practices', will take place 25 - 28 August 2008. Umeå, Sweden. For more information visit: <http://www.forestadaptation2008.net/home/en/>

The third session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the UNFCCC and the Sixth Session of the AWG under the Kyoto Protocol are scheduled to take place in August/September 2008 although the venue and date are not yet determined. For more information contact visit: <http://www.unfccc.int/>

IUCN fourth World Conservation Congress will take place 5 - 14 October 2008 in Barcelona, Spain. For more information visit: <http://www.iucn.org/congress/2008/>

The 14th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC and the fourth Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol will take place 1 December 2008 - 12 December 2008 in Poznan, Poland. For more information visit: [http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc\\_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2008](http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2008)

Forest Day 2, will take place in Poznan, Poland. Dates to be announced. For more information visit: [http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/Events/CIFOR/forest\\_day2.htm](http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/Events/CIFOR/forest_day2.htm)

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