

Community Conservation Efforts of Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities



There is growing recognition in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) of alternative non-market-based approaches that address rights, governance and ownership, and traditional knowledge and customary uses of biodiversity.

There is an increasing consensus that appropriate recognition and support for Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCAs) and other community conservation initiatives are one of the most effective and equitable non-market-based approaches to motivate women and men on the ground to conserve and restore forests and other ecosystems. Key factors in the success of such initiatives include strong community leadership, agency, capacity, effective participation of women, traditional knowledge and practices, and confidence to advocate for themselves.

To be able to address these diverse and complex dimensions for biodiversity conservation, it should be further taken into the context of the 2030 Development Agenda. First there is a need to acknowledge and address realities of governance and land and resource tenure and embed a human rights approach to improving such dynamics, as recommended by the 2030 Development Agenda. The ambitious aspiration of "leaving no one behind" should be the focus in holistic policy approaches to biodiversity conservation, poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Acronyms	
BMNP	Bale Mountains National Park
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBMIS	Community-based monitoring and information systems
CCRI	Community Conservation Resilience Initiative
CENESTA	Centre for Sustainable Development and Environment
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GFC	Global Forest Coalition
ICCAs	Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Territories and Areas
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NIPS	Network for the Indigenous Peoples - Solomons
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

C



Sacred Sites : Playing An Integral Part In Biodiversity Conservation

In the Solomon Islands, an estimated 85-90% of biodiversity is located within IPLCs' territories and areas. The Bae abu' sacred burial sites cover an area of about half of a square kilometre each and are regarded as so sacred that the ecosystems are left undisturbed for many years. There are about four Bae abu' owned by the main tribes of Sulufou and Fera Subua. Each performs the important function of preserving traditional shrines, artifacts and burial sites, and at the same time, conserving the ecosystems within them. NIPS is working with the communities in developing community-specific strategies to address biodiversity loss and engaging with the national government to endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and incorporating the Declaration's key provisions into national legislation.

Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

1. Appropriate legal, policy and other forms of recognition at (sub-)national levels could help address conflicts and gaps between laws and their implementing agencies, and provide secure tenure through land and natural resource laws.
2. Recognise and respect IPLCs' decisions to provide or withhold free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) in situations concerning protected areas; and assess the situation of protected area governance and scope for recognition of the full diversity of ICCAs and other community conservation initiatives within or outside of the protected area network, including recognition and respect for ICCAs as a means to implement UNDRIP and human rights treaties.

11 Sacred sites under community governance are widespread across the world, and provide crucial cultural, psychological and well-being benefits.

11 The biodiversity in territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities tends to be sustained by their relatively autonomous and customary food and energy production and consumption systems.

A



Recognising Collective Contributions of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

The Community Conservation Resilience Initiative (CCRI) is an informal alliance of national and international Indigenous Peoples' organisations, NGOs and social movements and aimed to contribute to the implementation of the CBD Aichi Targets by providing policy advice on effective and appropriate forms of support for community conservation and restoration initiatives. So far, communities have undertaken 33 participatory assessments of the resilience of their own conservation initiatives. Such initiatives play an important role in biodiversity conservation. However, their resilience is undermined by internal and external threats such as the expansion of monoculture plantations and extractive industries.

Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

1. Further recognise and support community stewardship, governance and rights-based approaches to biodiversity conservation and realise the collective contributions of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to achieving the CBD and all 20 Aichi Targets, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
2. It is particularly important to understand and support the unique roles, rights, needs and aspirations of women and youth.

15 Documentation and review of bottom-up, participatory assessments in more than 33 countries of the resilience of community conservation initiatives.

15 Awareness raising and strengthening inclusion of women in community conservation initiatives.

15 Support for intergenerational transfer of knowledge with and among the youth.

B



Weaving of Knowledge : Scientific and Traditional

The Bale Mountains National Park (BMNP) in Ethiopia is at the core of the Bale Mountains. The park was established in the late 1960s and covers approximately 2,200 km². MELCA - Ethiopia has been working on bicultural diversity and promoting intergenerational learning, strengthening community ownership of sacred natural sites and community conserved areas using methodologies including participatory mapping. In Dinsho District, this has paved the path for awareness raising and putting in place strategies for biodiversity conservation. Within the communities there are custodians who take responsibility for the sacred sites; these custodians have a variety of local titles, including wembera, kalu, boku and bahira. Individuals carrying the title wembera are responsible for mobilizing the communities to conserve their sacred sites and creating a sense of ownership. The community members recognise and respect the custodians and their guidance is widely accepted.

Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

1. Biodiversity conservation and community empowerment are closely linked to secure land and resource tenure, which in turn greatly affect the social, cultural, political, economic, and other aspects of communities.
2. Demarcation of IPLCs' lands and territories should be supported and fully recognized as that would further empower communities to assert self-governance and stewardship of those areas.
3. Existing international human rights and environmental agreements that recognise the value of ICCAs and sacred sites should be implemented in practice with the full and effective participation of the peoples and communities concerned. This includes protection against and redress for any violations of human rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights, especially Indigenous and environmental defenders.

15 Increasing documentation, research and database support for identifying ICCAs.

15 Social recognition and support being given to facilitate public awareness of ICCAs and community conservation and their various values (e.g. through mass media) in local or national languages; provide platforms of public recognition, such as at relevant workshops, festivals, and celebrations.

15 Building network of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to synergise their struggles and initiatives, learn from each other, and provide a united front for advocacy at national, regional and internal levels.



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D



Migration: A Conservation And Adaptation Strategy to Mitigate Climate Change

In Iran, the Abolhassani Indigenous Nomadic Tribal Confederacy is located in the extremely dry area of Southeast Semnan Province. It is enclosed within a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and part of a mosaic of protected areas. The Abolhassani have demonstrated remarkable resilience to drought through both indigenous knowledge and innovative solutions by incorporating limited agricultural opportunities to their mainstay of herding. The efforts of the community have also ensured healthy pastures and forests with an abundance of endangered and/or rare plant and animal species. CENESTA in collaboration with the communities, put together comprehensive community determined indicators to assist them to review and access their own initiatives.

Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

1. Recognise ICCAs and other community conservation initiatives as effective, holistic non-market-based approaches for climate change mitigation and adaptation and offer appropriate legal, political, social, economic and other forms of support rather than results-based payments.
2. Promote comprehensive and participatory reporting on community conservation initiatives and other land use actions, taking into account their multiple benefits and values rather than using flawed carbon accounting methodologies.
3. Explicitly exclude monoculture tree plantations, intensive livestock farming and other environmentally and socially destructive industries and practices from climate finance schemes.

15 Recognising the traditional knowledge systems and customary sustainable uses of biodiversity such as nomadic pastoralism as contributing to livelihood security and ecosystem connectivity and resilience.

15 Recognising that women often take leadership roles in ensuring their families and communities are resilient to climate change and the risk of disasters.

15 Traditional knowledge systems and practices are vital to monitoring, predicting and adapting to change.

15 Recognising that ICCAs often include multiple ecosystems, particularly in the context of nomadism. Migration is a conservation and adaptation strategy for many indigenous nomads, who traverse great distances and altitudes in accordance with seasons to which they are intimately attuned.

E



Tagal: A Community Stewardship System for Traditional Fisheries Protection

In Sabah, Malaysia, the Department of Fisheries has endorsed the indigenous management system, Tagal, for maintaining the productivity of riverine fisheries, and enabling recovery in areas affected by extensive logging and destructive fishing methods. Wherever Tagal is enforced, no fishing is allowed for a length of time at designated areas and, when the prohibition is lifted, the catch is shared equally amongst members of the community. By 2012, the number of Tagal areas established in Sabah had multiplied to 212 involving 107 rivers in eleven districts. To aid in the management of resources, PACOS support communities to prepare community resource maps.

Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

1. In the development and application of methodologies, such as community protocols and CBMIS, it is important that Indigenous peoples and local communities are fully involved in the process for assessing their collective actions.
2. Recognise and support ICCAs, community protocols and CBMIS in national and sub-national action plans, schemes, and programs related to environment, development and social welfare, especially in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and national indicators for the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Sustainable Development Goals.
3. Financial, technical and development support including provide training and capacity enhancement for technical aspects such as management, accounting, ecological restoration, mapping, research and documentation, wherever possible building on local and traditional knowledge.

18 Use of community protocols in several communities as a set of clear terms and conditions regulating access to the knowledge and resources of an indigenous people or local community.

18 Development and use of Community-Based monitoring and information Systems (CBMIS) that are being developed by indigenous peoples and local communities based on their own monitoring needs, which are used for monitoring the indicators for traditional knowledge under the Convention.

18 Growing recognition of the roles, rights, needs and aspirations of women and youth and enhancing their leadership and decision-making capacities.

AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS STRATEGIC GOALS

A

Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across governance and society

- 1** Target 1: By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.
- 2** Target 2: By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.
- 3** Target 3: By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio economic conditions.
- 4** Target 4: By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

B

Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use

- 5** Target 5: By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.
- 6** Target 6: By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.
- 7** Target 7: By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.
- 8** Target 8: By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.
- 9** Target 9: By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.
- 10** Target 10: By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.

C

To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity

- 11** Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.
- 12** Target 12: By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.
- 13** Target 13: By 2020, the genetic diversity of cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and of wild relatives, including other socio-economically as well as culturally valuable species, is maintained, and strategies have been developed and implemented for minimizing genetic erosion and safeguarding their genetic diversity.

D

Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services

- 14** Target 14: By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.
- 15** Target 15: By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.
- 16** Target 16: By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation.

E

Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building

- 17** Target 17: By 2015 each Party has developed, adopted as a policy instrument, and has commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan.
- 18** Target 18: By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.
- 19** Target 19: By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.
- 20** Target 20: By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 from all sources, and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization, should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties.