



**MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
BRAULIO FERREIRA DE SOUZA DIAS
on the occasion of
THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
9 August 2014**

Biodiversity, the variety of life on our planet, is essential for sustainable development. The ecosystem services which it underpins are the basis for our wealth, our health and are the foundations of our cultures. For thousands of years, indigenous peoples around the world have understood this along with the need to live in harmony with nature. Many indigenous and local communities have conserved and sustained biodiversity through their traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use. They have been and still are the custodians of much of the world's biodiversity.

The Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) recognized their unique and important contribution through a number of its articles, but most notably through articles 8(j) on traditional knowledge, and 10(c) that addresses the customary sustainable use of biodiversity. The implementation of these articles through the programme of work has produced guidelines and codes of conduct, along with action plans, in the recognition of the importance of traditional knowledge and customary use as concrete ways to bridge the gap – and implement the rights of indigenous peoples.

Within the CBD processes several intergovernmental protocols and guidelines, including the Nagoya Protocol have been adopted that require that access and use of traditional knowledge be based on prior informed consent, a key element of the rights of indigenous peoples.

The “Akwé: Kon Voluntary Guidelines for the Conduct of Cultural, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment regarding Developments Proposed to Take Place on, or which are Likely to Impact on, Sacred Sites and on Lands and Waters Traditionally Occupied or Used by Indigenous and Local Communities”, provides a collaborative framework to ensure the full involvement of indigenous and local communities in the assessment of cultural, environmental and social impact of proposed developments on sacred sites and on lands and waters that they have traditionally occupied or used.



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In the context of access to and the equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources, the voluntary Bonn Guidelines recommends the prior informed consent of indigenous and local communities and the approval and involvement of the holders of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices. In addition to the Bonn Guidelines, the Nagoya Protocol, which is legally binding, establishes that access to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources is based on prior informed consent or approval and involvement.

Furthermore, the “Tkarihwaí:ri Code of Ethical Conduct to Ensure Respect for the Cultural and Intellectual Heritage of Indigenous and Local Communities” that requires that any activities/interactions related to traditional knowledge associated with the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, occurring on or likely to impact on sacred sites and on lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by indigenous and local communities and impacting upon specific groups, should be carried out with the prior informed consent and/or approval and involvement of indigenous and local communities.

With regards to customary sustainable use of biological diversity, the Parties to the Convention are poised to adopt a global plan of action at its twelfth meeting in October 2014 in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea. The objective of this plan of action is to promote, within the framework of the Convention, a just implementation of Article 10(c) at local, national, regional and international levels and to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities at all stages and levels of its implementation. For indigenous peoples and local communities, ensuring customary sustainable use is intricately linked to continued transmission of knowledge to the next generation.

As we celebrate the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples under the theme, “*Bridging the Gap* – implementing the rights of indigenous peoples”, it is important to understand that real advances have been made regarding traditional knowledge, customary sustainable use and the effective participation of indigenous peoples in all matters of relevance to them, under the Convention on Biological Diversity.
