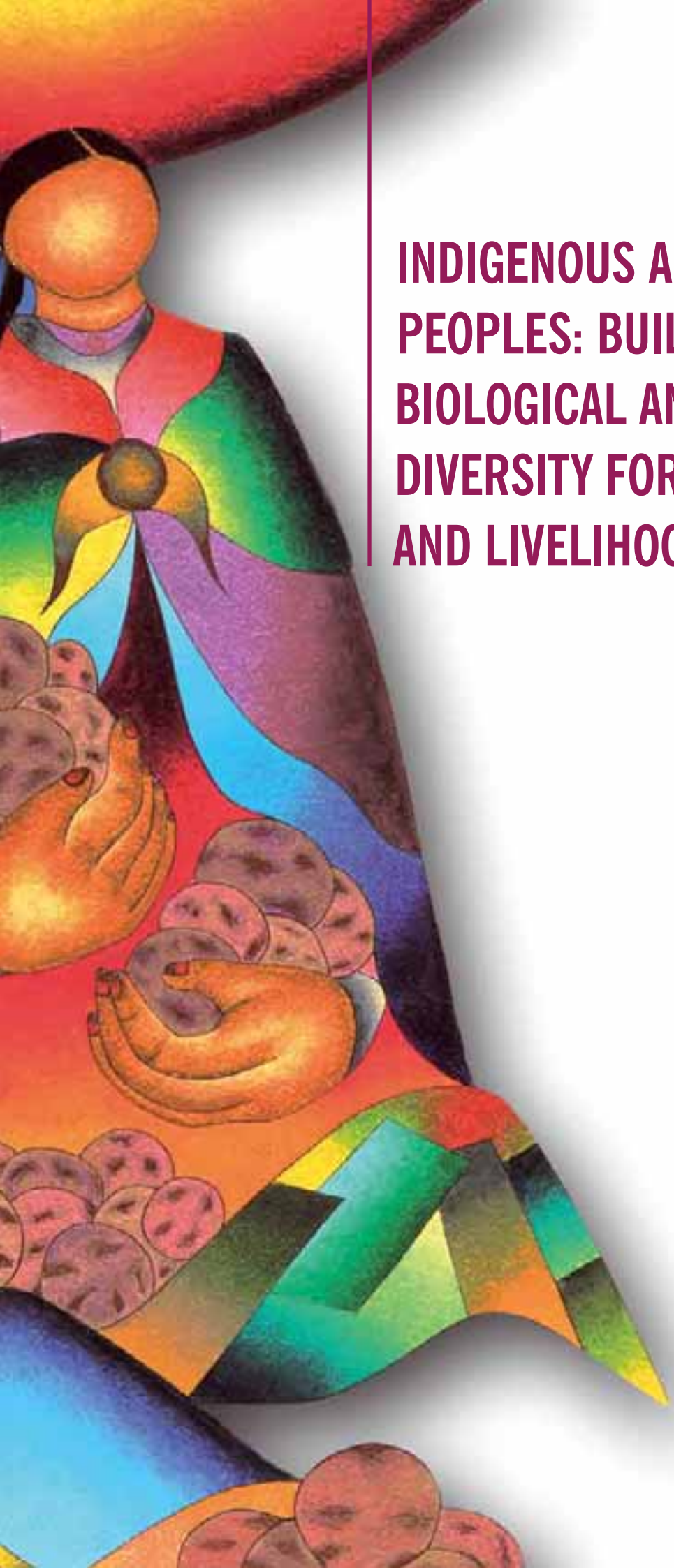
INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL PEOPLES: BUILDING ON BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY FOR FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD SECURITY



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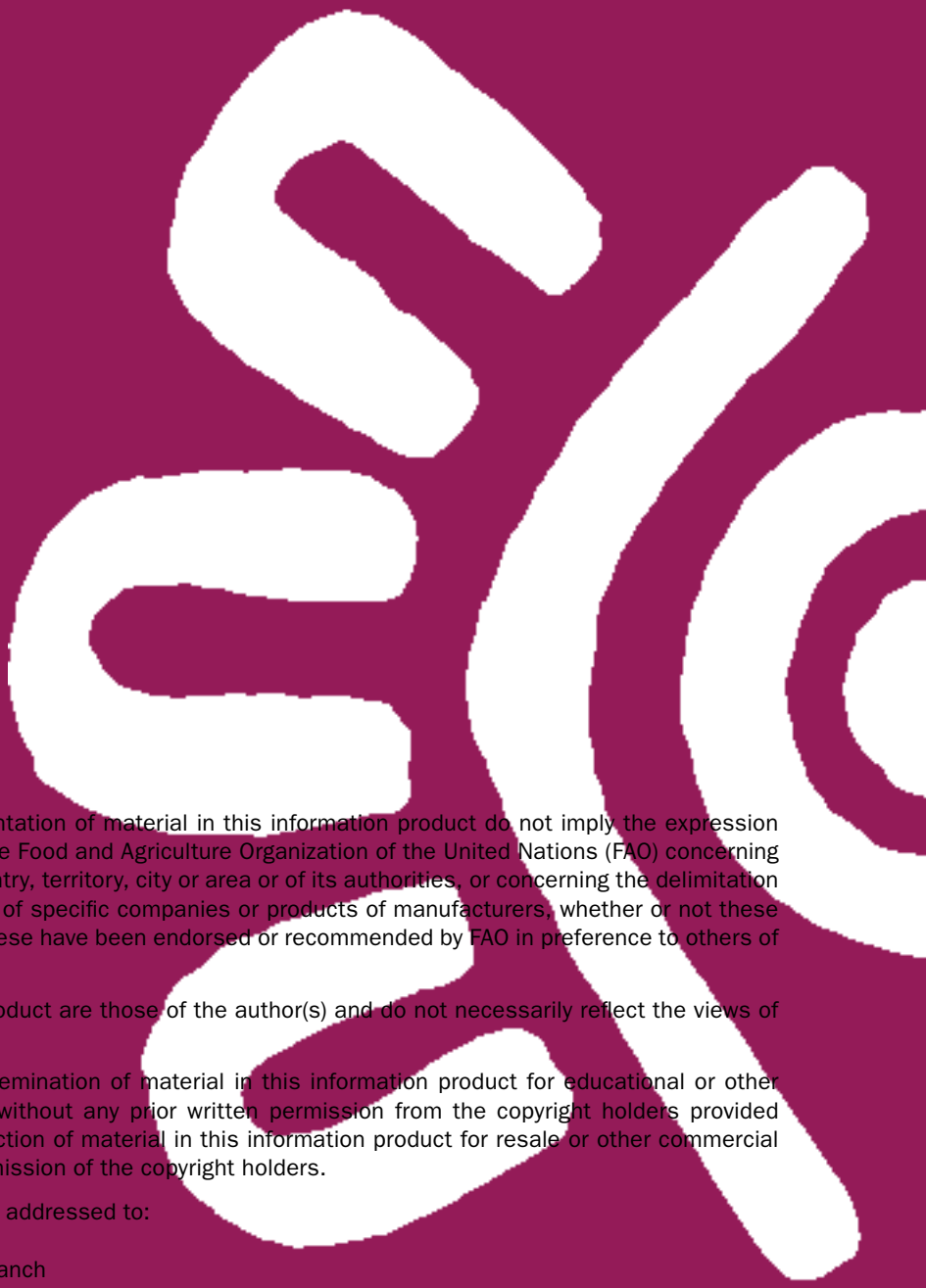

Photos: © FAO
Cover artwork by artist Roberto Mamani Mamani entitled “Vendiendo papas y lunas”

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ACRONYMS

CGRFA	Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
CIDOB	Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia
CINE	Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment
CULT	Savings and Credit Union of Thailand
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
FAORAP	FAO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
GIAHS	Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems
IASG	Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IITC	International Indian Treaty Council
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITPGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
K-Net	Keewaytinook Okimakanak Organization
LinKS	Local, indigenous Knowledge Systems project
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDG-F	Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organization
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SARD	Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development
TECA	Technology for Agriculture
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization
UNHABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
WTO	World Trade Organization

FOREWORD

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) seeks to improve the conditions of people who suffer from food insecurity. Poverty, socio-political difficulties and environmental degradation are only some of the many issues which influence peoples' ability to secure an adequate livelihood. FAO's focus is on rural areas since most of the world's poor live in marginal rural environments and are dependent on agriculture for their daily needs.[1] Indigenous peoples are an undeniable part of this discussion. As mostly rural residents, they are greatly affected by economic hardships and the loss of biological diversity. At the same time, they have historically suffered from political-economic marginalization, social prejudice, or even indifference on the part of dominant social actors, all of which have contributed to significant adversity and cultural erosion. Together, biological and cultural diversity underpin indigenous peoples' livelihoods, and their passing is a serious matter. At the same time, the loss of indigenous culture will bring with it the disappearance of important knowledge about the environment. Biological and cultural wealth is in many ways integral for food and livelihood security, and it is in this vein that FAO's work on indigenous issues is acquiring greater attention.

This publication has been prepared by FAO to acknowledge the importance of working with indigenous peoples and to raise more awareness about their needs and claims. It discusses the main issues which affect indigenous peoples and outlines some of FAO's efforts to respond to their development concerns as expressed through both human and environmental dimensions. Although it puts much emphasis on the difficult conditions in which many indigenous peoples live, it also draws attention to the resourcefulness and ingenuity which characterize indigenous individuals and communities. The art-work displayed in these pages accompanies the text as a simple but effective way to demonstrate how important the link between cultural and biological diversity is, and how deeply it is reflected through indigenous peoples' every-day life.

At the international level, the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the General Assembly in September 2007 is an extremely valuable achievement for the protection of indigenous peoples. FAO takes the Declaration very seriously and is determined to address it to the best of its ability. FAO's work on indigenous issues is indeed part of a wider movement which is committed to bettering the lives of indigenous populations around the world. In collaboration with other agencies, governments, and institutions such as the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, FAO contributes its technical and policy expertise in the areas most related to its mandate. As members of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, for example, FAO and others are

[1] Agriculture is considered in its broadest sense, including crop production, forestry, fisheries, livestock, and other dimensions of food security and rural development.

part of an institutional support mechanism which aims to facilitate dialogue between indigenous representatives and the international community. Joint efforts of this kind offer the most promising way to achieve rural development and hunger alleviation goals.

By clarifying key issues and opportunities in FAO's engagement with indigenous peoples, we hope that this publication will generate more understanding so that FAO staff and others are in a better position to address indigenous peoples' development challenges and improve food and livelihood security more generally.

Hafez Ghanem

Assistant Director General,
Economic and Social Development Department
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Individual members of FAO's working group on indigenous issues provided substantial technical input, under the overall coordination of the FAO focal point on indigenous issues, Regina Laub.

Lead author Stefania Battistelli was responsible for the document in its present form.

Finally, FAO is grateful to the indigenous artists who were willing to share the works that are present throughout the document. Displaying these artistic pieces gives the publication an additional dimension by portraying elements of indigenous life more directly. The link between cultural and biological diversity is thus visibly apparent, allowing readers to see more clearly the richness which is intrinsic to indigenous peoples' cultures and expressions.

I do not think the measure of

a civilization

is how tall its buildings

of concrete are,

but rather how well its people

have learned to relate

to their environment and fellow man.

Sun Bear, Chippewa Tribe

A human being is part of the whole, which we call the "Universe": a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness.
This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and affection for a few persons nearest us.
Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its astonishing beauty.

Albert Einstein, Ideas and Opinions

Counselling artist Saul Williams

I. INTRODUCTION

When the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted in 2000, the international community made an unprecedented pledge to meet the needs of the world's poor and to safeguard them against the threats of the twenty-first century.[2] Leaders of 147 states reaffirmed the principles of poverty reduction, democratic governance, and human rights protection, which have been at the heart of the United Nations system since its creation after the Second World War. Today these principles demand renewed effort as the disparities between the world's poorest and wealthiest are increasing, and poor people's livelihoods are becoming evermore vulnerable to new socio-economic and environmental challenges.

Millennium Declaration (September 2000)

"... We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want. We resolve therefore to create an environment – at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty..."

[2] See the United Nations Millennium Development Goals webpage www.un.org/millenniumgoals.

Worldwide, the people who are hit hardest by livelihood insecurity are those on the economic and political margins. Rural lifestyles are particularly threatened by the dominance of mainstream society and the steady loss of biological resource diversity. Indigenous populations require particular consideration, because political discrimination, socio-economic inequity and environmental degradation are seriously hampering the cultural and biological elements on which many indigenous livelihood systems are based. These multiple dimensions of hardship have received increasing international attention in recent decades, but more needs to be done to protect indigenous communities against the erosion of the cultural and biological richness on which they depend.

Over the last decade, stories about the mistreatment of indigenous peoples[3], combined with the increasing vigour of their advocacy have helped to place indigenous peoples' issues on to the global development agenda. The General Assembly's adoption of the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in September 2007 has given these issues greater impetus by formalizing them within the UN system. The international community is increasingly encouraged to protect indigenous peoples' collective and individual rights.[4] As article 41 of the Declaration states, "The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations shall contribute to the full realization of the provisions of this Declaration through the mobilization, **inter alia**, of financial cooperation and technical assistance."

[3] The term "indigenous peoples" will be used for simplification throughout this document. It refers to all indigenous and tribal peoples.

[4] The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is available at www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/declaration.html.

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (September 2007)

"Article 20: ... Indigenous Peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic, and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and economic activities..."

The purpose of this publication is to raise awareness about the difficulties confronting indigenous groups and to outline some of FAO's efforts to support improvements in related areas. It also draws attention to indigenous peoples' skills and expertise, which may be of valuable assistance to global development efforts. Throughout their history, indigenous communities have developed specialized knowledge of the environment and a strong ability to adapt to its changing circumstances. If given the opportunity, the joint resources of indigenous peoples and the international community may lead to innovative solutions for such issues as climate change and biodiversity loss. As world leaders declared at the UN Millennium Summit, the most pressing need for the twenty-first century is a more inclusive and equitable globalization process that acknowledges development as a mutual give and take. Recognizing that indigenous peoples should be both recipients **and** contributors of development programming is critical in this regard.

FAO has a fundamental role in efforts to improve the quality of life and opportunities for the world's poorest people. Its mandate is to "improve agricultural productivity, raise levels of nutrition, better the lives of rural populations, and contribute to the growth of the world economy." As such, the Organization tries to build on the strengths, skills, assets and potential of rural inhabitants. It is FAO's hope that its own expertise can be complemented by the knowledge and contributions of local individuals, so that development efforts can respond better to on-the-ground realities. This publication describes how and why indigenous peoples can help realize this pursuit. It is intended for two types of audience: the general public, to inform readers (including indigenous peoples) about FAO's engagement in this issue; and FAO staff members themselves, to increase in-house attention to the problems that confront indigenous groups and FAO's efforts to respond to these.

II. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Who are indigenous peoples?

The problems of "indigenous peoples" as a distinct social category were first articulated in the 1950s. The most widely accepted characterizations of indigenous peoples are derived from the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions 107 and 169 (ILO, 1957; 1989), and from the United Nations Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC's) Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which authorized a ground-breaking study by Special Rapporteur José R. Martinez Cobo on the problem of discrimination against indigenous populations (Martinez Cobo, 1987). Together, ILO and the Cobo report provide the most accredited descriptions of indigenous peoples. The following identification criteria are based on this general consensus:

- Indigenous peoples usually maintain a strong attachment to particular geographical locations and ancestral territorial origins.
- They typically seek to remain culturally, geographically and institutionally distinct from the dominant society, resisting assimilation into the greater national society.
- In this way, they tend to preserve their own socio-cultural, economic and political ways of life.
- They specifically and overtly self-identify as "indigenous" or "tribal".

J. Martinez Cobo, United Nations Special Rapporteur, 1987

"Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from the other sectors of societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems."

ILO Convention 169 Statement of Coverage

"1a) tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations;"

"1b) peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment

of present state boundaries and who irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions."

"2) Self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of this Convention apply."

Although base characteristics have been identified, there is no universally accepted and absolute **definition** of indigenous peoples; this absence has not been and should not be construed as an obstacle (UNPFII, 2004). It is better to identify key parameters than to risk developing too exclusionary a classification. Working definitions that are centred on major characteristics, such as those in the box, provide a good practical basis for recognizing the existence of a specific population while leaving the "indigenous" categorization sufficiently wide to accommodate numerous socio-cultural variations. The fact that specific classification details continue to be discussed testifies to the great variety and diversity that exist across countries and indigenous groups; it is important to consider the idiosyncrasies and contextual specificities of particular indigenous groups, in addition to recognizing their shared characteristics and principles.

Mortal Feelings artist Ibiyinka Olufemi Alao

The situation of indigenous peoples worldwide

This section outlines some of the main facts and issues that require particular consideration when discussing indigenous peoples. It explains the general conditions in which many indigenous groups live, covering issues that range from poverty to human rights violations and the erosion of cultural and biological elements. It also highlights some endogenous factors that create difficulties **within** indigenous communities.

"Indigenous and tribal peoples are more likely to have lower incomes, poorer physical living conditions, less access to health care, education, and a range of other services, worse access to labour, land and capital markets and worse returns to work as well as weaker political representation."

Source: ILO, 2005.

Socio-economic conditions and standard of living

Worldwide, there are an estimated 370 million indigenous individuals in more than 70 countries.[5] They represent more than 5 000 languages and cultures, and inhabit settings as diverse as polar regions and deserts, tropical and temperate zones, forests and savannahs, mountainous areas, tundras, wetlands and small islands (UNESCO, 2006). Although they constitute only about 5 percent of the world's total population, indigenous peoples comprise more than 15 percent of the global poor (World Bank, 2003).[6] Their communities commonly live in remote rural areas characterized by challenging environmental conditions and difficult access to centres of political power or economic activity. Income levels and human development indicators (health, education, etc.) consistently lag behind those of non-indigenous groups (World Bank, 2004). Indigenous peoples therefore often (but not always) constitute the poorest sections of society, scoring lower than others in terms of standard of living and general welfare.[7] The following box contains some examples.

[5] Precise estimates of the world's total population of indigenous peoples are difficult to compile, owing to complexities related to their identification, and to variances and inadequacies of available census data. The number is increasing, mainly because African States have only recently started to recognize indigenous groups (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2000).

[6] For more information, see the UNPFII website at www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/history.html.

[7] It should be noted that indigenous peoples do not always regard the term "poor" as appropriate, because they consider themselves rich in knowledge and culture. According to internationally accepted poverty standards, however, "poor" is a suitable designation for a human development classification.

Facts and Figures Concerning Indigenous Peoples Around the World

- Canada: In 2001, living conditions on Canadian Indian reserves were at the same level as those in a country ranked 73 on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index; Canada as a whole was placed eighth (this disparity has since increased) (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat website www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/dpr-rmr/0506/inac-ainc/inac-ainc01-eng.asp).
- Guatemala: In the decade 1994 to 2004, 38 percent of total households were poor, compared with 87 percent of indigenous households (World Bank, 2005).
- Mexico: The poverty rate is 18 percent in municipalities where less than 10 percent of the population is indigenous, compared with 80 percent in those where more than 70 percent is (World Bank, 2005).
- Peru: Half the country lives below the poverty line, compared with almost 80 percent of indigenous peoples (World Bank, 2004).
- Guyana: More than 80 percent of indigenous Amerindians live below the poverty line (ILO, 2005).
- The Philippines: Poverty incidence in the country declined from 34.3 percent in 1991 to 27.5 percent in 2001, but in regions with high proportions of indigenous peoples, such as Mindanao, it still ranges from 63 to 92 percent (ILO, 2005).
- Viet Nam: Poverty dropped from 58 to 37 percent between 1993 and 1998, but in the northern and central highlands, where indigenous minorities are concentrated, poverty rates remain at 73 and 91 percent, respectively (ILO, 2005).
- Cambodia and Viet Nam: In 2000, less than half indigenous households had access to safe water (UNICEF, 2003).
- Namibia: The San indigenous communities have the lowest income in the country and a Human Development Index rate that is nearly half that recorded for the next lowest group (UNHABITAT, 2005).
- Australia: 72 percent of indigenous peoples are in the lowest household income bracket, rising to 91 percent in some areas (UNHABITAT, 2005).
- Life expectancies at birth are 10 to 20 years less for the indigenous population than for the general population of countries (Alderete, 2004).
- Guatemala: Chronic malnutrition is 67.8 percent among indigenous peoples, and 36.7 percent among non-indigenous peoples (PAHO, 2004).
- Canada: Suicide rates among indigenous peoples are two to seven times higher than those among the population in general (PAHO, 2004).
- The Innuit of Greenland reportedly have the highest suicide rate in the world (UNICEF, 2003).
- New Zealand: Maori infant mortality rates are almost twice as high as those of other infants (UNICEF, 2003).
- Australia: The mortality rate of indigenous infants is almost three times higher than the overall rate; life expectancy is 19 to 20 years less (UNICEF, 2003).
- Australia: Indigenous peoples are three times more likely to be unemployed (UNHABITAT, 2005).
- Namibia: 95 percent of the country's 7 to 13–year-olds are enrolled in school, but only 30 percent of indigenous San children are (UNICEF, 2003).
- Mexico: 44.27 percent of indigenous peoples are illiterate, compared with 10.46 percent of non-indigenous peoples (UNHABITAT, 2005).

Los Tiempos del bosque-verano de gusand artist Abel Rodriguez

Orange of Kponyan artist Ibiyinka Olufemi Alao

Discrimination and human rights issues

Many of the world's indigenous peoples face serious discrimination in terms of access to basic social services and representation. The relationships among indigenous peoples, mainstream groups and national governments vary from country to country, but overall there are marked instances of rights violations. Progress has been made, most notably in South America where some indigenous rights are constitutionally recognized, but most indigenous communities lack full citizen status (UNESCO, 2006). Their histories are also often marked by dramatic events such as colonization, forceful relocation and other abuses. Political discrimination and socio-economic marginalization hamper many indigenous groups' ability to secure a livelihood for themselves and their children.

Because of their under-representation in national and local politics, indigenous peoples are also frequently left out of mainstream development efforts and policy-making processes (UNDP, 2006). Not only are their interests often ignored during the planning and implementation of development programmes and policies, but dominant groups often consider indigenous groups as impediments to the progress of the overall society. Indigenous peoples are repeatedly and unjustly perceived as being backwards compared with other social constituencies, and their claims to territorial ancestry and traditional living choices are seen as hampering the development prospects of the general population. Misperceptions about indigenous peoples may create situations in which they suffer negative affects from development interventions that aim to be of assistance.

Indigenous peoples also frequently face transboundary challenges and confusion. Owing to the historical longevity and continuity of their societies, some indigenous groups have found it difficult to assimilate the nation-state paradigm, or have even been rejected by the national governments in their geographical locations. Ambiguous definitions of citizenship cause serious problems, as indigenous peoples are frequently partly inside and partly outside the political, legal and cultural boundaries of the countries in which they live.

Environment and well-being: the link between cultural and biological resources

Their livelihood systems make most indigenous peoples fundamentally reliant on the environment and natural resources for their daily existence. Most indigenous groups use subsistence-based production, mainly pastoral, horticultural and/or hunter-gatherer techniques. Indigenous groups also profess ancestral bonds to particular territorial spaces. This reliance on natural resources has become integral to their way of life and their self-identification. Land, territories and other natural resources are therefore not only basic means of production and food security, but also have important cultural and spiritual values. The link between biodiversity and socio-cultural well-being is therefore very strong.

Although living from the land in remote rural locations has consigned many indigenous peoples to marginal living conditions, it has also made them specialists in agriculture-related activities and local environmental management practices. Indigenous peoples have generally demonstrated an excellent ability to adapt to natural changes that occur over time, such as climate shifts, desertification, environmental resource degradation and migration. This resilience is a result of their traditional forms of social organization and their ability to use biological

resources sustainably, which historically protected them against crop failure, biodiversity loss, soil infertility and other threats. As a result, indigenous livelihood systems have persisted throughout the centuries, generating time-tested experience that could be useful in adapting to and mitigating global warming effects (Kelles-Viitanen, 2008).

This valuable wisdom and expertise is contingent on the continued availability of environmental resources and the transmission of indigenous cultural systems and knowledge down the generations. More recently, however, the capacity of indigenous livelihoods has decreased because the **scale** of environmental and cultural erosion has reached an unsustainable point. At present, in fact, the intensity of environmental and cultural loss is greater than ever before, upsetting the natural harmony between indigenous peoples and their surrounding environment. Today, severe environmental damage and politico-economic discrimination are further aggravated by economic pursuits which ignore the rights and needs of populations in the interested locality (practices such as mining, oil exploration/exploitation, logging and pharmaceutical development). Indigenous peoples will also bear the brunt of climate change catastrophes and natural resource depletion because they so often live in marginal territories and strongly draw on the environment for their livelihoods. Scientific research has confirmed that many of the lands they inhabit will be the first and hardest-hit by global warming impacts. Plant and animal varieties will likewise disappear (IASG, 2007). As a result, indigenous peoples' expertise is being lost at an alarming rate, with grave effects on their livelihood security, and negative consequences for humanity as a whole, since valuable contributions to sustainable development and resource management will be lost with the passing of traditional agricultural heritage.

"Despite [many] challenges, indigenous and local communities are not simply the passive victims of climate change but valuable partners in the global efforts to address climate change."

Source: IASG, 2007.

Endogenous factors: intra-community discrimination, gender and generational concerns

The **internal** dynamics of indigenous communities are another important issue. Indigenous peoples are not only the passive victims of exogenous discrimination and adversity. Certain customs within indigenous societies and recent developments such as communal violence and poor health should also be taken into consideration.

Internal discrimination against women and other minority groups is a notable example, especially regarding property rights and violent behaviour. Indigenous women are frequently the victims of a "triple marginalization" as poor farmers, as indigenous individuals, and as women. This leaves indigenous women worse off than indigenous men and non-indigenous women in terms of poverty levels, access to education, health and economic resources, political participation and access to land, among other factors. Alarmingly high maternal mortality rates among indigenous women are a distinct reflection of this (UNDG, 2008: 2). As an example, in Garifuna and other communities in Honduras, men retain the prerogative to negotiate mortgages and sell property without consulting women; this continues in spite of the Agrarian Modernization

Law (1992), which states that women should have equal treatment and conditions in landownership (Huairou Commission).

Generational issues are also of note. Many indigenous young have left community life (where physical labour is hard) in search for more 'modern' lifestyles. Their desires to become part of wider society has generated many identity struggles and feelings of disconnect between older and younger individuals, leading to increased communal tension. Labour shortages in the territories of origin have become a problem as well, with consequent adversities for indigenous agricultural systems. Poverty, unemployment and other factors of livelihood insecurity have also precipitated situations of violence among community members, particularly against women, children, and disabled persons (Cripps and McGlade, 2008).

These points demonstrate how indigenous peoples face challenges from both environmental **and** human-related dimensions, as well as from forces outside and within their own societies. Development programmes should consider these multiple sources of discrimination and difficulties in a holistic way. Along with redressing issues at the national and international levels, in fact, they should also address structural discrimination issues that are internal to many indigenous communities. Also important is the need to remember that indigenous peoples are not a homogenous group, but part of a variety of cultures with different concerns and needs (Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women, 1995). Greater consciousness of local dynamics is important to ensure that indigenous peoples' issues are approached with appropriate information and caution.

Core principles of indigenous peoples' identity and advocacy

A considerable proportion of the world's food-insecure individuals come from indigenous communities, and this number is rising. Over the years, indigenous groups have mobilized individually and collectively to affirm their rights internationally and to counteract the problems that threaten their livelihoods and identities. This call for recognition has evolved through several decades of engagement in regional and international processes, with particular emphasis on the UN system. Indigenous peoples' social and economic development concerns are expressed in documents such as the Mataatua Declaration (1993), the Quito Declaration concerning the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (2000), the Kimberley Declaration (2002), the Declaration of Atitlán (2002) and the Indigenous Peoples' Kyoto Water Declaration (2003).

Although indigenous peoples around the world are culturally distinct, they share a number of common principles and indigenous advocates have made concrete advances in demanding internationally recognized rights and autonomy (as evidenced by declarations and other initiatives). This allows them to act as a fairly united front and increase their political leverage. The motivation to engage the international system and the UN in particular arises from frequent difficulties in approaching the national level, which to them is often an alienating environment. A number of core principles to which indigenous peoples adhere can thus be identified. They are reported in the following subsections to provide a better understanding of indigenous peoples' broader claims and points of view (UNDG, 2008).

1] Right to development

Indigenous peoples have unique cultures and world views, which make their needs and aspirations for the future, and therefore their concept of what is generally called "development", differ from those of broader society. According to indigenous peoples, mainstream conceptions of economic development fail to capture the variety of human life; rather than promoting the distinctiveness of different forms of civilization, development initiatives tend to impose a set course of action and a homogenizing notion of progress. Indigenous peoples seek the adoption of a culturally sensitive approach to development, which listens to their appeals and includes them as legitimate and respected stakeholders.

For indigenous peoples, the right to development is understood as their right to decide the kind of development that takes place on their lands and territories, in accordance with their own priorities and conceptions of well-being. The development goals of indigenous peoples are therefore closely linked to their ability to exercise decision-making in their communities, maintain rights over their lands and resources, protect the rights of groups **within** their communities, and live according to their cultures and traditions. This institutional reworking is now commonly referred to as "development with identity", and emphasizes the need to introduce a more holistic approach that does not ignore cultural meaning and impose a predetermined developmental path.

2] Self-determination

"Indigenous peoples have the right of self determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

Source: UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 3.

One of the most fundamental components of this right to development is the principle of self-determination. Indigenous peoples have underlined their desire to determine their own future in accordance with their ways of life. "Self-determination" refers to the right of all peoples to pursue their economic, social and cultural development freely, without outside interference (UNHCHR, 1996). However, the nature of states and national governments makes absolute autonomy from them impossible, and perhaps even ill-advised, so indigenous peoples' representatives and national leaders are continuously involved in discussions about the extent and implications of such a tenet.

The following features have been identified by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) as reasonable expressions of self-determination (UNDG, 2008: 13):

- Autonomy or self-government in matters relating to indigenous peoples' internal and local affairs.
- Respect for the principle of "free, prior and informed consent" (see principle 3 below).
- Indigenous peoples' full and effective participation at every stage of any action that may affect them directly or indirectly. Such participation may be through traditional authorities or a representative organization.

- Formal recognition of indigenous peoples' traditional institutions, internal justice and conflict-resolution systems, and ways of socio-political organization.

Essentially, the principle of self-determination implies that there must be no coercion, intimidation or manipulation on the part of governments or development practitioners. In claiming the right to self-determination, few indigenous peoples seek full independence of the nation states that now encompass them. They accept that a balance is needed between full autonomy and integration into the national system, but they seek new ways of being recognized by national laws and systems of decision-making that do not imply losing their autonomy and their values (Colchester and Mackay, 2004).

3] Free, prior and informed consent

This principle demands that states and organizations obtain indigenous peoples' permission before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them. It emphasizes that indigenous peoples must be included in consultation processes, that the time requirements for this be respected, and that information on the likely impact of activities be provided. Consultation and participation are crucial components of a consent process. They ensure that indigenous peoples' concerns and interests match the objectives of the planned activity or action (Report of the International Workshop on Methodologies Regarding Free Prior and Informed Consent E/C.19/2005/3).

"Consent must be freely given, obtained prior to implementation of activities and be founded upon an understanding of the full range of issues implicated by the activity or decision in question; hence the formulation: free, prior and informed consent."

Source: Colchester and Mackay, 2004: 5.

4] Human rights as collective rights

Indigenous peoples' claims for greater sovereignty and recognition are grounded in a basic human rights framework. Beyond this, however, indigenous peoples view their rights differently from traditional human rights law, and demand the acknowledgment of specific collective rights for the full articulation of their appeals. Collective rights are considered indispensable for the survival of indigenous peoples as distinct human populations.

The collective rights of indigenous peoples include recognition of their distinctive histories, languages, identities and cultures, and of their collective right to the lands, territories and natural resources they have traditionally occupied and used. The concept also refers to indigenous peoples' collectively held traditional knowledge.

Most international human rights instruments and national laws protect the rights of the individual rather than a collectivity. They are often criticized for this (Colchester and Mackay, 2004: 11) because the Western legal framework, which focuses on the individual, is not always consonant with other social realities; indigenous peoples are a clear example of this.

The principles reported here are the basic pillars

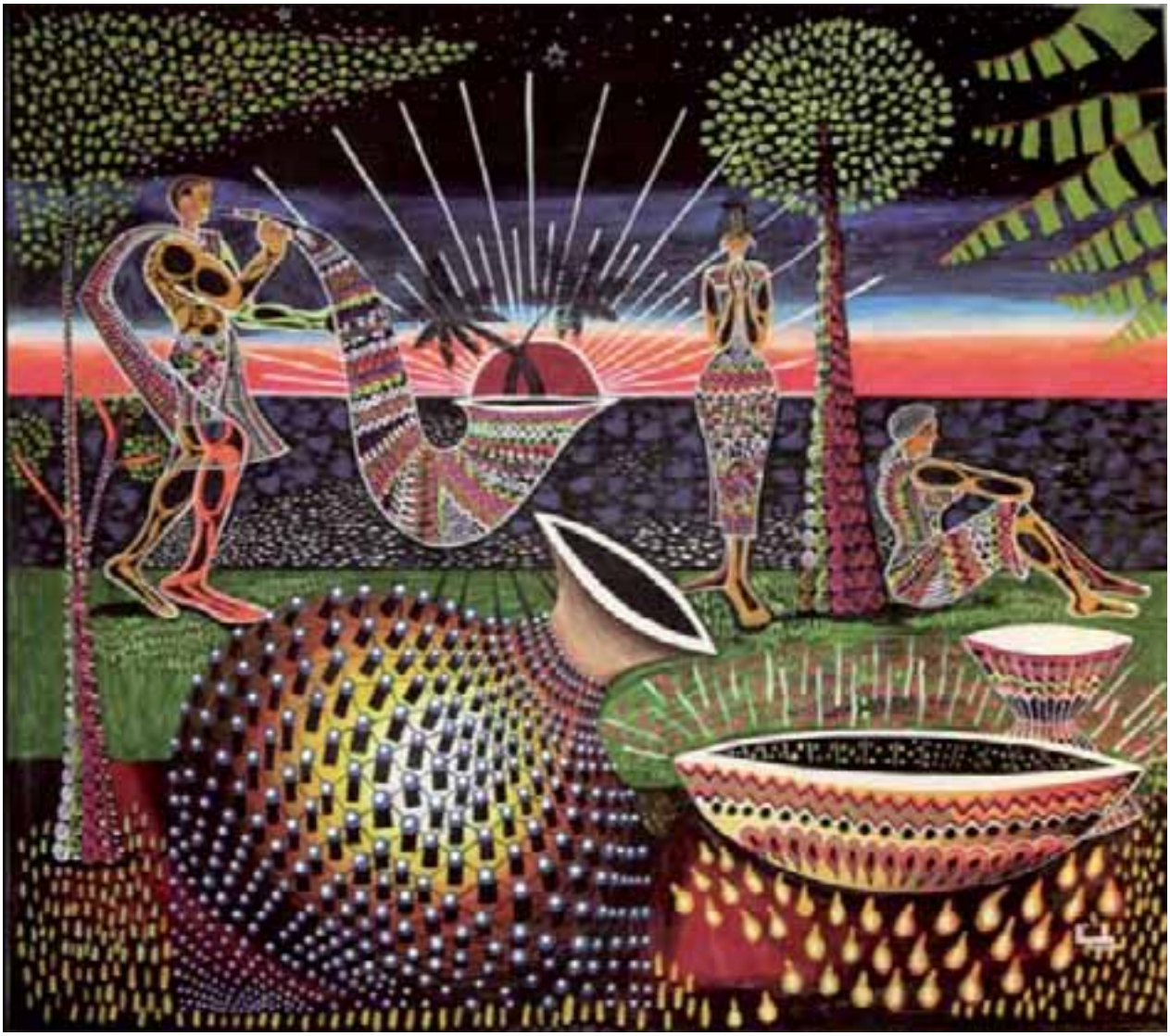
of indigenous peoples' issues. They are intentionally broad so they can be adapted to different situations. Fundamentally, they unite all indigenous groups around the world, and comprise the minimum standards for protecting and promoting indigenous livelihoods.

In sum, indigenous peoples emphasize a concept of development that responds to the specific needs of different socio-cultural groups (including but not limited to their own). In their view, the dominant development model has failed because of its "incessant pursuit of economic growth without the integration of cultural development, social justice and environmental sustainability" (Consultation Workshop and Dialogue on Indigenous Peoples' Self-determined Development or Development with Identity, 2008). Instead of reducing livelihood security to the meeting of basic needs, indigenous peoples advocate for a more holistic view that recognizes well-being as a multidimensional condition defined by a range of human experiences, not only material, but also social, mental, spiritual and cultural welfare. To create a more expansive vision of livelihood security, development ought to accept indigenous perspectives, acknowledge the uniqueness and diversity of human experiences, and be tailored to respond to this variety. At the international level, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and ILO Convention 169 represent the most significant affirmations in recognition of these principles.

Core Principles in Brief:

- Right to development
- Self-determination
- Free, prior and informed consent
- Human rights as collective rights

Changing of seasons artist Julietta Carimbwe



The Music Party artist Ibiyinka Olufemi Alao

III. THE INTERNATIONAL NORMATIVE, LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Indigenous peoples' activism has grown enormously in recent decades, advancing their issues on a global stage and placing them on the development agenda of many actors. Despite numerous challenges and conflicting opinions, the international community has granted more space to indigenous peoples' issues in recent years. Significant steps have been made in formulating a more sophisticated legal and institutional framework for the protection of indigenous peoples' livelihoods and traditional customs. The following are some of the most important accomplishments on this front since the mid-twentieth century, and constitute important building blocks for further work in this field.

The first international juridical instrument on indigenous peoples' rights was ILO's 1957 Convention No. 107, which outlined the characteristics of indigenous communities as distinct peoples, and emphasized the need to improve the living and working conditions of autochthonous groups (ILO, 1957). In 1989, this document was modified and updated as Convention No. 169. This is a more comprehensive instrument covering a range of issues including land rights, access to natural resources, health, education, vocational training, conditions of employment and contacts across borders. It states that indigenous peoples have the right to decide their own priorities for development and to participate in the development process. It also outlines possible actions to promote the rights of such groups (ILO, 1989). Conventions 107 and 169 are legally binding to the countries that have ratified them, giving indigenous peoples' issues a significant impetus in some national and international circles.

The standards set by ILO and other groundbreaking efforts reached a decisive moment in September 2007, with the General Assembly's adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. After decades of consultation and negotiation, the signing of the declaration was a landmark event for consolidating indigenous peoples' issues as an important constituent of the UN system, although some key countries did not vote to support it. It represents the minimum international standards to be observed in relation to indigenous peoples, and emphasizes their rights to maintain traditional institutions, cultures and customs and to pursue development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations.

In addition to these documents, an institutional support mechanism has been established over the years to facilitate dialogue between indigenous representatives and the international community. Indeed, FAO's work in relation to indigenous issues is part of a wider effort which involves other agencies, governments, and indigenous peoples themselves. Efforts to link and coordinate initiatives related to indigenous issues are now more common and offer a good opportunity to strengthen collaboration on this front. In 2000, the UN created the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), an advisory body with a mandate to discuss indigenous issues, provide expertise and allow indigenous agents' participation in international settings.[8] Establishment of the UN Special Rapporteur and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues (IASG), in 2001 and 2002 respectively, strengthened this institutional support system. The Special Rapporteur was created by the Commission on Human Rights (now the Human Rights Council) and has the mandate to undertake country visits, report on trends and take up cases of human rights violations directly with governments. IASG was established in an effort to formalize the UN system's cross-agency

[8] See the UNPFII website at www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/about_us.html.

cooperation on these issues; its main purpose is to provide support and guidance for mainstreaming indigenous peoples' issues in UN operational activities by working as a task team of the UN Development Group (UNDG, 2008). The First and Second Decades of the World's Indigenous People (1994 to 2004 and 2005 to 2015) have also helped raise awareness about indigenous peoples and will continue to do so in coming years (Consultation Workshop and Dialogue on Indigenous Peoples' Self-determined Development, 2008).

Major accomplishments of this kind have ensured that the distinct legal status of indigenous peoples has been acknowledged at every major world forum since the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) (UNDP, no date). Their significance has been enshrined in key resolutions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), and at important events such as the World Food Summit (1996), the World Food Summit: five years later (2002), the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) and the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (2006). Unfortunately, many of these instruments and processes have not been properly implemented, and many indigenous groups are unaware of their existence and of the mechanisms by which they operate (Tebtebba Foundation, 2008). Further steps are required to reduce alienation and continuing rights abuses.

Indigenous peoples' representative organizations have become increasingly vocal in their advocacy efforts, and, in recent times, international organizations and national governments are becoming more receptive and willing to compromise. As a lead agency in the UN system and the global development effort, FAO is continuously prompted by requests from such fora. FAO has an important responsibility to respond to these principles in the areas closest to its mandate. Given the growing urgency of such threats as climate change and natural resource degradation, the development of rural areas inhabited by marginalized groups demands more fervent action.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and FAO's Mandate

The following articles of the Declaration have particular relevance for FAO as they concern issues that relate to FAO's mandate, technical expertise and status as a UN organization.

"Article 3. Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

"Article 10. Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return.

"Article 20 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence

and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.

"Article 25. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

"Article 26 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

"Article 29 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.

"Article 31 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

"Article 32 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.

"Article 41. The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other inter-governmental organizations shall contribute to the full realization of the provisions of this Declaration through the mobilization, inter alia, of financial cooperation and technical assistance. Ways and means of ensuring participation of indigenous peoples on issues affecting them shall be established.

"Article 42. The United Nations, its bodies, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and specialized agencies, including at the country level, and States shall promote respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of this Declaration."

Vendiendo papas y lunas artist Roberto Mamani Mamani

IV. FAO AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

FAO's mandate is to pursue food security for those whose livelihood prospects are threatened by chronic poverty, scarce access to resources, environmental degradation and other socio-economic difficulties, including discrimination and marginalization from opportunities for production. The protection of environmental resources from natural or human-induced degradation complements this primary purpose, as food production and other livelihood necessities depend on the continued presence of healthy and bountiful ecosystems. In addition, the need to safeguard traditional agricultural systems receives increasing attention, because many of these systems offer good examples of sustainability and local acceptance. This chapter discusses the relevance of indigenous peoples to FAO's mission and demonstrates the benefits that may arise from efforts to preserve the relationship between cultural and biological diversity.

Why is it important to engage indigenous peoples in development work?

At the core of FAO's mission are efforts to address livelihood insecurity through a food and agriculture-centred approach. The focus of its activities is rural areas, which are the heart of agricultural production and are inhabited by the world's most vulnerable populations. Indigenous groups should be a particular concern in rural development because they often live as marginal populations within marginal areas. It is in this context that FAO is making more concerted efforts to work with indigenous communities. As their difficulties continue to intensify, it is imperative that more be done to secure the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and to ensure that development processes do not harm or exclude them.

Most indigenous peoples live in remote and risk-prone environments and are dependent on primary means of production. Their economies are often based on subsistence activities, making natural resources and biodiversity indispensable for meeting their daily needs. Many indigenous communities lack basic assets such as access to land, credit, technological inputs and other means of production, and have even less access to markets and policy-making circles. This, coupled with the steady decline of biodiversity, is making it increasingly difficult for indigenous peoples to guarantee their individual and collective livelihood.

Indigenous peoples' socio-cultural lifestyles are also increasingly threatened by environmental degradation and continued discrimination. As mentioned, one of the defining characteristics of indigenous groups is a historical and self-identified relationship with the environment. Land and natural resources are woven into the social fabric of indigenous peoples' customs, spiritual traditions and social relations, as well as their economic undertakings. This special bond means that the environment is directly related to indigenous peoples' sense of being. Hence, the loss of environmental resources is contributing to the loss of indigenous identity. The international community must confront this multiple layer of hardship to preserve the cultural and biological diversity which undergird the livelihoods of so many peoples.

FAO, Indigenous Peoples and the Millennium Development Goals

FAO is dedicated to promoting rural development and facilitating achievement of the 1996 World Food Summit goal of eradicating hunger. The Organization is a world centre for food and agriculture-related information and a forum for policy dialogue among nations and organizations. Its work in these areas complements activities aimed at achieving the MDGs.

The MDGs most relevant to FAO's mission are:

- *MDG 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger:* FAO's programmes contribute to all dimensions of food security: availability, access, stability and utilization of safe and nutritious food.

- *MDG 7. Ensure environmental sustainability:* FAO's activities are designed to address the sustainable development of threatened environments and assist those living in marginal areas with livelihood support programmes based on sound ecosystem management principles.

- *MDG 8. Develop a global partnership for development:* For example working with its members and the World Trade Organization (WTO), FAO seeks to create an open, fair and rules-based multilateral trading system, particularly through its support to food, agricultural and overall trade policies conducive to food security.

Although these three MDGs are specifically and directly related to FAO's mandate, important effects also stem from work related to the other goals; these cover the empowerment of women (MDG 3), access to primary education (MDG 2), decreases in child mortality (MDG 4), the betterment of maternal health (MDG 5), and the combating of diseases (MDG 6). Positive effects in these fields are generated primarily by work addressing economic and political discrimination, as well as hunger and malnutrition.

For more information see: www.fao.org/mdg/.

How cultural and biological diversity can support FAO's efforts for food and livelihood security

The best working relationships are those that are mutually beneficial, and indigenous groups have much to offer despite their widespread conditions of poverty and disadvantage. Participatory approaches to development are based on the belief that local people have special knowledge about their own conditions and surroundings, and that interventions should therefore build on local capacities in order to be better integrated with local settings. Many FAO projects maintain a people-centred focus in an effort to foster the potential of

development programme recipients. What benefits can be derived from increased cooperation between UN agencies, such as FAO, and indigenous groups? What kind of expertise do these groups have to offer?

Indigenous peoples are creators, providers and conservers of cultural and biological diversity. On their own, indigenous groups account for most of the world's cultural diversity. Not only is the preservation of human heterogeneity an important factor in and of itself, but indigenous peoples are also directly responsible for some of the most ecologically sustainable activities known around the world. Studies demonstrate that many of the areas of highest biodiversity on earth are inhabited by indigenous peoples. The "Biological 17" – the 17 nations that are home to more than two-thirds of the world's biological resources – are also the traditional territories of most of its indigenous peoples (UNHCHR, no date).[9] The interdependence between the extensiveness of plant and animal species and the resource management practices of indigenous peoples demonstrates the indigenous contribution to biodiversity.

"...while proof of conservation success is ultimately biological, conservation itself is a social and political process, not a biological process. An assessment of conservation requires therefore an assessment of social and political institutions that contribute to, or threaten, conservation..."

Source: Alcom, 1994.

[9] The Biological 17 are Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, Papua New Guinea, the United States and Venezuela.

Most indigenous groups demonstrate a socially ingrained capacity for environmental conservation, which is based on their spiritual, cultural, social and economic relationship with land and, more generally, nature. Traditional customs and practices reflect both an attachment to the land and an entrenched sense of responsibility to preserve it for future generations (UNHCHR, no date). This special bond is common to all indigenous communities, which affirms the importance of recognizing and protecting them as a distinct socio-cultural group. However, widespread discrimination and misperceptions have often prevented indigenous peoples from taking advantage of their most important asset, their local knowledge. Indeed, they are often considered "backwards" and viewed as only the passive recipients of development initiatives which try to redress the historical wrongdoings to which they have been subjected, and which have created structural inequality in resources and opportunities. Indigenous peoples' importance in maintaining and conserving the world's biodiversity must also be recognized (Toledo, 2001). Their knowledge may provide valuable insights for integrating more sustainable methods into the management of environmental resources. It could also help identify alternative and locally sensitive methods for adapting to climate change and mitigating its risks. Capitalizing on this expertise could lead to more fruitful development outcomes for both indigenous peoples and the international community, because the world as a whole stands to benefit from a healthier and diverse biological system.

FAO's current work on indigenous peoples' issues

As FAO is the lead UN agency for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, livestock, rural development and food security, its work is crucial to indigenous peoples. The Organization has collaborated frequently with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) active in this area, and with other UN agencies such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and ILO. As recommended by the Declaration of Atitlàn, which emerged from the indigenous peoples' 2002 consultation in Atitlàn, Guatemala, FAO established an inter-divisional working group to ensure that indigenous peoples' issues are considered during the development and implementation of policies that affect their food security and food sovereignty. More than 50 FAO staff members from different technical departments and regional specializations meet regularly to discuss and exchange experiences. The working group collaborates closely with UNPFII and IASG, providing an internal forum aimed at increasing awareness and commitment. A FAO focal point has also been instituted for greater inter-agency collaboration and information exchange. The following subsections outline the key thematic areas that frame some of FAO's work regarding indigenous issues. These areas are derived from existing activities that coincide with indigenous peoples' interests, and provide an excellent basis for further work.

Environment, biodiversity and genetic resources

The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) was established by the FAO Conference as a permanent forum where governments discuss and negotiate matters relevant to genetic resources, which are crucial in feeding the world's population.[10] The commission was established in 1983 as the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources, broadening its mandate in 1995 to cover all biodiversity components of relevance to food and agriculture. Its main objectives are to ensure the conservation and sustainable utilization of these resources, and the fair and equitable sharing of their benefits.[11] One of CGRFA's major achievements is the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), which was negotiated over seven years before being adopted in 2001 by the FAO Conference. ITPGRFA is a binding treaty which formally recognizes the enormous contribution that local and indigenous communities and farmers of all regions, particularly those in centres of origin and crop diversity, have made and will continue to make to the conservation and development of the resources that constitute the basis of the world's food and agriculture production.

[10] Genetic resources are the raw material that farmers and plant breeders use to improve the quality and productivity of crops or livestock.

[11] For more information see www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/

My grandmother gathering herbs artist Saul Williams

Koroso Dancer artist Ibiyinka Olufemi Alao

International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001)

The following clauses are relevant to indigenous peoples.

"Article 5 – Conservation, Exploration, Collection, Characterization, Evaluation and Documentation of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. d) Promote in situ conservation of wild crop relatives and wild plants for food production, including in protected areas, by supporting, inter alia, the efforts of indigenous and local communities.

"Article 9 – Farmers' Rights. 9.1 The Contracting Parties recognize the enormous contribution that the local and indigenous communities and farmers of all regions of the world, particularly those in the centres of origin and crop diversity, have made and will continue to make for the conservation and development of plant genetic resources which constitute the basis of food and agriculture production throughout the world."

Under the aegis of CGRFA, FAO also convened the International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in September 2007. At Interlaken, Switzerland, the conference adopted the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and the Interlaken Declaration on Animal Genetic Resources.[12] Both instruments were endorsed by the Thirty-Fourth Session of the FAO Conference as a major contribution from FAO to the overall international framework on agricultural biodiversity. Both also recognize indigenous and local communities' important contributions to the conservation of animal genetic resources and the domestication of animal breeds for productive use.

Today, food security and rural development are being compromised by the continuing loss of plant and animal genetic resources and the erosion of knowledge on how to use them. Food security is not only a matter of conserving species and ecosystems; it is also diminished by the loss of traditional agricultural cultures, which results in the loss of important information and skills (personal communication, Dr Shakeel Bhatti, ITPGR Secretary, October 2008). As the Global Plan of Action states, many local breeds, especially those held by poor farmers in harsh environments in developing countries, probably contain many valuable adaptive traits, but these have not been sufficiently characterized, and considerable value may be lost with their extinction. FAO's CGRFA has thus made an important step in recognizing the significance of indigenous peoples as custodians of genetic resources and keepers of valuable information.

Global Plan of Action

"The historic contribution of indigenous and local communities to animal genetic diversity, and the knowledge systems that manage these resources, needs to be recognized, and their continuity supported."

[12] For more information see www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/genetics/documents/interlaken/gpa_en.pdf

Interlaken Declaration

"... the Commission and its member countries affirm that "[local and indigenous communities and farmers, pastoralists and animal breeders] should participate in the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture." This includes the "... desirability, as appropriate, subject to national legislation, of respecting, preserving and maintaining traditional knowledge relevant to animal breeding and production as a contribution to sustainable livelihoods, and the need for the participation of all stakeholders in making decisions... on [related] matters."

Land and natural resources

Land is a fundamental production factor; without it, rural populations cannot meet their daily needs and ensure their long-term survival. As mostly rural residents, indigenous peoples are strongly drawn into this dynamic; land and natural resource availability constitute the basis of their economic livelihood and are the source of their spiritual, cultural and social identity. However, this inextricable relationship to land has often been denied or ignored. Many indigenous peoples have long suffered dispossession, expropriation or forced removal (without compensation) from traditional lands and sacred sites (UNHCHR, no date). This is a major problem for indigenous peoples all over the world, whose notions of land rights are often very different. Lands are commonly seen not as individual or marketable properties with defined boundaries and ownership titles, but as broad territories to which people belong and towards which they have a sense of responsibility and heritage. For indigenous peoples, the boundaries of such lands are not tightly defined by mapped coordinates, but are frequently nebulous and shifting (Colchester and Mackay, 2004: 8).

Kimberly Declaration (2002)

"As peoples, we reaffirm our rights to self-determination and to own, control and manage our ancestral lands and territories, waters and other resources. Our lands and territories are at the core of our existence – we are the land and the land is us; we have a distinct spiritual and material relationship with our lands and territories and they are inextricably linked to our survival and to the preservation and further development of our knowledge systems and cultures, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem management."

These conceptions of ownership and entitlement obviously run counter to the nation state paradigm and the clear delineation of national boundaries. In an effort to harmonize their own practices with the standards of governments, indigenous peoples have begun to implement mapping systems as a means of asserting and defining land claims. Although ancestral rights to land are a cornerstone of indigenous peoples' livelihoods, few countries have taken concrete steps to recognize and grant land rights to indigenous communities. Reasons for this include lack of political will, legal obstructions and complications, and persistent discrimination. FAO is involved in a number of consultative initiatives to reinforce indigenous peoples' land demarcation

and tenure security. Participatory mapping techniques can be useful tools in negotiating the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights to their lands, waters and resources. They permit indigenous groups to "speak the language of the state" while asserting their entitlement to certain geographical locations (Chapin, Mac and Threlkeld, 2001). This helps indigenous groups and government authorities to find compromises for an issue that is often highly conflict-ridden.

FAO has supported land tenure issues through the years. One of the most successful demarcation initiatives took place in post-conflict Angola, where colonial legacies and post-independence difficulties have created a situation of disturbed access and land use. Weak property entitlements, land rights and security of tenure threaten people's ability to make a living, with consequences for the country's social stability. In the absence of land access, rural dwellers especially have faced innumerable obstacles to their personal and collective development. Most indigenous communities in Southern Africa belong to the San population. Until recently, Angolan San had never been able to participate in public, political and legislative processes. Recognizing this inequity, and in response to growing poverty among indigenous Angolans, FAO partnered with other organizations and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to support a land delimitation project for the San community of Mupenbati, in the municipality of Quipongo.

Building on the efforts of local and international NGOs (Trocaire Angola, WIMSA- Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa) and in partnership with other actors, including OCADEC (Organização Cristã de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento Comunitário) and the government of Huila province, FAO engaged in a participatory rural appraisal (PRA) to determine the location and extent of land owed to the San. The methodology involved three phases: understanding the San's history of settlement in the area; understanding social hierarchy and defining stakeholder roles; and identifying the community's boundaries through consensus with neighbouring populations. With funds from the Italian government and the European Union, the project ran from 2005 until April 2007, resulting in land title being granted for an area of 1 389 ha. In accordance with the Angolan legal framework established by Law 9 of 2004, the local Mupenbati San community is now recognized as rightful owners of the designated territory. In the words of the Mupenbati San leader, "For me, it means everything" (personal communication, Paolo Groppo, FAO Land Tenure System Analysis Officer).

Land demarcation and land titling are an integral part of local development and FAO will continue efforts of this kind to increase the opportunities for development elsewhere.

Agricultural heritage, cultural diversity and traditional knowledge

Approximately 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity is found in indigenous peoples' territories, indicating a fundamental interdependence between the abundance of plant and animal species and the resource management practices of these populations (Toledo, 2001). In 2002, FAO's Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) programme set out to document noteworthy local production and management systems, many of which belong to indigenous peoples. GIAHS are "remarkable land-use systems and landscapes that are rich in globally significant biodiversity evolving from the co-adaptation of a community with

its environment and its needs and aspirations for sustainable development." Building on local knowledge and experience, these ingenious agricultural systems reflect the evolution of humanity and its harmony with nature. They result in landscapes of outstanding aesthetic beauty, and the maintenance of biodiversity, resilient ecosystems and valuable cultural inheritance; above all, they provide multiple goods and services, food and livelihood security, and quality of life. The dynamic human management strategies that allow these ecosystem services and livelihood strategies to persist are characterized by continuous technological and cultural innovation, transfer and exchange.

Over the last few decades, local diversified agricultural systems are increasingly jeopardized by pressure from large-scale ventures, monocropping practices and domestication of exotic species, which have had negative consequences such as the adoption of unsustainable techniques, the overexploitation of resources, and declining productivity. Unless local agricultural systems are supported against such threats, increasing numbers of rural communities will die out in the wake of industrialization and modernization. These sites of biological and cultural wealth are a global resource, which should be preserved.

The GIAHS programme is built on the understanding that throughout history human beings, among which indigenous peoples, have secured their own survival by domesticating plants and animals and shaping harsh environments. Generations of indigenous peoples have developed and transmitted systems that overcome extreme climatic conditions, geographic and political isolation, and scarcity of material assets such as natural resources or government subsidies. The GIAHS programme aims to establish global recognition of the world's most important sites of agricultural heritage; ultimately, it seeks to help preserve local (including indigenous) farming systems and their associated landscapes, biodiversity, knowledge systems and cultures. GIAHS pilot sites were identified during the preparatory phase (2002 to 2006) in Peru, Chile, China, the Philippines, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria. In the subsequent seven years (2007 to 2014) the pilot projects will implement conservation practices aimed at helping to preserve the systems and their components, including cultural livelihoods.[13]

One of the most important GIAHS pilot sites is the island of Chiloé in Chile's lake region. The Chiloé archipelago is an extraordinary biodiversity reserve, whose temperate rain forests hold a wide range of endangered plant and animal species. For local populations, these resources provide food, medicines, dyes and other elements for physical and cultural well-being. The indigenous Huilliche populations inhabiting the area still cultivate about 200 varieties of native potatoes, following ancestral practices transmitted orally by generations of farmers, mostly women. However, their livelihoods are being threatened by persisting marginalization, lack of secure land titles, and environmental degradation caused by forest concessions, water pollution and uncontrolled tourism development. New income-generating activities, such as intensive fish farming in the island lakes and inner sea, are leading to a dramatic outflow of male and female labour from the agriculture sector, resulting in the abandonment of traditional agricultural practices. These changes jeopardize biodiversity conservation activities that are beneficial not only to Chilotes, but also to global genetic biodiversity. The GIAHS programme will help design policies for resource conservation, build institutions able to uphold sustainable practices, and engage in sensitization activities at the local and national levels.

[13] See www.fao.org/sd/giahs

What Experts Say about GIAHS

"The agricultural heritage systems are unique in as much as they represent a fascinating story of man's ability and ingenuity to adjust and adapt to the vagaries of a changing physical and material environment from generation to generation and leave indelible imprints of an abiding commitment to conservation and respect for the natural patrimony. Their other unique characteristics include their ethical, religious and aesthetic values, respect for the rights of indigenous and traditional peoples, their relation with biodiversity, the richness of their natural and cultural diversity, and their deep reservoirs of knowledge and experience, all of which are of tremendous importance for human resilience."

Patricia L. Howard, Wageningen University,
the Netherlands (2008)

"GIAHS have resulted not only in outstanding aesthetic beauty, maintenance of globally significant agricultural biodiversity, resilient ecosystems and valuable cultural inheritance, but above all, in the sustained provision of multiple goods and services, food and livelihood security and quality of life for millions of people. Despite the onrush of modernization and economic change, a few traditional agricultural management and knowledge systems still survive. These systems exhibit important elements of sustainability, namely, they are well adapted to their particular environment, rely on local resources, are small-scale and decentralized, and tend to conserve the natural resource base. Therefore, these systems comprise a Neolithic legacy of considerable importance, yet modern agriculture constantly threatens the sustainability of this inheritance. Because of their significance and the wealth and breadth of accumulated knowledge and experience in the management and use of resources that GIAHS represent, it is imperative that they be considered globally significant resources and should be protected and preserved as well as allowed to evolve. Such ecological and cultural resource is of fundamental value for the future of humankind."

Miguel A. Altieri, University of Berkeley,
California, United States (2008)

Man and Fish artist Saul Williams

FAO's Local indigenous Knowledge Systems (LinKS) project ran from 1998 to 2006 as a regional Eastern and Southern African effort aimed at raising awareness about how rural men and women use and manage biodiversity. It highlighted the importance of indigenous knowledge systems in managing natural resource variety and achieving food security. For example, it is estimated that up to 90 percent of the planting material used by poor farmers is derived from seeds and germplasm that they have produced, selected and saved themselves. The LinKS project demonstrated that small rural farmers have a significant role in preserving and promoting biodiversity for the benefit of food and livelihood security.[14]

One LinKS study focused on the role of indigenous knowledge in range management and forage plants for improving livestock productivity and local food security. It found that indigenous Maasai pastoral communities have enormous knowledge of animal health, management and productivity. For example, the Maasai monitor rainfall patterns using indigenous techniques such as the observation of tree flowering patterns. They also possess a profound knowledge of local resource variety; plant species are identified and assessed to determine their effects on animals' nutrition and vigour, and used in ethno-veterinary practices that contribute to community health and well-being. Although livestock production is usually perceived as a man's domain, the study revealed that women also play an important role, and are responsible for such tasks as milking and looking after sick animals. Given their thorough understanding of livestock practices, women are often consulted by their husbands regarding the selection of cows for breeding. Maasai women are experts on livestock progeny records and advise male heads of households about milk yield, animal temperament, maternal behaviour and fertility traits. Although they do not have legal claim over livestock, because ownership is generally vested in men, women contribute significant knowledge, which should be recognized. Maasai knowledge is usually passed down to younger generations by word of mouth, practice and social interactions among community members. It is important that local gender–differentiated expertise be validated so that future generations can continue to rely on it to meet their daily needs (FAO, 2006).

[14] See www.fao.org/sd/links

Cultural indicators and awareness

An important part of FAO's work with indigenous issues is analysis of indigenous peoples' socio-economic conditions and study of the factors that influence their ability to secure food and livelihoods (FAO, 2007). An expanding area of interest is the development of indicators that define indigenous peoples' social forms and track the quality of their living circumstances. Lack of data results in indigenous peoples' realities being misrepresented, and conceals the truth about the structural disadvantages which many of them face. Without good facts and figures, there is no firm basis for determining development priorities and effective programmes. Data must be collected with care and in accordance with local realities. Beginning in 2002 and in partnership with the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), FAO's Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) initiative has developed cultural indicators for indigenous peoples' food and agro-ecological systems. These markers examine the relationship between indigenous culture and food and agro-ecological systems, and the extent to which they validate indigenous peoples' perceptions. Questionnaire surveys and consultations were first initiated to help identify the

relevant criteria. These were reviewed by 30 representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations and nations and representatives of UN agencies at the 2nd Global Consultation on the Right to Food, Food Security and Food Sovereignty for Indigenous Peoples (Bilwi, Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, 2006). Subsequently, the markers have been consolidated into the following five main categories, which form the basis for continued work in this area:

- Access to, security for and integrity of lands, territories, natural resources, sacred sites and ceremonial areas used for traditional food production, harvesting and/or gathering and related cultural and ceremonial purposes.
- Abundance, scarcity and/or threats regarding traditional seeds, plant foods and medicines, food animals, and the cultural practices associated with their protection and survival.
- Use and transmission of methods, knowledge, language, ceremonies, dances, prayers, oral histories, stories and songs related to traditional foods and subsistence practices, and the continued use of traditional foods in daily diets and cultural/ceremonial practices.
- Indigenous peoples' capacity for adaptability, resilience and/or restoration regarding traditional food use and production in response to changing conditions that include migration, displacement, urbanization and environmental changes.
- Indigenous peoples' ability to exercise and implement their rights, including self-determination and free, prior and informed consent, and self-government structures to promote and defend their food sovereignty and related aspects of their development.

The indicators are designed to enable indigenous peoples monitor the impacts of some key trends and development interventions on their lives, help policy makers and development practitioners to understand, recognize and respect dimensions of indigenous peoples' livelihoods that are important for them, and promote improved understanding, transparency and accountability between indigenous peoples and those working to assist and support them (Woodley et al., 2008). This initiative is grounded in the recognition that cultural indicators can provide a valuable, practical basis for developing a common understanding about the role of culture in sustaining food and agro-ecological systems, and thereby community health, development and well-being.[15]

Food security, right to food and nutrition

On several occasions, particularly through the Atitlán Declaration of 2002, indigenous organizations have stressed that many indigenous peoples face extremely high risks of food insecurity. Although precise estimates are difficult to acquire, there is evidence to support the claim that indigenous groups suffer disproportionately high levels of poverty and hunger. Besides having to contend with frequent episodes of discrimination and abuse, which hinder their possibilities for productive labour, indigenous peoples also have to deal with increasing environmental degradation and natural resource depletion. In response, indigenous peoples have emphasized that rights to land, water and territory, as well as to self-determination, are essential for the full realization of their food security and food sovereignty. The concept of "food

[15] See the FAO SARD Initiative website at www.fao.org/sard/en/init/964/2687/2453/index.html.

sovereignty" was originally coined by members of the Via Campesina organization in 1996, and generally refers to the right of peoples to define their own food, agriculture, livestock and fisheries systems, rather than having them subject mainly to market forces and other exogenous dynamics. For indigenous peoples, food security goes beyond the mere satisfaction of physical needs; their conception of right to food is closely linked to the fulfilment of cultural rights, where food security implies not only access to adequate food quantities and nutrition, but also the right to choose what they eat and to prepare it according to traditional methods.

FAO's Right to Food Unit was established in 2005 as a follow-up to adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (known as the Right to Food Guidelines).[16] These were adopted unanimously by the FAO Council in November 2004 and recommend practical steps for implementing the right to food at the national level. The Right to Food Guidelines are highly relevant to policies and practices affecting indigenous peoples. They refer to indigenous peoples and indigenous communities explicitly, but also implicitly as members of vulnerable groups.

Realization of the right to food is closely contingent on the socio-political and economic conditions to which people are subject, making the issues of natural resource access and discrimination extremely relevant to indigenous peoples' ability to achieve food security and realize their right to food. As a result, the conjunction between the right to food and indigenous groups requires particular attention (www.fao.org/righttofood). A publication from the Right to Food Unit offers a comprehensive analysis of the relevance of the right to food for indigenous peoples. As well as being necessary for livelihoods, therefore, food-related practices are an important aspect of cultural integrity and a necessary component of "development with identity" (Knuth, 2008).

Specific Example of the Right to Food Guidelines and Indigenous Peoples

"Guideline 8.1. Access to resources and assets. States should facilitate sustainable, non-discriminatory and secure access and utilization of resources consistent with their national law and with international law and protect the assets that are important for people's livelihoods. States should respect and protect the rights of individuals with respect to resources such as land, water, forests, fisheries and livestock without any discrimination. Where necessary and appropriate, States should carry out land reforms and other policy reforms consistent with their human rights obligations and in accordance with the rule of law in order to secure efficient and equitable access to land and to strengthen proper growth. Special attention may be given to groups such as pastoralists and indigenous people and their relation to natural resources."

[16] See www.fao.org/docrep/008/y5906m/y5906m08.htm.

In collaboration with the Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE) at McGill University (Montreal, Canada), FAO has also been involved in documenting indigenous peoples' food systems and nutrition status. Despite their wealth of local expertise and traditional knowledge, the conditions to which indigenous peoples are subject often cause nutritional deficiencies and poor health states. A recent publication documenting 12 case studies from around the world demonstrates the inherent strengths of local traditional food systems and explains the circumstances that have caused negative nutrition transitions in many indigenous communities, including the influx of industrial and purchased food (FAO, 2008). The case studies – from Canada, Japan, Peru, India, Nigeria, Colombia, Thailand, Kenya and the Federated States of Micronesia – focus on the fundamental relationships among people, traditional food practices and their supporting ecosystems. Together, these elements underpin the food security and health status of local populations, so each is essential to people's physical and cultural preservation, as well as to the principle of food sovereignty.

The studies found that the numbers of locally available food species varied considerably depending on the ecosystem and socio-political context. The following table shows the quantities of daily food intake derived from traditional sources, and the impressive resource variety inherent to indigenous communities' environments.

Percentages of Adult Dietary Energy Supplied by Traditional Food and Numbers of Species/ Varieties in Food Systems (CINE)

Indigenous group	% daily energy derived from local food systems	Number of species/ varieties
Awajun (Peru)	93	223
Bhil (India)	59	95
Dalit (India)	43	329
Gwich'in (Canada)	33	50
Igbo (Nigeria)	96	220
Ingano (Colombia)	47	160
Inuit (Canada)	41	79
Karen (Thailand)	85	387
Maasai (Kenya)	6	35
Nuxalk (Canada)	30	67
Pohnpei (Micronesia)	27	381

Source: CINE.

The ultimate goal of this joint project is to document successful food-based strategies to help protect the health status of indigenous peoples using their own food traditions. Such an approach ensures better health and livelihood outcomes from the cultural, biological and financial perspectives, contributing to the long-term sustainability of indigenous communities and natural ecosystems.

Economic opportunity and sustainable enterprise development

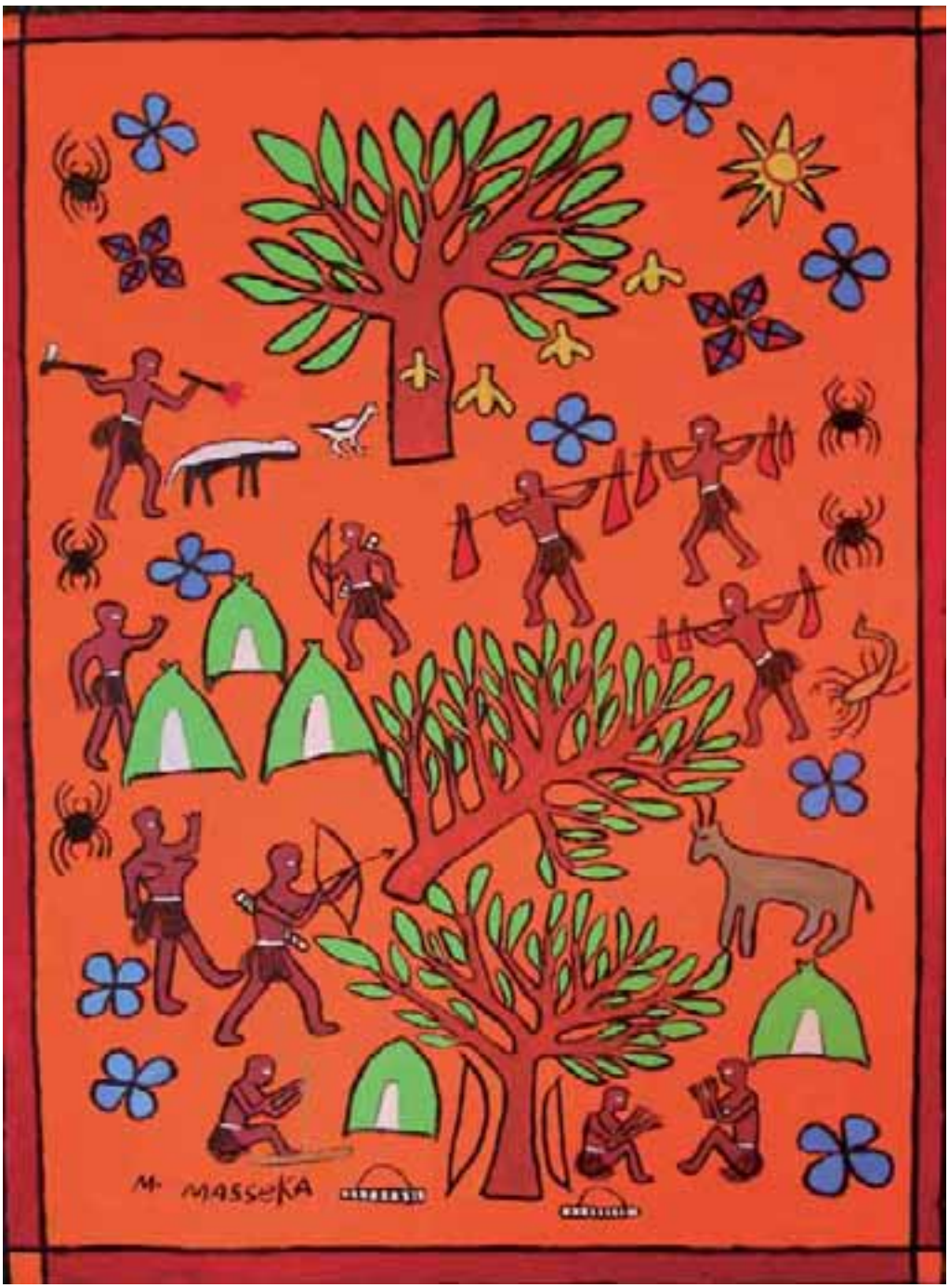
As part of efforts to create an enabling environment for economic employment and livelihood security, the rural development section of FAO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAORAP) has been involved in cooperative enterprise initiatives with indigenous Lawa and Karen women in northern Thailand. Although many aspects of their socio-economic situation have improved in recent years, modernization and influence from the lowlands have brought rapid changes in life patterns, and traditional agricultural self-sufficiency can often no longer be sustained. As a consequence, highland communities are suffering deterioration in such key areas as agriculture, employment and socio-cultural values. FAORAP's entrepreneurial and institutional capacity building projects aim to stimulate or strengthen the socio-economic development of remote communities.

For example, in collaboration with the Savings and Credit Union of Thailand (CULT), FAO provided support to develop local women's savings groups into production and marketing groups for textile products with original ethnic designs. In consultation with FAO and local experts, CULT produced a handbook on small enterprises for hilltribe people in Thailand, which is available to anyone engaged in promoting small and medium community enterprises. The handbook has been disseminated through technical training and marketing linkages provided by the CULT women's enterprise centre.[17] The Hill Tribe Development Project thus brought together development practitioners, local NGOs and indigenous groups to create income-generating activities and a foundation for longer-term sustainability. A recent assessment by a FAORAP officer reports that some women's groups have continued to produce and sell their goods, and the women-led cooperative marketing model continued to function even after regular project activities had ceased. This demonstrates that a rural institutions approach to development has great potential; by building on local trust and sharing local financial resources, such an approach provides a solid base for generating sustainable enterprises. It also helped strengthen the cultural identity of hill tribe groups (Lawa, Karen and others) through sales of textile products with traditional symbols. ACCU, an Asian network of savings and credit unions, has adopted this model for creating community-based financial institutions (personal communication, Wim Polman, Rural Development Officer, FAORAP).[18]

Similar efforts are taking place in Latin America. For example, the FAO office in Honduras has initiated the Creativity and Cultural Identity for Local Development Programme, which falls within the framework of the MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F), a collaborative venture between UNDP and the Spanish Government established to help accelerate realization of the MDGs in selected countries. Its purpose is threefold: 1) to implement local development strategies and programmes that recognize

[17] The handbook is available at www.fao.org/docrep/006/ad491e/ad491e00.htm

[18] For more information on FAORAP see www.fao.org/world/regional/rap/susdev_rural_devt_regional.asp



The story of honey bird, honey badger and man working together to find the honey
artist Manuel Masseka

cultural diversity and help strengthen peoples' identities; 2) to establish creative and cultural enterprises that contribute to local development and expand economic opportunities for the populations of eight regions; and 3) to produce and distribute information on the theme of culture and development to raise awareness and advise both public authorities and private investors on its potential benefits and implications. As a partner, FAO is responsible for providing technical consultations and capacity building activities for the development of rural enterprises based on traditional products and artefacts. FAO will also contribute to designing and promoting a network for the sustainable production, commercialization and distribution of these products. It is hoped that links to markets and tourist centres will help local populations, including ethnic minorities and indigenous groups, to sustain themselves in the face of decreasing opportunities.

Communication and information exchange

Knowledge and information are fundamental in supporting livelihood security and development, and FAO has promoted communication tools for agriculture and rural development for the last 30 years. Communication tools are increasingly recognized as an effective means of promoting capacity building and social change; they can be used to advocate for human rights, inform about important events, put pressure on policy-makers, mobilize support for a cause, and improve community participation in development processes. Giving voice to disadvantaged people and fostering dialogue among stakeholders can render development initiatives more inclusive, more democratic and more responsive to local realities. Communication initiatives also foster the blending between local/indigenous knowledge and technical information for development. Indeed, recognition of the resourcefulness of traditional agricultural knowledge systems and their complementarity with "scientific" innovation systems is a growing area of interest today.

In September 2006, the First International Indigenous Peoples' Meeting on Communication for Development was organized in Bolivia by the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia (CIDOB) and FAO. Its aim was to share experiences, visions and best practices in order to influence discussions in the upcoming First World Congress on Communication for Development (October 2006). Hosted at FAO Headquarters in Rome in collaboration with the World Bank, this global convention reviewed evidence for increasing the role of communication in sustainable rural development, and established priorities for future interventions. Regional and thematic communication platforms were established to provide fora for discussions and the exchange of ideas and experiences (FAO, 2007). In response to demand, a special session on indigenous peoples' communication was held, resulting in the first Latin American Indigenous Peoples' Communication Platform – the **Plataforma Indigena**.

Developed by CIDOB and FAO, the Plataforma Indigena is a participatory communication portal that provides indigenous peoples with a virtual space through which to communicate among themselves and with external actors. FAO facilitates the technical and managerial components. The platform fosters dialogue and discussion, informs members of past events and new developments, and recognizes indigenous peoples as a united front in pushing for their rights. Through the portal, indigenous groups are better able to organize gatherings and coordinate their presence at relevant events.[19]

[19] See the Plataforma Indigena website at www.plataformaindigena.org

Endorsement of this initiative by UNPFII and indigenous peoples worldwide has led to the development of a similar platform in North America. In consultation with FAO, the Keewaytinook Okimakanak Organization (K-Net) of Canada has created a communication platform for consultation, collaboration and sharing of experiences among indigenous peoples of Canada and English-speaking nations.[20] Preliminary discussions are taking place for the development of similar initiatives in Asia and Africa.

Communication for development tools of this type play a fundamental role in today's fast-paced and increasingly interconnected world. As well as functioning as an advocacy instrument, they can help close the information and technology gaps that often exist in remote rural communities, and improve traditional farming systems, environmental care and advisory services for indigenous communities. They also offer a means through which indigenous peoples can express their concerns, interests and opinions, thus providing a link to national and international arenas.

Indigenous Languages

One of the most important dimensions of communication is language. Languages carry cultural characteristics and traditional idioms, as well as sustaining the knowledge and local practices that communities use to meet their livelihood needs. For example, the loss of language associated with food and agro-ecological systems is considered a proxy indicator for the loss of knowledge associated with agrobiodiversity use in rural areas. This makes it important to invest in efforts to retain indigenous languages and the knowledge they carry. To this end, FAO is increasingly involved in recording indigenous expressions and disseminating information in languages other than official UN ones. For example, FAO's Fisheries Department recently published its *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries* in several Pacific languages – Fijian, Kirbati, Motu, Gela, Tongan, Tuvaluan, Bislama, Samoan and Maori.

[20] See the K-Net website at meeting.knet.ca/moodle/

Can you see it? artist Ibiyinka Olufemi Alao

Fire in Africa artist Ibiyinka Olufemi Alao

V. CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

FAO has an important niche in development efforts that concern food security and agricultural development. The recent adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has made FAO's work in this area increasingly necessary, as have several emerging challenges, which are making indigenous issues even more pressing. Among the most important matters for urgent consideration are climate change, biofuel production, volatile food prices and extractive industries.

Climate change and disaster management

As testified by their continued existence, indigenous peoples have been adapting to social and environmental shifts for thousands of years. However, the scale and intensity of recent climate change have eroded this capacity to adapt to altering environmental conditions. Indigenous peoples are now often referred to as the "barometer of climate change", because the changes observed in their territories are primary indicators of the developments that are affecting the global climate (Consultation Workshop and Dialogue on Indigenous Peoples' Self-determined Development, 2008: 15). Indigenous peoples have contributed the least to world greenhouse gas emissions and have the smallest ecological footprints on earth, but they suffer the worst impacts of climate change because of their proximity to the environment and dependence on natural resources, which mean that any change in the ecosystem will have a profound and immediate impact on their livelihoods.

The impacts of climate change include (World Change Café, 2008):

- in tropical and subtropical areas, increases in diseases associated with higher temperatures and in vector- and water-borne diseases such as cholera, malaria and dengue fever;
- worsening drought conditions and desertification, leading to more forest fires that disrupt subsistence agriculture, hunting and gathering livelihoods, and to serious biodiversity loss;
- in arid and semi-arid lands, excessive rainfall and prolonged droughts, resulting in dust storms that damage grasslands, seedlings, other crops and livestock;
- in the Arctic, stronger waves, thawing permafrost and melting mountain glaciers and sea ice, bringing coastal and riverbank erosion;
- smaller animal populations and the introduction of new marine species due to changing animal travel and migration routes;
- in boreal forests, new types of insects and longer-living endemic insects such as spruce beetles, which destroy trees and other vegetation;
- in coastal regions and small-island States, erosion, stronger hurricanes and typhoons, leading to the loss of freshwater supplies, land, mangrove forests and dislocation (environmental refugees);
- increasing food insecurity due to declining fish populations and coral bleaching;
- crop-damaging pest infestations, such as locusts, rats and spruce beetles, and increasing food costs due to competition with the demand for biofuels;
- extreme and unprecedented cold spells resulting in health problems, such as hypothermia, bronchitis and pneumonia, especially for the old and the young.

Indigenous and other rural peoples have adapted many unique livelihood systems to counteract difficulties associated with environmental change. FAO has been documenting local practices that have the potential to help offset the negative consequences of climate-related developments. Technology for Agriculture (TECA), one of FAO's most comprehensive initiatives in this area, aims to improve access to information and knowledge about technologies that have proven particularly useful to agricultural development and sustainable practice. TECA provides repositories of information on agricultural technologies around the world, allowing interested partners to access a common database and to share knowledge about best practice techniques in agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry, thus contributing to food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

One of TECA's most important components is the documentation of good practices for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). As climate change effects become more frequent and intense, DRR becomes more important, especially for rural populations such as indigenous peoples, who are more vulnerable to the effects of severe natural occurrences. Disaster risk is the combination of a potential damaging event (the hazard) and the degree of vulnerability of a given population group. DRR involves strengthening the coping strategies and resilience of local communities so that the adverse effects of a phenomenon can be avoided or limited. TECA has collected information about good DRR practices that have been successfully field-tested in FAO projects. Both development technicians and rural populations such as indigenous groups stand to benefit from a mechanism that helps increase preparedness for emergency situations.[21]

[21] For more information on TECA and DRR technologies see www.fao.org/sd/teca/partners/drr_en.asp

Case Study: Indigenous Peoples in Watershed Areas and Inland Deltas – Using Traditional Techniques to Protect Watersheds in Honduras

In the remote village of Guarita in Honduras, traditional techniques have been integrated into climate change adaptation measures. Traditional farming in this area involves planting crops under trees whose roots anchor the soil, pruning vegetation to provide nutrients to the soil and conserve soil water, and terracing to reduce soil erosion. Widespread slash-and-burn techniques are not customary. During Hurricane Mitch in 1998, traditional farming methods in Quezungal provided greater protection to the upper catchment; as a result, only 10 percent of crops were lost and the village was spared from the kind of massive destruction that occurred elsewhere in the region. In some places, major damage resulted from the application of farming methods more suited to plains than hill terrain. Experiences from Hurricane Mitch and other environmental disasters corroborated the success of these traditional systems, and efforts to emulate them are now being promoted by the Government of Honduras in collaboration with FAO.

Source: IUCN, 2008: 53.

Biofuel production and changing food prices

Attempts to mitigate problems such as climate change and high oil prices have fed the dilemma of biofuel production. Although modern biofuels can provide an alternative energy supply and help decrease greenhouse gas emissions, their production may have severe negative impacts on the environment and rural communities. The rapid expansion of biofuel production is putting immense pressure on land, forests and water resources. Groups such as indigenous peoples who depend on these natural assets are therefore finding it more difficult to obtain necessary resources. Indigenous peoples' representatives have also declared that human rights violations are increasing alongside the biofuel boom: conflicts, displacements and expropriations of ancestral lands and forests have intensified to make space for biofuel plantations, such as soya, sugar cane, jatropha, oil-palm and maize (Coutla, Dyer and Vermeulen, 2008).

Land rights and tenure security concerns are becoming even more pronounced. Where there are competing resource claims among local resource users, governments and incoming biofuel producers, the rapid spread of commercial biofuel production may result – and is resulting – in poorer groups losing access to the land on which they depend. In these contexts, the spread of commercial biofuel crop cultivation can have major negative effects on local food security and the economic, social and cultural dimensions of land use.

Biofuels may also have devastating effects on food security by leading to large increases in basic food prices (Ford Runge and Senauer, 2007). Rural populations typically spend 50 to 80 percent of their household income on food and/or food production, so upsurges in the prices of staple foods will mean malnutrition and hunger. Until conditions are in place to protect the rights and opportunities of poorer groups, indigenous peoples will continue to suffer from socio-economic injustices and misplaced policy interventions.

Extractive Industries

In many developing countries, extractive industries (oil, mining, timber, gas and other products) provide a substantial proportion of government revenue, foreign exchange and GDP. As evident, they are an important component of the development potential of natural-resource rich countries. If managed sensibly and effectively, they can generate much of the revenues needed to finance public services and broad-based poverty alleviation. However, natural resource extraction is a complex issue which raises numerous dilemmas, especially for populations which inhabit the areas of interest. In many cases, these locations coincide with indigenous peoples' territories. For many indigenous communities, extractive industries have caused numerous cases of forced relocation, land dispossession, appropriation of resources and other violations. During recent decades indigenous peoples have fought hard to change the distribution of benefits and costs from resource exploitation, and their advocacy has made some advances in areas such as "corporate social responsibility" policies (O'Faircheallaigh and Ali Eds., 2008). Nevertheless, greater considerations for the economic, legal, environmental, social, and human rights implications of extractive enterprises and their relationship to indigenous peoples need to be addressed.

Papa Imillas artist Roberto Mamani Mamani

VI. A SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

Today, decisions about when, where and how to exploit natural resources are normally justified in terms of the national interest and the "greater good", which is generally interpreted as the interest of mainstream society. As a result, the rights and interests of unrepresented groups, such as indigenous peoples, are often subordinated to majority interests (Colchester and Mackay, 2004: 9). As the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous groups has recently stated, there is no mechanism for ensuring that indigenous groups are adequately consulted in development projects that affect them directly or indirectly. Although indigenous peoples occasionally have some input in government agencies' service delivery, they do not have adequate control and sometimes suffer from paternalistic attitudes on the part of government agencies, NGOs and international organizations.

"It is evident that indigenous peoples frequently do not control the decisions that affect their everyday lives and their lands, even when their lands have been officially demarcated and registered, because of invasions and mining by outsiders and other factors."

S. James Anaya, Special Rapporteur (August 2008)

According to the principles defined in the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples and other documents, indigenous peoples must be included in all stages of the development process. Unfortunately, perceptions of indigenous peoples as "backwards" and a hindrance to national development continue to reign in government circles and mainstream society; this negative view leads to institutionalized discrimination and a desire to assimilate indigenous groups into the national body rather than allowing them their own space. As stated by the principle of self-determination, however, development for indigenous peoples implies their right to participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of national and regional development plans and programmes that may affect them.

Sustainable livelihoods approach

For development to have lasting impact, an effort should be made to tailor projects and programmes to the needs of people themselves. One of the most well-appreciated approaches which embraces this conception of development is the sustainable livelihoods framework. A livelihoods perspective facilitates more thorough analyses of different social groups and social settings, thereby making a greater effort to consider the idiosyncratic conditions faced by different communities. A realistic understanding of people's strengths and assets is pursued in order to convert these into positive livelihoods outcomes. Furthermore, it emphasizes the relevance of the wider context in which people's livelihoods and capacities are embedded (including institutional environment, policy and legal structures, peoples' vulnerability context, and so on), in order to link micro and macro dynamics for greater sustainability (FAO, 2005).

In essence, a people-centred and holistic approach of this kind seeks to make development more in line with the views of local people. It fits well with the principles expressed by indigenous peoples since it focuses on specific livelihood characteristics and the context in which these unfold. By building on local capacity, it would also grant more space to indigenous knowledge systems and their potential contributions to sustainable management of natural resources.

Elements of a Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

- Focus on local people and their livelihood strategies
- Holistic
- Dynamic in terms of changing priorities and needs of different people at different times
- Builds on people's strengths and assets (for example, local knowledge)
- Links micro and macro dimensions of people's lives
- Sustainability (related to improved local capacities and empowerment for long-term benefit)

Indigenous peoples demand that "one-size-fits-all" development solutions be expanded to accommodate alternative conceptions of human need, progress and well-being (Consultation Workshop and Dialogue on Indigenous Peoples' Self-determined Development, 2008). The sustainable livelihoods approach offers a practical framework for development which meets indigenous peoples' criteria and which can be feasibly applied by international organizations such as FAO.

Mechanisms for greater engagement with indigenous issues

The following section outlines some mechanisms which can make FAO's engagement with indigenous issues more complete.

- **Awareness raising**
  Raising awareness about the conditions in which indigenous peoples live, the development challenges they face, and their concerns for the future would increase understanding and pressure to take action. Because FAO works through member governments, effective communication may also play a role in influencing policies which directly or indirectly affect indigenous peoples' livelihoods.
  Dialogue with indigenous organizations is also important in order to communicate effectively how FAO's mandate and operational boundaries affect its engagement with indigenous issues. In this way, the relationship between FAO and indigenous peoples would be made as clear and practicable as possible.

- **Capacity building for indigenous peoples**
  Since indigenous peoples frequently face many challenges to their livelihoods, capacity building for indigenous communities is important. Stronger field activities are at the core of FAO's mandate to ensure that Member Countries can ensure food security for their populations, including indigenous ones.

- **Capacity building for FAO staff**
  Capacity building within FAO must go hand in hand with awareness raising efforts and increased field-level capacity. FAO staff need to develop greater capacity to understand and integrate indigenous issues into policies and programmes, when these concern populations with an indigenous constituent. Development workers should be sensitive to local dynamics and be prepared to tailor development interventions so as to avoid negative effects on the communities they aim to assist, especially on non-mainstream groups.

- **Participation and inclusion**
  Greater participation in development processes is considered of utmost importance to indigenous peoples. For projects which involve or affect them, FAO must endeavour to ensure that governments include indigenous representatives in consultations and programming cycles, in accordance with the principle of "free, prior and informed consent." Multi-stakeholder dialogues are necessary to allow indigenous peoples to express their views and to ensure that development processes are compatible with local realities and aspirations.

- **Coordination and cooperation**
  Increased on-the-ground cooperation among organizations which have a commitment to indigenous issues would make work in this area stronger and more effective. The recent tendency towards more multi-agency projects is thus a welcome development which could ensure a more integrated United Nations system response to important development challenges.

Sunlit Labyrinth artist Calamus Kenny

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD

"Modern science can and must build on indigenous knowledge systems to develop agriculture while at the same time safeguarding an embattled environment and enabling fragile and threatened ecosystems to survive."

Address by FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf, World Food Day Ceremony, FAO Headquarters, 16 October 2005

Indigenous peoples have featured in a number of FAO projects over the last decade. These initiatives are varied in nature and scope, but are all the result of increasing recognition of indigenous peoples' history and potential contributions to sustainable rural development. The examples given in previous chapters form the basis of FAO's work with indigenous groups and of future endeavours to capitalize on the skills and knowledge that rural inhabitants offer.

Although international human rights instruments are extremely important for the protection of all people, they are not always enough to guarantee the survival, well-being and dignity of indigenous and other minority groups. In spite of these international instruments and the regulations in favour of indigenous peoples established by many national governments, the situation on the ground is still one of widespread disregard for such laws. There is need for increased sensitivity to the plight of indigenous groups, and greater awareness of the contributions they could make to environmental protection and sustainable rural development. A more holistic approach to development, which does not alienate small groups but instead seeks to build on their local expertise, could lead to more successful development and better human rights conditions. The sustainable livelihoods framework should be viewed in this regard.

As consideration for indigenous peoples and their lifestyles continues to grow around the world, FAO aims to expand its work in this area to contribute to international efforts to protect rural peoples while respecting their socio-cultural features and rights. Developing local capacity and advocating for policy responses are central components of this objective: strengthening of both the micro and the macro levels is necessary for creating a productive environment that can lift people out of insecure conditions without threatening the natural resources on which they depend.

Indigenous peoples are significant to FAO's mandate because they remain highly dependent on agriculture and many suffer disproportionately in terms of food and livelihood insecurity. Although culturally rich, many indigenous peoples remain economically impoverished, and unless biodiversity and cultural knowledge are maintained they will be unable to continue meeting their livelihood needs. Indigenous peoples are also important because they provide important services to the environment and therefore to humanity; their expertise as sustainable managers of the world's diverse ecosystems can be a strategic advantage in the fight against environmental degradation. Promoting the coexistence of indigenous systems with others, rather than assimilating them into the larger society, is key. Indigenous peoples should thus be considered both a vital beneficiary group and an ally for FAO in its efforts to achieve its strategic objectives in food security and sustainable agriculture. Cooperation on this front may lead to innovative and progressive programmes – a win-win solution for humanity as a whole.

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ANNEX
Sharing knowledge through art

Throughout time art has been an essential aspect of indigenous life and culture, constituting the oldest ongoing tradition in the art world as a whole. It is an expressive medium that connects past and present, the people and the land, while reflecting the richness and diversity of communities, languages and geographic landscapes.

The artworks displayed in this publication are from various regions and the artists from diverse communities. Through the use of different techniques these artists have captured traditional aspects of indigenous societies and cultures using art as a medium to share their knowledge.

FAO is grateful to the following artists who have contributed to the publication.

Artist Biographies

AFRICA

Julietta Carimbwe

Julietta was born some time during the 1960s in Mavinga, Angola. Like many Bushmen, Julietta was one of the 4500 Xun and Khwe Bushmen from Angola and Namibia who were forcibly relocated to the Northern Cape in South Africa. It was here that Julietta emerged as one of the most sought after Bushmen artists. Throughout her life Julietta viewed painting as a valuable form of healing, “I want to say that it is my work that sustains my life. When I paint I feel good.”

Julietta and her community used to follow the hunter/gatherer lifestyle. Her Bushmen community did not wander aimlessly but would follow the migration of the animals as the seasons changed. Julietta’s art work entitled “**Changing of seasons**” (page 15) represents these seasonal shifts as they occurred in the Kalahari Desert.

Sadly, Julietta passed away in September 2008. Some of her art can still be viewed at: www.theartofafrica.co.za
The Art of Africa is one of the world’s largest Bushmen/San art galleries.

Manuel Masseka

Manuel was born in 1946 near the Longa River in Angola. Here Manuel received his traditional education in craft and survival skills from his family. In 1968 he was contracted to the Portuguese Army as a tracker and thereafter to the South African Defense Force in Namibia. When Namibia acquired independence in 1990, Manuel was relocated to a makeshift tent town in South Africa. This is when Manuel Masseka blossomed into an internationally recognized and respected artist. Hunting and gathering scenes are often depicted in Manuel's work. His hope is that one day the next generation of Bushmen will realize what it was like to be a Bushman in the old days.

His art work entitled "**The story of honey bird, honey badger and man working together to find the honey**" (page 38) captures the traditional Bushman story of the honey bird and honey badger:

"Honey bird and honey bee were once friends. One day honey bird's chick gets sick. She can only survive if she receives one of bee's wings. Bee refuses to give up one of his wings because he says he'll die without it. Honey bird's chick dies which makes her very angry and decides to make a partnership with honey badger. Honey bird will lead honey badger to the bee's nest and they'll share the honey. However, bee gets clever and moves his nest to the top of the tree where honey badger can't reach the honey. Honey badger then decides to make an agreement with a man. Honey badger would follow honey bee with the man just behind with his axe and fire. Man will remove the honey but always leave enough for honey badger and honey bird to enjoy" (source unknown).

Manuel can be contacted through the Art of Africa, one of the world's largest Bushmen / San art galleries. For further information please see: www.theartofafrica.co.za

Ibiyinka Olufemi Alao

Born in Nigeria in 1975, Ibiyinka is a native Yoruba man. He is a trained architect and an internationally recognized artist. Growing up, Ibiyinka learned from his father that happiness in life is a code which one can decode by listening to silent voices and speaking without talking. At an early age Ibiyinka saw what many others did not: life in "colour" and "colour" as a language. Ibiyinka's work depicts African life from a traditional point of view. This unique perspective allowed him to depict in a clear and elaborate manner what he often had a hard time articulating. Empty art canvases soon became a vehicle for bringing his thoughts to life and giving his opinion a voice.

Ibiyinka's art is globally recognized. He is the winner of the prestigious United Nations International Art Competition and his art work has been exhibited in many countries.

In between exhibitions, Ibiyinka gives open lectures at universities and sets up workshops in community

centers across the country. As Nigeria's Art Ambassador, Ibiyinka is also frequently involved in seminars, panel discussions, workshops and exhibitions.

"Orange of Kponyan" (page 8)

"Sweet taste falling from the sky My desire is always to be here Oh Orange of Kponyan."

"Mortal Feelings" (page 4-5)
"If I could leave this mortal body alone to show you the real reasons for my joy, yes I would. There comes to me moments when I feel trapped in this lifeless body, however, it is our only carriage to immortality. By seeing the happy mix of movement and emotions, we can know that there is immortality. For we can see in our mortal bodies the expression of joy and sorrow."

"Can you see it?" (page 41)
"It is well for gentlemen and fishermen to talk of the age of miracles; but remember the foolish brutes whom they carry on their boats, men nursed in material possessions, entirely ignorant, made to take pride in deeds of blood, men who can have no amusement but in drunkenness, debauch, and plunder. Men without faith and foresight. No wonder they cannot see the hand of divine providence guiding those with spiritual eyes to succeed."

"The Music Party" (page 16)
"Flutes of many colours remind me of you Red Sun in the horizon is the way my heart will bleed Blowing it out really helps to heal the wounds I will shine for the world to see. That I am filled with colours."

"Fire in Africa" (page 42)

"Fire burns, destroys, but it also gives light. The idea in this painting is to show that every sad situation may also yield a good result. Africa has had her own share of wars, famines and natural disasters."

"Koroso Dancer" (page 26)

"In this painting, I illustrate a woman who is confident in her own surroundings. A woman who exhumes self confidence and upholds peace in her own home while protecting her children."

Ibiyinka is also the proud author of a book entitled "Eternity in our Hearts" which was recently published in April 2009.

Ibiyinka can be contacted at email:
ibiyinkacla@yahoo.co.uk

More of Ibiyinka's art work can be viewed at:
www.ibiyinka.com

NORTH AMERICA

Calamus Kenny

Calamus Kenny is a 28 year old aboriginal man living in Sioux Lookout. As a highly spiritual person himself, Calamus firmly believes we are all spiritual beings and views himself and his art as an instrument through which to pass on what he has learned to others. For Calamus, the greatest gift he has ever received is his daughter. In his words, "a child is a gift that the creator gave me in which to raise, protect, teach, and above all love. Passing on the gift of life is the greatest achievement any person can make while on this earth."

Calamus was introduced to painting at the age of 17, and was instantly transformed. Painting came quite naturally to him, it unleashed a creative force which he expressed using acrylic paints. The avenue for his artistic abilities did not end, however, and he soon took up photography and graphic design for the Kuh-ke-nah Network (K-Net). K-Net is a programme of Keewaytinook Okimakanak (KO) tribal council which provides broadband network services and information and communication technology (ICT) applications to First Nations in remote regions of northwestern Ontario, Canada. Today Calamus is a Multimedia coordinator and videographer at K-Net Services.

"Sunlit Labyrinth" (page 50)
Calamus is an avid canoeist and he and his family often find themselves in places where the water way is not very clear. This painting is a place where the river meets a long stretch of marshes, and the creek is not visible. It was originally a photograph taken while standing on a fallen tree 15 feet from the ground.

Calamus's work can be viewed at www.knet.ca/

Calamus can also be contacted through K-Net at email: Calkenny@knet.ca

Saul Williams

Saul was born in 1954 in Neeyahgoyahg, Canada. Saul lived in North Caribou Lake district until he was nine years old, after which his family was told to move to Weagamow, 30 miles west of Caribou. He attended Indian Affairs Day School for six years from grade 1 to grade 8. In the summer of 1969, Saul sold his first painting for five dollars (a 4 feet by 6 feet canvas). In 1970, he went to Elliot Lake Summer School in northern Ontario to take art lessons. Here, he experimented with various art mediums including etching, weaving, linoleum cuts, pottery, and silk screen. In 1971 Saul took part in his first art show at York University in Toronto. Since then he has displayed his work throughout Canada. Saul is currently working on a collection of Intarsia. Intarsia is an art form which uses different pieces of wood, individually cut, shaped, and smoothed, to create a three dimensional picture.

When not creating art Saul teaches art skills to children as a visiting art teacher in Bearskin Lake, Fort Severn, Weagamow, Pelican Falls School, Constance Lake, Fort Hope, and Mitchell.

"My grandmother gathering herbs" (page 25)
"Every summer and especially in the fall we would follow our grandmother wherever she went .. She would gather some traditional medicine and herbs from the land .. She would explain how to use each plant and for what purpose. There is a plant that grows by the shore ..It has a peppermint smell to it.. She said ..we will boil these when we have a cold and get rid of our coughs ..She had many plants she would store for winter months for various illnesses.. She would often say anything and everything you need is here in the land ..The Creator has provided for our needs...Everything we need is here. I wish more documentation would have been done of all the herbs and medicines she had made from natural resources."

"Counselling" (page xii)
"Counselling takes skill and most of the time some counselors have said it is how you grew up or the place you grew up has made you who you are to-

day.. Rather than solve problems a Counselor is to reflect the problem to the Client...So I have learned.. and in our culture it is our land and our food from the land has made us who we are today."

"Man and Fish" (page 32)
"Our people say if there was no fish to catch we would not have survived. There was always plenty of fish and rabbits in our land...That is how our First Nation survived by catching fish and rabbits.. Blankets and clothing were made from rabbit skins woven together..nets were home made with tree roots if there was no twine to be had...Some people developed and designed fish traps using rocks and trees along the rivers ..but in the spring time you can grab them from the river..we still do when they spawn in the spring around May..This was before there was a store..Long time ago like in the early 1900s there was no store, no other people ..Just us in this land.. In 1952 Hudson Bay Company came to our community to build a store and it changed everything. Our people are always thankful to fish and fish spirit for saving them."

Saul can be contacted on: 001 807 469 1254 or at: saulwilliams@knet.ca

Saul's work can be viewed at: www.knet.ca

Saul's Intarsia collection can be viewed at: www.rasterville.com/intarsia

LATIN AMERICA

Roberto Mamani Mamani

Roberto was born in 1962 in Cala Cala, Cochabamba. His parents were native Aymaras from the Tiawanaku region. He spent his childhood between the La Paz highland plateau and the same valley where he was born. Roberto is a self-taught artist who started painting when he was twelve. As a young adult, Roberto graduated in agronomy and law but never forgot his passion for drawing and painting.

Driven by his first-place victory at the annual exhibition of visual arts 'Pedro Domingo Murillo', Roberto has continued to produce quality art work in the mediums of painting, drawing, photography, sculpture and ceramics (pottery). Since 1983 Roberto has exhibited his work internationally, representing his country in numerous international fairs and events.

Today Roberto Mamani Mamani is one of Bolivia's most recognised artists. His work is exhibited across the world.

"Papa Imillas" (page 46)
Imilla potatoes are the maidens of the sun. Every Imilla is young, beautiful and unique.

"Vendiendo papas y lunas" (page 20)
illustrates a local woman before dawn at a market square. The woman struggles to work while her baby rests on her shoulders.

Roberto can be contacted on: 00591 715 503 44

or by email at: mamani_mamani@lycos.com

To see more of Roberto's work visit: http://hem.bredband.net/mamani_mamani/index.html

Abel Rodriguez

Abel Rodríguez is a native Nonuya man. He is well-known by his community as an expert in plant knowledge. The Nonuya's use of plants holds insights into many fundamental elements of their social and cultural life.

Since graduating from university with a degree in natural sciences, Abel has dedicated most of his time to the compilation and documentation of his botanical knowledge. He was motivated to do so after he worked as a field assistant for a group of biologists who came to his community to carry out research on plant ecology and forest dynamics. Abel is the proud author of a case book entitled "Los Tiempos del Bosque; estudio de los cambios durante el ciclo anual desde el conocimiento tradicional indígena" due to be published in December 2009. This case book documents plant and specie varieties, the anatomical characteristics of Amazonian trees and the ecological relationships between biodiversity. It also includes illustrations depicting his visions and perceptions of local forests.

One of these many illustrations, "**Los Tiempos del bosque-verano de gusand"** (page 7) depicts summer in the Amazon tropical rainforest during a time when there is an abundance of caterpillars.

Abel can be contacted through Tropenbos Internacional Colombia an NGO Abel is currently collaborating with at email: tropenbos@tropenbos.org

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