



Volume 39,
Issue 1
Monday, 7 Nov 2011
www.cbdalliance.org

IPBES and Indigenous Peoples

Joji Carino (Tebtebba, Indigenous Peoples International Centre for Policy Research and Education)

Tebtebba sees the establishment of IPBES as an opportunity for indigenous peoples to play a critical role in strengthening knowledge platforms, which are essential to addressing the biodiversity and ecosystems crisis.

Collaboration with scientists in assessments, knowledge generation and capacity-building activities, could also enhance indigenous peoples' own knowledge and understanding of tools which are useful for territorial and ecosystem management efforts and local livelihoods.

IPBES needs diverse forms of knowledge

IPBES - as a knowledge platform - must draw its strength from science and from diverse knowledge systems, working in ways which are inter-cultural, collaborative, and complementary.

IPBES needs to embrace the “added value” from the contributions of indigenous and traditional knowledge, farmers knowledge, women’s knowledge and diverse knowledge systems, and make a transition away from scientific models of “extraction and validation” in relation to other systems of knowledge.

Therefore, the work programme of IPBES must consciously embrace cultural and knowledge diversity, and also address the challenges presented by diverse knowledge systems.

A dialogue engaging indigenous peoples, scientists and governments at different levels, could begin to identify areas of collaboration and priorities to be included in the work programme.

An expert workshop can also focus on addressing the challenges around collaboration between scientists and traditional knowledge holders, including the development of

indicators about status and trends in traditional knowledge, issues of access to traditional knowledge and its documentation, the use of non-peer reviewed literature and appropriate methods of validation.

Indigenous Peoples participation in IPBES

Critical for the success of IPBES is its inclusiveness towards Indigenous Peoples and other local knowledge holders in its work programme.

The participation of major groups, which is already established practice in the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and in UNEP, provides one model which can be adopted by IPBES, among many good practice examples which foster full and effective participation of civil society in policy development and governance within the United Nations. Because IPBES is a knowledge platform, it is important for major groups to enjoy full speaking rights at the IPBES plenary, with seats reserved for their designated representatives.

As the IPBES work programme needs to be bottom up, there will be opportunities for fuller participation of indigenous peoples in capacity-building, knowledge generation and assessment activities at multiple scales.

In this edition:

- 1. IPBES and Indigenous Peoples**
- 2. Supporting the Majority Food Producers**
- 3. CBD “Consultation” on geo-engineering**

ECO is currently being published at the 15th SBSTTA meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity coordinated by the CBD Alliance. The opinions, commentaries, and articles printed in ECO are the sole opinion of the individual authors or organisations, unless otherwise expressed.

Submissions are welcome from all civil society groups.

Email to lorch@ifrik.org and jessicaannedempsey@gmail.com

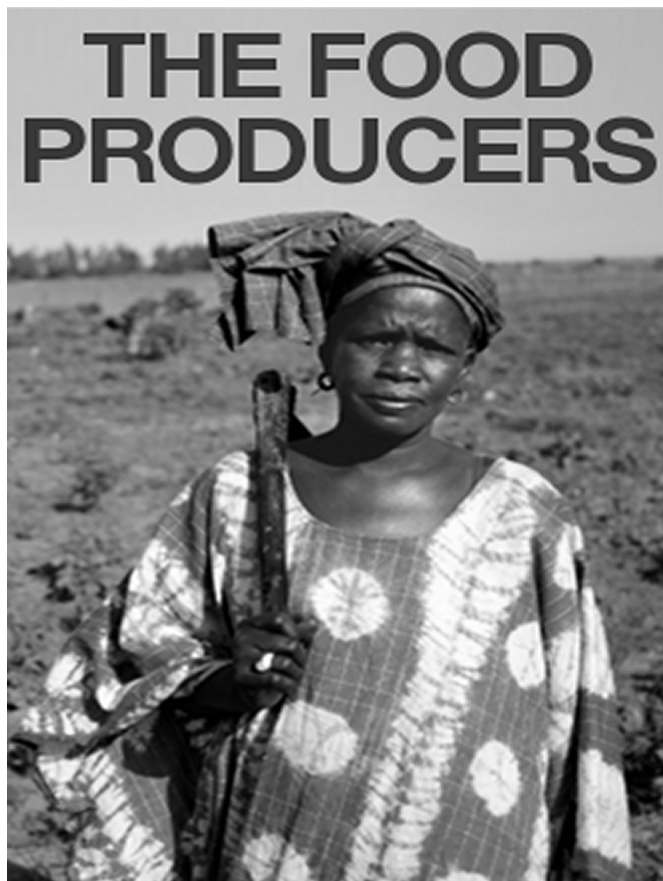
Supporting the Majority Food Producers

Supporting the small-scale developers and sustainable users of agricultural biodiversity

Patrick Mulvany (Practical Action)

The good news is that more than 70% of the food people eat is still produced locally. The world's majority food producers are the women and men who farm, garden, raise livestock, fish and gather other wild foods under the cultural norms of customary institutions and who provide it to others through local food webs and local markets. They are also the ones who have sustained and continue to develop the basis of all our food: the agricultural biodiversity in all its dimensions from genes to landscapes. They have nurtured this vital sub-set of biodiversity through using it sustainably over millennia.

The bad news is that the seemingly inexorable spread of industrial agriculture, livestock production and fisheries - supported by unjust and biodiversity-eroding laws, rules, contracts and technologies - is dramatically undermining agricultural biodiversity, its related ecosystem functions and the lives and livelihoods of those who sustain and develop it.



20 years ago governments recognised in the text of the Convention “that it is vital to anticipate, prevent and attack the causes of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity at source.” Such losses are well-documented by now and their causes include the rapid spread of industrial production of commodities and livestock as well as unsustainable capture fisheries. They are facilitated among others by the legalisation of the enclosure of community rights to seeds, livestock breeds, aquatic organisms and their genes, by research that is driven by the imperative to develop and disseminate proprietary goods and services, by the globalisation of production and trade, and by the homogenisation of consumers' food cultures.

The bio-barons, as well as other distant corporations and financiers, who are behind the spread of industrial production, wish to extend their control over -and profit from - the global food system. If not stopped, they will further capture, control and ultimately destroy the markets, livelihoods and ecosystems of the bio-serfs, shackling them in food chains of input supply and produce markets.

This perilous situation can be averted by implementing what has already been agreed, and by working closely in support of the majority food producers themselves.

There is no shortage of priorities and actions, which have been adopted by governments.

- The Addis Ababa Principles on Sustainable Use are to show parties and other actors “how to ensure that the use of the components of biodiversity will not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity.” The ‘Guidelines on the Ecosystem Approach’ further support this.
- The landmark 1996 Decision III/11 on Agricultural Biodiversity in its Annex 1 stated that “meeting the imperative of increasing agricultural production in such sustainable [agroecological] ways while conserving and prudently using biological diversity is **the major challenge** which we must urgently address” (emphasis added). This Decision provided the ‘basis for action’ of

the CBD's Programme of Work on Agricultural Biodiversity.

- Already since 1996, CBD decisions on Agricultural Biodiversity have reinforced the need to “prioritise work on promoting, supporting and removing constraints to on-farm and *in situ* conservation of agricultural biodiversity.”
- The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) - sponsored by the UN and the World Bank and approved by 58 governments in 2008- found it necessary to move towards smaller-scale and more agroecological production systems that *inter alia* would sustain agricultural biodiversity.
- The International Seed Treaty (IT PGRFA) has inextricably linked articles on sustainable use, conservation and Farmers' Rights, debated in the 2011 session of its Governing Body, with commitments to action.
- The Second Global Plan of Action on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA, adopted by FAO in 2011,

has a Priority Action to support ‘on-farm’ and ‘in situ’ conservation.

The Convention was empowered 20 years ago in Rio to challenge and change norms and practices that damage biodiversity and to do what is necessary to ensure benefits flow to those who conserve and continue to use it sustainably. In terms of agricultural biodiversity, this should have translated on the one hand into legally-enforceable international regulation of biodiversity-damaging industrial production, and on the other hand into globally actioned protection and support for small-scale, biodiversity-enhancing food providers, ensuring continued benefits through their sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity, for producing food, securing livelihoods and sustaining healthy ecosystems.

The evidence is clear. Actions are agreed. The small-scale providers of the world's food have shown through their promotion of the food sovereignty framework that they are willing and able.

What is the CBD waiting for?

CBD “Consultation” on geo-engineering

Diana Bronson (ETC Group)

During the working group on article 8j in Montreal last Wednesday, the CBD held a side-event/consultation on geoengineering.

The COP 10 decision - in addition to calling on states to not allow geoengineering activities except under certain conditions - instructed the Secretariat to prepare some documentation, specifically to:

(1) **Compile and synthesize available scientific information, and views and experiences of indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders, on the possible impacts of geo-engineering, techniques on biodiversity and associated social, economic and cultural considerations,** and options on definitions and understandings of climate-related geo-engineering relevant to the Convention on Biological Diversity and make it available for consideration at a meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and

Technological Advice prior to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

(m) Taking into account the possible need for science based global, transparent and effective control and regulatory mechanisms, subject to the availability of financial resources, **undertake a study on gaps in such existing mechanisms for climate-related geo-engineering relevant to the Convention on Biological Diversity**, bearing in mind that such mechanisms may not be best placed under the Convention on Biological Diversity, for consideration by the SBSTTA prior to a future meeting of the Conference of the Parties and to communicate the results to relevant organizations;

So far, considerable resources have been devoted to synthesizing the view of scientists (largely through UK funding) but there has been almost nothing done with the other half of the equation: “synthesizing the views and

experiences of indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders”. Two meetings were convened by the CBD in summer in Europe: one in Bonn and one in London and a third meeting is now in the planning stages for London in January. Various people - overwhelmingly British scientists involved in geoengineering - were selected to write chapters of the report, in a process which two civil society representatives considered deeply flawed (see Open letter <http://econexus.info/node/161>). Some stakeholders did attend the Bonn and London meetings but clearly a much more serious process is required if the instruction from COP 10 is to be respected, particularly concerning Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

This was the context for the “consultation” that was held in Montreal, led by David Cooper from the secretariat who every clearly stated that CBD was not thinking that this “consultation” was in any way enough in terms of “synthesizing the views of indigenous peoples, local communities and other stakeholders.” Cooper provided an outline of the paper synthesizing scientific data, which includes an overview of geo-engineering technologies and a preliminary analysis of their impacts on biodiversity. The question of social, economic and cultural impacts is not very well covered in this paper and the secretariat specifically welcomed input on these questions. The entire paper is to be released for comment in the coming days and shortly

thereafter the paper on governance will be released. The comment period will be for one month and it will be announced on CBD website.

Also speaking was Yolanda Teran, Kichwa from Ecuador, from the Indigenous Women's Network on Biodiversity. Teran said that these technologies were not familiar to Indigenous peoples and that such manipulation of the planet felt like a

violation of Mother Earth, where all living beings are inter-related and sacred. She called for the rational and sustainable use of the Earth's precious natural resources, their respect and their protection, a balanced relation between human beings and the rest of nature and underlined the epistemological nature of the question that was being discussed, insisting that different knowledge systems, including traditional knowledge, be considered and respected.

In the discussion that followed, it was put to the CBD that equal weight should be given to both aspects: traditional Western science, and other knowledge systems and experiences more familiar to indigenous and local communities. The Secretariat seemed to be open to the idea of helping to find resources if Indigenous peoples and others were interested in devising a process to put forward some positions and analysis of geoengineering. This is something that should be thought about and discussed over the coming weeks by those who have an interest in the topic and may be interested in devoting some energy to it.

Events

The **CBD** will held a second consultation on geo-engineering this week (Wednesday at 1:15, Room AB Level 1) and the paper synthesizing the science on the impacts of geo-engineering on biodiversity should be published.

ETC Group will host a side event on Monday at 1:15 (Room AB Level 1) which will include an overview of what is at stake and a discussion on next steps.

