



**Indigenous Peoples
Rights International**

Championing Indigenous Peoples Rights

AN EVENT ON RIGHTS AND EQUITY SESSION | WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS 2021

REDEFINING PROTECTED AREAS

Addressing criminalization of and human rights violations against Indigenous Peoples and recognizing Indigenous-led governance in conservation

5 SEPTEMBER 2021

**4:30 New York | 10:30 Geneva/Kinshasa/Marseille | 11:30 Nairobi/Dodoma
| 14:15 Kathmandu | 15:30 Bangkok | 16:30 Manila**

Background

Indigenous Peoples, despite being nature's stewards, are suffering from gross human rights violations related to conservation efforts. The prevailing "fortress conservation" model, which views nature as separate from people, has led to criminalization, killing, enforced disappearance and massive displacement of Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Peoples have occupied, owned, or used these lands since time immemorial. The customary use of their lands, territories and resources have resulted in the richness of biodiversity and landscapes that lead to the establishment of protected areas. Oftentimes, these areas are protected with the aim of promoting tourism and even safari hunting. Thus, states may also equip these areas with park rangers, who are usually armed. In the process, they blame Indigenous Peoples for biodiversity loss and environmental degradation.

Studies have shown that indigenous management are as effective, if not better, compared to these state-led protected areas. Thus, a human rights-based approach that recognizes the roles and contributions of Indigenous Peoples would also fulfil the public interest of nature conservation. In addition, Indigenous Peoples are being recognized in conservation policies at the global level. But these policies rarely transform ground realities. The legacy of colonialism continues to haunt Indigenous Peoples as the prevailing conservation model has never ceased to violate their rights and threaten their existence.

Based on the above, the Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI) along with its partner-organizations have initiated country studies on the state of conservation and criminalization of indigenous peoples. Indigenous Peoples speakers from Asia and Africa will thereby share the key findings of the studies and to share their experiences with protected areas including on conservation policies and approaches.

They will also provide recommendations to address their criminalization and impunity as well as in key measures to protect biodiversity and climate change with indigenous peoples as part of essential partner and not the enemy.

Program

I. Introduction | Victoria Tauli-Corpuz

II. Presentation of global report on criminalization of Indigenous Peoples in conservation | June Rubis

III. Presentation of Democratic Republic of Congo country report | Diel Mochire

IV. Presentation of Kenya country report | Daniel Kobei

V. Presentation of Tanzania country report | Edward Porokwa

VI. Presentation of Nepal country report | Shankar Limbu

VII. Presentation of Thailand country report | Phnom Thano

VIII. Reactors

Silke Spohn | Head of Programme, Conservation of Biodiversity, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

A Party Member of the Convention on Biological Diversity (TBC)

IX. Questions and Answers

X. Conclusion and Closing Remarks | Joan Carling

Speakers and Moderator

Moderator

Vicky Tauli Corpuz | IPRI Co-founder and Board Member

Vicky is an indigenous activist from the Kankana-ey Igorot people of the Cordillera Region in the Philippines. She is the founder and current executive director of Tebtebba Foundation (Indigenous Peoples' International Center for Policy Research and Education) in the Philippines.

Closing Remarks

Joan Carling | IPRI Co-founder and Global Director

Joan is from the Cordillera with more than 20 years of working on indigenous issues from the grassroots to the international level. Her expertise includes areas like human rights, sustainable development, the environment, climate change, and additionally the application of Free, Prior and Informed Consent. She was the General Secretary of the Asia Indigenous People Pact (AIPP) From September 2008 to December 2016. She was appointed as indigenous expert of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2014-2016) by the United Nations Economic and Social Council. She was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by UN Environment in September 2018.

Speakers

Daniel M. Kobei | Kenya

Daniel is the founder and executive director of Ogiek Peoples' Development Program (OPDP), an NGO based in Kenya, with ECOSOC Status since 2019. His work with OPDP involves promoting human rights and land rights of indigenous Ogiek Community and other Indigenous Peoples of Kenya and across Africa. He is the focal point on Indigenous Peoples matters in the International Indigenous Forum for Biodiversity (IIFB) under the Collaborative Partnership for Wildlife Management (CPW) established by Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD). As a staunch human rights defender, he has featured in diverse high-level discussions on Indigenous Peoples' issues. He is also the focal point in the Protection Working Group led by Defenders Coalition. One of his key achievements is leading the Ogiek into winning a landmark case against the Government of Kenya at the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights based in Arusha, Tanzania on May 26, 2017.

Edward Porokwa | Tanzania

Edward is the executive director of Pastoralists Indigenous NGOs Forum (PINGOs Forum), a network organization of Indigenous Peoples in Tanzania. He holds a bachelor's degree in Law (LLB Hon) from the University of Dar es Salaam and a master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) from ESAMI/Maastricht School of Management. He has over 20 years' experience of working with Indigenous Peoples' organizations in the areas of human rights advocacy, policy analysis, constitutional issues, and climate change. He is an advocate of the High Court of Tanzania and an activist and defender of rights of Indigenous Peoples. He has actively been working around issue of recognition and defense of human rights, and land and natural resource rights of Indigenous Peoples at national and international level.

Diel Mochire | Democratic Republic of the Congo

Diel is a Mutwa Mumbuti Pygmy human rights defender from North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo. He has a degree in International Relations and is the provincial director Programme Intégré pour le Développement du Peuple Pygmée (PIDP) in North Kivu. Through PIDP, he is involved in advocacy on the legal recognition of Indigenous Pygmy Peoples and in securing their land and territorial rights while fighting against criminalization of their rights defenders in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2018, he was appointed by the UN Secretary General as Expert at the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples and now sit as a member and Honorary President (2020 term). He is currently the DRC national coordinator of Indigenous Peoples Rights International.

Shankar Limbu | Nepal

Shankar is an indigenous human rights attorney working with the Lawyers' Association for Human Rights of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples (LAHURNIP). In his role with LAHURNIP, he provides free legal aid services in collective rights violation cases and works to promote, protect and defend the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples as well as locals living with Indigenous Peoples in Nepal.

Phnom Thano | Thailand

Phnom belongs to Karen Indigenous group of Chiang Mai province, northern part of Thailand. He's among the thousands of villagers whose lives were restricted by conservation regulations. His work on Indigenous Peoples rights started in 2011 when National Park Officers seized the field where his village practices shifting cultivation. The authorities claim their field overlaps with a protected area.

He's currently working with Indigenous Peoples Foundation for Education and Environment (IPF) and coordinating the Indigenous Media Network (IMN). His experience and work taught him that lack of understanding between parties involved, and top-down policies created by the elite people who are not aware of Indigenous Peoples' roles in forest conservation and natural resources management can lead to conflict. He believes access to information and openness to sincere consultation are the keys to build a common understanding and foster respect to the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

June Rubis | Former conservation biologist

As a former conservation biologist, June has about twelve years in hands-on wildlife conservation fieldwork in both Indonesian and Malaysian Borneo. She has also worked on Indigenous land rights and environmental issues in collaboration with Indigenous activists and NGOs in Malaysian Borneo (Sarawak and Sabah). She has carried out research on Bidayuh ritual revitalization, under the guidance of her Bidayuh father and relatives, linking the revitalization with environmental change in her home state of Sarawak, Malaysian Borneo. Much of her approach to her work follows the teachings of her parents, including her late Bidayuh father, following his own parents' journey as traditional Bidayuh priest and priestess. Her recent PhD research examined a decolonial Indigenous approach to orang utan conservation in Sarawak. She holds both an MSc in Environmental Change and Management and a DPhil (Ph.D.) in Geography & Environment, from the University of Oxford. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow in Indigenous Environmental Studies, at Sydney Environment Institute, University of Sydney.

Reactors

Silke Spohn | Head of Programme, Conservation of Biodiversity, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Silke Spohn is a trained engineer for landscape planning, who has been working in international development cooperation for the last 20 years, mainly with GTZ/GIZ. During this time, she worked in different countries, mostly in Latin America, like Nicaragua, Panama and latest 6 years in Peru. She had also spent 7 years in the GIZ headquarters in Eschborn. The projects and programs Ms. Spohn directed were mainly related to environment, natural resource management, biodiversity and climate change. But she also headed programs to strengthen indigenous people.

In Peru, she was the director of a major program providing advice on environmental governance, aiming at biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation. Additionally, she coordinated the entire GIZ portfolio on environment/biodiversity/Climate Change in Peru. Amongst others, she accompanied the Peruvian Government in its elaboration of the NDCs, advised on accreditation for the GCF, as well as on other topics related to climate financing, like REDD+ and sectoral finance mechanisms for mitigation.

Since April 2017, Silke Spohn is the project director of the BMZ financed program "Climate Finance Readiness" – or "CF Ready" - in Bonn

A Party Member of the Convention on Biological Diversity (TBC)