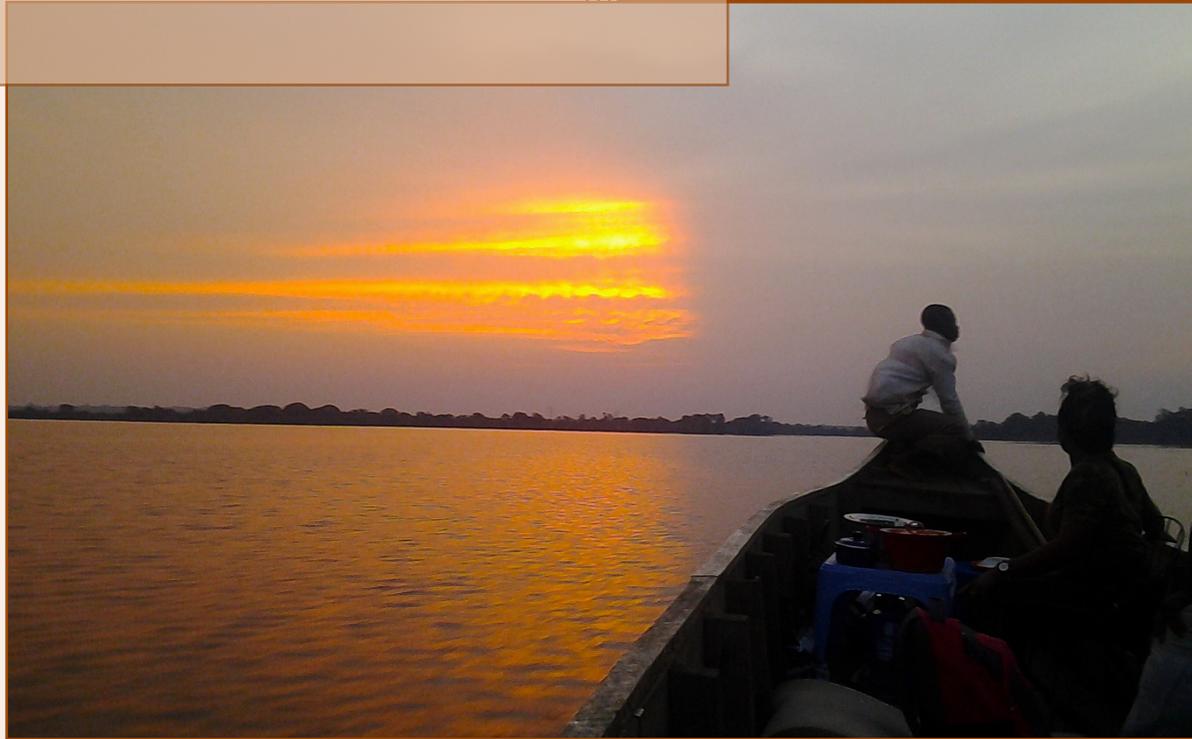


FPP E-Newsletter: April 2012



Forest
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Programme

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Cover photo: Sunset on Lac Mai Ndombe, Bandundu province, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) © John Nelson

Dear Friends,

The continuous, sometimes subtle, violence of conservation and development against indigenous peoples continues, unchecked even at the highest levels by the most worthy-sounding agencies of the United Nations.

As this newsletter reports, the [Global Environment Facility](#), the international mechanism of choice for helping developing countries meet their global obligations under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, is stumbling badly, adopting an out-dated policy on indigenous peoples designed to 'mitigate' impacts rather than respect rights already affirmed by the UN. Meanwhile, conservation organisations in Central Africa are paying lip service to a requirement to consult with indigenous peoples, before asking for international recognition of protected areas as [UNESCO](#)-recognised World Heritage Sites.

Now, indigenous peoples preparing for the [United Nations 20th anniversary of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development](#) express concern that a similar sham will be played out in Rio de Janeiro in June, where they fear a focus on the 'Green Economy' promises to do more to promote corporate ventures than ensure respect for their human rights. All this despite the fact that it is now nearly five years since the UN General Assembly agreed 'minimum standards' to protect indigenous peoples' rights and explicitly required United Nations bodies to 'promote respect for and full application of the provisions of' the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (citing Article 42).

And this is doubly anomalous when it is these same UN-derived standards that are being, slowly but surely, applied through national and local problem-solving processes. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples is working hard to remedy the problems of the [Teribe people of Costa Rica](#), who are facing forced resettlement from their territory due to the Diquís dam.

The so-called voluntary standards of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, which, consistent with the UN's human rights regime, require member companies to respect communities' customary rights and their right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), are helping the [Vai people of western Liberia](#) to enter into negotiations with the Malaysian transnational, Sime Darby, and seem to have encouraged the Liberian Government to rethink a policy of development at all costs and replace it with a rights-based approach to development. Let's hope that the [forest peoples of the Democratic Republic of Congo](#), whose lands carbon brokers are speculating on, can now ensure the same respect for their rights by companies like Wildlife Works Carbon, which ascribe to similar principles through the 'Verified Carbon Standard'.

We all know that so-called sustainable development only works if people's rights are respected. We need joined-up-thinking by the UN to make this real. The 'Rio +20' conference in June would be a good place to make this evident.

Marcus Colchester, Director

1. Liberia: Agri-business expansion threatens forests and local communities' livelihoods

Agri-business expansion in Africa is a major threat to the forests and livelihoods of African peoples. Where governance is weak and the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples are insecure, agricultural development is disadvantaging local people.

Awareness of the social and ecological impact of agri-business expansion in South East Asia has led to new standards for acceptable palm oil development. The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), a third-party voluntary certification process, has adopted a set of Principles and Criteria that is substantially consistent with a rights-based approach, and which seeks to divert palm oil expansion away from primary forests and areas of critical High Conservation Value (HCV) while prohibiting the takeover of customary lands without communities' Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Increasingly, adherence to the RSPO standard is becoming a requirement for access to the European market and major palm oil producing conglomerates seeking to maintain market share are now members of the RSPO.



Remains of an abandoned house in Sime Darby's palm oil plantation. A nearby well and remnants of sugar cane, banana plants and lime trees growing between the young oil palm trees evidence previous community use and occupation. © Tom Lomax

In early September 2011, a press conference by local communities in Grand Cape Mount, Liberia, denounced the take-over and destruction of their lands for palm oil development by the Malaysian conglomerate, Sime Darby. The local communities filed a formal complaint to the RSPO via Forest Peoples Programme and their chosen legal representative Green Advocates. In response,

Sime Darby froze its operations in the contested area and, through the RSPO secretariat, agreed to bilateral negotiations with the communities to resolve their differences.

In December 2011, Forest Peoples Programme facilitated a first meeting between the local communities and senior Sime Darby staff from Malaysia and Liberia, to explore ways of resolving these conflicts. The bilateral meeting made good progress in agreeing a process for resolving the land dispute. However, soon after this, negotiations between the communities and Sime Darby broke down following the Liberian Government's insistence that the communities should talk with them and not directly with the company.



Customary land cleared and planted with young oil palm trees without the free, prior and informed consent of the community. As well as land used for food and building materials, to the right of the photograph land has been cleared and planted on a village burial ground, and to the left (outside of frame), a substantial part of a sacred women's forest was also cleared and planted. © Tom Lomax

On 2 January 2012 the President of Liberia and various Ministers came to Grand Cape Mount to meet with communities, informing them that it was their duty not to obstruct Sime Darby and that they should not be misled by civil society organisations. But the communities still presented 14 issues that they wanted resolved. The communities' lawyer – Green Advocates' Alfred Brownell - explained the situation to the President, who appeared to say that the government had not agreed to the communities' land being cleared for palm oil development. The President then set up an inter-Ministerial committee headed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to resolve the issues through three sub-committees addressing compensation, water and land. The government reiterated that negotiations between Sime Darby and the communities could not go ahead, but should instead take place between the communities and the government.

Meanwhile, a letter purportedly coming from Sekou Belloe, one of the original signatories of the communities' complaint to the RSPO, was sent to the RSPO in order to withdraw the communities' complaint against Sime

Darby. Subsequent work in Liberia by FPP in February 2012 established that this letter had not been written by the communities nor authorised by them.

In early February 2012, FPP staff returned to Liberia to help communities move the RSPO process on and to ensure that Sime Darby responded to their complaints. FPP staff visited communities and discovered that their environment of forests and farms has been completely destroyed, bulldozed to bare earth by Sime Darby to plant cloned Malaysian oil palm trees. The compensation for destroying the communities' crops (there was no compensation for taking the land) was a pittance, or didn't materialise. As one community member pointed out:

“I had 334 trees but was only paid compensation for 134 trees. I was told if I don't accept this then I won't get anything. I had no choice. They didn't ask permission to take the land. They were only paying money per acre for people who had deeds for their land. Sime Darby said 'the government has given us the power to do this'. If we had the power to resist we would not have let them take the land.”



Balah shows what was formerly a running creek used by her and her village for fresh-water and fishing. Due to clearing, draining and in-filling by Sime Darby, the creek now lies stagnant, risking the spread of water-borne diseases. Balah's family farm land has also been lost to Sime Darby's plantation without their free, prior and informed consent, and she now has to walk many hours to find land on which to grow food. © Tom Lomax

Local people had been misinformed as to the extent of destruction that would take place, and they had also been led to believe that there would be a palm oil plantation but they would still have their farms. There was no opportunity to say 'no' to the process: it was a question of taking the compensation and having one's land destroyed, or not taking the compensation and having one's land destroyed.

FPP sought to help break the deadlock by holding

meetings with Sime Darby, Liberian government ministries, community support organisations such as Green Advocates and the Sustainable Development Institute (SDI, Liberia), and with the communities themselves. As a consequence of this, plus parallel meetings between FPP's Director and Sime Darby staff in Malaysia, an [op-ed article](#) in the New York Times by SDI's Silas Siakor, and negotiations by Alfred Brownell of Green Advocates, significant changes are underway, especially to the government's own management of this situation.



Banner created by communities of Grand Cape Mount in protest at the loss of their customary land to Sime Darby without their free, prior and informed consent. © Justin Kenrick

The Liberian Land Commission has now replaced the Ministry of Internal Affairs as the part of government leading on the issues. The Land Commission has not only promised to ensure that communities who have lost their land in Grand Cape Mount have their land demarcated and their land issues resolved, but has also announced a major reorientation in how it addresses oil palm development projects in Liberia. While future concessions will be frozen, the Commission will seek to regularise 'tribal' lands in the area of the concession handed to Sime Darby before the company expands further and to resolve the land issues in favour of the communities in the disputed area of Grand Cape Mount. If this course of action is pursued then the communities and their civil society partners' complaints will indeed have been heard and acted on. Both the company and the communities have asked FPP to help facilitate further discussion between them if this is needed.

We will all be watching to see if the Government's commitment to action is fulfilled, or if further assistance is needed. In the meantime we applaud the Land Commission's commitment to resolve these issues in a way which respects communities' rights, can ensure the company retains its RSPO certification, and demonstrates that the Government is committed to ensuring the well-being of its citizens.

2. Costa Rica: UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples follows-up on progress regarding the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples affected by the proposed Diquís Dam

Professor James Anaya, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples, visited Costa Rica from 23-27 March 2012 on an official mission to hold meetings with indigenous peoples' representatives and members of communities affected by the proposed Diquís Dam, State representatives, and UN staff. His visit included meetings in six different indigenous territories where indigenous peoples from Boruca, Cabagra, China Kichá, Curré, Salitre, La Casona, Térraba, and Ujarrás participated.



UN Special Rapporteur addressing community members in Boruca. Next to him is Jose Carlos Morales from EMRIP, UN country Director, UNESCO Director and members of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights © Alancay Morales Garro

His visit is considered by many as an historic step towards advancing the recognition and respect of indigenous peoples' rights in Costa Rica. Last year Professor Anaya received a positive response from the State and indigenous peoples on the observations and recommendations he made in relation to the proposed Diquís dam and the affected indigenous peoples.

Challenges lie ahead since there are very few examples of the adequate implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples to effectively participate in decision-making on large-scale projects, in particular with regards to their right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).

Professor Anaya's visit to Costa Rica coincided with a time of racist clashes affecting the Teribe, one of the indigenous peoples most affected by the proposed Diquís Dam. One month earlier there had been unprecedented violent attacks on Teribe community members who were holding a one-week protest calling for their right to education to be properly recognised: notably the right to an adequate education that responds to their traditions and customs. The violent attacks, perpetrated mainly by non-indigenous persons who are illegally settled in the Teribe territory, together with some Teribe, resulted in over 10 people being seriously injured. Following these protests the Ministry of Education made an agreement to urgently address the Teribe's demands regarding their right to education, with most of this agreement being already implemented.

Many challenges lie ahead in the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights in Costa Rica. Among the main issues addressed at the meeting between the State and indigenous representatives, (facilitated by the UN Special Rapporteur and José Carlos Morales, member of the UN Human Rights Council Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP)), were land tenure, (up to 98% of territories are illegally occupied by non-indigenous peoples) indigenous peoples' distrust of the State due to past acts and omissions that have resulted in their fundamental rights being harshly undermined, and issues that have been raised and recognised by international human rights bodies such as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples himself.

The UN Special Rapporteur said, "I consider that this first meeting has represented an important step for opening a space for an eventual dialogue. All parties have agreed that it is necessary to take specific measures to create an atmosphere of trust that allows an adequate consultation process."¹

1 <http://unsr.jamesanaya.org/statements/consulta-a-pueblos-indigenas-de-costa-rica-puede-ser-una-oportunidad-y-buen-ejemplo-para-otros-paises-afirma-relator-especial-de-la-onu-sobre-derechos-de-los-pueblos-indigenas>

3. Report by CEFAID questions the validity of the consultations in Cameroon for the World Heritage Site nomination of the Tri-National de la Sangha (TNS) protected area

The Tri-National de la Sangha (TNS) is a protected area with a landscape approach spanning three countries: Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR) and the Republic of Congo. In 2010, the three countries jointly nominated the area as a UNESCO World Heritage site. This nomination was considered by the World Heritage Committee in June 2011.

IUCN, as the World Heritage Committee's Advisory Body responsible for evaluating the proposal, recommended that the nomination of the TNS be deferred - IUCN considered a substantial revision and subsequent full re-evaluation of the proposal necessary. Instead, the [Committee's](#) decision taken in June 2011 was to refer the proposal, meaning that only some additional information (rather than a substantial revision) would be required and that the nomination could be resubmitted in 2012. The reasons that the World Heritage Committee gave for not approving the original nomination included the lack of consultation with the indigenous peoples and local communities affected by the TNS. This had been one of the key sticking points raised in IUCN's evaluation and one of the objections in a [statement](#) made by a large number of indigenous peoples' organisations and NGOs. Indeed, when FPP visited the Central African Republic part of the TNS in October 2011 it was discovered that indigenous peoples had never heard of the World Heritage Site nomination. The World Heritage Committee also requested the States parties to "Evaluate the potential application of cultural criteria to the nominated property (i.e. nomination as a mixed property), taking into account the rich indigenous cultural heritage of the area".

Following the Committee decision, the authorities involved in governing the TNS, which include WWF and the governments of the three countries, resubmitted the nomination on 1 February 2012 rather than waiting any longer. Consultations with some indigenous communities in CAR and Cameroon took place during January 2012.

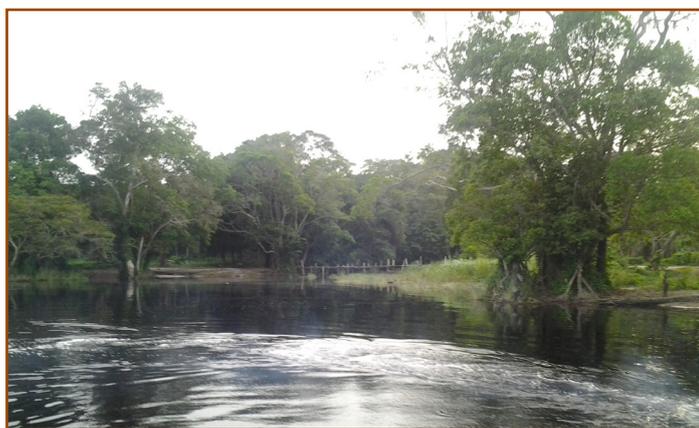
FPP has not yet assessed the quality of the consultation in the TNS but our partner Centre pour l'Education, la Formation et l'Appui aux Initiatives de Développement au Cameroun (CEFAID) was invited to follow the consultations in Cameroon. CEFAID [found](#) that the consultations were entirely inadequate and were carried out at the very last minute, just before the nomination document was resubmitted to the World Heritage Committee. It even appears that some of the consultation meetings were held after the submission was handed in. Therefore, it is clear that it would have been very difficult to take into account any comments from the communities in the final submission. Seven meetings were planned each day, which could not allow sufficient time for information and consultation and some of the meetings were very brief (under thirty minutes). Information given during the meetings was insufficient and did not include an explanation of the potential risks of World Heritage Site inscription for indigenous peoples and local communities.

Furthermore, most of the communities living in the TNS were not consulted and large areas were not visited by the consultation team. It seems that before the consultations were carried out, the authorities decided against renominating the property as a mixed site (which would have enabled taking into account the rich indigenous cultural heritage of the area) so that the option for a renomination as a mixed site was not presented as an option during the consultations in Cameroon and CAR.

The [CEFAID report](#) raises serious concerns about the validity of the World Heritage Site consultations in Cameroon and raises questions about the effectiveness of the consultations in the two other countries that are part of the TNS. The findings of the report indicate that the involvement and representation of local and indigenous communities in the nomination process and future management, as requested by the World Heritage Committee, has not been satisfactory. FPP and partners will be watching closely to see whether the World Heritage Committee accepts the revised nomination of the TNS and whether the managers of the protected areas increase the involvement of indigenous communities in their management over the next few months.

4. Carbon Concessions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Neglect Communities

In 2011 the private Canadian company Ecosystem Restoration Associates (ERA) signed a management contract with the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for a former logging concession of almost 300,000 hectares that adjoins the western reaches of Lac Mai Ndombe in Bandundu Province. Carbon trading and the generation of carbon credits through forest preservation and enhancement is the main objective of the ERA project. As part of our global project targeting support to communities in REDD pilot areas, and in the [DRC](#), in March 2012, Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) and Cercle pour la defense de l'environnement (CEDEN) staff travelled to the region where we held meetings with the customary leaders from 6 communities living inside the ERA concession area. The objective of these meetings was to find out what was happening on the ground, and the extent to which communities were informed about goals, objectives and *modus operandi* of ERA staff.



The ERA Carbon concession overlaps extensive forests overlapping the customary territories of many communities. © John Nelson

Some of the communities we spoke to had been directly targeted by ERA, in that they had received some visits from ERA staff and local government authorities, including the Minister of the Environment. The communities reported that they had been told that the project had arrived, and that they were promised some new schools, but they were not asked if they wanted to participate, nor were they told about the potential impact of the project on their customary rights and control over their lands. Communities still do not know what ERA

research teams are doing in their forests and at least one community has flatly refused to collaborate in the ERA scheme.

It was also reported to us that while carbon credits had been mentioned during some of the preliminary meetings with ERA staff, none of the communities had been informed about what the carbon market actually is, or how it works. They were told simply that the project would generate carbon credits and that they would benefit from this. The communities were not told that ERA had licensed the rights over the entire 300,000 hectare concession and were therefore charged with the management of the entire area. They had also not been told what would happen to the management of their customary areas covering both forest and farmlands across the concession, even though we estimate that *at least* one third to one half of the ERA concession overlaps local communities' customary territories. Communities were not informed of the scale of profit that ERA might be able to achieve by taking over the communities' forest, nor were they told what proportion of this profit would be shared with them. This is not in line with the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

The outcome of our visit to the region was that local communities from across the ERA project area requested to collaborate with FPP and CEDEN in order to: secure additional and impartial information on the ERA project targeting their customary lands; to become informed of their legal and human rights, and to find out about the potential impacts of carbon projects on community land tenure. The communities asked FPP to advise and support them if and when contracts were offered to them (this has already been mentioned to some of them by ERA staff), and to generally support them to engage with the project at all levels.

After our visit we arrived back in Kinshasa to discover, from a [press release](#) targeting stock market investors, that ERA had signed a deal with Wildlife Works (another carbon credit trader based in Kenya) and that ERA was boasting about the amount of carbon credits contained in their concession in the DRC. We look forward to sharing this press release with the communities from that area – they will be very interested to hear how much the carbon in their forest is worth.

5. Indigenous peoples call on Global Environment Facility to honour its commitments

Indigenous peoples' organisations have long called on the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as major global finance institution providing funding for government environmental projects and programmes, to adopt a specific policy on indigenous peoples in line with international standards. In October 2010, the GEF CEO, Monique Barbut, finally announced that the GEF would develop its own set of safeguard standards and would address the specific concerns of indigenous peoples ([FPP E-news, October 2011](#)).

After a somewhat rushed process with limited participation, in November 2011 the GEF adopted a set of minimum safeguard standards on social and environmental assessment, involuntary resettlement, natural habitats and indigenous peoples ([FPP E-news October 2011](#)). However, the final minimum standards approved by the GEF Council have been sharply criticised by indigenous peoples' organisations for being based on outdated World Bank policies, and for restricting the GEF commitment to respect free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) only to those countries that have ratified ILO Convention 169.

"There is no justification for restricting FPIC only to ILO 169 countries as these states have to implement FPIC anyway," said Minnie Degawan, of the Kankanaey people (Philippines), and member of the Indigenous Peoples Task Force (IPTF) to the GEF. "FPIC is a right of all indigenous peoples established under international law, and this is the current level of international understanding and consensus, as exemplified in other intergovernmental institutional policies on indigenous peoples like those used by UN agencies and international financial institutions such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)".

Meanwhile, GEF action to address indigenous peoples' concerns as a specific issue made some progress in 2011 with the formation of an Indigenous Peoples Task Force (IPTF) on the GEF, which developed an Issues Paper with detailed recommendations on essential elements for an effective rights-based GEF policy on Indigenous Peoples. The Issues Paper was duly submitted to the GEF for their consideration in the summer of 2011.

At the beginning of 2012, indigenous leaders and

organisations have been disappointed on the release of GEF's draft "Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples in GEF Projects and Processes", which has disregarded most of the recommendations made in the IPTF Issues Paper as well as recommendations made in Indigenous peoples' statements over the past decade (e.g. at the GEF Council and in Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) meetings).

Indigenous leaders have expressed concerns that the draft guidance has downgraded GEF action from formulating a *policy* to the compilation of non-binding *guidelines* that would be approved by the GEF CEO without adoption by the GEF Council. The GEF admits that the guidelines would only be 'supplementary' and 'additional information to explain or implement a particular policy' (in this case, the defective minimum standards safeguard policy and out-of-date existing GEF policies).

Despite IPTF recommendations on the improvements needed to make the draft guidelines useful, the second draft released in mid-March still suffers from numerous defects. Remaining problems include ambiguous and weak language on rights, offensive treatment of FPIC and repeated linkages to defective provisions in the GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards. Indigenous peoples are especially disillusioned that the draft guidelines do not contain more explicit recognition of indigenous peoples' rights and have used optional and qualifying language, even though the guidance is non-binding.

Statement calls for greater GEF recognition of indigenous peoples' rights:

At the end of March, the Asian Indigenous Peoples' Caucus issued a statement expressing serious concerns about the GEF policy process. The statement, which has been endorsed by over 20 organisations from Asia and Russia, affirms that any interim GEF guidance on indigenous peoples must, as a minimum, include provisions that fully recognise indigenous peoples' rights protected under international law and in related international instruments, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It also makes it clear that indigenous peoples in Asia expect the GEF to honour its commitments to develop a specific policy on indigenous peoples, which must require that indigenous peoples' rights are respected in all GEF-financed activities that may directly or indirectly affect their rights, lands, resources, livelihoods and interests in general.

Further information:

GEF Council to adopt revised Environmental and Social Safeguards in November, FPP E-news, October 2011

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/global-environment-facility-gef/news/2011/10/gef-council-adopt-revised-environmental-and-social>

Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: an opportunity to influence GEF policy, FPP E-news, July 2011

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/global-environment-facility-gef/news/2011/07/implementing-un-declaration-rights-indigenous-pe>

Input into the proposed Global Environment Facility environmental and social safeguards, FPP E-news, July 2011

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/global-environment-facility-gef/news/2011/07/input-global-environment-facility-environmental>

Global Environment Facility finally plans to adopt social safeguards, FPP E-news, December 2010

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/environmental-governance/news/2010/12/global-environment-facility-finally-plans-adopt-social>

Indigenous peoples' participation in the decisions and policy-making of the GEF (2007), Forest Peoples Programme, Moreton-in-Marsh <http://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/publication/2010/08/gefandiparticipationjun07eng.pdf>

A desk-based review of the treatment of indigenous peoples' and social issues in large and medium-sized GEF biodiversity projects (2005-2006), Forest Peoples Programme, Moreton-in-Marsh

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/publication/2010/08/gefbioprojreviewfeb07eng.pdf>

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its Local Benefits Study - A critique (2006), Forest Peoples Programme, Moreton-in-Marsh,

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/publication/2010/08/fppgefbriefingaug06eng.pdf>

Indigenous Peoples and the GEF (2005), Forest Peoples Programme, Moreton-in-Marsh

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/publication/2010/08/gefstudyjan05eng.pdf>

6. RIO+20 Conference might promote green economy and development at the expense of human rights and environmental justice - Parallel events will highlight demands and contribution of Indigenous Peoples

The UN Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio+20, is aimed at ensuring full implementation of international commitments on environment and social development. However, there are concerns that it will neglect the urgent need to respect indigenous peoples' rights, traditional knowledge and self-determined development.

Government ministers and non-governmental delegates from all over the world will gather in June in Rio for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio+20. The conference is taking place 20 years after the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was held in Rio and will aim, among other objectives, to assess the state of implementation of the three Conventions adopted at UNCED: the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Desertification (UNCCD).

Participants will also negotiate institutional reforms aimed at ensuring more consistent and holistic actions on global environmental and development issues, thereby striving to take into equal account social, economic and environmental imperatives. The leitmotiv of this conference, however, is the so-called "Green Economy" and governments will spend time at RIO+20 discussing its meaning, definition, principles and purpose. They also plan to secure intergovernmental consensus on actions needed for a "global transition" to a green economy for sustainable development. Some observers consider this merely as an opportunity to seek market solutions in favour of the private sector, rather than a commitment to support a transition to a socially just and ecologically healthy model.

A draft negotiating document, the so-called "Zero draft",

is being discussed in monthly meetings in New York. The document falls short of defining clear binding targets and actions for governments and the private sector alike, nor does it identify the need to adopt binding rules for the latter. To make matters worse, key elements, such as a “rights-based” approach to development and social and environmental matters, risk getting lost among diverging governmental agendas. Commitments to tackle cross-sectoral issues, such as economic justice and a thorough reform of the financial system risk the same fate.



IP Caucus discussing with Japan delegation the IP Key Message on the cultural pillar © Tebtebba

Prior to the conference, from June 16-19 2012, Indigenous Peoples will convene a “*Global Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Self-determined and Sustainable Development*”. Parallel to the official Rio+20 event, civil society organisations and social movements will gather under the umbrella of the “*Summit of the Peoples for Social and Environmental Justice and in Defense of the Commons*”; there will be an Indigenous Peoples’ Pavillion 19-22 June 2012; and a public space (proposed by South-American and Central American Indigenous Peoples “*Acampamento Tierra Libre por el Buen Vivir y la Vida Plena*”) to share experiences of sustainable environmental conservation and natural resource management practices based on traditional knowledge and livelihoods. The linkage between territorial rights and truly sustainable paradigms will be highlighted, as well as the urgency to secure a strong rights-based anchor to any programme or platform that will ensue from Rio.

It should be underlined that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the key author of the [report](#) on the “Green Economy” produced for the Rio+20 summit, sees forests as a key pillar of green economy, through support of Payment for Environmental Services (PES) schemes and programmes and projects for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) as a “catalyst” for greening the forest sector. Nevertheless, UNEP does not mention indigenous peoples’ rights to land, territories and

resources, nor highly relevant international obligations and standards, such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).



IP Caucus Meeting during the Intersessional © Tebtebba

Recognition of the UNDRIP is a key demand of indigenous peoples for Rio+20. In their statements and submissions to the Zero Draft, Indigenous Peoples’ Organisations have repeatedly highlighted 5 key priorities that governments and UN agencies will have to take into due account:

- UNDRIP must be the key international standard and framework for sustainable development;
- Indigenous peoples’ culture will have to be added to the three traditional “pillars” of sustainable development;
- Indigenous peoples’ rights to land, territories and resources should be respected and protected;
- The contribution of traditional knowledge should be respected, valued and included; and
- Diverse local economies should be acknowledged with the “Green Economy” supporting an holistic framework to self-determined development.

Forest Peoples Programme will be in Rio to support a delegation of indigenous peoples to participate in the Global Indigenous Peoples’ Conference, parallel events and official negotiations.

For further information please visit:

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/tags/rio20-untied-nations-conference-sustainable-development>

<http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.html>

<http://www.tebtebba.org/index.php/content/200-indigenous-peoples-and-rio-20>

<http://rio20.net/en/>

http://www.unep.org/pdf/PressReleases/UNEP-ForestsGreenEco-basse_def_version_normale.pdf

<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=659&ArticleID=6902&l=en>

http://www.un-redd.org/REDD_and_Green_Economy/tabid/55607/Default.aspx
