

Human Rights and Biodiversity Conservation: Collective action by environmental rights defenders for an environment of peace and sustainability

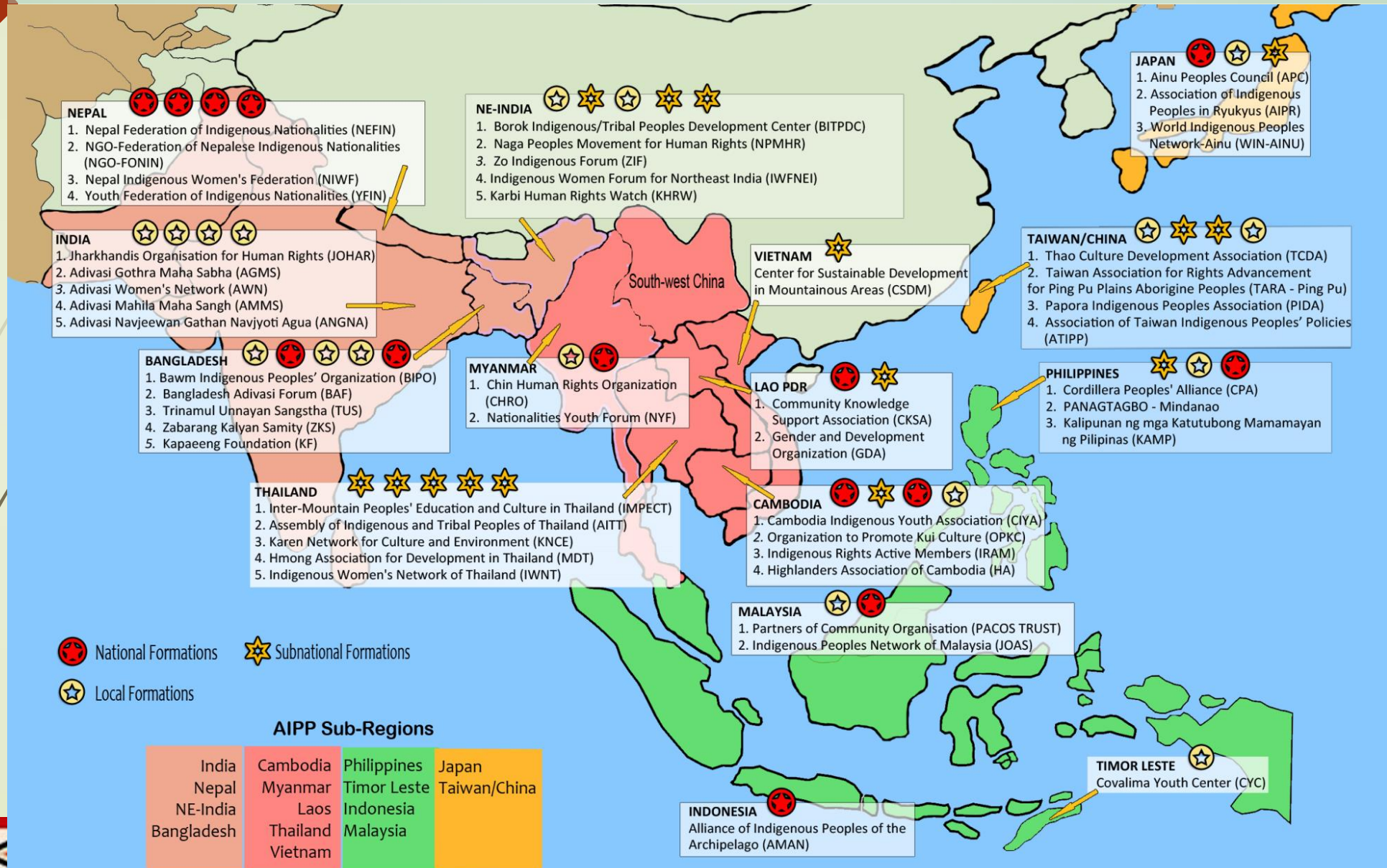


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Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)



AIPP Members



AIPP's networks



► Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights Defenders Network (IPHRED) comprising about 400 individuals and organizations

At What Cost? Irresponsible business and the murder of land and environmental defenders in 2017 (Global Witness)

- According to the report, at least **207 land and environmental defenders** were murdered in 2017.
- Overwhelmingly, these are indigenous human rights defenders
- **Why is this so?**

Why?

- More **human rights instruments and mechanisms** exist today than ever before. But there is a **huge gap between the legal framework and discourse on indigenous peoples' rights** at the international level and the situation on the ground.

“Political leadership is in retreat from human rights and democracy”

- Unsettled historical rights of indigenous peoples and militarization
- **Systemic corruption:** Certain States are **undermining the rule of law** that seeks to control and disempower, even destroy indigenous human rights defenders.

“Legalizing criminalization of defenders through anti-terrorism legislation and national security acts”



Why?

- A **huge power imbalance** between **companies and indigenous peoples**. Companies have the **resources to bribe officials**.

“Often state authorities are themselves directly or indirectly responsible for the killings in a number of cases.”
- Part of the **root causes** is the **existing development and conservation paradigms** that conflicts with **Indigenous paradigm**.

“Indigenous peoples, who have a different approach to development, pay the prize with harassment and killings.”



Why?

- **Racism:** historical discrimination still makes us vulnerable to **toxic stereotyping**

“From **toxic public rhetoric denouncing** and **diminishing indigenous peoples’ rights and their claims** to tarnishing our image as **anti-development** and **anti-conservation**”



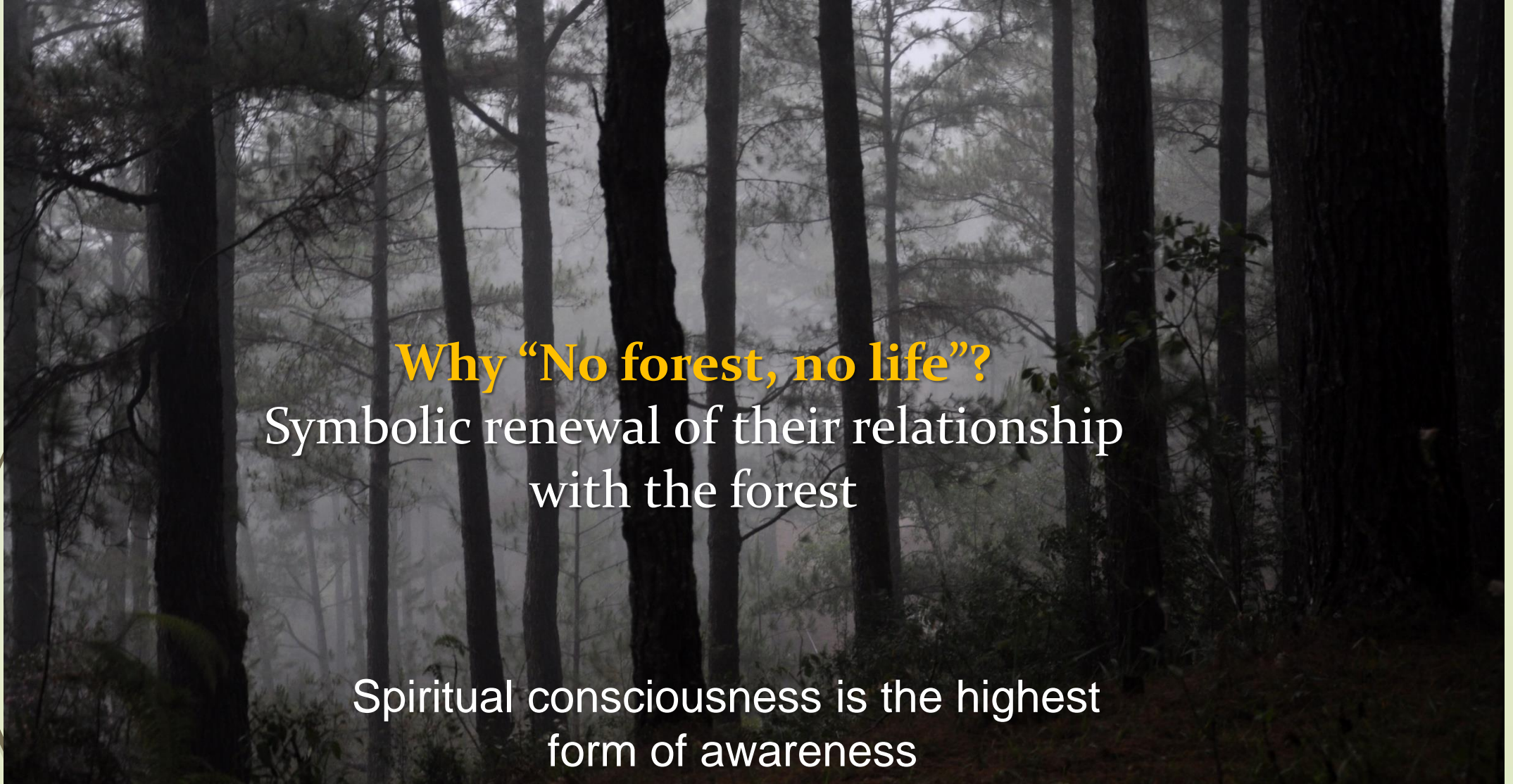
Why human rights and biodiversity conservation?

- You **can not protect the environment** without **protecting** the environmental defenders
- We have always **defended our land and nature** because they are in our hearts. And

“It is the source of our knowledge and livelihood;
it is the space from where freedom springs and secures
our lives”

- Violating our **sacred spaces** means **violating our right to spirituality, belief systems and wellbeing; How?**

Why human rights and biodiversity conservation?



Why “No forest, no life”?

Symbolic renewal of their relationship
with the forest

Spiritual consciousness is the highest
form of awareness

Umbilical cord tree





Conclusions and recommendations

- **Human rights, culture, spirituality and environment** are closely connected together and explains the deepest reaches of their **consciousness and values**.
 - This is the reason why **culture and human rights** must be made **pillars** in biodiversity conservation approaches.
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Conclusions and recommendations

➤ Fundamental issue:

- Basic human nature and need is to **Cultivate and nurture**
 - **Responsibility is the mirror image of Right**
- **Indigenous peoples are often the first casualties of development and conservation but:**
 - the last **to be heard**; the last **to be included**; the last **to be consulted**; and the last **to be compensated**.

It is time to put IPs, culture and human rights “first” in Post 2020 Vision & Action!