



## HIGHLIGHTS: 8 DECEMBER 2016

The theme for the Rio Conventions Pavilion (RCP) on Thursday, 8 December, was Indigenous People and Local Communities: The Power of Local Action. The event consisted of a series of dialogues and panel discussions to share knowledge, exchange best practices, inform policy and enhance capacity. Topics focused on the COP 13 themes: forests, fisheries, agriculture and tourism.

The event was organized by UNDP's Equator Initiative, GEF, CBD, Conservation International, Rare, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), EcoAgriculture Partners, BMZ, Government of Norway, Nippon Foundation and Wildlife Conservation Society.

### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES – LOCAL ACTION FOR AICHI TARGETS AND SDGs

Eva Gurria, UNDP Equator Initiative, moderated this session. Jamison Ervin, UNDP, suggested indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) should be central to SDG work because they are often innovative, take risks, and can be more dynamic.

Angela Fajardo, Organización Manejo y Conservación, Guatemala, discussed how her organization helps sustainably manage the largest community-managed area in Mesoamerica.

René García, Grupo de Estudios Ambientales y Sociales (GEA), Mexico, discussed how GEA has worked with indigenous farmers in Guerrero state since 1977 to improve agricultural practices, restore soil and watersheds, enhance capacity, and improve food security.



René García, Environmental and Social Studies Group, Mexico

John Knox, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, said indigenous peoples' rights are clear but often poorly implemented, while rights of non-indigenous communities need to be clarified, particularly regarding the right to free, clear and prior consent.

Noting the CBD's acknowledgement of IPLCs rights in Article 8j (on traditional knowledge, innovations and practices), 10c (on sustainable use), Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols, Viviana Figueroa, CBD, highlighted that this provides leverage for IPLCs to request implementation of effective national policy.

Andrew Rhodes Espinoza, Mexico, outlined the evolution of the Protected Areas (PAs) model in Mexico, from the classical model of isolated PAs, PAs with a buffer zone, connected PAs, to PAs integrated to the land use matrix.

Tehmina Akhtar, UNDP, presented a GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) perspective, recalling the early recognition that local communities are not passive recipients of development assistance, but that they have agency, vision, knowledge and capacity to take charge of their own development. She highlighted a key strategic focus including on participatory consultations and support to community grant making.

During the ensuing discussion participants reflected on requisite support for IPLCs, enabling policies, learning from success stories and scaling up. John Knox called for respecting the rights of IPLCs environmental defenders who are opposing government and private interest development projects, often at high risk.



Viviana Figueroa, CBD



**Diego Flores**, Ministry of the Environment, Chile

### ***SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION***

Carmen Miranda, ICCA Consortium, moderated the session. Daniel Ancapan, Comunidad Indígena Manquemapu, Chile, described his association's work on sustainably managing ancestral forestlands and rivers by making handcrafted wood products, furniture and through the creation of a fisher cooperative.

Ana Isabel Arroyo, Asociación de Artesanas Unidas de Los Límites, Colombia, described how female artisans promote the protection of endangered monkeys by handcrafting stuffed toys and recycling over three million plastic bags into carrier bags embossed with conservation messages.

Carlos Crasborn, Asociación de Comunidades Forestales de Petén, Guatemala, explained her organization represents communities conserving over 500,000 hectares of forest within the Mayan Biosphere Reserve, while producing sustainable wood products for the fair trade market.

Héctor Anguiano, Comunidad Indígena Nuevo San Juan Parigarcutiro, Mexico, detailed community efforts to manage 18,000 hectares of communal forest while producing sustainable timber and non-timber forest products.

Diego Flores, Ministry of Environment, Chile, stressed that mainstreaming biodiversity has to be a bottom-up activity, highlighting his country's new forest policy vision that includes native forest conservation and involves small owners and indigenous communities. He pointed to indigenous communities' initiatives on native forest conservation outside PAs that match areas of forest with greater coverage. Flores stressed the need for further integration efforts, including communities' access, right and health, and further collaboration between states and communities.

Stressing that less than 5% of the planet's forests are managed by communities and local schemes, Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, Conservation International, called for halting deforestation outside community schemes, for secured indigenous communities' rights over their territory and for 50 % of the planet to be protected through conservation schemes such as PAs.



**Carmen Miranda**, ICCA Consortium

Bente Herstad, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, emphasized that recognition of rights is a prerequisite for sustainable use and that IPLCs rights should be respected, but that this is sometimes difficult when governments have other priorities. Emphasizing communication, she said the Equator Initiative was important for showcasing local experiences.

Eva Gurria, UNDP, stressed that community-based forest models are underutilized and encompass a wide range of activities. Highlighting how forests contribute to the SDGs, she noted that 50-90% of income for 100 million people comes from forests. She acknowledged Norway's contribution to the Equator Initiative Prize.

The ensuing discussion focused on: the links between the avocado production boom, land use change and deforestation; defending indigenous territories; and the importance land ownership in the context of sustainable management of forests.

### ***SUSTAINABLE FISHING AND PROTECTION OF MARINE AND COASTAL HABITATS: LEARNING FROM LOCAL ACTION***

Handoko Adi Susanto, Rare, moderated the session. Oscar Pihuave, Junta de Manejo Participativo Pesquero de Puerto Cayo, Ecuador, described his association's work on restoring fish populations by improving shrimping methods to prevent by-catch of larval and juvenile shellfish and finfish, and to prevent fishing in PAs.

Rigoberto Bonilla, Comité para la Defensa y Desarrollo de la Flora y Fauna del Golfo de Fonseca, Honduras, outlined the committee's efforts to create artificial reefs, regenerate mangroves, promote artisanal fishing, and co-manage 10 PAs.

Jordán Solórzano, Coope Tárcoles, Costa Rica, described how his artisanal fishers co-op successfully petitioned the government to prohibit commercial shrimping in a community-managed marine zone.

José Canto, Pescadores de Vigía Chico y Cozumel, México, outlined how his co-op manages eight fishing reserves, with a focus on Caribbean spiny lobster for which it is seeking Marine Stewardship Council in order to sell to international markets.

Suzanne von der Porten, University of British Columbia, Canada, outlined strategies for marine conservation and revitalization of indigenous culture. These strategies include

legal challenges; negotiating with governments; protests and demonstrations; maintaining traditional indigenous fishing practices; applying indigenous law; and strengthening indigenous identity and pride. She also stressed inter-community collaboration and solidarity, and negotiating with the fisheries industry.

Leonel Requena, UNDP, presented a video on the GEF-SGP experience in Belize focusing on indigenous peoples.

Gerald Singh, University of British Columbia, Canada, discussed on how healthy oceans contribute to different SDGs including on poverty, hunger, sanitation and energy. Focusing on Guatemala, he described how the country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP) contributes to SDG targets on ocean, noting this has to be linked to community needs and goals.

The ensuing question and response discussion addressed the participation of fishers in ocean conservation; the role and empowerment of women in local fishing communities; linking conservation to improved quality of life; industrial wastes and pollution; and mangrove management.

Pharoah closed the session noting the importance to create transformational change to generate innovative local adaptive solutions to achieve Aichi Targets and the SDGs.

#### **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND CROP DIVERSIFICATION**

Joji Cariño, Forest People's Programme, the Philippines, moderated the session. Yolanda Contreras, Asociación de Artesanos de Arbolsoy y Huaca de Barro del Distrito de Mórrope, Peru, shared her association's experiences of reviving native cotton cultivation.

Angela Gómez, Asociación de Productores Indígenas y Campesinos de Rioscuo, Caldas, Colombia, explained how coffee bean production in the Caldas region degraded the environment. She highlighted efforts to restore traditional production methods, revive seeds, move to sustainable production and diversity cultivation.

José del Carmen Huichin, Kooel Kab/Muuch Kambal, Mexico, discussed the impact of transgenic soya bean production on artisanal beekeeping and a successful law suit to stop this soya bean cultivation.



**Joji Cariño**, Forest Peoples Programme, the Philippines



**José Juárez**, Café la Selva, Mexico

Jose Juárez, Café la Selva, Mexico, explained how local organic coffee producers have organized themselves in order to market their coffee, conserve natural resources and establish alliances with other stakeholders.

Juan Bezaury, TNC, discussed TNC work focusing on replicating the European natural regional parks concept in Mexico. He explained that the concept worked by enabling local communities to have their communal lands certified as PAs, which means that they are able to receive financial support and trademarks for PA.

Emile Frison, International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems, advocated transitioning from an industrial agriculture model based on input-intensive crop monocultures to one that replaces chemical inputs, optimizes biodiversity, values traditional knowledge, and reestablishes the role of farmers as innovators.

The ensuing discussion focused on: the value of the Equator Initiative in spotlighting transformative community initiatives; shifting public investment from industrial agricultural systems; the need to preserve traditional seed systems; and initiatives to declare the Yucatan a "transgenic free" zone.

#### **SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE TOURISM: RESPECTING CULTURE, PROTECTING NATURE**

Alejandra Pero, UNDP, moderated the session. Guido Mamani, Albergue Ecológico Chalachán, Bolivia, described his community's ecotourism activities in Madidi National Park, noting they facilitate the education of young people; enhance the community's quality of life; increase the visibility of local indigenous people, contributing to their self-esteem and belonging; and inspire the creation of other eco-shelters in the region.

Roman Caamal, Community Tours Sian Ka'an, México, underscored his company 15-year experience in PA eco-tours. He said the visitor's experience is enhanced through the sharing of indigenous culture, adding that limiting the number of visitors per trip reduces the impact on the PAs. He noted that an Equator Initiative recognition opens doors and the company is now considered a serious enterprise.

Galindo Parra, Federación Plurinacional de Turismo Comunitario del Ecuador, explained that the federation's community-based tourism activities are focused on



**Galindo Parra**, Federación Plurinacional de Turismo Comunitario del Ecuador

organizational strengthening, with all members of the communities participating in tourism-related activities, and cultural revitalization, through the transfer of knowledge between the generations. He said foreign strategic alliances are necessary, as little support is received from the government. He concluded by emphasizing that community-based ecotourism is “tourism with heart.”

José Antonio Medina Oviedo, Red Indígena de Turismo, Mexico, observed that the reason for transitioning to ecotourism, beside generating economic benefits, was to preserve territory and cultural identity. On opportunities, he cited participation in decision-making processes and the exercise of indigenous people’s rights.

Cristina Eghenter, WWF-Indonesia, said Indonesia’s communities could learn a lot from the Latin American Equator Prize winners. She said WWF is trying to help promote community-based ecotourism in Indonesia. She recommended two strategies: community-private partnerships, and the adoption of community protocols that establish rules and safeguards for stakeholders.

Gonzalo Merediz, Amigos de Sian Ka’an (ASK), Mexico, described the evolution of ASK efforts to promote conservation in the Sian Ka’an Biosphere Reserve in Quintana Roo through sustainable fishing of lobster, eco-tourism boat trips and organic



**Alejandra Pero**, UNDP

agricultural products. He explained that ASK is trying to share experiences with others in the Yucatan region.

Participants then broke into four discussion groups to consider lessons learned from shared experiences, factors enabling success of community initiatives and strategies required for scaling up and replication. Reporting on lessons learned, participants agreed that “social investments” must be consistent in the long term, participation by all stakeholders is crucial and local culture should be respected. On success factors, participants cited long-term community commitment, innovation, organization, visionary leadership, networking and empowerment. On scaling up and replication, participants highlighted collaboration with like-minded associations and NGOs and the sharing of successful experiences.

In his concluding remarks, moderator Pero reminded participants that 2017 will be celebrated as the international year of sustainable tourism, and that a sustainable tourism summit would be convened in Colombia in March 2017. She suggested both would provide IPLCs opportunities to make the case for community tourism.

