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Indigenous Peoples Perspective

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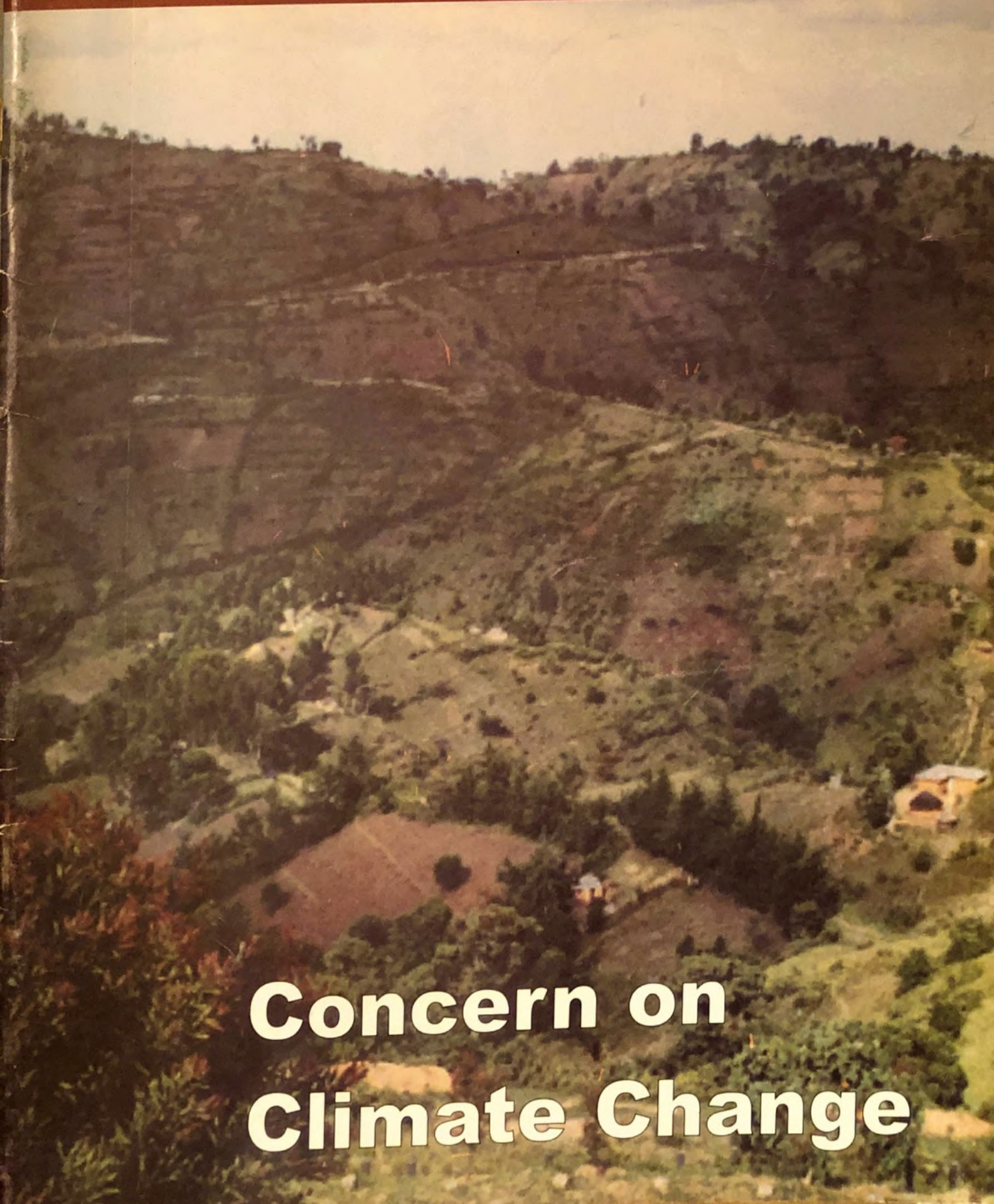

Concern on Climate Change

Editorial

Chief Editor
Lucy Mulenkei

Editorial Board
Lucy Mulenkei
Edna Kaptoyo
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Editors
Lucy Mulenkei
Jacquelyne Awinja
Edna Kaptoyo

Design/Layout
Lucy Mulenkei
Tracy Munyiri

Editorial Assistance
Yvonne Godia
Edna Kaptoyo

Printing & Publishing
Pann Printers and Stationers
P.O. Box 29276
Nairobi

Photos
Dominic Njiru
Kaitline Dearharm
IIN Library

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IIN Team
Network Members

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Upper Lower Hill
Duplex Apartments (Apt No 28)
P.o Box 74908-00200
Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: 254-20-2723958
Fax : 254-20-2729607
Mobiles: 254-722 914614
Email: lin@lin.co.ke
Website: www.indigenous-info-kenya.org

Promote, Protect, Empower and Build Capacity of Indigenous Peoples

Contents

Editorial

Welcome all to our new edition of ***Environmental News Indigenous Peoples Perspective***. We are indeed happy to have had support to publish this edition. It is a sister magazine to our *Nomadic news* and both of them are bi-annual. We have realize that Environmental issues are just too many and a lot of issues happening at the same time, that, if we wait for the *Nomadic news* then the activities and news become time bad. The Environment world has been extremely busy. Indigenous Peoples have been on their toes following up the different topics on the world agenda. There have been successes and challenges, but as usual strong and determined we continue with the struggle.

This edition is coming at the time when we are all celebrating the success of the adoption by the United Nations' General Assembly on the Declaration of Indigenous Peoples. For 25 years Indigenous Peoples have had powerful advocacy work all over the world. The work made Indigenous Peoples to be a global family, working together believing that one day we will win. Special gratitude to especially the Global Caucus and all the sponsors, who were camped days and nights in New York an Geneva discussing and planning strategies for the positive end of the Declaration. The declaration was approved by 143 Members States. In the first article in this news letter you will read more on the countries that opposed the Declaration, those that abstained and those that were absent. For Indigenous Peoples from Africa we celebrate with the rest of the world despite the delay caused by some of the African countries and unfortunately others not voting and being absent during this historic adoption of the Declaration. In our Nomadic 13 edition, we will cover comprehensively the declaration processes and hear from different Indigenous Peoples from different parts of the world with a focus on *what future for the implementation by all in our respective countries*. We still have a journey to take and we should not all loose our path.

Environmental News has in this edition brought you news, on different activities and news on how indigenous Peoples have been collectively working together on Climate change and making efforts to start projects to help ease pressure in the destruction of the environment. United Nations Department of Information and Public affairs organized its 60th conference for NGOs world wide. The theme was ***Climate Change and how it Impacts us all***. Very appropriate topic for the world at the moment and to our satisfaction Indigenous Peoples were invited and had a panel of their own. This panel focused on the impacts of global climate change on Indigenous Peoples. It provided examples of local initiatives that demonstrate their commitment to defend their cultures by actively participating in concerted efforts to reduce human-induced causes of climate change. Facilitating this Panel was a privilege for me. It was the first time I saw so many people in a conference listening to Indigenous Peoples, who were speaking from their own experiences and reality without referring to any scientific evidence but telling the world was exactly happening out there. From Africa Daniel Salau Rogei Simba Maasai Outreach Organization from Kenya explained on the stress in dry lands of Africa and the impact of frequent droughts and what that means for Indigenous Peoples of Africa, Fiu Mata'ese Elisara-La'ulu, Director of Ole Siosiomaga Society from the small islands states of the pacific expressed the great fear ahead as the sea level raises, Mikhail Todishev, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North talked on the melting of Ice in the artic and what that means to the Indigenous Peoples the impact on their survival. From Brazil we had special spiritual thinking and focus from Marcos Terena, Professor, Traditional and Spiritual Knowledge of the Indigenous Peoples from Brazil, who reminded the world why God made the environment the way it is, and now wonders why we have disrespected what was given in God faith. Indeed a standing ovation from the floor. Encouraging in this conference were messages that you will be able to read in the articles calling for action by different key persons. Presenting from the floor during the conference was Dr. William Littlechild one of the members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues from Canada. This was a joint Submission by the Assembly of the First Nations and the International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development. A detailed study on Indigenous Peoples, cultures and traditional Knowledge which is collective and good case study to see how, even in the developed countries like Canada and United States, Indigenous Peoples have similar problems faced by their brothers and sisters in the developing world.

While on climate we have very comprehensive article on the Africa's vulnerability to Climate Change very interesting indeed after reading it you will understand why we in Africa need to be concern. The author is a researcher on climate change in a country where the impact is felt greatest because of the refugees in Dafur.

Human activities and pressure on resources has caused more stress to the land and the natural resources. On Climate and impact on women and why there is a slow progress in integrating Gender issues, are some of critical issues we need to focus as we look on climate change and further information and feed back will be welcomed on this topic as you read views s expressed here.

The first edition of Environmental News has traveled around the world bringing you information by different key plays in environmental agenda and their concern on different environmental problems facing us all. The question of Biofuels is still in the world agenda. As we speak of climate change we look at the negative and positive adaptation and mitigation efforts suggested. Some of the suggestions and projects proposed or are being or planned to be undertaken have had and will have real bad impact on Indigenous Peoples worldwide. Many have the fear that despite not having, many examples from Africa we see it coming slowly in darkness while we are all asleep. If we are not keen as watchdogs we will have a disaster and terrible negative effect like what we have seen and heard happening in Latin America and Asia. It is on or already in Africa.

I do wonder many times if we ask ourselves why environmental problems are causing such concern worldwide, and yet when I travel around the country, I see the destruction right on my face, cutting down of forest and trees for charcoal burning, sand mining, and over harvesting of natural resources. When you try to ask, they say ***"what do you want us to do, give us alternatives, we are poor"*** these responses are never satisfactory at all. Someone is not doing the right think somewhere can we do something? As we look at the questions of climate change, we have focused on forests here in Kenya. It is important to know that man made activities have to a large extend to blame in the cause of climate change and this for sure is of great concern to many in the region. One may ask what has caused the melting of Mt. Kilimanjaro, what has caused the dying of our lakes and rivers in Africa? Where are our forests, these remaining are they Indigenous Forest anymore or what are they, plantations? What about the forest laws what do the say? Kenya has the act like other countries it is our hope that the awareness can be vigorous for the communities to understand and therefore make the implementation process a success. Managing forest in a sustainable way is something that we need to think carefully. Edna Kaptoyo has tried to give details about the importance on the forests in Kenya without looking at some of the problems that have been facing that sector because, of the need to first create awareness of the importance first to understand the question of sustainability. The questions most of us ask, are these forests managed in a sustainable way? Is the new act going to make a difference? Please write back to us on this if you have a chance to read the articles.

Those of you not form Kenya this is just an example tell us of the success stories out there, in your lands. But in my view Indigenous Peoples and the hunter gatherers are still faced with more challenges. Examples like the Batwa of Uganda, the Hadzabe of Tanzania and the Ogiek of Kenya, they were once forest People. The Forest is where they once called home. What happened? To them the forest is central to their life. Today even those communities do not live in the forest; most of those forests are under threat. This is also happening in Asia and Latin America where Indigenous Peoples continue to struggle to keep their lands and forest areas in order to protect their traditions and cultures. A story from Barzil on the success of the Tupinikim and Guarani Peoples reconquer their lands are one of such example. Environmental news will continue to cover and keep you informed on the struggles of not only Indigenous Peoples and hunter gathers but also on the efforts by the partners like the civil society organizations who help keep Governments and donors on their toes reminding them of accountability.

We have in the magazine soft, encouraging and interesting small experiences that help us reflect on the small activities at the village level. Profiles of some Indigenous Peoples who have success stories on traditional and cultural ceremonies, which we hope to continue sharing with you as a reader and friend of the indigenous world. The initiative by a small community in Kajiado Kenya to install solar in their houses is both energy saving and advancement of their way of life. The short stories from Mia Macdonald world are short, but indeed interesting. As she travels she reflects on the environment she is in, and always picks very important topics that makes one think and reflect on the surrounding. Her organization Brighter Green is contributing allot in crating awareness on environmental problems and success faced by many today and tries to give ideas of what really can be a good reflection to the solution. One of the interesting stories she has written is the question of plastics. Those of you from Africa you know very well you cannot go turn around and not see plastic somewhere, worst of it is in major cities. I was happy to be told that Rwanda has banned the use of plastic bags completely. If this is then the case, this small African country needs to be awarded an environmental price to be an example for the other African countries.

We thank all the contributors and the support we have had from Brighter Green in the production of this edition. Thank you all very much and let us keep informing our People, our communities, and us all for ***Information is Power. We can make a difference be we are informed. Take action now and change your environment.-***

Lucy Mulenkei

At last the Declaration for Indigenous for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

After 25 years came the 61st session of the General Assembly, 13th September 2007 adopting the long awaited declaration on rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indeed a ***'major step forward' towards human rights for all, says*** Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa President of the UN General Assembly.

This day was and will always remain a celebration for many Indigenous peoples worldwide who have struggled for their voices to be heard. Many especially those from Africa have not even been visible at all. As Indigenous peoples we can now take another step to ensure that our people are informed and are aware that they can use this instrument in many positive ways.

We however know that despite the overwhelming backing by the General Assembly for the Protection of Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples work is not over yet. When the voting was done 4 countries were against the declaration, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and United States. This send a signal to Indigenous peoples especially those from the mentioned countries. There were 11 countries that abstained from voting Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burundi, Colombia, Georgia, Kenya, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Samoa, Ukraine. 34 countries were absent among them 14 were from Africa. Indeed for Africa a problem still lies ahead for many Governments to even understand the importance of the declaration.

The Declaration took many years because of the contentious negotiations over the rights of native people to protect their lands and resources, and to maintain their unique cultures and traditions. But now the declaration sets out the individual and collective rights of the world's 370 million Indigenous Peoples, calls for the maintenance and strengthening of their cultural identities, and emphasizes their right to pursue development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations. A non-binding text, the Declaration states that Indigenous Peoples have the right ***"to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties"*** and prohibits discrimination against Indigenous Peoples and promotes their full and effective participation in all development matters.

The Human Rights Council adopted the Declaration in June 2006, over the objections of some Member States with sizeable indigenous populations. The Assembly deferred consideration of the text late last year at the behest of African countries, which raised objections about language on self-determination and the definition of "indigenous" people.

"I am acutely aware that the Declaration is the product of over two decades of negotiations," she said, and stressed that, by adopting the Declaration, the Assembly was also taking another major step forward towards the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. It was also actively demonstrating the General Assembly's important role in setting international standards. Countries voting against the Declaration said they could not support it because of concerns over provisions on self-determination, land and resources rights and, among others, language giving indigenous peoples a right of veto over national legislation and State management of resources.- *Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa the General Assembly President*

Introducing the text on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/61/L.67), LUIS ENRIQUE CHAVEZ BASAGOITIA (Peru), noted that Indigenous Peoples were among the most vulnerable, and that the process had begun in 1982. Thirteen years later, a preliminary text had been submitted to the former Human Rights Commission. In 1995, the draft had been put to a group of the Commission. For the first time, representatives of Indigenous Peoples took part in working on the text, giving legitimacy to the text. During recent months, many efforts had been made to meet the concerns expressed by various Member States on the draft, which had been approved by the Human Rights Council. As a result of such efforts, a revised version produced several changes to the text. Those changes had been duly communicated to Member States and representatives of Indigenous Peoples. The changes had not undermined the protection of Indigenous Peoples and should ensure the Declaration's adoption. With the conclusion of a 25-year process, he thanked the President for her efforts in bringing the parties together. The text would set the foundations for a new and sound relationship among Indigenous Peoples, States and societies, where and with whom they shared their lives.

The Declaration is hoped to make a difference in the life of these Indigenous women from Maasai Tanzania.

Who opposed the declaration and why?

Australia-, speaking in explanation of vote before the vote. The Australian representative said Australia had actively worked to ensure the adoption of a meaningful declaration. Australia had worked hard to ensure that any declaration could become a tangible and ongoing standard of achievement that would be universally accepted, observed and upheld. The text of the Declaration failed to reach that high standard and Australia continued to have many concerns with the text. Australia had repeatedly called for a chance to participate in negotiations on the current text and was deeply disappointed that none had been convened.

Regarding the nature of the Declaration, he said it was the clear intention of all States that it be an aspirational Declaration with political and moral force, but not legal force. The text contained recommendations regarding how States could promote the welfare of Indigenous Peoples, but was not in itself legally binding nor reflective of international law. As the Declaration did not describe current State practice or actions that States considered themselves obliged to take as a matter of law, it could not be cited as evidence of the evolution of customary international law. The Declaration did not provide a proper basis for legal actions complaints, or other claims in any international, domestic or other proceedings. The Australian Government had long expressed its dissatisfaction with the references to self-determination in the Declaration, he said. Self-determination applied to situations of decolonization and the break-up of States into smaller states with clearly defined population groups. It also applied where a particular group with a defined territory was disenfranchised and was denied political or civil rights. The Government supported and encouraged the full engagement of indigenous peoples in the democratic decision-making process, but did not support a concept that could be construed as encouraging action that would impair, even in part, the territorial and political integrity of a State with a system of democratic representative Government.

Canada said that his country had long-demonstrated its commitment to protecting and promoting indigenous rights at home and around the world. It had strongly supported the work of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the relevant United Nations special rapporteurs. Canada also had a constructive and far-reaching international development programme targeted specifically at improving the situation of Indigenous Peoples in many parts of the world, and it also continued to make further progress at home within its constitutional guarantees for aboriginal and treaty rights, and with its negotiated self-government and land claims agreements with several Canadian aboriginal groups.

Canada had been an active participant in the development of the Declaration over the past 20 years, he continued. And while it had long been a proponent of a strong and effective text promoting indigenous peoples' fundamental freedoms without discrimination,and a text that promoted harmonious agreements between Indigenous Peoples and the States in which they lived, the text presented to the Human Rights Council last year did not met those expectations. Canada's position had remained consistent and principled and the country had stated publicly that it had significant concerns with the wording of the current text, including provisions on lands and resources; free, prior and informed consent when used as a veto; intellectual property; military issues; and the needto achieve an appropriate balance between the rights and obligations on Indigenous Peoples, Member States and third parties. For example, the recognition of indigenous rightsto lands, territories and resources was important to Canada. He said that Canada was proud that land and treaty rights had been given strong recognition and protection in its Constitution. Canada was equally proud of the processes that had been put in place to deal with aboriginal claims respecting those rights and was working actively to improve those processes to address claims more effectively. Unfortunately, the provisions in the Declaration on lands and territories were overly broad, unclear and capable of a wide variety of interpretations, discounting the need to recognize a range of rights over land and possibly putting into question matters that had been settled by treaty.

Similarly, some of the provisions dealing with the concept of free, prior and informed consent were unduly restrictive, he said. Provisions in the Declaration said that States could not act on any legislative or administrative matter that might affect Indigenous Peoples without obtaining their consent. While Canada had a strong consultative process, reinforced by the Courts as a matter of law, the establishment of complete veto power over legislative action for a particular group would be fundamentally incompatible with Canada's parliamentary system.

New Zealand, speaking in explanation of vote, noted that New Zealand was one of the few countries that from the start had supported the elaboration of a declaration that promoted and protected the rights of Indigenous Peoples. In New Zealand, indigenous rights were of profound importance, and were integral to its identity as a nation State and as a people. New Zealand was unique: a treaty concluded at Waitangi between the Crown and New Zealand's indigenous peoples in 1840 was a founding document of the country. Today, New Zealand had one of the largest and most dynamic indigenous minorities in the world, and the Treaty of Waitangi had acquired great significance in the country's constitutional arrangements, law and Government activity. The place of Maori in society, their grievances and disparities affecting them were central and enduring features of domestic debate and Government action, she said. New Zealand also had an unparalleled system for redress, accepted by both indigenous and non-indigenous citizens alike. Nearly 40 per cent of the New Zealand fishing quota was owned by Maori, as a result. Claims to over half of New Zealand's land area had been settled. For that reason, New Zealand fully supported the principles and aspirations of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The country had been implementing most of the standards in the Declaration for many years. She shared the view that the Declaration was long overdue, and the concern that Indigenous Peoples in many parts of the world continued to be deprived of basic human rights. New Zealand was proud of its role in improving the text over the past three years, turning the draft into one that States would be able to uphold and promote, she said. It was, therefore, a matter of deep regret that it was unable to support the text before the Assembly. Unfortunately, New Zealand had difficulties with a number of provisions of the text.

In particular, four provisions in the Declaration were fundamentally incompatible with New Zealand's constitutional and legal arrangements, the Treaty of Waitangi, and the principle of governing for the good of all its citizens, namely article 26 on lands and resources, article 28 on redress, articles 19 and 32 on a right of veto over the State.

The provision on lands and resources could not be implemented in New Zealand, she said. Article 26 stated that Indigenous Peoples had a right to own, use, develop or control lands and territories that they had traditionally owned, occupied or used. For New Zealand, the entire country was potentially caught within the scope of the article, which appeared to require recognition of rights to lands now lawfully owned by other citizens, both indigenous and non-indigenous, and did not take into account the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the Indigenous Peoples concerned. The article, furthermore, implied that Indigenous Peoples had rights that others did not have. The entire country would also appear to fall within the scope of article 28 on redress and compensation. The text generally took no account of the fact that land might now be occupied or owned legitimately by others, or subject to numerous different or overlapping indigenous claims.

Finally, the Declaration implied that Indigenous Peoples had a right of veto over a democratic legislature and national resource management, she said. She strongly supported the full and active engagement of Indigenous Peoples in democratic decision-making processes. New Zealand also had some of the most extensive consultation mechanisms in the world.

United States said the United States had to vote against the Declaration's adoption. While the United States had worked for 11 years in Geneva for a consensus declaration, the document before the Assembly had been prepared and submitted after the negotiations had concluded. States had been given no opportunity to discuss it collectively. It was disappointing that the Human Rights Council had not responded to his country's calls, in partnership with Council members, for States to undertake further work to generate a consensus text. The Declaration had been adopted by the Council in a splintered vote. The process had been unfortunate and extraordinary for any multilateral negotiating exercise and set a poor precedent with respect to United Nations practice.

The Declaration, if it were to encourage harmonious and constructive relations, should have been written in terms that were transparent and capable of implementation, he said. Unfortunately, the text that had emerged from that failed process was confusing, and risked endless conflicting interpretations and debate about its application, as already evidenced by the numerous complex interpretive statements issued by States at is adoption at the Human Rights Council, and the United States could not lend its support to such a text. He said the United States views with respect to the text's core provisions could be found in a separate document, which would be circulated as an official United Nations document. The document discussed the core provisions of the Declaration,including but not limited to self-determination, lands and resources, redress and the Declaration's nature. Because the flaws in the text ran through its most significant provisions, the text as a whole was rendered unacceptable.

While the United States was voting against the Declaration, his Government would continue its efforts to promote indigenous rights domestically, he said. Under United States domestic law, the Government recognized Indian tribes as political entities with inherent powers of self-government as first peoples. In

its legal system, the federal Government had a government-to- government relationship with Indian tribes. In that domestic context, that meant promoting tribal self-government over a broad range of internal and local affairs, including determination of membership, culture, language, religion, education, information, social welfare, economic activities, and land and resources management. At the same time, the United States would continue its work to promote indigenous rights internationally.

Voices from the positive.

Chile said that his delegation had also voted in favour of the Declaration, supporting the important role indigenous peoples played in the development of all societies. The Declaration was a significant step. Chile reaffirmed its internal legal system, which aimed to develop, promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples,and supported their efforts to build their own communities. The Declaration would serve to strengthen such national efforts.

United Kingdom welcomed the Declaration as an important tool in helping to enhance the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. The United Kingdom regretted that it had not been possible to reach wider consensus on the important text, and that some States with large indigenous populations had felt that they had no recourse but to call a vote on it. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom recognized the efforts that had been made to reflect many concerns raised in negotiations. The United Kingdom was pleased to be able to support its adoption. The United Kingdom fully supported the provisions in the Declaration which recognized that indigenous individuals were entitled to the full protection of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in international law, on an equal basis to all other individuals. Human rights were universal and equal to all. The United Kingdom did not accept that some groups in society should benefit from human rights that were not available to others. With the exception of the right to self-determination, the United Kingdom did not accept the concept of collective human rights in international law. That was without prejudice to the United Kingdom's recognition of the fact that the Governments of many States with indigenous populations had granted them various collective rights in their constitutions, national laws and agreements.

In that regard, the United Kingdom strongly endorsed preambular paragraph 22 in the Declaration, which it understood to distinguish between individual human rights in international law and other collective rights bestowed at the national level by governments to indigenous peoples. Her delegation read all the provisions in the Declaration in the light of the understanding of human rights and collective rights. The United Kingdom understood article 3 of the Declaration as promoting the development of a new and distinct right of self-determination, specific to indigenous peoples. She understood the "right" set out in article 3 of the Declaration to be separate and different from the existing right of all peoples to self-determination in international law. Subsequent articles of the Declaration sought to set out the content of that new "right" which was to be exercised, where it applied, within the territory of a State and was not intended to impact in any way on the political unity or territorial integrity of existing States. Continuing, she said the United Kingdom understood the commitments of articles 12 and 13 on redress and repatriation as applying only in respect of such property or of such ceremonial objects and human remains that were in the ownership or possession of the State. She emphasized that the Declaration was non-legally binding and did not propose to have any retroactive application on historical episodes. National minority groups and other ethnic groups within the territory of the United Kingdom and its overseas territories did not fall within the scope of the Indigenous Peoples to which the Declaration applied. The United Kingdom had, however, long provided political and financial support to the socio-economic and political development of indigenous peoples around the world.

Norway said that the Declaration set the standard of achievement to be pursued in a spirit of cooperation. Norway would work with the Sami people, recognized as indigenous by the Government. Several articles in the Declaration dealt with the exercise of self-determination and stipulated that such rights should be exercised in the framework of international law. The Norwegian Government had signed agreements with the Sami parliament setting out cooperation and legislative matters. The question of land was a crucial issue to cultural identity and, in that regard, Norway referred to the relevant language of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169.

Mexico welcomed the adoption of the Declaration and reaffirmed her Government's pride in its multiethnic population. With the anniversary of its independence, Mexico had enjoyed the recognition of its indigenous peoples, who supported the country's national identity. She also welcomed the provisions of the Declaration in accordance with the provisions of Mexico's Constitution. Article 2 of the Constitution recognized the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination, granting them autonomy to determine their internal form and system of norms for conflict resolution. She understood, however, that the rights of indigenous people to self-determination, autonomy and self-government shared be exercised in accordance with Mexico's Constitution, so as to guarantee its national unity and territorial integrity.

Sweden said that her Government was pleased that the Assembly had finally adopted the Declaration. Sweden had supported the Declaration throughout the negotiation process, had voted in favour of the text and hoped that its implementation improved the situation of Indigenous Peoples. At the same time, the Declaration included several references to collective rights. While the Swedish Government had no difficulty in recognizing such rights outside the framework of international law, it was of the firm opinion that individual human rights prevailed over the collective rights mentioned in the Declaration. She went on to say that the Sami people were recognized as indigenous by the Swedish Parliament, and the Government had based its relations with the Sami on dialogue, partnership and self-determination, with respect and responsibility for cultural identity.

To that end, Sweden looked forward to discussing the implementation of the Declaration with Sami representatives. She stressed that the political discussion on self-determination could not be separated from the question of land rights. The Sami's relationship to the land was at the heart of the matter and the Swedish Government must maintain a balance between competing interests of different groups living in the same areas of the north of the country. She said that some clarification of her country's interpretation of the Declaration was necessary. For instance, the text's reference to self-determination should not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would impair the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States. She noted that a large part of the realization of the right to self-determination could be ensured through article 19 of the Declaration, which dealt with the duty of States to consult and cooperate with Indigenous Peoples.

Brazil said that his delegation had voted in favour of the text. Brazil had believed that the text adopted by the Human Rights Council, the body most able to deal with such issues, should not have been reopened. Nevertheless,Brazil welcomed the text and appreciated the flexibility of delegations that had brought the Declaration before the Assembly today. He said that his country's indigenous peoples were crucial to the development of society at every level, including the development of spiritual and cultural life for all. Brazil would underscore that the exercise of the rights of Indigenous Peoples was consistent with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States in which they resided. At the same time, States should always bear in mind their duty to protect the rights and identity of their indigenous peoples, he added.

India said his country had consistently favoured the promotion and protection of indigenous peoples' rights. The fact that the working group had been unable to reach consensus was only reflective of the extreme complexity of the issues involved. While the Declaration did not define what constituted indigenous peoples, the issue of indigenous rights pertained to peoples in independent countries who were regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region which the country belonged, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present State boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retained some or all of their socio-economic, cultural and political institutions.

Regarding references to the right to self-determination, it was his understanding that theright to self-determination applied only to peoples under foreign domination and that the concept did not apply to sovereign independent States or to a section of people or a nation, which was the essence of national integrity. The Declaration clarified that the right to self-determination would be exercised by indigenous peoples in terms of their right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as means and ways for financing their autonomous functions. In addition, article 46 stated clearly that nothing in the Declaration might be interpreted as implying for any State, people, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act contrary to the Charter. It was on that basis that India had voted in favour of the adoption of the Declaration.

And some African States

Namibia said that its delegation had made clear from the outset of the negotiations that Namibia was not opposed to the idea of a Declaration on indigenous rights. "We, as historical victims of deprivation of rights could not do anything that would be construed to deny other people human rights," he said, adding that having experienced first-hand the pain of being treated as second class citizens in their own land, Namibians had traditionally been friends of human rights instruments. Namibia understood that nothing in the Declaration could be interpreted in any way to mean that measuresadopted by States for securing equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples and individuals created, as a consequence, any new, separate rights. He said that Namibia also understood that the word "law" in article 46 (2) of the Declaration referred to the national laws of States. Accordingly, Namibia understood that the exercise of the rights set out in the Declaration was Msubject to the constitutional frameworks and other national laws of States

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Climate Change: How It Impacts us all'

60th Annual NGO Conference by UN Department of Public Information

By:
Danniel Salau Rogei - Simoo.

Climate change is a household name of the 21st century coming on the premise of global warming phenomenon that is threatening the very existence of this planet. Whereas, warnings were made some decades ago in regard to its devastating effects, causes and possible ways of mitigation, this has gone unheeded for long and now we are busy putting out the fire off the house we have just set ablaze. Since the adoption of the Convention on Climate Change a few years ago, which majority of the UN member states have since ratified, many global meetings have been held to address this monumental issue. Although the previous forums were hitherto dominated by scientists and technocrats, the organizers of the 60th annual UN conference of the Department of Public Affair's NGO conference saw the wisdom of including the forgotten lot, the Indigenous Peoples. In a situation reminiscent of the old biblical adage that "the despised stone has become a corner stone", the Indigenous Peoples got unprecedented platform, not as observers but players in giving an elusive solution to this problem

This conference was held in UN headquarters in New York 5th - 7th September 2007 with the theme Climate *'Change: How it Impacts us all'* this theme has for the past year dominated the world agenda worrying many. The discussions are always on the headlines even at the United Nations and it is no wonder that the United Nation Secretary General Ban Ki-moon words were very clear in his message to the participants;

"We cannot go on this way for long. We cannot continue with business as usual. The time has come for decisive action on a global scale.

As participants in the global carbon-based economy, all of us are part of the problem. Now we all must commit to the search for solutions. New technologies, energy conservation, carbon-trading, forestry projects, renewable fuels, and private markets are vital aspects of an overall response. But the enormity of the issue cannot be addressed by mitigation alone. It requires adaptation and a fundamental rethink of the way we live, and how we travel and transact business. The most vulnerable developing countries, who have contributed the least to this phenomenon, yet remain most at risk from it- need assistance to improve their capacity to adapt."

The impact of climate change is grave and growing. The melting of Artic ice threatens the region's people and ecosystems, but it also imperils lo-lying islands and coastal cities half a world away. On the other hand, as glaciers retreat, water supplies are being put at risk. And for one third of the world population living in dry lands, especially those in Africa, changing weather patterns threaten to exacerbate desertification, drought and food insecurity.

Citing clear evidence that global warming was real, mostly man made and had the potential to devastate our planet, Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro told Participants that tackling climate change required a truly global effort that drew together Governments, the private sector and civil society in ***"one sustained push for change"***.

While Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had identified climate change as one of his top priorities, "we also understand that this is not a challenge for the UN alone", said Ms. Migiro, addressing nearly 2,000 civil society representatives from 90 countries, she said that the effects of climate change were already visible – from the Arctic, which was warming twice as fast as the global average to her home continent of Africa, where changing weather patterns threatened to exacerbate desertification, drought and food insecurity. So how global warming was addressed today carried grave implications for the future. At the same time, she said that the challenge presented a remarkable opportunity to break with the past, *"to look anew at the way we operate...and the way we relate to each other"*. It also provided the opportunity to implement a new sustainable development process; promote cleaner business, industries and jobs; make better and wiser use of limited natural resources; and re-invest in depleted natural capital.

Asha Rose Migiro
- Deputy Secretary General

Those changes would not prove painless, but their discomfort was far outweighed, by the cost of not acting, she said, noting that the landmark reports of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change had suggested that "it will not cost us the moon to save the Earth" -- as little as 0.1 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP) might be needed annually for the next three decades, ***"if we start to act now"***.

The gathering was also addresses by Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), said that 2007 was proving to be a pivotal year, and that people of the world, galvanized by the Intergovernmental Panel's reports, had finally begun to ask their Governments and leaders: ***"What are you doing about this problem?"*** Moreover, calls to address climate change were now building from the grass-roots level. Civil society had stepped up its already active involvement and NGOs were becoming more aware that the grave, far-reaching consequences of global warming touched on virtually all aspects of their work. He said that, in the global effort to turn back the effects of climate change, it was absolutely necessary to address the role of the United Nations, an organization that was "much maligned, criticized and faulted for the problems of the world.

The United Nations had picked up the science on climate change and moved the discussion into the Government arena, even though the idea had been met with derision in some quarters, though establishing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). He noted that UNEP, for its part, had set up the Intergovernmental Panel of some 2,000 renowned scientists who had turned a hotly contested ideological concept into a universally accepted basis for action in 2007. "That is the United Nations at work," he said. But the challenge to take another major step forward would be again on the table of world leaders this December in Bali. What Government leader could stand before his or her people and try to explain the alternatives to action in the face of such compelling evidence? ***"There are no alternatives"*** to collective action, he said, appealing to civil society representatives, who knew more about the United Nations than some, to go back into their communities and make people aware that they were in danger of losing some of their greatest assets unless action to comprehensively address climate change was not taken swiftly.

Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa the General Assembly President said that a comprehensive global response to the climate change threat must be pursued within the ambit of the international development agenda. It also required ***"a radical change of behaviour and consciousness"***, and the effort can only succeed "if it is home-based" and engages communities "in identifying the actions and responses that are most suited to their particular circumstance". According to her , civil society could contribute greatly and most effectively if it fostered awareness and persisted in developing inventive initiatives at the grass-roots level which inspire people to work towards a solution, she added. Her message to the participants was ***"The United Nations is an intergovernmental organization, but it draws its strength and inspiration from the support of civil society worldwide,"***

Kiyo Akasaka, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, said that the Conference took place on the eve of several milestone events on the United Nations climate change agenda. Those included the 24 September high-level meeting on climate change convened by the Secretary-General, the releases in November of the Human Development Report and the synthesis report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali, in December.

After the opening statements, several NGO representatives took the floor, including Joan Kirby, Chair, NGO/DPI Executive Committee, who said that ***"the tide is turning and political leaders are responding here and around the world"***. In large part, that response was due to the persistent efforts of the Secretary-General. She was pleased to share his concerns about climate change with civil society and the world of NGOs. Hopefully, Conference participants would be transformed into ***"conservers rather than users of the Earth"***, and leave knowing what they could do to respond to the challenge, equipped with the practical tools to do so.

Richard Jordan Conference Chair and Co-Chair of its Planning Committee, and representative of the International Council for Caring Communities said, in assessing the challenge, cross-cutting issues of gender, education, human rights, health and migration should be articulated. He urged participants to consider the reasons for the lack of progress, for all too soon it would be time for everyone to help combat that very serious challenge to the entire ***"human-earth"*** community.

The Indigenous Peoples panel representing four regions

of the globe, that is Africa, Arctic, The Pacific and Latin America shared their experiences and gave insights on another perspective, a departure from the monotonous scientific jargon. Moderated by Lucy Mulenkei of Indigenous Information Network, this Panel was perhaps the best of all if the participation, comments and reactions from the floor is anything to go by. Having had the opportunity to represent specifically the Maasai and the African region generally, I shared about our perception on climate change and how it has impacted on all our aspects of life.

African Indigenous Peoples still practice their traditional economic livelihood systems which are closely intertwined with the environment. Once the environment is threatened, and so is their livelihood and existence. There are four major forms of economic livelihoods. The first one is Pastoralism. This entails the keeping of domestic livestock such as goats, sheep, cows, donkeys and camels. This is practiced mainly by the Maasai, Turkana, Tuareg, Fulani among others. To be able to sustainably make use of natural resources such as water, grass and salt licks, they have to move from one region to another following the rain patterns. This mobility which is called nomadism, helps in allowing the resources to regenerate in one region as they move on to another. Land is therefore an essential resource for this lifestyle to be practiced.

Hunting and Gathering is another economic livelihood practiced by the Indigenous Peoples in Africa. Some of the groups that practice it include the Ogiek, Hadzabe, Bushmen, Batwa, the San and Pygmy among others. The forest resources and environment is very essential for this livelihood. Unfortunately, most of their territories have been designated as forest reserves and National Parks threatening their very existence.

Subsistence agriculture is also widely practiced by Indigenous Peoples. They use indigenous seeds which guarantee good yields and nutritional value. This is being threatened by genetically modified seeds which lead to terminator seeds. This means that farmers never save the seeds for the next season. They have to go and buy from the business people every other season.

A historic pose for all of us as Indigenous People. Lucy Mulenkei, Africa and Marcos Terena of Brazil pose for a picture with the wife of Ban-Ki-moon - the UN Secretary General after a working lunch.

The traditional fisher folks constitute another huge economic practice by Indigenous Peoples. They use appropriate and sustainable fishing methods which ensure that fish species are never depleted. They are challenged by concession of fishing territories leading to commercial over fishing, and treating them as poachers.

African Indigenous Peoples have survived the test of time owing to their resilient cultures and traditional knowledge. This has enabled them to live harmoniously with the rest of biodiversity making them become custodians and stewards of nature. Always minding of the coming generations, indigenous peoples have set upon themselves a sacred obligation and responsibility to bequeath their heirs a good environment. Spiritual reverence is the greatest pillar that gives the environment its sanctity.

Climate change is therefore a very new phenomenon to Indigenous Peoples. Thinking that they have offended their ancestors in one way or another, many have resorted to their sacred sites such as mountains to offer sacrifices. But this has not guaranteed them the much needed rains and when it comes, it is so torrential that it becomes detrimental. Drying up river beds, disappearance of various plant and animal species, landslides, floods, prolonged droughts and desertification are some of the indicators of climate change currently witnessed by Indigenous Peoples. Their traditional early warning systems have been compromised by the seemingly corrupted weather patterns. The Maasai for example, use to observe the flowering of specific plants, or the behavior and movement of wildlife among others. With the disappearance of some of these species and environmental destruction, this has become untenable.

Indigenous Peoples in Africa and particularly pastoralists have become more vulnerable to effects of climate change due to loss of their traditional land and territories. The Maasai for example have lost a greater part of their land to the colonialists through the dubious Anglo-Maasai agreements. They have continued to loose it to the Independent government owing to its lopsided legislation. This has ensured perpetual marginalization both economically and politically. The government policies have furher aggravated the matter. In its parsuit to meet political and economic interests, the Kenyan government for example has conceded to the encroachment of forests such as Mau which is the source of the Mara Rive that give life to the Maasai Mara ecosystem.

The cultures and traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples are also being undermined and exploited. The intellectual property rights regimes do not recognize the collective rights of indigenous knowledge. This becomes a loophole for exploitation making them victims of globalization.

To the Indigenous Peoples, the effects of climate change appear like nature has conspired with dominant societies to exterminate them. They suffer the most from the problem they have least contributed to. They now suffer from food insecurity as a result of droughts and famine. Diminishing resources have led to widespread conflicts. Loss of land and environmental degradation has led to disintegration of cultures as well as spiritual and health deficiencies.

Indigenous Peoples face numerous challenges in addressing and mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. Faced with the lowest literacy levels, they lack the necessary information and general awareness of what is happening. Besides, they also don't have the capacity to address these issues some of which are alien to their customs.

This is compounded by the fact that they are not fully involved in the regional and global climate change processes. But even as we receive all the measures that are geared towards the reduction of carbon emissions, we are skeptical about the commercialization of carbon sink initiative. Indigenous Peoples interprets this to mean conceding more land and further exploitation.

Indigenous Peoples however are willing to be part of the solution to this program. They can be consulted for their traditional knowledge expertise. This gives credence and respect to Indigenous Peoples knowledge and cultures. However, it is necessary to build Indigenous peoples capacities to enable them adapt to the changes. There is need to embrace cleaner and renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, biogas among others. Developed countries should take up the responsibility of the mess and be responsive by ratifying and implementing the provisions of Kyoto protocol and other related international instruments such as the Draft declaration for Indigenous Peoples Rights.

During the conference there were so many panels, one such was a panel discussion on "Climate Change: The Scientific Evidence", one of seven such scheduled discussions, was highlighted by a presentation by Micheal Oppenheimer, one of the authors of the Intergovernmental Panel's report. Mr. Oppenheimer, the Albert G. Milbank Professor of Geosciences and International Affairs, Woodrow Wilson School and Department of Geosciences, Princeton University, focused particularly on the findings of working group 2, which had examined the *impact of climate change and the ability of human and natural systems to adapt to those changes.*

Touching on water availability, human health, the effects of climate change on ecosystems and species, as well as on sea level, he said that, after working on the issue for the past 25 years, he had never seen such a clear statement of the hazard of climate change as the predicted precipitation changes, flowing from working group 2's report. Particularly worrying would be the anticipated drying in the south-western United States, the Mediterranean basin, sub-Saharan Africa, Mexico and elsewhere. The rains would decrease in sub-Saharan Africa, which already had difficulty with water and food availability. Already, malnutrition and starvation were all too common worldwide.

In terms of ecosystems, he said that coral reefs were very sensitive to temperature. Those were broadly distributed in the tropics, and provided a rich biodiversity centre and were essential to island nations. The sinking of floating ice was another concern. The ice pack in the Arctic, the polar bears' habitat, was shrinking, which might lead to that species' extinction. Niche species lived in very specific circumstances and were at particular risk, but about 30 per cent of all species would disappear, based on the estimated warming.

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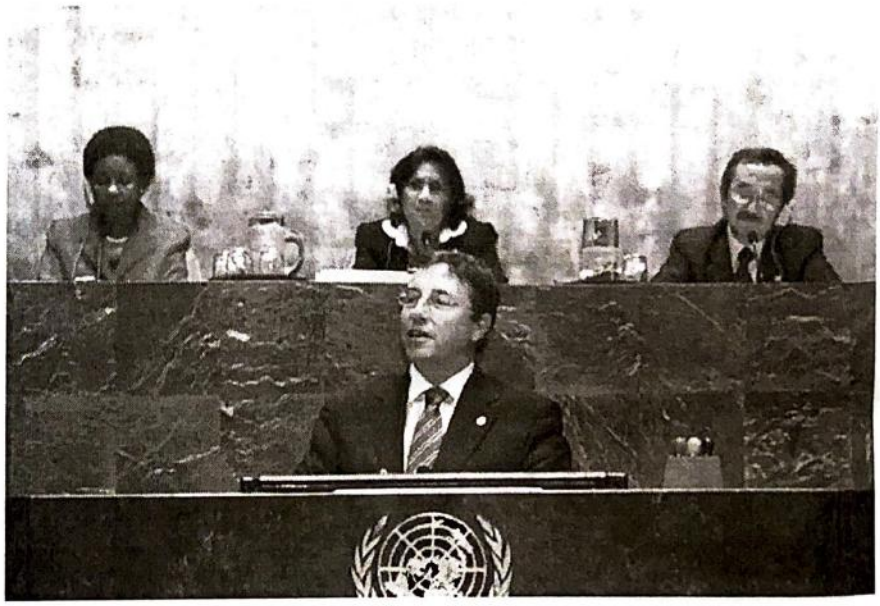


Achim Steiner - Executive Director UNEP - on the lower level addressing participants while on the right Asha-Rose Migiro, Sheikha Haya Rashid Al Khalifa and Kiyo Akasaka listen keenly

Africa's Vulnerability to Climate Change and Opportunities for Adaptation

By Balgis Osman Elaisha
Senior Researcher Climate Change Unit - Sudan

The increasing number of disasters since the beginning of the 21st century and their association with climate change has become a major concern for the international community, raising climate change issues to the top of the global agenda.

Africa is especially vulnerable to climatic changes and variability. This vulnerability is due to the fact that a large share of its economies depends on climate-sensitive sectors, mainly rain fed agriculture, widespread poverty, poor infrastructure, high illiteracy rates, over-exploitation of natural resources and tribal conflicts. All these factors, in addition to limited institutional and technological capabilities, have contributed to its low adaptive capacity. The continent's high physical sensitivity to climate change is expected to result in increased average temperatures and more rainfall variability, both of which are going to severely impact people's livelihoods. The knowledge and information base for decision making on expected impacts and the required adaptation measures is also low.

One of the constraints to understanding current and future climate variability is the lack of observational climate data in Africa. Significant gaps are apparent in the surface network, such as over Angola, the Congo basin, Sudan, and parts of the Sahel. This lack of data limits, for example, regional diagnostic studies, which can identify the structure of dry and wet years, their precursors and their impacts, utilizing empirical and statistical techniques and which need further support in Africa. To address this evident gap, coordinated efforts for capacity building, training, research and development should be emphasized to provide for a continent-wide monitoring network. Making reliable climate observations available would transform them into useful products for a wide spectrum of stakeholders.

This information gap is evident when observing the unsatisfactory operation of the Global Surface Network and the Global Upper Area Network in Africa. In a recent World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Annual Global Monitoring Report, it was noted that only 50 per cent of the ten upper air stations and ten per cent of the 84 surface stations are working well enough to properly provide for expected reports. It has also been reported by the WMO that about 26 per cent out of 84 of the Global Surface Networks and 20 per cent out of ten of the Global Upper Air Network stations within eastern and southern Africa are silent, and most of the remaining stations provide a less than desirable performance.

This situation creates key gaps in the understanding of and ability to predict the global climate system, resulting in the climate observing system in Africa being in a far worse state than that of any other continent. According to the WMO, this situation is deteriorating.

Requirements for increasing Africa's contribution to the global climate observing system have been identified by regional workshops and the regional action plans that followed. These requirements include:

- Improving and sustaining operational observing networks, such as the Global Climate Observing System's Surface and Upper Air Networks;
- Recovering historical data;
- Improving national and regional coordination;
- Education, training and capacity building; and,
- Improved national planning and reporting.

More stations are needed - of those that are in place many are not reporting or are reporting at a sub-standard level. Africa also has a low density of WMO World Weather Watch real-time weather stations, in fact, the lowest of any region in the world.

Africa has a low level of expertise in climate science, particularly in prediction at longer time scales. Most predictions are supplied from international centres external to Africa. The continent also lags behind other regions in terms of availability of detailed scientific

Pastoralism is the worst hit in both the Sahel and Sub-Saharan Africa. Thank God they have their own traditional coping mechanism which should be recognised.

to climate at national levels, since climate is seen as a lesser priority compared to other urgent needs.

Many country reports have also highlighted specific constraints and data needs to build capacity related to the vulnerability and adaptation components of National Communications. In particular, such constraints include:

- the lack of country-specific socio-economic scenarios;
- the deficiencies in data collection, quality control, archiving, retrieval, preparation and analysis of data; and,
- the lack of comprehensive studies on possible adaptation measures and cost-benefit analysis of adaptation options.

At the institutional level, many countries have stressed the critical role that local government agencies play in the development and implementation of policies and measures to address climate change.

Actions required to address these gaps include training programmes for local government officials, dedicated research activities and post-graduate courses and the initiation of specific institutional frameworks for climate change. Some parties have established training programmes for local government officials. For example, local environmental action plans that contain climate change programmes and projects.

Vulnerability assessment

Africa is, it is clear, already under pressure from climate stresses and this increases the continent's vulnerability to further climate change and reduces its adaptive capacity. Floods and droughts can occur in the same area within months of each other. Droughts in Africa often lead to famine and widespread disruption of socio-economic well-being.

Atmospheric dust in the form of dust and sand storms is a major element of the Saharan and Sahelian environments. The Sahara is the world's largest source of airborne mineral dust, and according to some estimates, up to one billion tonnes of dust is exported from the Sahel-Sahara region annually, although this does vary year to year. The frequency in occurrence of dust storms has, however, increased in some parts of the Sahel, from the wet 1950s/1960s to the dry periods of the 1970s and 1980s. Human impacts such as overgrazing, deforestation and resulting desertification are contributing factors to the increase in dust storms through the creation of new sources of dust. Dust storms have negative impacts on agriculture, infrastructure and health in the dry Saharan environment. The storms can be transported over large distances, traversing northern Africa and adjacent regions, eventually depositing dust in Europe, Western Asia and the Americas.

What is their future? Innocent as they are they need to see a better world tomorow.

With further climate change, climate in Africa is predicted to become more variable and extreme weather events more frequent and severe. There are likely to be large regional differences in changes in rainfall, for example, an increase in the western part of the continent and a decrease for the northern part. Some studies, however, have indicated that these general trends may include hidden variations within the regions and countries. For example, southern Africa may be drier in general terms, but some countries of the region may become wetter than the average.

General circulation models are the most common tools used for climate prediction in Africa, although they show uncertainty regarding both the magnitude and direction of changes in precipitation. The inter-annual, inter-decadal and multi-decadal variations in Africa's climate make future changes hard to understand and predict. Other climate factors important to Africa such as land-cover change, the interaction of Saharan dust and the El Niño Southern Oscillation are not represented well in these models. Better regional climate models are required, although some, such as the Hadley Centre's PRECIS model, have already been applied in some areas.

Top-down climate model scenario-based assessment is a common approach for the assessment of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climatic changes in Africa. Recently, though, the bottom-up approach, which places the sensitivity and vulnerability of natural and human systems to the fore, has been employed, particularly through the National Adaptation Programmes of Action process.

Key sectors and areas are likely to be seriously impacted for Africa as climate change develops.

Millions of people in Africa have no access to potable water. Water scarcity is expected to increase due to greater water demand. Population increases in drought-prone areas could, for example, coincide with

future decreases in precipitation. At present, water availability is decreasing in Africa with disparities between the location of water and the need for water resources. For example, one third of the people in Africa live in drought-prone areas mainly in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa. Reduction in water quantity will lead to a reduction in water quality and the associated impacts on sectors such as health and biodiversity. By 2025, it is projected that around 480 million of people in Africa will face either water scarcity or accompanying stress with a subsequent potential increase of water conflicts - almost all of the fifty river basins in Africa are transboundary

The ice-cap on Mount Kilimanjaro has been disappearing due to climate change with serious implications for the rivers that depend on ice melt for their flow. Statistics indicate a reduction in the ice-cap of around 82 per cent since it was first surveyed in 1912. Several rivers are already drying out in the summer due to a depletion in melt water. Recent projections suggest that if the reduction continues at its present rate the ice-cap may disappear completely within fifteen years. Other glacial water reservoirs such as Ruwenzori in Uganda and Mount Kenya are facing similar threats.

Agriculture is the most important economic sector in most African countries. It represents approximately 30 per cent of Africa's GDP and contributes about 50 per cent of total export value.

Agriculture is mostly subsistence in nature with a high dependence on rainfall (over 95 per cent) for irrigation. As a result, agriculture in Africa is highly vulnerable to changes in climate variability, seasonal shifts and precipitation patterns. The food security threat posed by climate change is great, particularly where agricultural yields and *per capita* food production have been steadily declining and where population growth will increase the demand for food, water and forage. According to a 1996 Food and Agriculture Organization study, Africa's food supply would need to quadruple by 2050 to meet people's basic caloric needs, even under the lowest and most optimistic population projections

In general terms, the impacts of climate change on agriculture may include:

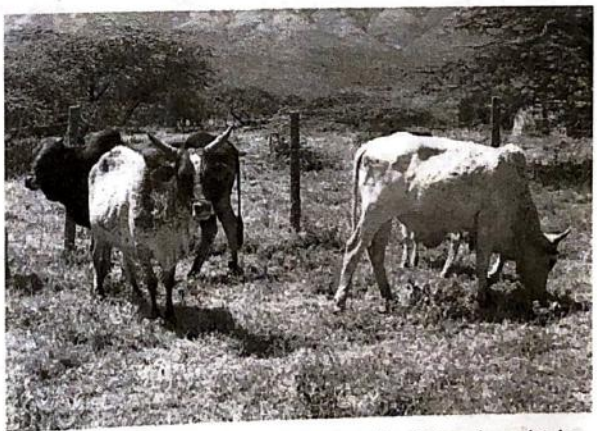
- a reduction in soil fertility;
- decreased livestock productivity directly (through higher temperatures) and indirectly (through changes in the availability of feed and fodder);
- an increased incidence of pest attacks resulting from an increase in temperature; and,
- the manifestation of vector and vector-borne diseases resulting in negative impacts on human health, which, in turn, affects the availability of manpower.

The health effects of a rapidly changing climate are likely to be overwhelmingly negative. It has been noted that the vulnerability of Africa to health impacts is a function of climatic as well many other non-climatic factors. These factors include poverty, conflicts and population displacement, and access, availability and management of health services. In addition, there are other factors such as those related to drug sensitivity of the pathogens and the general awareness and attitude towards preventive measures. Africa is already vulnerable to several climate sensitive diseases such as Rift Valley fever, cholera, malaria and heat stress. It is expected that the range, timing and severity of outbreaks of these diseases will change with a changing climate.

Africa is home to five internationally recognized areas of particularly high species richness and endemism known as 'biological hot spots'. The continent has a large and diverse heritage of flora and fauna. It contains about a fifth of all known species of plants, mammals and birds, and a sixth of amphibians and reptiles. Savannahs, which are the richest grasslands in the world, are the most extensive ecosystem in Africa.

Africa's biodiversity is currently under threat from natural and human pressures. Climate change will be an additional stressor and may lead to changes in habitats causing species migration or extinction for both flora and fauna. Sea-level rise will threaten coastal areas which are already vulnerable because of over-exploitation of coastal resources, over-population and pollution.

An increasing frequency of droughts and floods associated with climate variability and change could have a negative impact on the ecosystems of some areas in Africa. For example, lakes and reservoirs in the African Sahel could lose part of their storage capacity or completely dry up. Changing rainfall patterns could lead to soil erosion, the siltation of rivers and the deterioration of watersheds. Wetlands, of



These cows are lucky to have survived the drought in the past years - Kajiado Kenya.

international importance, and wildlife are also under threat from drought in Southern Africa. An increase in temperature could impact the montane biodiversity of east Africa, specifically those species with a limited ability to move up in elevations.

The detrimental effect that climate change is expected to have on natural resources will lead to increased competition for those resources still available. Conflict is a possible outcome.

More than 25 per cent of Africa's population lives within 100km of the coast, and projections suggest that the numb increase from the one million in 1990 to 70 million in 2080. Sea levels around Africa are projected to rise by 15-95cm by the year 2100. Sea-level rise threatens coastal and marine ecosystems such as lagoons and mangrove forests of both eastern and western Africa. It will also impact urban centres and ports, such as Cape Town, Maputo and Dar es Salaam. An estimated 30 per cent of Africa's coastal infrastructure could be at risk including coastal settlements in the Gulf of Guinea, Senegal, the Gambia and Egypt.

Impacts of sea-level rise could include:

- reduced productivity of coastal fisheries;
- coral bleaching;
- mass migration of populations from the coast and associated health issues;
- salt water intrusion;
- loss of recreational beach facilities; and,
- a loss of coastal infrastructure such as ports and subsequent negative impacts on the tourism sector.

Africa's desertification is strongly linked to poverty, since poor people have little choice but to over-exploit the land. Extensive agriculture in the drylands of Africa and the heavy dependence of rural people on natural resources for subsistence has largely contributed to land degradation and desertification. This situation could be further aggravated by the impacts of expected climatic changes (a decrease in precipitation and an increase in temperatures). Projected climate change by the year 2025, associated with a rise in mean temperature, will exacerbate the losses already experienced due to drought. The link between desertification and climate change is an important issue that needs to be better explored.

Climate change has the potential to undermine economic development, increasing poverty and delaying or preventing the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, the lack of effective adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change can jeopardize the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 1, which is the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, Goal 6, which is the combating of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and Goal 7, which is to ensure environmental sustainability.

A direct link is obvious between climate change and development. The impacts of climate change could greatly impede development efforts in key sectors. Development strategies and plans could have an impact on the capacity to cope with climate change.

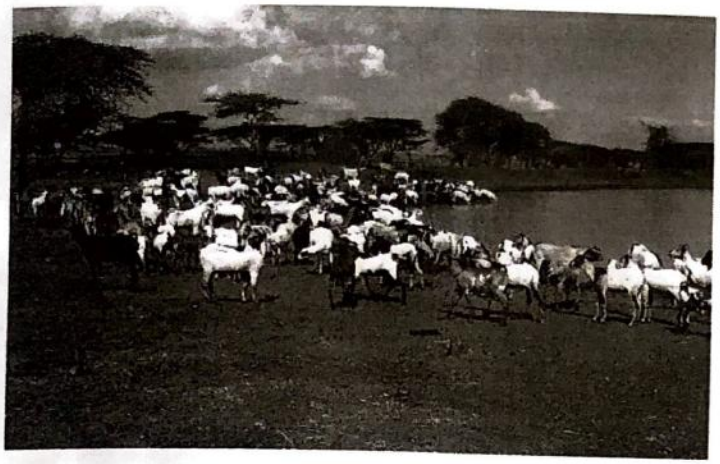
In consideration of the fact that the adverse effects of climate change pose an additional burden in meeting development goals, the mainstreaming of adaptation into sustainable development planning and the accommodation of additional climate change risks are issues that are under consideration for support through additional funding. For example, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development member countries declared in the Declaration on Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into Development Cooperation that they will work to better integrate climate change adaptation in development planning and assistance, both within their own governments and in activities undertaken with partner countries.

In 2003, the European Commission produced a communication entitled Climate Change in the Context of Development Cooperation, in which it proposed a European Union action plan aimed at integrating climate change concerns into their development cooperation activities. Similarly, the World Bank's progress report on its investment framework for clean energy and development asserts that, "it is essential that the Bank Group, along with other International Financial Institutions, play a leading role in ensuring that maximum impact is obtained from these [climate treaty] funds by mainstreaming appropriate investment and appropriate risk in the global development portfolio."

Competition for scarce resources, such as freshwater, land or fish resources, brought about by changes in climate can lead to conflict which will impact on the successful achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The 2001 IPCC Third Assessment Report highlights conflicts over water resources, especially in international shared basins, as an important aspect of Africa's vulnerability to climate change. One such an example is that increased pressure on resources deepened tensions between nomads and agriculturalists in Niger during the 2005 crisis. It has also been argued that increased competition over land was one of the triggers of the conflict in Darfur in Western Sudan.

Adaptation strategies

In spite of the low adaptive capacity of Africa, there are some African communities that have developed traditional adaptation strategies to cope with climate variability and extreme events.



More of such watering points should be enhanced in Africa

Rural farmers have been practicing coping strategies and other tactics, especially in places where droughts recure, and have developed their own ways of assessing the prospects for favourable household or village seasonal food production. For example, in Senegal and Burkina Faso, locals have improved their adaptive capacity by using traditional pruning and fertilizing techniques to double tree densities in semi-arid areas. These help hold soils together, thus reversing desertification. Similar community-initiated projects in Madagascar and Zimbabwe have also been viewed as successes. Othe examples are given in the Box that follows.

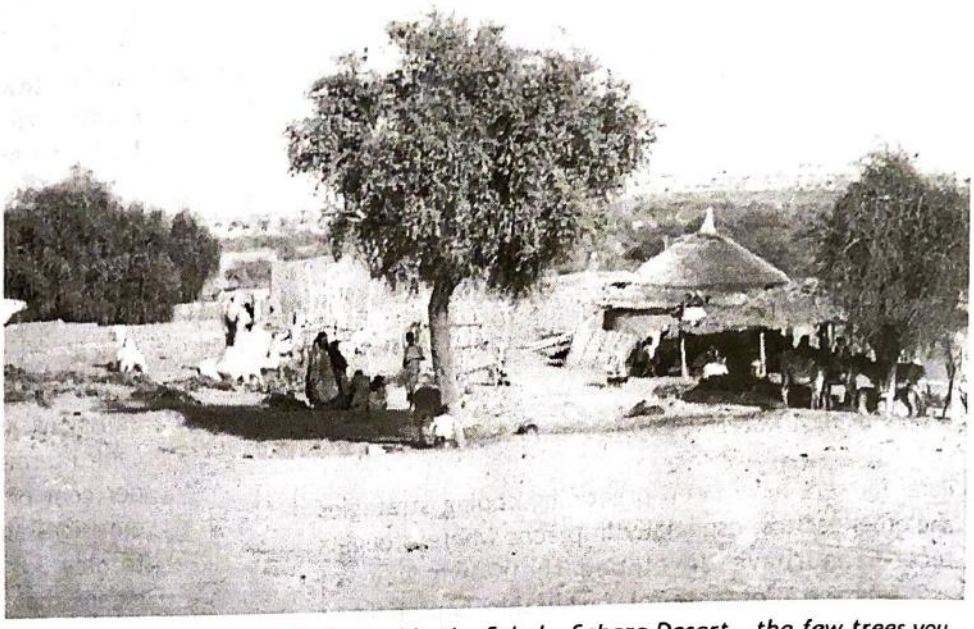
Examples of coping strategies in African countries

- Diversification of herds and incomes, such as the introduction of sheep in place of goats in Bara Province in Western Sudan
- Reliance on forest products as a buffer to climate-induced crop failure in climatically marginal agricultural areas in Botswana
- Decentralization of local governance of resources, (Community-Based Natural Resource Management approaches) to promote use of ecosystems goods and services as opposed to reliance on agriculture in climatically marginal areas for agriculture in Sudan
- Manipulation of land use leading to land use conversion, for example, a shift from livestock farming to game farming in Southern Africa.
- Experience with these strategies needs to be shared among communities, although some of these techniques may need to be adjusted to deal with additional climate risks associated with climate change.

Opportunities for Africa

- In spite of the gloomy picture that climate change is drawing for the future of Africa, the continent possesses some unique characteristics which could provide good opportunities for it to emerge stronger and more capable of reducing future climate change impacts.
- The following points illustrate positive characteristics that would enable Africa to better withstand climate change impacts.
- Africa is still not heavily polluted and is not considered to be a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. Compared to the industrialized countries of Europe and North America, Africa's contribution to global climate change is not significant. Fossil fuel carbon dioxide emissions are low in both absolute and *per capita* terms. Its emissions represent only 3.5 per cent of the world's total carbon dioxide emissions and these are expected to increase to only 3.8 per cent by the year 2010. This means that the continent has a good chance to follow a sustainable development path. Africa is home to some of the greatest wilderness areas in the world, as well as some of the greatest biodiversity hotspots. The GLOBIO analysis shows that the great deserts and the Central African rainforests have huge remaining tracts that show low human impact and development.
- Africa has a population density of 249 people per 1,000 hectares, which is low compared to the world average of 442. Population projections show a decline in fertility from 6.1 children per woman in 1995 to 2.9 by 2025. This will be accompanied by a slow and uneven decline in mortality. A positive aspect is that life expectancy is expected to increase from the 50.1 years it was between 1995 and 2000 to 62.1 by 2025.
- Africa has good potential for exploiting its agricultural and range lands in a more productive way through agricultural transformation processes and sustainable use of its rich natural resource base.
- Africa participated fully in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992 and had great expectations from the vision of global cooperation for sustainable development. This promised positive advancement if the African countries would join hands in the implementation of Agenda 21. It is still hoped that the envisioned harmony between economic development and the environment will manifest itself in Africa achieving sustainable development at national and regional levels.

- Africa is pursuing accelerated socio-economic development strategies to eradicate poverty and protect and promote human health. This is being achieved through commitments to two main initiatives that have been designed to propel Africa towards achievement of a sustainable development path in the 21st century. The two initiatives are the Poverty Reduction Strategies, which are spearheaded by the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund and the Partnership for African Development. Further support to strengthen these initiatives is needed through re-thinking and full commitment to development by governments.



A village in Northern Mali situated in the Sahel - Sahara Desert. the few trees you see above are valued a lot when the heat is more than you can bear.

- Excellent opportunities exist for Africa to make use of available multilateral funding. For example, there is the Strategic Priority on Adaptation which is part of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund. There is also both the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund, which are in addition to the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol.

- Africa possesses a wealth of social networks that have enabled people to survive throughout an environment of harsh climatic conditions. These networks represent safety nets for many of the people through compensation for their low financial incomes and helping many maintain their livelihoods. These networks should be built upon and further strengthened.

Approaches that address multiple environmental stresses and factors hold the greatest promise for Africa, particularly given the limitations in capacity, in terms of both human capacity and financial resources. Efforts to design implementation strategies that address land degradation (which leads to desertification), loss of biological diversity and ecosystem services, as well as adaptation to climate change, such as through enhancing adaptive capacity, will be more likely to succeed than uncoordinated efforts.

Many African countries have ratified the international conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification. Support is still needed, though, from their development partners to ensure effective implementation of their emerging strategies and plans, as well as to fully exploit the opportunities that could be achieved

There is also a need for employing an integrated and synergetic approach among national level development partners for addressing sustainable development. Currently, various national institutions have enacted environmental action plans to address environmental degradation. Several strategies and plans have been formulated in a number of countries including national environmental action plans, forestry management plans, biodiversity plans, coastal management plans and wetland conservation strategies.

In conclusion, it is clear that although Africa is highly vulnerable to changing climate conditions and to environmental stress, with a full commitment to cooperation and utilization of the many mechanisms that are available, the continent can take positive advantage of adaptation opportunities to ensure a sustainable future.

The writer is a senior researcher at the climate change unit in the higher concil for environment and Natural Resource in Khartoum, Sudan.

This article has been drawn from the background paper on Impacts, vulnerability and adoption of climate change in Africa - Prepared and presented by the writer.

For more visit: www.tiempocyberclimate.org/newswatch070302htm

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Managing Forests for Sustainable Development

By Edna Kaptoyo- Indigenous Information Network

Sustainable forest management (SFM) is the management of forests according to the principles of sustainable development. It is also the current culmination in a progression of basic forest management concepts preceded by Sustainable forestry and sustainable yield forestry before that. Sustainable forest management is the term currently used to describe approaches to forest management that set very broad social, economic and environmental goals. It is an art and science of managing a forest whose growth exceeds timber harvest, provides continuous economic benefits, sufficient environmental/ ecological services, social benefits and goods on a sustainable basis to forest dependent communities and other ecosystems as well as itself.

A range of forestry institutions now practice various forms of sustainable forest management and a broad range of methods and tools are available that have been tested over time.The Forest Principles adopted at The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 captured the general international understanding of sustainable forest management at that time. A number of sets of criteria and indicators have since been developed to evaluate the achievement of SFM at both the country and management unit level. These were all attempts to codify and provide for independent assessment of the degree to which the broader objectives of sustainable forest management are being achieved in practice.

The areas of sustainable forest management have emerged based on the criteria of the nine ongoing regional and international criteria and indicators initiatives. The seven thematic areas are:

- Extent of forest resources
- Biological diversity
- Forest health and vitality
- Productive functions and forest resources
- Protective functions of forest resources
- Socio-economic functions
- Legal, policy and institutional framework.

This consensus on common thematic areas (or criteria) effectively provides a common, implicit definition of sustainable forest management. The seven thematic areas were acknowledged by the international forest community at the fourth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the 16th session of the Committee on Forestry

Background

Sustainable Forest Management is relevant in Kenya particularly at this time that the country is transforming from Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) to the vision 2030.

"Sustainable management of forest resources in Kenya will only be possible if we practice good governance of the forest resources; which calls for the respect for the rule of law, respect for human rights, a willingness to give space and a voice to the weak and the more vulnerable in our society; that we respect the voice of the minority, even while accepting the decision of the majority; and, respect diversity" (Wangari Maathai, 2005).

Forests are among the country's most important natural resources and their sustainable management comprises an integral part of Kenya's national development strategy (GOK, 2006). The responsibility of conserving and managing this vital resource has been charged on the Kenya Forest Service (KFS); in the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MENR).

The total area of gazetted forests in Kenya is about 1.7 million hectares, which is only 2.8% of the total area of the country (Was, 1995). The 1.7 million hectares is composed of 1.2 million hectares of closed canopy indigenous forests and 0.5 million hectares bush and grassland forests (GOK, 2003, Wass, 1995). Plantations cover only 140 thousand hectares (FD, 2003) while forests on farm are estimated to cover about 2.5 million hectares (KEFRI, 2003). The forest plantations and trees on farm are planted and harvested from time to time and play only a minor role in water and soil conservation and yet most of the rivers flow through farm lands (Ongugo et al, 2006).

The conservation of the remaining forests in Kenya is at a critical stage as it is affected by population growth, which is estimated to be 34.3 million according to the World Bank data 2007, uncertainties concerning the will of both the government and the forest managers to conserve them and institutional constraints

affecting their management. This is evident in the fact that community people seeking to form forests associations have found it hard to be registered by forest officers. These leaves one wondering is it that the officers have no information on the issue of Community Forest Association (CFA), which in fact is recognised by the new Forest Act of 2005. The main objectives of conserving and managing natural forests in Kenya are: to conserve soil, water, and biodiversity and to exploit their productive potential in a sustainable manner.

Forests occur in highland areas, which are also the main water catchment areas (water towers) of the country. These areas account for 20% of the country's land area, which is fertile with high amounts of rainfall, and hence contain the highest concentration of human and animal populations, of which, 6.2% is classified as forested area(percentage of land area) as per the Kenya country data and 12.6% are classified as the nationally protected area(% of land area). The remaining 80% of the country is arid and semi-arid with fragile soils and low rainfall. The management of both the fertile and the dry areas therefore poseS the great challenges not only to the forestry sector but also the development planners.

Pressure on natural resources is increasing

The human population in Kenya today (2007) is estimated at 32 million, calculated from the figures of the 1999 census that recorded 28.8 million people with an annual growth rate of around 2.1%. Population exerts enormous pressure on the natural resources of the country, especially on the biodiversity. Soil erosion is widespread, deforestation alarming and is estimated to be at 0.3 % annually in relation to the Sub-Saharan estimate which is placed at 0.6%(average annual %, 1990-2005) according to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and biodiversity is being lost, all posing serious challenges to the sustainability of the rural economy and most importantly to sustainable environmental management especially in the fragile ecosystems in ASAL's (Arid and Semi Arid lands).Deforestation which is a major problem especially in ASAL's, refers to the permanent conversion of natural forest area (which is mostly indigenous), to other uses, including shifting cultivation, permanent agriculture, ranching and infrastructure development.

Poverty a major constraint in the ASAL's

Poverty levels are highest in the ASAL's with high over-dependence on subsistence farming and livestock making them more vulnerable to effects of poverty, recurrent droughts, and floods among other externalities. Successful performance of interventions on sustainable energy and environment management is directly linked to poverty, food security and issues of equity in integrated rural development.

Climate Change

In trying to cope with climate change problems there should be a choice between mitigating mechanisms versus adaptation policies. Climatic variations cause desertification-, which has serious economic and social implications. Synergies and the mainstreaming of the issues of climate change with other programmes dealing with development and environment would considerably enhance the efficiency of planned action in forest conservation. Synergies between the UNCCD national Action Programmes, which are building bridges between development and environment policies, on the one hand and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change National Adaptation programmes of Action on the other present a unique opportunity to take a new step towards a comprehensive policy instrument. This will strengthen the adaptation capacities of the poor and fighting climate change through carbon sequestration and emission reductions.

The country report of Kenya, carbon emissions per unit of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) is 0.3 compared to the Sub-Saharan estimate which is 0.4. The largest emitter is the United States which has 22% when distribution is done globally. Africa's emission is minimal only occupying 11%. The trend in global emissions worldwide has been showing an increase of 19% since early 1990's with culprits being the high income and developing countries. This calls for more effort to be put in terms of lobbying to enable the ratification of the Kyoto protocol(by the countries who have not yet ratified), whose objective is the "stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. As of December 2006, a total of 169 countries and other governmental entities have ratified the agreement, notable exceptions include the United States and Australia.

Participatory forest management (PFM)

Partnership for sustainable forest management is like a radio you tune it well you get good reception from it. You fine tune it you get the best ever reception from it in form of social, cultural, economic, ecological and traditional forest values. Threats and risks for Partnerships in Sustainable Forest Management are noted to be; Political maneuvers, Weak and non legal (MOUs), Mistrust, Big brother syndrome/muzzling, Unprofessional ethics, and uselessness syndrome.

Forestry is uniquely positioned to make a major contribution to addressing the problems of environmental degradation and rural poverty, given the multiple roles that trees can play in the provision of

food, the generation of income and the maintenance of the natural resource base. The concept of sustainability implies ideas about resource stewardship, on the one hand, and quality of life on the other. When all is said and done, conservation is about people. It is about the balance that must be struck between humans and nature and between generations. And if it is to be relevant to the developing world, it must address the needs of the poor and the dispossessed who ironically share their rural frontier with the earth's biological wealth."

The issue of sustainability assumes crucial proportions when confronted by the twin challenges of environmental degradation and rural impoverishment. In much of the developing world, conservation for the sake of conservation- environmental fundamentalism - has become an anachronism. There is an increasing awareness and acceptance of the fact that if the natural resource base is to be sustained, it must be done so in a productive manner, which benefits the local population. Respect for natural resources must be accompanied by respect for human needs. The growing recognition of the links between environment, poverty and sustainability has been an important step forward in development thinking. While this interlinkage poses a formidable challenge to those who worry about the future of the planet, it also offers an opportunity for integrated, multidisciplinary solutions - an approach often honoured with little more than lip service in the past.

Sustainability for whom?

While everyone believes in sustainability, just what it is that everyone believes in remains open to interpretation: The word is variously used to convey human needs, levels of economic production and consumption, and the desirability of conserving natural capital.

The fundamental premise of much mainstream thinking about sustainable development is a direct link between poverty and environmental degradation; however, the reality is really much less simple since both have deep and complex causes.

Approaches

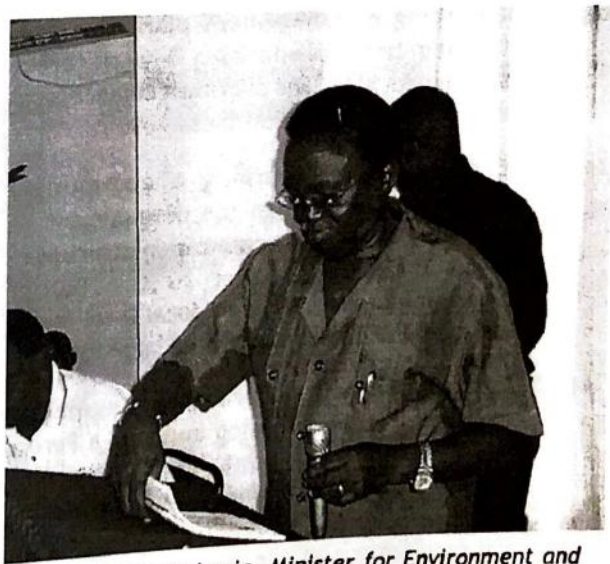
Sustainable forest management was recognized by parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2004 (Decision VII/11 of COP7) to be a concrete means of applying the Ecosystem Approach to forest ecosystems. The two concepts, sustainable forest management and the ecosystem approach, aim at promoting conservation and management practices which are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, and which generate and maintain benefits for both present and future generations. In Europe, the MCPFE and the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) jointly recognized sustainable forest management to be consistent with the Ecosystem Approach in 2006

This unique commitment to sustainable forestry recognizes that all forest landowners, not just SFM program participants, play a critical role in ensuring the long-term health and sustainability of our forests.

The Ecosystem Approach has been prominent on the agenda of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) since 1995 . The CBD definition of the Ecosystem Approach and a set of principles for its application were developed at an expert meeting in Malawi in 1995, known as the Malawi Principles The definition, 12 principles and 5 points of "operational guidance" were adopted by the fifth Conference of Parties (COP5) in 2000.

The ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. Application of the ecosystem approach will help to reach a balance of the three objectives of the Convention. An ecosystem approach is based on the application of appropriate scientific methodologies focused on levels of biological organization, which encompasses the essential structures, processes, functions and interactions among organisms and their environment. It recognizes that humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of many ecosystems.

Participatory forest management is an approach to the management of forestry resources which aims at reconciling key stakeholders interests through development of mutually enforceable agreements and



Hon. David Mwiraria, Minister for Environment and Natural Resources, Kenya

decision making that define their respective roles, rights, responsibilities and authority in the management of a defined forestry resources.

The principles of Particpatory Forest Management (PFM) are as follows:

- Meaningful participation and shared analysis by making different points of view count.
- Based on negotiations and consensus building by ensuring "fair" deals and not losing sight of conservation objectives.
- Appropriate presentation and responsibilities by addressing inequalities bringing marginalized groups on board and developing supportive regulations.
- Capacity building and enabling key stakeholders take the lead and ensure robust institutions exist.

Participatory forest management is viewed as the most appropriate form of management since the government still retains considerable control while the views of the community are taken seriously, while they also manage the resource. Under the shamba system- an approach of PFM - communities and the forest department have for long been at loggerheads over sustainable use and management of the forest resources.

PFM should be implemented through the following stages (Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, 2006):

Step 1- Reconnaissance: This involves the identification of the community and the forest resources to be managed.

Step 2- Resource survey: Conducting a socio-economic survey and participatory resource assessment in the proposed forest area, analyze the data and present the results to the stakeholders.

Step 3- Developing a management plan: the local planning team prepares a 5-year forest management plan. The plan must balance local needs with conservation measures.

Step 4- Creating or developing a community structure: This involves the development or modification of local organization structures, which includes support to the Forest Association(s) and forming a local level forest management committee where appropriate.

Step 5- Development of forest management agreement (FMA): Develop and sign a Forest management Agreement (FMA). This is a legally binding document and explicitly addresses the costs, benefits, expectations and assumptions of the parties involved.

Step 6- Implementation: Regular progress and review meetings are held, to identify the strengths and weaknesses and reinforcements thereof for both the forest level management committee, as well as members of the Forest Association(s).

Step 7- Monitoring: At the end of each year of implementation the local level forest management committee together with the Forest Association and other stakeholders, will review and report on progress vis a vis the objectives of the operational plan.

Step 8- Consolidation and dissemination: The initial experiences from the first PFM will offer important lessons for the subsequent applications. Outcomes be documented and publicized through appropriate media channels.

The Challenges of Participating Forest Management

Gender and PFM

Socio-economic commentators comment that gender based sociial challenges have contributed to retardation of economic progress in such predominantly traditional and cultural settings depicted in parts of our country,Kenya. The lives of the ethnic groups who inhabit areas around most forest areas are still rooted in their traditional culture. Patriarchy still dominates in access and control of means and factors of production, decision-making, and leadership. The obtaining social, economic, political and cultural dispensations are, as expected, tilted, by societal design, in favor of the male.

Gender segragated analysis reveals that women are by far overworked. Violence against Women(VAW) and other forms of discrimination tende to undermine the female genders attempt to realize her full potential and contribute effectively towards economic development and general societal progress.

This kind of segragation need to be addressed efficiently in the rules and legislation for participatory forest management are being put in place.(IUCN,1996)

The Shamba System (Forest Farms)

The Shamba system played a significant role in establishing plantations that ensured the survival of young trees-system of replanting the forest.Earlier in Kenya,the system was there whereby farmers were allowed to farm on the forest and were charged yearly in terms of acreage.The system evolved into a residential farming system when farmers were allowed to live and farm in the forest.The system was then abolished in 1989 and all the farmers were evicted from government forests creating a huge squatter

problem.The farmers were not allowed to live in the forest,they were only allowed to occupy areas they were sure to replant.People who lived in the forest were given priority in the allocation of the plots.

However the system provided avenue for scrupulous people who took advantage and encroached on forest land thus the system broke.Recently the Kenya government announced it was considering lifting a ban on cultivation in its forests.The environment minister said the reintroduction of non-residential cultivation was a cheap way of replanting depleted forests, that this would benefit both the government and the local communities.This has opened a veritable pandora's box. However these did not auger well with the Nobel laureate,Prof. Waangari Maathai who dismissed the ministers assertion that farmers would only be allowed to cultivate on the periphery of forests.She insisted,"Natural biodiversity cannot be protected if human activity like growing of farm produce is going on"...."the government does not provide money for the management of forests.This is an ancient way of doing things and is retrogressive to efforts to conserve the environment."She further said that people need to understand the importance of protecting our biodiversity and stay out of the forests. Even though some people expressed their sentiments that the system would improve food security.

It is said that under the new system, fresh guidelines will be developed and gazetted by the environment minister.The rule will propose harsh penalties for defaulters.

Even with much promise that the system has positive aspects, still there is the feeling that no amount of legislation will prevent politicians from abusing the system.Hence we are left to wonder,are the indigenous peoples who reside in the forests recognised as the protectors of forests? since the system talks of farming without residing in the forest.What implications does it have on indigenous peoples livelihood?

International Treaties And Agreements As An Opportunity For ustainable Forest Management

1. Promoting forest law enforcement and governance e.g the ministerial Declaration, East African Ccommunity protocol et.c.
2. Promoting knowledge and common understanding on SFM aimed at adoption of common policies.
3. Promoting SFM through joint programming and collaboration on transboundary related issues.
4. Resources mobilization.

Conclusions:

Understanding local knowledge on some resources and incorporating them in forest management is essential to sustainable forestry.On the basis of this, there is need to empower local communities by increasing their capacity to monitor and manage their resources in a sustainable way e.g through enabling th formation of community forest associations.

- Aggressive afforestation programme must be informed by sound professional and technical aspects.
- Deliberate forestry programme should benefit local people.
- Issue of governnace(society's mandate) should be mainstreamed wirhin natural resource management.
- A contractual agreement should be made with tree growing enterprises.
- Sorry state of forests is not the lack of policies,it is the non implementation of the policies and treaties(this is a real challenge).Thus there is need for mechanisms for implementing the treaties and policies.
- There is need to increase awareness and knowledge among national planners.
- Setting up of a national stakeholders fund.
- Need to focus on criteria and indicators for Sustainable forestry Management(SFM)

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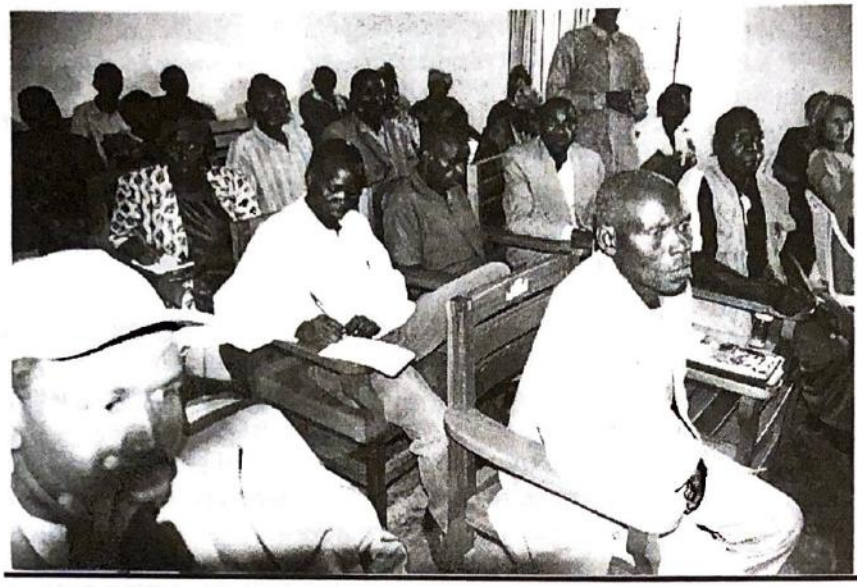
The Boad of the Kenya Forest Society with Hon. David Mwiraria Minister for Environment seated 2nd left and professor Kiyapi, Permanent Secretary 3rd right seated.

Forest as Central to life

Importance of forest to Batwa / Personal face of biodiversity



Batwa Commumity members looking carelly, during a meeting in Kisoro Uganda on issues of their land rights especially "right to land" July 07

The concept of environmental conservation is much discussed in this age of global warming, Greenpeace, and Al Gore, but for most people it remains an issue of very abstract importance. For many indigenous groups however, local forests and the biodiversity that they embrace is of much more direct significance. For the Batwa, a pygmy community in Southwest Uganda, the forest is of central importance to their way of life.

Though the Batwa were evicted from the local forests in 1995 when they were turned into protected areas, and thus are unable to fully pursue the activities and way of life to which they were previoiusly accustomed, they still maintain a strong sense of the importance of the forest and its centrality to their identity. Their eviction has caused them to lose most access to the forest that was their home, but the knowledge associated with it remains, at least for the time being.

In tangible terms, the forest provided the Batwa with food, water, medicine, shelter, building materials, fuel, and livelihood. The isolated nature of their location meant that they were dependent on the forest for all of their needs; over the generations they developed ways of fulfilling these needs while not damaging their environment. The provisions of the forest more than fulfilled their needs, and often, in their opinion, are much better than things available outside of this environment; natural medicines derived from the forest, for example, such as nyakibazi, a shrub used for deworming, are unhesitatingly preferred to modern medicines. The elders of the community are so in tune with their natural surroundings that they are even able to tell time based solely on the sounds made by different animals. The ability of the Batwa to live in symbiosis with the forest, fulfilling their needs without environmental destruction, would be valuable today, if their traditional knowledge could only be fully recognized and appreciated.

The products derived from the forest are crucial not just to bare survival but to important ceremonies as well. The marriage ceremony, for example, traditionally necessitates things like meat, honey, and ivory that can only properly be acquired from the forest. The perfume traditionally worn by women, called *ibisete*, is made from certain nuts and shrubs pounded together and mixed with ghee.

The forest is central to the spiritual life of the Batwa as well as their physical life. The worship of their gods and ancestors, and the sacrifices to appease them, must take place at certain sites within the forest in order to be authentic, as the ancestors are linked to particular locations. Burial must also occur in the forest. The displeasure of the gods and ancestors can have serious consequences, as children become ill and the luck of the Batwa in their lives and endeavors turns sour.

Most fundamentally, to the Batwa the forest was their home. There are groups like the Batwa all over the world, whose lives revolve around forests and other natural environments, and for whom environmental degradation would have similarly devastating consequences for all aspects of their lives.

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Farmers in Uganda cut down considerable part of Dutch CO-2 forests

By Jeroen Trommelen

AMSTERDAM - Dispossessed farmers retake their old land, where trees had been planted to make flying climate neutral.

A forest in Uganda that was planted with Dutch money to make the emissions from Dutch energy firms and flying climate neutral has been largely cut down and the land repossessed by farmers. The trees were planted since 1993 through the FACE Foundation on the order of SEP (a collaboration of Dutch energy firms). They had to remain standing for one hundred years.

Of the 9,000 hectares of climate forest in the Mount Elgon National Park approximately 1,300 hectares is now illegally converted into farmland, says FACE manager Denis Slieker. The land rights in the territory are disputed. Farmers that were evicted for the establishment of the national park have retaken the land during the past year.

In the taken over area stood around a half million trees. They have been processed to charcoal or damaged by the establishment of fields or grassland.

FACE has stopped the sale of CO2 credits from the Ugandan forests until the conflicts concerning the land rights have been solved. Last year the credits were sold to a Dutch energy firm to compensate the climate effect of the use of fossil fuel. FACE does not want to say which corporation.

Until last year CO2 credits from the Uganda forest were also sold through the organisation Greenseat of the Climate Neutral Group. Environmentally aware travellers can compensate the emissions of their flight travel there. The carbon dioxide that was stored in the wood to compensate the CO2 emissions, has now therefore partly gone up in smoke.

According to FACE, the land rights in the park are disputed wrongly. It [the park] stands under the management of the Uganda Wildlife Authority, that claims to have given damages to the evicted inhabitants. The reafforestation of a 200 kilometre-long strip was given to the Dutch foundation. According to some neighbours, however, the damage was never compensated and the fertile ground belongs not to the authorities, but to themselves.

Planting trees to compensate the emission of greenhouse gases is an illusion, says environmental activist Jutta Kill of the English organisation SinksWatch. She spent this past year in Mount Elgon National Park in Uganda where the Dutch foundation FACE invested 4 million Euros in establishing climate forest.

Then it was already clear that the local population would not accept that fertile country was converted to forest area, says Kill. The farmers experienced scarcely any advantage from that. "All the lawsuits of inhabitants against their eviction from the park have been won. The FACE Foundation will not easily be able to compensate on another spot in the park for the trees that are now lost."

Farmers were driven away from the park and got back at the most a temporary job as a planter or at the tree nursery. Therefore last year they took part of the forest back, which was tolerated by the local authorities. Of the 3.4 million "climate trees" that were planted with Dutch money, possibly half a million specimens have been lost. That has been converted to approximately 182,000 tons of CO2.

According to Kill, the event proves that forest is unsuitable to store carbon dioxide in. "It is not a safe method. Not only because of human activities, but also because of fire, storm and diseases. We have too little control over that."

Anyway, she disagrees with the argument, that a hundred year time gain

can be realised via the establishment of extra forest. "Climate compensation is used as an argument to avoid taking real measures. It cultivates illusions."

Environment researcher Chris Lang was also in Uganda last year. He examined the FACE project for the World Rainforest Movement and was subsidised by Novib. His conclusion was negative. The Ugandan authorities evicted people to make way for the climate forest, and that is not good. "Moreover we do not know how many trees would have been planted if the FACE Foundation had never got involved. There was already a reforestation project underway at Mount Elgon. Perhaps there would have been more trees standing than now."

The idea for a large Dutch climate forest came up in 1990 by the electricity producers in the SEP. The greenhouse gas emissions of a large coal plant of 600 megawatts could be compensated by planting 150,000 hectares of trees in 25 years. Of all possible options Uganda was the cheapest.

More than fifteen years later, the target appears to be too high to reach. The 150,000 has been adjusted to 25,000 hectares. Of that, so far 9,000 has been realised. In 1998, SEP was dissolved because of the liberalisation of the electricity market. FACE continued independently and was incorporated in the Climate Neutral Group. Also sitting in there is GreenSeat, an organization that sells CO2-credits from the Ugandan forests to plane passengers that want to fly climate-neutral.

The disappeared climate trees in Uganda do not turn that sale into "trade in hot air", implores FACE manager Denis Slieker. Setbacks such as these are foreseen, just as unexpected loss through fire or illegal forest clearing. The organisation has been obliged to hold a considerable reserve of forest to keep the climate accountancy in order. "The risk is spread over our whole portfolio."

Moreover the entire Ugandan national park is certified through FSC, the organisation that checks whether talk of sustainable forest management is justified, says Face. That assertion stands for years on the website of the foundation. But it is incorrect, says Gerrit Marais of the organisation SGS in South Africa that is to decide upon the certification. "The decision about this not yet has been taken."

Researcher Chris Lang can hardly believe in such certification. "That would be astonishing. The problems with land rights in the last year have only become more terrible. It concerns one of the most important criteria for FSC."

For more information on tree Plantations. Worldwide visit www.globalforestcoalition.org

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There they are...now

by Mia MacDonald · Brighter Green

It's the first of May, which got me to thinking about mangroves, those elegant and essential coastal forests. Many years ago, I spent time in the south of India documenting the work of a local activist trying to protect and restore mangroves. She worked by mobilizing communities—small-scale fishermen (and the women who take the fish to market), farmers, union leaders, members of the **Self-Employed Women's Association,** and even former priests (and maybe a current one as well). Then as now, the mangroves were being cut to make way for "development." In the Indian state of Kerala, this mostly meant expansion of large-scale shrimp farming in huge, chemical-laden lagoons carved from the mangrove beds.

Sadly, the pace of destruction in many coastal regions of India, Vietnam, Thailand and other countries has only increased since I was in Kerala, along with our appetite for cheap, plentiful shrimp. Mangroves were out of sight, out of mind. Until the devastating 2004 Asian tsunami. After that, the role mangroves play in protecting coastal communities from harsh weather did make it into the world press. Areas where mangroves were intact, experience and studies showed, saw fewer casualties and markedly less damage. Perhaps mangrove trees, slender, tall and vivid green, might get a reprieve after all. To find out more about mangroves and what they do, including for us, check out the **Mangrove Action Project.**

Belize, in central America, also has large stands of mangroves—at least for now. Their value is accepted fact. In 1961, **Hurricane Hattie** ravaged Belize; mangroves were protected and still are. On our recent trip there, we saw lots of riverine mangrove forest and in them a boa constrictor, several iguanas, lots of birds and in the river, the shadow of a manatee. Ah, bliss. Until we learned that if a politically well-connected developer wants to build a resort or luxury timeshares for Belize's northern neighbors seeking warm weather and beach (among them lots of Americans), mangroves will be cleared. Notwithstanding their legal protection. Or their vital "ecosystem services" like holding back ocean tides, wind and both garden-variety storms and mega-hurricanes.

"We can grow trees anywhere but we cannot establish a factory anywhere," a spokesman for Uganda's president said recently, commenting on protests over a forest being excised to make way for a sugar company. Those trees aren't mangroves, but they could be. There's a madness to our relationship with mangroves. You'll see them...then you won't. Instead, there will be shrimp and beachside villas. A maladapted calculus to be sure.

www.brightergreen.org

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Changing the Climate:

Why Women's Perspectives Matter!

Climate change is one of the most urgent issues of our time.

Extreme weather and natural disasters are more common and the results are all too real: devastating drought and floods in Africa and Asia, a deadly European heat wave, and the wreckage of hurricanes in the Americas. Despite increased media coverage and public awareness many governments have yet to act.

Unquestionably, climate change will affect everyone. But women are the most vulnerable and the best poised to curb the effects of climate change. Yet, they have remained invisible in these efforts. Governments' main tools for tackling climate change—mitigation measures to slow down global warming and adaptation measures to decrease the consequences—are not yet reaching the most affected populations, particularly women.

In every society, women and men have distinct responsibilities, knowledge and needs which are essen-tial to addressing the effects of climate change.Climate change magnifies existing inequalities and gender inequality is among the most pervasive. Women's historic disadvantages—their restricted access to resources and information and their limited power in decision-making—make them most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Climate Change Amplifies Inequality

As the majority of the world's poor, women are disproportionately affected by swift environmental changes. This is true even in industrialized countries. In the US, Hurricane Katrina en-trenched poor African-American women, already the most impoverished group in the nation, in deeper levels of poverty. Poor women living in developing countries face even greater obstacles.

Climate Change has made, access to basic needs and natural resources becomes a challenge. And natural disasters often reinforce traditional gender roles. Rural women in developing countries are still largely responsible for securing food, water, and energy for cooking and heating. Drought, deforestation, and erratic rainfall cause women to work harder to secure these resources. Women, therefore, have less time to earn income, get an education, or provide care to families. Girls regularly drop out of school to help their mothers gather fuel wood and water.

In nearly all societies, women still have unequal access to information and capital and less power to make decisions. During natural disasters, often more women die than men because they aren't warned, can't swim or can't leave the house alone. Women usually have fewer assets than men to recover from natural disasters, and they often don't own land that can be sold to secure income in an emergency. They can not even secure any credit from Financial Institutions as they do not have security to that credit. Women also make up the majority of the world's agricultural laborers and rely heavily on fertile land and regular rainfall.vii

Climate Change Fuels Conflict

A shortage of natural resources can lead to conflict, and conflict amplifies existing gender inequalities. Shortfalls in seasonal rains have resulted in drought and economic distress that lead to a 50% increase in the likelihood of civil war. While men are more likely to be killed or injured in fighting, women suffer greatly from the indirect consequences of conflict.

In the Darfur region of Sudan, where desertification has plagued the land in recent decades, homes are often destroyed, campaigns of intimidation, rape or abduction are waged, and thousands of women and children are caught in the crossfire.The vast major-ity of the world's refugees are women and children.

The effects of climate change are multifaceted: social, political, and economic as well as environmental. By recognizing that women are key agents of environmental transformation, we also counter the gender inequalities that render climate change so devastating to women.

Women: Untapped Resources

Another consequence of gender inequality is that women are often perceived pri-marily as victims and not as positive agents of change. However, women can be key agents of adaptation to climate change. Their responsibilities in households, communities and as stewards of natural resources position them well to develop strategies for adapting to changing environmental realities. For example, We have seen time and again that communities fare better during natural disasters when women play a leadership role in early warning systems and reconstruction. Women tend to

African Women girls here walk for large distance to look for firewood and water. Can we make their life better ???

share information related to community well being, choose less polluting energy sources, and adapt more easily to environmental changes when their family's survival is at stake.

"Women must be at the heart of relief efforts and the re-building of shattered communities. ." Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

Global climate change negotiation—including the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol are narrowly focused on emissions reductions, rather than social impacts. Even the latest UN research from the report on climate change completely omits social or gender concerns. To date, four out of the fourteen National Adaptation Plans of Action that have been submitted to the global climate change convention specifically mention the importance of gen-der equality. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set out global benchmarks on gen-der equality, poverty eradication, and environmental sustainability, although national reports have so far neglected to seriously address the linkages between these areas. And a recent UNEP survey of environment ministries found only 2 countries engaged in cli-mate change activities that incor-porated a gender perspective.

What can be Done?

The connection between gender equality and sustainable development isn't new: in fact, every major global agreement on sustainable development acknowledges the importance of gender equality. National level action is especially important and government agencies and other stakeholders should ensure that gender equality is at the forefront of climate change initiatives by:

- Undertaking a gender analysis of national or local climate change policies, programs and/or budgets. For example, examine how national adaptation or other climate change plans include or exclude gender equality.
- Ensuring that women participate in decisions related to climate change and have access to capacity building. For example, enhance opportunities for participation, education, and training.
- Developing gender-sensitive indicators for governments to use in national reports to the UN Frame-work Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol, and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).
- Creating practical tools that allow gender equality to be incorporated in climate change initiatives. For example, develop a mechanism for the CDM to fund projects that make renewable energy technologies more available to women.

Resources for Action

To learn more about the linkages between climate change and gender equality and what needs to be done:

www.wedo.org

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Slow Progress on Integration of Gender Issues

Ulrike Röhr reports on the current state of progress made on integrating gender issues into the climate treaty negotiations, most recently at the Twelfth Conference of the Parties (COP12) in November 2006.

In 2003, at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Ninth Conference of Parties (COP9) in Milan, Italy, an informal network of women and some men was formed composed of individuals interested in integrating gender issues into climate change policies and negotiations. We all brought to the network different interests and areas of work from various regions of the world, but were united in our commitment to ensure that women's voices were heard in the climate change debate.

Since then, our network has organized side events during the annual UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties. At these events, we informed participants about the linkages between gender and climate change at our exhibition stands and held women's meetings during the Conferences as well as submitting statements in the Plenary Sessions. Compared to gender-related activities before COP9, that's a lot! Although compared to our goal of mainstreaming gender concerns into the climate change debate, progress is still moving at a snail's pace.

Progress is being achieved very slowly and is mainly constrained by two realities. First, there are too few women and men participants whose main focus is on gender issues and who are also willing to lobby for gender mainstreaming. Second, there is a huge lack of sex-disaggregated data and gender-aware research in the area of climate change and climate protection, a fact that limits the quality of discussions that can be held at a negotiation level.

A first step has recently been undertaken which aims to close this gap. LIFE/genanet is conducting a research project to review, analyse and assess existing research in order to develop a comprehensive overview of data and knowledge relevant to gender aspects of climate change in mitigation and adaptation, including identifying strategically important knowledge gaps. The review will consider research done under the heading of "gender and climate change" as well as research in other disciplines and fields linked to climate change policy. In addition, the project aims to consolidate contacts and networks within the research community and develop a database of experts on gender and climate change. The project is being conducted in cooperation with, and is funded by, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Gender and climate side event, COP12

The first results of the project were presented during a side event at COP12 in Nairobi, November 2006.

At the side event, Yianna Lambrou, senior officer at the Food and Agriculture Organization explained the commitment of her organization to mainstreaming gender issues in all of its work, such as on energy, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, and emphasised the importance of pursuing gender equality in climate change. She introduced preliminary results of the literature review on the gender aspects of climate change and invited participants to provide feedback and inputs so that the final result will be as comprehensive as possible.

After a brief explanation of the terms 'gender' and 'gender roles', the present author highlighted the observation that an underlying assumption of the project was that there might be more data in existence than originally thought, especially when looking at climate policy, energy, agriculture, water or biodiversity. Such data might not be linked directly to climate change yet - but this could easily be done. This was the initial assumption of the researchers but, unfortunately, reality proved otherwise. Since the beginning of the project in August 2006, preliminary findings indicate that there are more case studies than we expected, but there is very little large-sample quantitative research.

Minu Hemmati from LIFE/genanet outlined the five steps undertaken so far to develop an analytical framework on gender in climate change.

STEP 1: Identify climate change topics. That is, identify sectoral and cross-sectoral issues that are impacting the climate and/or are impacted by climate change, and/or are results of climate change.

STEP 2: Identify the gender aspects of the topics identified in STEP 1, such as known facts and open questions.

STEP 3: Identify the dimensions that are involved in looking at the gender aspects identified in STEP 2, and in which disciplines the relevant research is being done and/or should be done.

STEP 4: Identify what research exists, and where there are gaps. What do we know that needs to be integrated into climate policy making and what don't we yet know that needs to be addressed in future research?

STEP 5: Identify priority issues for future research.

Currently, the project has identified 609 individual sources, 215 of those of immediate relevance. Next steps to be undertaken include continuing the research review by interviewing researchers who are working directly on gender and climate change issues, examining additional scientific databases, and applying the analytical framework to all sectoral and cross-sectoral issues as

well as to the effects of climate change on gender equality.

A report identifying available knowledge and gaps is being published by the Food and Agriculture Organization midway through 2007.

The project is searching for further data on gender and climate change and looking for publications and projects that may have been missed, as the data collection process ended in January 2007. Relevant materials can be sent to the address below. At this stage of the project, we will not be able to integrate new materials into the final report but they will be included in the database that the project has created.

Discussion at the side event that followed the speakers' presentations noted that additional research and issues should be taken into account. For example, who decides about the purchase of energy efficient stoves in rural households and is the consent of men required for women to utilize the stoves? It was noted that decision-making power is gender-based - a key issue for the UNFCCC negotiations on technology transfer. Another challenge raised during the discussion was how to interest more men to committing themselves to applying gender mainstreaming strategies in climate change work.

Though progress in the field of data collection, as well as in the overall sensitization on gender issues, has been at snail's pace, there are some positive signs.

Environmental organizations have been especially resistant in the past to incorporating gender issues in their work. But, with time, we have seen that the inclusion of gender concerns in their policies and approaches is becoming increasingly present, particularly when looking at climate change from a human rights, justice and equity perspective. For example, Friends of the Earth International and its members are combining advocacy for environmental protection with human rights and justice arguments.

An example of a recent initiative is a position paper prepared by the Global Forest Coalition entitled Biofuels: A Disaster in the Making which has been endorsed by more than one hundred organizations and individuals. The paper calls upon the Parties to the UNFCCC to immediately suspend all subsidies and other forms of

inequitable support for the import and export of biofuels and calls especially upon industrialized countries to recognize their responsibility for destroying the planet's climate system.

The paper describes the harmful effects of rapidly increasing demands for crops like corn, palm oil or soy as a source for biofuel, such as increased land competition leading to marginalization of small-scale agriculture. The paper also explains that arable land used to grow food is now being used to grow fuel, leading to staggering food prices and causing hunger, malnutrition and impoverishment among the poorest sectors of society. It points out the destruction of traditions, cultures and values of indigenous peoples and rural communities. The paper highlights that these effects have particularly negative impacts on women and indigenous peoples who are economically marginalized and who are most dependent on natural resources like water and forests.

The increasingly present and growing voice of young people who are involved in the UNFCCC negotiations should also be highlighted. These young people are much more aware of gender inequalities than most other constituencies, emphasizing in their communiqués and other formal interventions the importance of taking into account gender equity and following up with concrete action.

We hope that more environmental organizations will take note of these examples and will be encouraged to integrate gender into their own communiqués and position papers.

What is still greatly lacking is building a nexus between gender knowledge in climate change and the concrete issues of the negotiations in detail, as well as a linkage to the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and the UNFCCC.

In Nairobi, it was noticeable that the social aspects of climate change and climate protection were often addressed in side events and debates. This might be due to the venue of the conference; for the first time, a UNFCCC conference was held in sub-Saharan Africa, putting the whole continent at the centre of the world's attention. The impacts of climate change and their linkages to poverty reduction were put on the agenda, particularly in the context of Africa. Unfortunately, gender aspects were only rarely taken into account in these debates. Nevertheless, the broadening of the debates with the inclusion of social and inequity aspects in discussions otherwise focusing mostly on the economic, technical and natural science dimensions of climate change is an encouraging, strong entry point for gender perspectives as well.

The hope for greater emphasis on gender mainstreaming in climate protection and climate change is nourished by several good examples that came up in Nairobi. The CARE Brazil Social Carbon Fund, a partnership between CARE Brazil and global brokers CO2e was launched at the conference. In the presentation of the Fund at COP12, it was discussed how local women's projects might benefit. The methodology was based on a strong gender approach. It was agreed to carry out a pilot project, aimed at identifying options at both ends, for women's projects and for seeking donor funding.

African women especially Indegenous are most affected by climate change. Maasai from Tanzania

Women's Caucus, COP12

During the meetings of the Women's Caucus at COP12, a first draft of a lobbying paper, identifying connections and entry points for strengthening the gender aspects in some of the issues negotiated in Nairobi and beyond, was discussed.

The paper addresses, amongst other things, adaptation, the Clean Development Mechanism, capacity building, public awareness and information, and market-based approaches in general. It protests that the main victims of market-based approaches to environmental protection are those who do not have the cash to buy their water, fuel wood and medicines. They include women, indigenous peoples, landless farmers and the cash-poor in general. These same people also lack formal land titles, marketing skills, investment capital and the technical information they would need if they wished to compete in the environmental services markets. In addition, the challenge of equitable access to energy, which is particularly important for rural women and the urban poor, is not likely to be resolved through market-based mechanisms. In view of this, the Women's Caucus called for a careful analysis of positive and negative effects on all potential market actors for all market-based approaches. Moreover, the Women's Caucus plans to develop a common submission to the UNFCCC adaptation committee regarding gender issues in climate change debates.

We hope that results of the LIFE/genanet and Food and Agriculture Organization research review will put these activities on a more substantiated base, supported by the literature, in the future.

The author is director of genanet - focal point on gender, environment and sustainability, which aims to integrate gender justice within the climate treaty process and other environmental and sustainability policies. Her primary areas of responsibility are gender issues in energy and climate change.

www.genanet.det

The traditional use of Plants amongst the Maasai

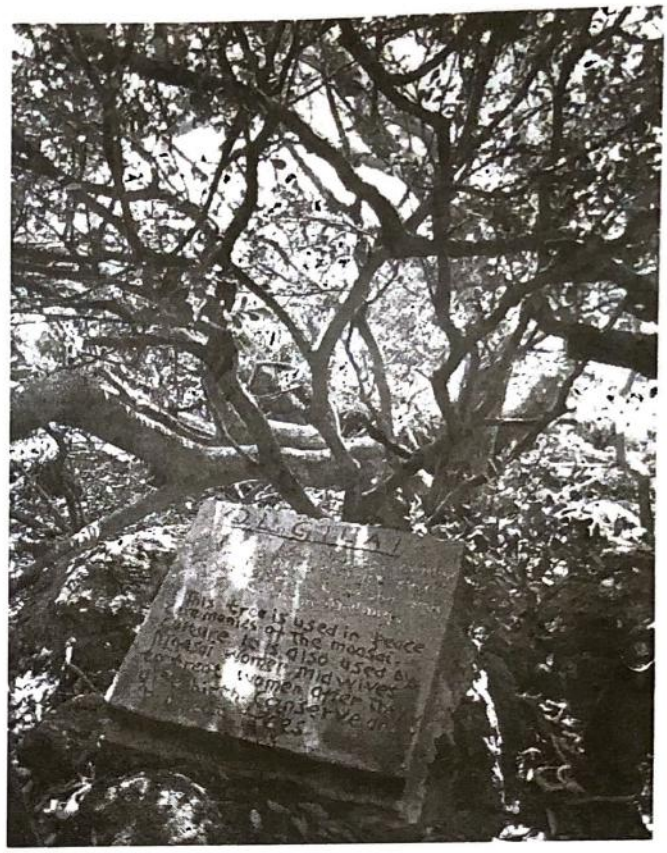
By Kristen Mcneill and Katherine Williams

On June 15th, 2007, the Indigenous Information Network visited the Simba Maasai Outreach Organization (SIMOO) whose headquarters are in the Ngong Hills just outside of Nairobi. IIN was there to participate in the Maasai Cultural Exhibition that was being hosted by SIMOO at a nearby primary school, and to also see the museum containing traditional cultural artefacts and information that is maintained by the organization.

Our tour of the museum was conducted by John Parsitau, the coordinator of SIMOO's educational and training programs. While in the past IIN has visited quite a few cultural museums, they mostly focussed on traditional handicrafts and jewellery. However, while SIMOO's museum has a wide array of these traditional artefacts that are often seen in museums, there is also a substantial outdoor section to the museum. This section focuses more on maintaining Maasai traditional knowledge as opposed to the preservation of physical objects. Handmade signs throughout explain the origins and characteristics of the 12 Maasai clans, and describe a number of trees that are an integral part of Maasai life.

There were three trees in particular that John focussed our attention on: the Oseki, the Ositeti, and the Olgilai. The plaque in front of the Oseki tree read: *This tree is used in all peace ceremonies such as the bull of wands, reconciliation, circumcision, etc. Therefore conserve trees.* John further explained that it is only women who are allowed to cut this tree, and they must do this while praising the tree and sprinkling it with milk. The Osieti tree was described saying: *This tree is use in making sticks for peace ceremonies, herding and ropes for constructing Maasai houses. Don't cut trees. Conserve them for future generations.* Information for the Ogilai tree stated: *This tree is used in peace ceremonies of the Maasai culture. It is also used by Maasai women midwives to treat women after they give birth. Conserve and protect trees.* It is evident that SIMOO greatly values the conservation of these trees, not only for their use in society but the symbolic value they hold for the Maasai culture.

The focus placed on trees and plants at the SIMOO outdoor museum sparked my interest on the subject, so



I decided to look further into the use of plants by the Maasai. In all, the Maasai have three primary uses for plants and plant material: building material, healing, and ceremonies.

Building Materials

Amongst some Maasai groups there are as many as 17 different species of plants are used in the construction of houses and other buildings, each with there own specific purpose. Some types of plant are used to make rope, which then serves to tie sticks together to form the frame of the building. These species can include *cyperus distans, pavonia patens,* and *grewia bicolor.* To construct the poles that create the frame of the building, *juniperus perocera, acacia nilotica,* or a number of other plants can be used. The smaller sticks that fill in the spaces between the larger poles can be made of *ochna ovata, tarchonanthus camphorates,* and others. There is a great wealth of knowledge about what plants are available in what environments, and how they can be used effectively for building materials.

Healing

The Maasai use plants to treat both human and animal illness. There are a huge number of species that can be used to treat any number of ailments - some estimate that up to 33% of plants used by Maasai serve this purpose. According to some sources, there are 31 plants that can treat digestive problems, 19 that can treat fevers, 14 that can treat urinary tract infections, 11 that act as painkillers, 6 that treat wounds, and 4 that treat eye problems. This list continues on and includes snakebites, respiratory problems, circulatory problems,

and many more. The Maasai have accomplished an amazing feat in being able to perfect this knowledge of traditional healing and preserve it over time for future generations.

Most plants used for healing work in a way that it is that either a certain part of or the whole of a plant is stewed and the broth is then fed to the ill individual or animal. The broth serves as a purgative and emetic, forcing the illness out of the body.

While treatments for malaria are available at health centres and chemists, many Maasai still rely on treatment with traditional plants. There are many different species that can be used to treat the disease, including warburgia salutaris, teclea nobilis, olea europaea. These plants also act as a purgative to rid the body of the elements causing the fever.

Other problems that are commonly treated with plants include wounds, stomach problems, skin diseases, common colds, breathing problems, parasites, circulation problems, joint and muscle pain, depression, and general strengthening.

Amongst various animal species, plants are used to treat a large variety of problems. The Oloisuki plant's leaves are boiled and the decoction is given to cattle suffering from intestinal tract infections. Olokildia's bark, roots, and leaves are boiled all together and the decoction is fed to cattle to treat blindness. If a cow has a cough, the Orbibiay plant is boiled in its entirety and the decoction is again fed to cattle. For a cow that is in pain, the leaves of the Ormisikiyoi plant are boiled and fed to it. These are just a small number of the remedies that are able to be produced using plants and traditional knowledge retained over time.

Women from Oloshooibor performing a ceremonial dance

Ceremonial

Ceremonies are a very important element of Maasai life - there are ceremonies that resolve conflicts, reverse infertility, mark major life events, bestow blessings, and many more. There are many different plants that are associated with such ceremonies, each with its individual importance.

Olea europaea is the most commonly used plant in ceremonial proceedings. It is used in all ceremonies and is believed to bring good luck and blessings.

During the circumcision ceremony, the African olive tree holds particular significance. The animals slaughtered during the pre-circumcision ceremony are slaughtered under the olive tree and their meat is cooked over burning olive tree wood while supported by a mesh made of olive tree branches. On the day of the ceremony, branches of the olive tree are collected by men, women, boys, and girls, and placed standing up outside the door of the hut where the ceremony takes place. While the ceremony is taking place, olive tree wood is burned and the leaves of the plant are sprinkled on top of the fire to create smoke. The olive tree plays a central role in this ceremony, and its importance has been carried down from generation to generation.

When a fertility ceremony, called *olamal loo ngituak* in Maa, takes place, women travel deep into the forest and pass through an arch made of oreteti. When this part of the ceremony is finished, the women return to the village and elders use the leaves of the oltukai to sprinkle the women with beer and milk. Finally, meat is roasted on olorien sticks and served to the women on olorien leaves. There are a number of plants involved in this ceremony, each representing different and important aspects of the traditional culture.

Plants and their derivatives play an integral role in many aspects of Maasai culture. The importance of this traditional knowledge has been highlighted by the Simba Maasai Outreach Organization through their unique museum. It is integral that this traditional knowledge be preserved and passed down to future generations of the Maasai because once lost, this knowledge cannot be recovered.

Beautiful...and dry

by Mia MacDonald - Brighter Green

At the end of March, I got an on-the-ground view of the impacts of climate change. The scene wasn't pretty. I found myself in a pick-up truck driving into the Rift Valley about an hour outside Nairobi. In the best of times, the valley is dry and has an austere, almost out-of-this-world brownish beauty. When the seasonal rains fall, the grass turns green and animals cows, goats and the occasional zebra or gazelle "come to graze. In the part of the valley where I was, however, the rains hadn't come and it was bone dry. As the truck wound into the valley, we stopped frequently as women climbed aboard. Public transportation here is erratic to non-existent. The women, dressed in traditional Maasai red-patterned sheets and beautifully, primary-color-beaded jewelry, needed to get to a meeting with as it happened, me.

As we drove, Joseph ole Simel, founder of a Kenyan NGO, the Manyoto Pastoralist Integrated Development Organization (MPIDO) filled me in on the local effects of global warming. The communities here, nearly all Maasai herders of cows, sheep and goats, are going from one crisis to another, he said. The rains fail more often now. The elders can recall drought, but when it came then, it was only once in ten years. That gave people time to recover. Now, that time is gone. As a result, livestock populations are decreasing all over Maasailand, the traditional lands of the Maasai people. Without the livestock, families don't have money, so they can't pay school fees for their children. Girls are the first to suffer. They're often forced to drop out of school and married off so their fathers can get some cows and goats as dowry in return. Raised rates of early marriage follow droughts. It's a crazy cycle, as Joseph explained. Just as pastoralism becomes less viable as the climate changes, education and the options it provides are gaining value. But because the rains don't come regularly, cows and goats die, families get poorer (many need food aid) and the children can't go to school. What kind of a future will they have? Its not a great leap from what I'd seen to arguing that raising livestock, and especially cows, just won't work in a warming world. (Goats, Joseph explained, are more resistant to drought than cows). It's not clear it's working now. Methane, particularly from cows, is a significant contributor to climate change.

As I looked around me at the parched landscape, I listened to the women at our meeting. Among thequestions they asked me were these: How can we cope with drought? What will we do? Do you have droughts in your place I tried to explain that the effects of climate change, like

Invisible at the far end are Maasai cattle at a watering point during dry spells - Kajiado, Kenya

erratic rainfall, wouldn't affect us in the industrialized world as much because we could adapt more easily. But for you here, I said uncertainly, it's tough. (I couldn't offer much consolation or any real soothing words: how on earth will they cope?) The rich world needs to know about that and help, I concluded. We're the ones who got us all into this mess in the first place with our fossil-fuel burning and outsize appetites.

Things are happening on the ground, but slowly. As Joseph said, the people have almost no information about climate change and the government doesnt have the capacity to do much of anything. Climate Network Africa, based in Kenya, is working to improve the chances for environmentally sustainable and socially equitable development in Africa in light of the serious danger of climate change, ozone depletion anddesertification. At the global level, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change just spoke for the third time in a few months, this time in a major report addressing mitigation. That means what do we do to reduce what we're currently doing that iss heating up the planet. Livestock gets only a small mention. We need, the authors say, to ensure better management of grazing lands and livestock, and restore degraded lands. Fine, but it sounds so small bore. Those Maasai women in Kenya's Rift Valley and millions of other people are in the cauldron of a changing climate; for them, it can mean life or death.

The last day I was in Kenya, in early April, there was a short but soaking rain. March and April are the traditional season of the long rains. I saw Joseph ole Simel in New York later after I left Kenya. He told me had there been three days of rain in the Rift Valley in all of April. Fear of drought and catastrophe, along with temperatures, are rising.

Visit: www.brightgreen.org and Lantern Books Collection at www.Lantern.com

When Conservation and Humanity Collide:

The Story of the Batwa

by Katherine Williams and Kristen Mcneil - IIN/ MCgill University

A Batwa elder going through Nomadic News to see if issues of the Batwa have been included

While environmental conservation is undoubtedly necessary and is growing in importance with each passing year, its ramifications are not always entirely positive. What many fail to realize in their efforts to protect and preserve the world's vital forest resources is that in many cases, there are people living in the forests, who have been residing there as far back as their collective memory can recall. When access to forests is restricted to prevent environmentally destructive activities from taking place, these forest residents are often swept away along with loggers, poachers, and other ecological criminals. One such group is the Batwa.

The Batwa, meaning "people" in their language, are a pygmy group living in southwest Uganda. Until 1995, they were forest peoples with little contact with the outside world; most lived in Bwindi Forest, also known as the Impenetrable Forest, while others lived in Mgahinga and Chuya. After the forest was made a protected area, the Batwa were evicted from their ancestral lands and displaced to the surrounding districts of Kabale, Kisoro, and Kanungo.

Though small in stature and in numbers (according to the 2004 census, 2551 Batwa were living in Kisoro and Kanungo districts), the Batwa maintain a strong sense of identity, and a recollection of what they have lost. Until 1995, their entire lives, from birth to death, were intimately entwined with the forest that was their home. Food, shelter, livelihood, craftsmanship, worship, burial, and every other aspect of their lives were linked to the forest, and everything they needed could be found within it. Today, everything is different.

The Batwa are severely marginalized in Uganda, and lack access to almost all basic opportunities for personal development. Deprived of the ways that they know and have mastered, they are forced to make their way in unfamiliar terrain, surrounded, outnumbered, and often exploited by unfamiliar peoples. They have been landless since their eviction from the forest, and were never compensated for what they lost. Thus, they are squatters on the land of other tribes, their labour is often exploited, and their shelter is temporary and insufficient. Their lives are unpredictable, as they could be asked to leave the land they squat on at any time. Their traditional income generating activities are now lost to them, and they are forced to rely on menial jobs to eke out a living. Most are uneducated, and the future of their children looks bleak; many parents are not able to pay the required fees for school attendance, nor feed their children enough for knowledge to be properly absorbed.

Perhaps even more perilous than these tangible difficulties are the intangible effects on their culture and their identity. Their landlessness and lack of access to forests and the traditional worshiping sites within them have caused the gods to be angry with them, according to many. Nyirakaromba Pascal, a spirited Batwa woman, believes strongly that the inability to appease their gods has led many of their children to become ill; her views are shared by many. The greater ramifications of this and other lifestyle changes that have been forced upon the Batwa have led to an erosion of the unique Batwa culture, according to Steven Barahirwa, a leader in the community.

Though the Ugandan government, which does not consider this group among its priorities, has largely ignored the plight of the Batwa, efforts have been made to ameliorate their situation. Non-governmental organization ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) bought 89 acres of land in the region, with one acre each given to landless Batwa families. While this is clearly not sufficient to aid all of the landless Batwa, it is a very positive step in the right direction. However, there have been some unforeseen complications. The Batwa's lack of education and a legal system that discriminates against them has enabled others to take advantage. One man had such a story.

A man in his late twenties was one of those given an acre of land by ADRA, and he was thrilled with the opportunities that this land presented. As he began working his land, clearing some of the trees to free up

land for cultivation, some of his neighbours (not part of the Batwa community) called the police, claiming that he had no right to do so. The police dismissed the case, but when he returned to his land, his neighbours had taken it over. In order to open a police file to try to get his land back, he would have had to pay Ush 5000, which he was unable to obtain. Today, his neighbours still occupy the land that was rightfully his.

There are high hopes among the community that the problems related to the ADRA land will quickly be resolved, and most are very grateful for ADRA's efforts on their behalf. However, even once these problems are resolved, the Batwa still have a long way to go in order to close the development gap with the rest of Uganda.

The Batwa are hopeful that a compromise can be reached with the government in order to maintain the protected nature of the forest and also allow their people essential access to its resources. After a three day biodiversity and empowerment workshop held by the Indigenous Information Network and the United Organization for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU), the participants expressed an understanding for the need for environmental conservation and protection of the forest, as well as enthusiasm for self-representation to the government. The Batwa wish to be active participants in forest conservation rather than its casualties; by being, for example, forest guides, they could help to maintain the forest's integrity as well as earn a living.

While the Batwa recognize the importance of environmental conservation, they do not feel that their eviction from the forest was necessary for it to be successful. Governments must balance concern for environmental protection with concern for the lives and livelihoods of those affected; global environmental sustainability must involve coexistence between humanity and nature, the kind which forest peoples such as the Batwa have mastered for time immemorial. We can learn from the traditional knowledge of peoples like the Batwa, who have mastered the art of peaceful and fruitful coexistence with the natural environment.

CBD Secretariat Receives Ozone Protection Award

Montreal 21 September 2007 - The CBD Secretariat has received a Twentieth Anniversary Ozone Protection Award in the Partners Award category in recognition of its role as a member of the Green Customs Initiative (GCI) in the development and implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances the Deplete the Ozone Layer.

As part of the celebrations to mark the 20th anniversary of the Montreal Protocol, Mr. Marco Gonzalez, the Executive Secretary of the Ozone Secretariat yesterday presented the award to the CBD Secretariat, during a ceremony at the Palais des Congrès in Montreal.

An active member of the GCI since 2005, the Convention Secretariat has worked closely with the other GCI partner organizations: the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Secretariats of the Basel, CITES, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions, the Montreal Protocol, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the World Customs Organization (WCO) and Interpol.

The GCI was established in 2001 with the objective of strengthening the capacities of customs services to detect and act on illegal trade in environmentally-sensitive commodities covered by the relevant international agreements. These commodities include ozone-depleting substances, toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes, endangered species and living modified organisms.

The CBD Secretariat has participated in several GCI activities. Recently, the Secretariat facilitated the Green Customs Train-the-Trainer Workshop for the Asia Pacific Region held in Shanghai in May 2007. The Secretariat also contributed resource materials to training workshops for Indian Ocean Islands in Mauritius and for West Africa in Dakar, Senegal, and contributed to the Training Guide for GCI.

"Coinciding with the enhanced phase of implementation of the Convention, for the Secretariat team to receive such a prestigious award in recognition of its modest contribution is a great honour," said Ahmed Djoghlaf, CBD Executive Secretary. "We are proud to have helped enhance the institutional and human capacity of customs services in order to equip them to play their role in contributing to the challenges of the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention as well as those of sister conventions including the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol."

For more Information on the CBD visit www.cbd.int

The Forest Act No 7 of 2005:

Opportunities for improved forest conservation and constraints to forest development

by Edna Kaptoyo and Habiba Athman

The Forest Act NO 7 of 2005 received presidential accent on November 2005.The Act has been much awaited by the forest fraternity and the private sector, and is seen as a panacea that will cure all trauma and downturns that the sector has experienced for several years. The legal and policy framework has not been conducive to farm forestry development, which in part led to the push to review the Forest Act cap 385, resulting in the enactment of the Forest Act No.7 of 2005.

A. Opportunities For Improved Forest Conservation Under The Forest Act 2005

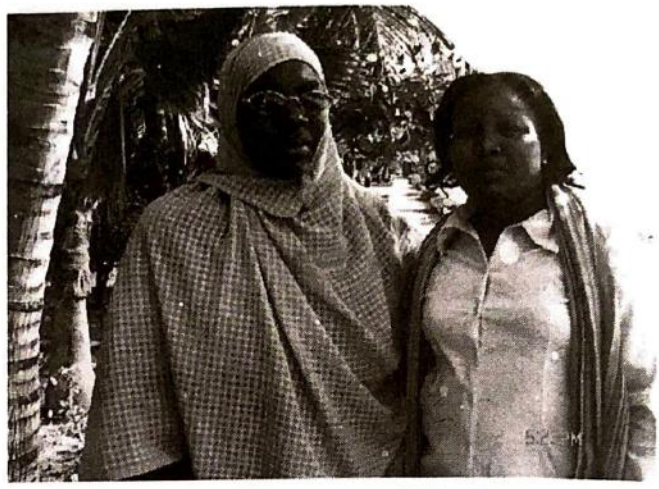
Stakeholder consultation in forestry decision-making

A Key opportunity under the Act is the requirement for intensive stakeholder participation in decision-making. The Act requires public consultation for all major forest decisions under the third schedule, and prescribes an elaborate procedure for the public to present various issues before decisions are made and published. Among others, public consultation is required for Joint Forest management Agreements (Section 46), variation of boundaries of revocation of state or local authority forests among others.

The proposal further approves the *locus standi* (legal standing) in a court of law, which legally enables concerned citizens to seek redress in courts if they are dissatisfied with a decision (Section 58: Restraint of breaches of the Act). Under the Forest Act Cap 385, the minister in charge of environment was considered infallible, and his/her decision could not be challenged.

The only requirement of consultation was to publish the intention of a decision in a gazette notice a given number of days before it was made. There was no requirement for the authorities to consider any representation made to it, nor to communicate the decision to the public. This abused process might be considered the single biggest cause of national forest decline since independence, and its effect on the loss.

Another Key avenue for community involvement in decision-making is the Forest Conservation Committee (FCC). The FCC has representation from major stakeholders such as community forest associations and local authorities. The FCC communicates opinions of the communities to the board on forest issues, and is involved in day-to-day forestry decision-making at the conservancy level. This provides an avenue through which locals' interests in national forest issues will find



Habiba Athman Marakwet and Edna Kaptoyo during the Kenya Forest Society Workshop

an expression at the forest board. The committee also must approve major decisions such as alteration of forest boundaries and applications for private forest development incentives before the board (Section 13)

Enhanced Community and private Sector Participation in forest management

Section 36(1) of the Act empowers the Kenya Forest Service board to enter agreement with any person, company, Forest Association" etc for the joint management of any forests.

..."The director may, with the approval of the Board, enter into an agreement with any person for the joint management of any forests..."

Section 46(2) provides for a community based forest association to apply to the Director for permission to participate in the conservation and management of a state forest or local authority forest.

...'an association registered under subsection (1) may apply to the Director for permission to participate in the conservation and management of a state forest or local authority forest in accordance with the provisions of this Act: provided that no application under this subsection be made where there is an existing prior agreement or license".

The management agreement between Director and the association may confer forest user rights such as ecotourism and recreation, harvesting of honey, collection of herbs, harvesting of timber and firewood, contracts to assist in carrying out cultural operations, development of community wood and non wood forest industries, etc. In return for these and other benefits the community forest associations will protect, conserve

and manage such forests according to the provisions of the management agreement approved management plan, formulate and implement forest programmes consistent with the traditional forest user rights of the community concerned etc.

The forests that are neglected because of the resources constraint in terms of developing and managing them can be managed according to this provision. These forests are sufficiently productive to guarantee returns. In the past there were no such mechanisms where the abundant human resources within the communities could be harnessed for such productive undertaking in forestry. This offers opportunities for improved management for such reserves whilst providing avenues for income generation for communities.

Recent studies on Participatory Forest Management (PFM) in Africa by FAO revealed that 22 states had already institutionalized formal Community Forest Management in their structures (FAO,2003), involving some 5000 communities and three Million people in nationally, locally owned, community or state forest.

Incentives for private forest development

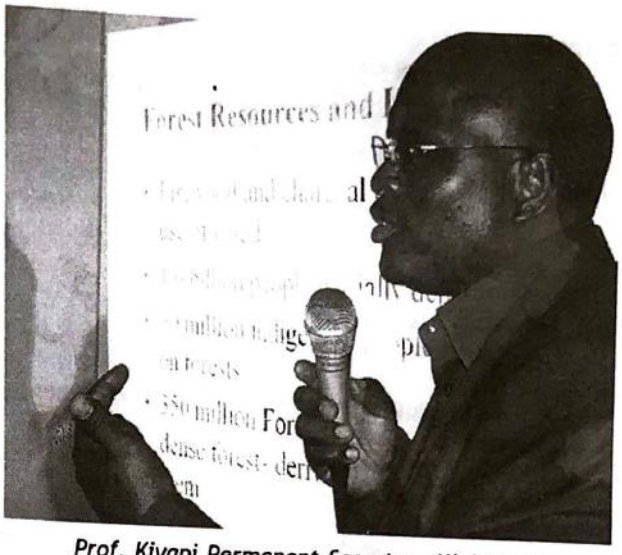
The dwindling forest cover was the major reason for the logging ban, which has led to most forest products such as timber, posts, poles and even charcoal in urban centers to be obtained form outside the public forest estate. The Forest Act Cap 385 had no provisions for the private sector and local authorities to draw credit for establishing and developing forests.

Since the legislation clearly empowers the service to use the funds even on private land, the government will not have any excuse for not allowing the private sector to develop the forests. This provision only applies to forests, which qualify for registration as private forests. Due to high population pressure in the high potential zones, within which over two thirds of the population lives, these are characterized by small sizes of land holdings, which further constrain the amount of area that can be put under trees. Opportunities however exist for cooperative efforts by several farmers to breach the threshold forest area required to benefit from the fund.

Section 25(4), which allows owners of to apply for exemption from paying part or all land rate charges, is another incentive for development of private and farm forests. The establishment of trees on such land and their registration as private forests would result in significant savings in rates while earning them income through sale of produce, and with the potential for management assistance from the forest management and conservation fund.

Enforcement

In ASAL areas, people still graze communally and planted trees are not considered as crops. People sued for grazing



Prof. Kiyapi Permanent Secretary Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources

livestock on other peoples land receive very lenient fines, which discourage forest owners from suing offenders. Similarly those caught cutting trees on neighboring farms equally get away with very lenient fines.

Section 50(1) seeks to give the forest officers powers. It states that the forest officer may

...'demand from any person the production of an authority or license for any act done or committed by that person in a state, local authority or provisional forest or in relation to any forest produce for which a license is required under this Act'

The Forest Act No7 of 2005 brings all forests be it private, local authority or state- under the act, and prescribes very heavy penalties for damage to forests and trees. Any person who makes charcoal in a state, local authority or a private forest or farmlands without a license or permit of the owner as the case may be, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding 50,000 shillings or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or both (Section 52(2). These very harsh penalties provides for deterrence to unlawful activities in public and private forests.

Section 52(1) deals with felling, cutting, burning, injuring or removing of any forest produce only cover state, local authority or provisional forest. It sets heavy penalties for damaging trees. This will assist farmers in maximizing benefits from growing trees.

Management of Indigenous forests

Section 40(1) of the act sets to ensure that the forest areas under her management are maintained for biodiversity, cultural or recreational use. In addition it protects the concession area from destruction and encroachment by other persons.

Section 41(1) says that all indigenous forests and woodlands shall be managed on a sustainable basis for

purposes of....

"Conservation of water, soil and biodiversity."

"River line and shoreline protection."

"Cultural use and heritage."

"Recreation and tourism..."

"Sustainable production of wood and non wood products."

"Carbon sequestration and other environmental services."

"Education and research purpose."

"Habitat for wildlife in terrestrial forests and fisheries in mangrove forests."

Section 41(2) in pursuance of subsection (1), the service shall, in consultation with the forest conservation committee for the area where the indigenous forest is situated, prepare forest management plans.

Section 41 (3) The board may enter into a joint management agreement for the management of any state indigenous forest or part thereof with any person, institution, government association or forest association.

The Act recognizes that several groups have close and specific relationship with forests, they include, forest dwellers, forest users who are mainly indigenous peoples. Indigenous Peoples interact closely with forests because their economic livelihood, cultural and spiritual identity, is derived from forests.

The Forest Principle from UNCED(United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) states that governments should promote and provide opportunities for the participation of interested parties, including local communities and indigenous peoples, NGO's and forest dwellers and women, in the development, implementation and planning of national forest policies. It further emphasizes that the commitment and genuine involvement of all social groups will be critical to the effective implementation of the objectives, policies and mechanisms of all government programmes of Agenda 21.

B. Constraints to Forest Development under the New Legislation

The administrative set up

The Forest Act No.7 of 2005 bestows the management of the service to a board whose composition is tilted in favor of civil servants who are appointed and can be dropped by the minister at any time. A Forest Conservation Committee (FCC) will undertake the oversight responsibility in a conservancy. The committee may in turn, recommend the establishment of divisional forest conservation committees.

The conservancy committees have been given responsibilities such as informing the board of desires of people within the forest conservancy on matters of forest conservation and utilization; monitoring, implementation of the Act and other forest regulation; approve alteration of boundaries, and to allocate forest management and development funds. It's evident from these and other duties that a committee will not equitably cater for the interest and desires of all the people in its area.

(i) Provisional forests

Section 26(1) stipulates that the minister, upon the recommendation of Board, may declare a local authority forest or private forest as a provisional forest, if in the opinion of the board is mismanaged or neglected. Once declared a provisional forest the service takes over the management in collaboration with the owner. There is no provision for appeal against the recommendation of the Board. This can be dangerous since some civil servants may take over the forest purely on malicious grounds.

Other National policies and legislation relevant to the forest sector

- Energy Act
- Water Act
- Forest Act Cap 385
- Sessional Paper No 9 of 2005 on Kenya Forestry Policy
- Vision 2030
- Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS)

Conclusion

The Forest Act 2005 identifies the need to strengthen community-based institutions, by creation of Community Forest Association (CFA).The public can now actively be involved in forest conservation.

A key aspect of the new policy is a greater emphasis on involving stakeholders through participatory management mechanisms in the management and conservation of forests. It is important to note that the current direction in forest policy has recognized that forestry contributes to poverty reduction, employment and improvement of livelihoods through forest management. The public can now actively be involved in forest conservation since it is provided in the Kenya Forests Act of 2005 " *Participatory Forest management*". PFM requires all partners to pull together their diversity to capture the interest of all stakeholders. Resources' sharing is necessary as a means of facilitating, developing and sustaining partnerships.

Biofuels switch a mistake, say researchers

Tristan Farrow - The Guardian

Increasing production of biofuels to combat climate change will release between two and nine times more carbon gases over the next 30 years than fossil fuels, according to the first comprehensive analysis of emissions from biofuels.

Biofuels - petrol and diesel extracted from plants - are presented as an environmentally friendly alternative to fossil fuels because the crops absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as they grow.

The study warns that forests must not be cleared to make way for biofuel crops. Clearing forests produces an immediate release of carbon gases into the atmosphere, accompanied by a loss of habitats, wildlife and livelihoods, the researchers said.

Britain is committed to substituting 10% of its transport fuel with biofuels under Europewide plans to slash carbon emissions by 2020.

"Biofuel policy is rushing ahead without understanding the implications," said Renton Righelato of the World Land Trust, a conservation charity. "It is a mistake in climate change terms to use biofuels."

Dr Righelato's study, with Dominick Spracklen from the University of Leeds, is the first to calculate the impact of biofuel carbon emissions across the whole cycle of planting, extraction and conversion into fuel. They report in the journal Science that between two and nine times more carbon emissions are avoided by trapping carbon in trees and forest soil than by replacing fossil fuels with biofuels.

Around 40% of Europe's agricultural land would be needed to grow biofuel crops to meet the 10% fossil fuel substitution target. That demand on arable land cannot be met in the EU or the US, say the scientists, so is likely to shift the burden on land in developing countries.

The National Farmers Union said 20% of Britain's agricultural land could be used to grow biofuels by 2010. However, the researchers say reforesting the land would be a better way to reduce emissions.

Biofuels look good in climate change terms from a Western perspective, said Dr Spracklen, but globally they actually lead to higher carbon emissions. "Brazil, Paraguay, Indonesia among others have huge deforestation programmes to supply the world biofuel market", he said.

The researchers say the emphasis should be placed on increasing the efficiency of fossil fuel use and moving to carbon-free alternatives such as renewable energy.

GM Campaigner Friends of Earth (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

Letter to financial times on biofuels and forest fires in Paraguay

By Simone Lovera- Managing coordinator. Global Forest Coalition

Sir,

The European Commission has its head stuck in the sand if it refuses to accept the conclusions of the OECD's report *'Biofuels: is the cure worse than the disease?'* concerning the negative social and environmental impacts of biofuels (*'Doubts raised over EU's biofuels target'*, 13 September).

The Commission claims that biofuels produce less CO_2 emissions than fossil fuels and that there is great potential for environmentally sustainable biofuel production in Africa and Latin America. However, these claims do not take into account the massive direct and indirect deforestation that is being triggered by the current worldwide expansion in biofuels production.

At this very moment my country, Paraguay, is on fire, because of biofuels. We are faced with the most serious forest fires the country has ever experienced. Thousands of hectares of forest have already been devastated, Asuncion is covered in smoke, the government has no means of controlling the situation and a national state of emergency has been declared. Some of the most precious forest areas of the country are on fire and the damage to biodiversity is irreparable.

Paraguay's Secretariat of the Environment said that many of the forest fires are being set deliberately. Large landholders stand accused of making use of the current extreme drought to get rid of forests on their lands in order to expand soy and meat production.

Last May, your newspaper reported that demand for biofuels is one of the main factors causing the current boom in agricultural commodity prices. This makes it really attractive for soy farmers to expand their production and clear their lands of forests, especially before the sowing season begins next month. So, even though this soy is as yet not destined for the biofuels market, it is undeniable that the current deforestation being experienced is still being triggered by the booming biofuels market.

In this light, the EC's proposals to certify 'sustainable' biofuels are either naïve or disingenuous. How might certification have influenced last year's massive shift of US soy farmers to corn production for the booming ethanol market? This is one of the main causes of the steep rise in the price of soy and subsequent forest fires in South America. Meanwhile, the tons of carbon that are going up in smoke in Paraguay right now should be enough evidence that promoting biofuels as a climate change mitigation strategy is akin to prescribing cyanide as a remedy for flu.

http://www.globalforestcoalition.org

Marakwet's Forest under threat:

Challenges, Solutions, and the Importance of Education

by Katherine Williams - IIN MCgill University

Around the world, climate change and human activity are destroying vital natural resources such as forests. The district of Marakwet, in Kenya's Rift Valley Province, is no exception. While the government is taking gradual steps to try to preserve Kenya's forests, the process is far from complete, and greater community participation will be necessary for it to be fully effective.

Africa has approximately 552,326,000 hectares of forested land, 97.6% of which is under public ownership. Kenya's forest area is estimated to cover about 1.7% of the country, well below the internationally recommended 10%. While the government has stated its intention to reach 10% by 2008, it is highly unlikely that Kenya's forest cover will increase to even close to that goal, as pressure on land continues to increase due to rapid population growth and changing forms of land use.

The Kenyan government has been a signatory to a number of international conventions on biodiversity and environmental conservation, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Framework Convention on Combating Desertification, and others. However, its actions have failed by far to live up to its commitments. Little has been done to implement the tenets of these conventions, and the future of Kenya's forests remains uncertain.

Marakwet, in western Kenya, enjoys a much higher percentage of forest cover (38%) than the national average, and the gazetted forest covers an area of approximately 65,000 hectares. The forests were gazetted in 1964, and are currently administrated by three established forest stations: Cherangani Forest Station, Chesoi Forest Station, and Cheptongei Forest Station.

Marakwet houses half of the Cherangani forest complex, an important source of biodiversity and one of Kenya's five water towers. The forest serves as a catchment for rivers Nzoia, Kerio, and Weiwei, which feed into other important bodies of water and are depended upon by farmers in the region.

For more than ten years, the forest in Marakwet has been degraded by income-generating activities such as charcoal burning and the collection of roofing timber for sale. These activities are exclusively carried out by members of the local communities; no large companies are active in exploiting the forest in this region. The forest cover is further compromised by families who are gradually clearing more of the trees in order to expand their fields and homesteads.

The consequences of the forest degradation in Marakwet district are dire. The biodiversity of the forest is threatened, and it is estimated that 8,000-10,000 hectares of the forest have been destroyed and turned into fields for cultivation. River volumes have been steadily decreasing to the extent that irrigation further downstream is no longer guaranteed, and some streams have dried up completely. Tree cover has decreased, and traditional beekeeping activities are no longer feasible due to the lack of forage and anchor trees. The attitude of the local communities is that the forest was given to them by God, and thus they can do with it what they will. They are ignorant of the serious environmental damage that their activities are causing.

In recent years, the government has become involved in forest conservation activities, which has led to conflicts and misunderstandings with the local inhabitants of the region. Programs and regulations initiated by the Minister of Environment and natural resourceshave prevented the local communities from carrying out their usual activities in the forest, which has provoked anger in local residents.

Besides activities such as charcoal burning and timber collection, the forest is often used for grazing by local farmers. This has occurred for decades, with periodic evictions at various times. Recently, the government has been acting more vigorously to prevent people from using the forested land in this way. This has become a very destructive situation, and has led to an extremely negative relationship between the government and the local community, who feel that the government is interfering with their God-given right to use the forest as they see fit. They do not understand the reasons behind the restrictions the government has imposed on forest use, and thus feel that the government is acting against their interests.

Historically in Kenya and elsewhere in the world, the relationships between local communities and institutions mandated with natural resource management have been strained, and this has certainly been the case in Marakwet. However, this relationship is not fated to be negative. With proper education and the participation of local communities, forest conservation can become a constructive partnership rather than a perpetual struggle.

Educating communities about the environmental consequences of their actions and the importance of conservation is crucial to ensuring the effectiveness of conservation efforts as well as a productive relationship between the government and the local community. At this point, a conflict of interest between income generation and forest conservation is perceived by local residents, but this does not have to be the case. In Marakwet, there are more environmentally sustainable alternatives to activities such as charcoal burning that residents could pursue without significantly changing their standards of living. In addition, harmful activities such as cutting trees for firewood can be improved by instructing local people to collect fallen wood for firewood instead of cutting living trees. Simple changes such as these can have a significant impact on the success of forest conservation efforts.

The technique of education and information dissemination to local communities has proven very effective in the case of the World Environment Day activities organized by the Marakwet Muslim Women and Girls' Foundation at Kapsumai Primary School in 2007. The goal of these activities was to promote respect for the environment and educate the students and other community members about conservation and how their actions affect the forest, in the hopes that the participants would take the lessons home to their families as well. The participants were extremely receptive to the ideas and facts presented, and all committed to changing their behaviour and educating those around them.

These activities also enabled the participants to understand the government's actions in relation to the forest, and why they were prevented from carrying out their usual activities there. They began to understand that the government was not trying to destroy their livelihoods, but rather protect the foundation of life itself. By educating communities about the environment and the reasons why it must be protected, the people become participants in conservation efforts rather than opponents of it.

In addition to informing local residents about the importance of the forests, fundamental perceptions about the value of forests must be changed for conservation efforts to be truly effective and sustainable. People in Marakwet and indeed the world over should be taught to see the value of forests not only in terms of supplies of timber and firewood and venues for expansion, but in terms of water, rainfall, food, medicine, flood control, oxygen production, grazing, tourism, and so on. When the connection is clearly made between biodiversity and life itself, the conflict of interests that is perceived between forest conservation and local livelihoods can be transformed into a symbiotic relationship.

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Live, for now

by Mia MacDonald - Brighter Green

In getting ready to watch some of the **Live Earth** events, I began to wonder: will the global concert series make clear that even though, as I've heard organizers say, "everyone" will be affected by climate change, some (many) will be affected more than others? Namely those in poor countries and poor communities in rich countries (think Katrina)—people who haven't contributed much to the greenhouse gases now warming up the planet. "Climate justice" is a rallying cry, but I haven't heard it loud and clear from that many United States. climate activists or activist musicians . . . at least not yet.

Some voices have been raised, as they should be. One is the NYC-based **West Harlem Environmental Action Team**. I've been using a tote bag from them that reads "WE ACT for Climate Justice" and they do, here in New York City. Nobel Peace laureate **Wangari Maathai** in an **open speach written for World Environment Day** had this to say about equity and climate change:

Evidence of climate change in Africa is already here. Food emergencies have risen three-fold each year since the mid-1980s. A warming world will increase the risk factors for conflicts between and within countries. According to a recent paper, when shortfalls in seasonal rains led to drought and economic distress in 40 sub-Saharan African countries, the likelihood of civil war rose by 50 per cent. . . .

Calling for the restoration of Kenya's water towers and protection of the Congo forest does not mean excusing developed countries, whose greenhouse gas emissions are the main culprit.

Many others and I are challenging the leaders and citizens of industrialised nations, and in fact all nations, to move beyond fossil fuels, to reduce their energy consumption, and to adopt policies so that individuals can live more responsibly on the planet.

The industrialised governments must not only accept their moral responsibility to help Africa and other poor regions find alternative and renewable sources of energy, but also protect forests.

Local Maasai technicians assemble the solar panel in Simoo - Kenya. A good Initiative for dry lands

Sustainable Energy In The Ngong Hills

by Kristine MCneil, , Kathrine Williams & Edna Kaptoyo
IIN/MCgill University

In a small house of wood and corrugated metal surrounded by grass and trees almost as far as the eye can see, the last thing one expects to see is a light bulb. The Simba Maasai Outreach Organization is making this image possible for hundreds of families in the Ngong Hills. Through an innovative solar panel installation program, SIMOO is bringing electricity to the homes of rural Maasai residents in the area. This is in recognition of the fact that energy services are essential to both social and economic development and that much wider and greater access to energy services is critical in achieving all of the MDGs and by scaling up the availability of affordable and sustainable energy services, there is a greater chance of achieving the MDGs, as energy services have a multiplier effect on health, education, transport, telecommunications, safe water, and sanitation services, and on investments in and the productivity of income-generating activities in agriculture, industry, and tertiary sectors.

The idea for this project was conceived in September 2006, and after extensive organization and fundraising, it was implemented in July 2007. Its goal was to provide electricity to local community members both to facilitate the academic efforts of students and to discourage the use of kerosene lamps, whose smoke is bad for the health and the environment. The wider goal was to encourage better school performance among Maasai children, who will benefit from the better light provided by the solar panel, especially as many families cannot consistently afford to buy paraffin. These was in recognition of the linkages between all of the MDGs and energy and it is argued that much greater quality and quantity of energy services will be required to meet the MDGs.

So far in the month of July 50 solar panels were installed, and was expected that 100 more will be completed the following month. The ultimate target is to provide this service to 300 households. The beneficiaries are chosen according to the benefits that are likely to accrue to them; the ideal household would have a house built in a way that can accommodate the solar panel, battery and light bulb, and also school going children who would benefit from improved lighting in the evenings. The installation and maintenance of the solar panel, battery and light bulb is fully funded by SIMOO, but after the battery is exhausted (between one and five years), it will be the responsibility of the homeowner to replace it.

Paulina Shenia's house is one such household chosen for the installation of solar panel electricity through SIMOO's program. She expects numerous benefits from this new form of lighting. It is cheaper to maintain than kerosene lamps, as the cost of paraffin can often be a burden. Clean, efficient energy services reduce the large share of household income spent on lighting, and keeping warm, as is in the case of the solar where her expense on kerosene will be reduced (poor people pay proportionately more for basic services). Her children will be able to study better in the evenings with the help of the brighter and more even light. This initiative supports MDG 2 achieve universal primary education since energy can help create a more child-friendly environment (access to clean water, sanitation, lighting, and space heating/cooling), thus improving attendance at school and reducing drop-out rates.

She herself can also benefit from this light, as she is a beadwork artist; the electric light will enable her to increase her working hours. Her predicament shows the importance of energy to achieving the MDG1 which seeks to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger since the access to affordable energy services enables enterprise development and lighting also permits income generation beyond daylight hours since she is able to work past hours. The sustainability of solar electricity is also a point in its favour; Paulina sees the use of solar powered electricity as a way of tapping the natural resources within her reach. She also appreciates being given access to an opportunity for development and inclusion in the world of global modern technology. The istallation of solar

Paulina Shena

panel in Paulina's household has appreciated MDG 3 that calls for promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. These is perpetuated through the availability of modern energy services which frees girls' and young women's time from survival activities (gathering firewood, fetching water, cooking inefficiently, crop processing by hand, manual farming work), clean cooking fuels and equipment reduces exposure to indoor air pollution and improves health, good quality lighting permits home study and allows evening classes for the girl child and affordable and reliable energy services offer scope for women's enterprises(e.g. her beadwork).

Simon Sakuda and his family have been enjoying the benefits of solar powered electricity for the first time, as their solar panel had been installed the day before. He appreciates the ease of use of the electric light compared to a kerosene lamp, and hopes someday to be able to extend the wire to the kitchen as well. He plans to use productively the money that he will save from not having to buy paraffin. His children are very pleased as well, as the light has made their homework much easier to complete. The family especially appreciates that the technicians who installed the panel and light bulb taught them about solar energy and basic maintenance of the panel and battery. Indoor air pollution contributes to respiratory infections that account for up to 20 percent of the 11 million child deaths each year (WHO 2002, based on 1999 data) and these has been dealt with since solar panels provide lighting that is clean compared to lamps which at times smoke.

SIMOO went to great lengths to secure funding for its solar panel project. The director, Francis Ole Sakuda, spent two weeks in the United States appealing to churches, universities, and high schools for support, and was very successful, despite the difficulty of making people from the developed world truly understand the situation that he aimed to improve. The lack of infrastructure in rural areas is also a challenge, and the expansion of the project may be hindered by a lack of roads to transport technicians and materials. However, SIMOO is hopeful that the project will be a success.

The project is hoping to extend to other areas apart from households lighting, for example, to household (in cooking), hospitals and schools, will endear to promote other MDG's apart from MDG 1, 2 and 3 which it has extensively addressed. The energy provided by the solar panels is of greater importance to the following Milleniums development goal.

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

- Indoor air pollution contributes to respiratory infections that account for up to 20 percent of the 11 million child deaths each year (WHO 2002, based on 1999 data)
- Gathering and preparing traditional fuels exposes young children to health risks and reduces time spent on child care
- Provision of nutritious cooked food, space heating, and boiled water contributes towards better health
- Electricity enables pumped clean water and purification

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

- Energy services are needed to provide access to better medical facilities for maternal care, including medicine refrigeration, equipment sterilization, and oper-ating theatres
- Excessive workload and heavy manual labor (carrying heavy loads of fuelwood and water) may affect a pregnant woman's general health and well being

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other major diseases

- Electricity in health centers enables night availability, helps retain qualified staff, and allows equipment use (for example, sterilization, and medicine refrigeration)
- Energy for refrigeration allows vaccination and medicine storage for the preven-tion and treatment of diseases and infections
- Safe disposal of used hypodermic syringes by incineration prevents re-use and the potential further spread of HIV/AIDS
- Energy is needed to develop, manufacture, and distribute drugs, medicines, and vaccinations
- Electricity enables access to health education media through information and communications technologies (ICTs)

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

- Increased agricultural productivity is enabled through the use of machinery and irrigation, which in turn reduces the need to expand quantity of land under cultivation, reducing pressure on ecosystem conversion
- Traditional fuel use contributes to erosion, reduced soil fertility, and desertification. Fuel substitution, improved efficiency, and energy crops can make exploitation of natural resources more sustainable
- Using cleaner, more efficient fuels will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which are a major contributor to climate change
- Clean energy production can encourage better natural resource management, including improved water quality

- Energy can be used to purify water or pump clean ground water locally, reducing time spent collecting it and reducing drudgery

Achieving all of the MDGs will require much greater energy inputs and access to energy services. Failure to include energy considerations in national MDG strategies and development planning frameworks will severely limit the ability to achieve the MDGs. As such, the following key recommendations point to priority energy interventions which national governments should take to support achieving the MDGs at the national level as proposed by the experts.

They should:

1. Place the issue of energy services at par with other MDGs: Integrate energy within national development strategies by adopting a goal-oriented approach to address the combined energy needs of social institutions and productive activities for cost-effective energy service delivery. This will require both flexibility in prioritizing programs and coordination across ministries of finance, economic management, energy, industry, health, education, agriculture (or rural development), water and sanitation, and transport.

2. Adopt legal and regulatory frameworks that will provide incentives for effective partnerships among government institutions (including local governments), private-sector utilities and other operators, and community organizations: Take into account the needs and socioeconomic conditions of the poor in defining the respective obligations of the service providers and poor customers. Allow for a wide range of technologies to ensure safe technical solutions in service provision.

3. Improve the affordability, availability, and safety of cooking fuels and practices. Enable the use of modern cooking fuels through regulatory reforms; investments in the handling, transport, and distribution of fuels; and well-designed subsidies (or safety nets) for the poor. Reduce the first-cost burden of LPG1/kerosene stoves/cylinders and reduce the incremental recurring costs associated with the use of modern fuels. These measures can encourage fuel switching especially in urban and peri-urban settings, where there is already a market for traditional biomass and charcoal. Adopt measures to increase the sustainable production of biomass and exploit linkages of biomass production with agriculture, agroforestry, animal husbandry, waste treatment, ecosystem services, forestry, carbon credits, and income generation. •Support efforts to develop and adopt the use of sustainable biomass and biomass-derived fuels, improved stoves, and practices that reduce exposure to harmful emissions. Increase the efficiency of conversion of biomass to biomass-derived cleaner fuels.

Rebecca Ngurianyang from West Pokot has made a traditional, energy saving stove for baking bread- which she sells localy as part of her income generating activity

4. Adopt strategic, institutional, and financial measures to ensure wider access for households and small businesses in urban and peri-urban settings to services such as illumination and power, information and communication technology (ICT), refrigeration, and other beneficial uses. •Reduce the cost burden of connection and distribution fees to enable electricity access for the poor in urban and peri-urban areas. A combination of strategies such as working with community organizations, lowered unit costs, subsidies, financing, and payment mechanisms can reduce the first-cost burden.

5. Adopt measures to ensure reliable electricity supply to households, businesses, public institutions, commercial establishments, and industry. •Enable payment and cost-recovery mechanisms that will ensure the financial health of energy service delivery entities so that they can pro-vide reliable service and expand services. •Create incentives to increase generation capacity and invest in distribution infrastructure to serve a larger population. Executive summary1LPG stands for Liquified Petroleum Gas. LPG is a mixture of propane and butane, gases that can be easily liquefied under pressure for ease of storage and transport in specialized canisters.

6. Provide access to mechanical power (for water lifting/ delivery systems and agroprocessing) and electricity for public facilities (health clinics/centers, schools, government offices, and community centers) in all rural communities. Aggregate demand across multiple social and income-generating needs within the community, thus lowering unit costs. Location of these services for small businesses and/or cooperatives at some central point within a rural community can lead to even greater aggregation of demand, further lowering unit costs as well as unlocking local private capital. Emphasize immediate wider access and scalability through use of low-cost transitional

technologies since these will be substituted eventually as affordability and energy demand evolve as income levels increase.

7. Take a flexible approach to selecting from a wide range of technologies as well as a wide range of institutional structures for the delivery of energy services. Include the entire spectrum of primary energy sources, distribution and end-use technologies from which proven, robust, and cost-effective technologies can be chosen for implementation at larger scales with appropriate standards.

8. Develop energy infrastructure and institutions that directly benefit women and the poor. Energy services delivery mechanisms for household, productive and social sector uses should take into account the distinct energy services used by men and women and how their availability impacts men and women in economic and social terms• Women should be included at all points of the project, policy and development planning process both as energy providers and energy users.

9. In order to develop and rapidly scale up energy services, enhance human capacity through energy-related education, training, and research. Training needs to include regulators, financiers, policymakers, technicians, community outreach workers, and people with local business skills/entrepreneurs to support the delivery of services.10. Incorporate the cost of energy service delivery needed to support the achievement of the MDGs into all national MDG strategies.

Progress toward providing greater access to modern energy services has been slow, due to a combination of interrelated circumstances. Obstacles limiting access of rural poor to modern energy services include but are low income levels among the unserved population; lack of financial resources for service providers to build the necessary infrastructure and reduce first-cost barriers to access; weak institutional, financial, and legal structures that could otherwise encourage private investment; and lack of long-term vision and political commitment to scale up services.

Can the many obstacles limiting access of the poor to modern energy services be overcome by 2015?

Conclusion is that this can be done, but many concrete actions will be needed from all stakeholders. This conclusion rests, in large part, on the successful programs undertaken in many developing countries in recent decades

The world has at its disposal the knowledge, tools, and resources to cut poverty by half in a decade. No new international commitments are needed to achieve the MDG. Existing commitments made at the Millennium Summit, the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, and reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit, are sufficient, if implemented. The focus must now be on implementation

Meeting the MDGs by 2015 requires a major a shift in development practice. Low-income countries and their development partners currently plan around modest incremental expansions of social services and infrastructure. The UN Millennium Project recommends instead a bold, 10-year investment framework aimed at achieving the quantitative targets set out in the Goals. Rather than strategies to 'accelerate progress toward the Goals,' countries need strategies to 'achieve the Goals,' which in turn requires a different approach

The multitude of short- and long-term benefits to health, productivity, agriculture, the environment, and women's welfare that modern cooking fuels provide suggests that a rapid scale up of modern cooking fuel distribution systems should be an important part of the strategy to meet the MDGs. From the point of view of the user, what matters is the energy service not the source. Whether in business, home, or community life, what matters are the reliability, affordability, and accessibility of the energy service.

This solar panel project is part of SIMOO's most recent five-year plan, which is currently in its first phase. Other components of the plan include a well drilling project, a food security initiative, and educational programs on conservation, global warming, and other topics.

Way Forward

While SIMOO requires and is grateful for assistance from donors in funding its projects, the organization is also very aware of the dangers of dependence on donors, and thus is making efforts to become more self-sufficient. They have started a parallel organization called Maasai Arts and Tours, registered as a company, which is intended to promote Maasai culture as well as generate income for SIMOO's projects. They hope in future to expand the business to include ecotourism. Income also flows in from the Maasai Cultural Exchange Project, through which Maasai individuals go to the United States to give educational lectures and speeches in exchange for an honorarium, which is then used by SIMOO for various projects.

SIMOO's work is diverse and growing, and has greatly benefited local residents. The organization has a clear focus, and will surely continue to successfully expand its activities.

For more information: simookenya@yahoo.com

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Agrofuels -

'New Revolution' or Another Scramble for Africa?

Despite widespread opposition from civil society groups, Northern government targets for increasing agrofuels use are already being set and brought into effect.

Businesses are enthusiastically scouting fertile African lands for opportunities to convert them to large-scale monocultures which will be manufactured into fuel and sold on an emerging green market. Critics argue that the impact on biodiversity, livelihoods and food security on the continent will be devastating.

Commentary

Africa appears to plunge from one corporate nightmare to another.

Just as we begin to come to terms with the colonially-sponsored corporate conquest of our oil resources, along comes a new wave of 'green' companies turning fertile African lands to Northern 'gold'. Senegalese president and agrofuel promoter

Abdoulaye Wade has called this 'a new revolution in Africa'. Others have likened it to 'the new scramble for Africa'.

The first impression of the global agrofuel movement was that of a 'win-win' scenario. The rationale offered by the global North was the reasonable sounding desire to minimise dependence on traditional fuel sources such as oil and coal by investing in renewable energy source from plants. This, the argument continued, will ensure that carbon contained in fossil fuels remains safely stored in the earth, thereby reducing the impact to the earth's climate. Furthermore, fuel crops grown are supposed to provide a 'carbon sink' by capturing and storing carbon dioxide and assisting with balancing concentrations of the gas in the atmosphere. The global South was promised that agrofuel would lead to climate-related benefits and an increase in revenue derived from selling the crops to growing green markets. New evidence has, however, challenged each of thesepresumptions. In the face of reckless new targets, large-scale land conversion for energy crops, increasing food prices and damning scientific reports, government's actions are increasingly being labelled by environmentalists as fraudulent.

A recent study published by the Africa Biodiversity Network (ABN) provides compelling evidence from Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Benin that the misguided scramble for projects could lead to environmental and humanitarian disaster on the continent. For instance, Timothy Byakola reports that a plan is underway to convert a third of Uganda's prime rainforest reserve, Mabira Forest, into agricultural land on which sugarcane will be planted for ethanol production. According to Byakola, President Yoweri Museveni has vociferously supported this controversial project, ignoring community opposition to it. The consequences of the deforestation of 7,100 hectares of one of the key water catchment sources for the Nile River and Lake Victoria, and the implications for the communities around Mabira which depend on the forest as a source oflivelihood, are potentially enormous.

All the other countries in the study report similar situations in which large tracts of arable land are being sold off to the highest bidders with little regard for the repercussions on local populations livelihoods and food security. Furthermore, anenvironmentalist from Ethiopia reports that there are plans to introduce the new 'wonder' plant, Jatropha, which will be grown as an agrofuel in fertile lands. Apart from emerging criticism about use of the plant as an agrofuel, this is controversial because Jatropha was promoted precisely because it is a hardy plant that could grow in drier lands and minimize use of the arable land that is needed by local populations.

The ABN report also indicates that there is a lack of engagement within the countries studied on the potential impact on rural communities and on food security. In South Africa, however, the draft strategy on biofuels/ agrofuels has been vigorously opposed by a variety of stakeholders who fear that rural communities will be compelled to bequeath their lands over to industrial producers of oilseed rape, maize and soy. The government is currently revising the strategy and it is due for comment again in June next year.

As with carbon trading, the agrofuels issue brings climate justice questions to the fore. In 2004 climate change activist George Monbiot warned that rising demand for biofuels will result in competition for food between cars and people. 'The people would necessarily lose: those who can afford to drive are, by definition, richer than those who are in danger of starvation.' He goes on to argue that the reason Northern governments are enthusiastic is because they don't want to upset car drivers. He argues that biofuels 'appear to reduce the amount of carbon from our cars, without requiring new taxes. It's an illusion sustained by the fact that only the emissions produced at home count towards our national total.'

In the latest UK budget announced in June, the tax rebate on biofuels was extended. From March 2008 all suppliers in the UK will have to ensure that 2.5% of the fuel they sell is derived from plants. Failure to do so will result in the imposition of a penalty of 15p (USD.30) per litre sold. The quota is set to increase to 5% in 2010 and by 2050 the government hopes that 33% of fuel will come

from crops. The US is setting similar targets. In response to such moves, both Monbiot and the organisation Friends of the Earth have called on governments to halt support of agrofuels. In a recent press release Friends of the Earth argue that 'more attention should be focused on reducing energy demand and improving vehicle efficiency, as this will cost less than subsidising inefficient new sources of supply like agrofuels.'

But this will be difficult to achieve with the market growing as it is. According to US research consultancy Clean Edge, the global market for agrofuels is set to grow from $20.5 billion in 2006 to $80.9 billion by 2016. Recent media reports in the South African press suggest that investors in Africa have already pledged billions of dollars for production plants that will derive bioethanol and biodiesel from crops like sugar, maize and soy in Africa. Talk in the North is already focusing on imposing guidelines to mitigate the problems that arise from agrofuels. Ultimately, the challenge for Africa will be to map its own path for sustainable development and not to be swept away by the current wave of potentially ill-conceived 'green' schemes.

Trusha Reddy, Researcher: Corruption and Governance Programme, ISS Cape Town.

www.issafrica.org

Should good guys finish last?

Payment for Environmental Services (PES) has caught our collective imagination as a new tool for conserving forests, and rewarding the poor for their environmental stewardship. But in an essay recently published in *Conservation Biology*, CIFOR Scientist Sven Wunder warns that implementation of PES will present trade-offs between conservation efficiency and fairness. PES schemes will have to be efficient enough to provide real incremental benefits, yet also fair enough to be politically viable.

A PES scheme involves a voluntary, contingent agreement between a buyer and a seller of a well-defined environmental service. It is designed to bridge the gap between the private interests of landowners and the interests of other stakeholders- -by compensating the former for foregone profits from less conservation-friendly landuses. For example, downstream beneficiaries of drinking water, hydro-electric power, or flood control services should be willing to pay upstream landowners in the watershed to conserve a standing forest – and thus control erosion that threatens each of these services.

Wunder predicts that the most efficient uses of PES may offend our sense of justice, as they must be targeted to those who pose a credible threat to the environment. If a community is living in harmony with the forest, it seems fair to reward them for their exemplary environmental stewardship. Unfortunately, such payments would not "buy" any additional conservation, nor produce extra services, and thus the community would have difficulty finding buyers. By contrast, a rancher already clearing the forest might change his behavior if payments were more attractive than the profits he would receive from converting the forest to pasture.

Wunder suggests that PES are most likely to succeed in places where expected profits from alternative landuses are relatively low. Where forests are threatened by conversion to farmland to produce high-value commodities, such as soybean or palm oil, PES incentives sufficient to make conservation economically attractive would quickly exhaust available funds.

High transaction costs may limit PES's potential for poverty reduction. Wunder notes that transaction costs are highest when many smallholders are involved, property rights are weak, and the costs of information and service provision are high. Under such conditions, he suggests donors should subsidize the high start-up costs of PES, as per-hectare running costs may be low enough to justify the up-front investment.

Wunder's findings are timely in light of the current climate change debate about payments for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD). While such payments will likely serve both climate and forest-related objectives, they will present tough choices between efficiency and fairness. The ideal PES recipient is not the environmentally benign community too poor to do much harm to the forest, but rather the guy who had enough capital to buy a chainsaw, and is on the verge of putting it to work. Does that sound fair to you? For more visit http://www.cifor. cgiar.org

Celebrating Culture and Leading into the Future: Alternative Livelihoods for the Maasai

by Kristen MCneil and Katherine Williams - IIN MCgill University

For the past eleven years, Maasai residents from around the Ngong Hills, as well as interested visitors, have assembled on a day in June to celebrate their culture and learn from one another. This gathering is organized by the Simba Maasai Outreach Organization (SIMOO), an organization working for the empowerment of Maasai peoples and the preservation of their unique culture.

The cultural gathering that occurred this year on June had 15 mixed fun and games, such as potato sack races and football matches, with learning opportunities. As one of the members of SIMOO explained, the gathering is intended to be a celebration of the positive aspects of Maasai culture as well as an educational experience. To this end, along with a livestock competition and traditional dance performances there were displays of agricultural products grown by some members of the community, a surprising sight at an exhibition celebrating a pastoralist tribe that traditionally does not practice cultivation.

SIMOO was thrilled to see this small but significant agricultural display. The variety of products was impressive, especially compared to previous years, with examples of maize, potatoes, beans, tomatoes, sorghum, kale, bananas, peppers, yams and others on display. SIMOO advocates for the diversification of livelihoods among the Maasai in order to improve the viability and sustainability of their way of life. In an increasingly monetized economy, it is impossible to live entirely separate from mainstream commercial culture; money is necessary, for example, to pay the required fees to send children to school. By mixing cultivation with traditional pastoralism, thus taking advantage of the arable land in the Ngong Hills, SIMOO believes that the Maasai can enjoy the best of both worlds as well as the preservation and continuation of their culture and way of life.

Climate change impacts (Droughts) and Adaptation (Alternative livelihoods)

Africa is especially vulnerable to climatic changes and variability. This vulnerability is due to the fact that a large share of its economies depends on climate-sensitive sectors, mainly rain fed agriculture, widespread poverty, poor infrastructure, high illiteracy rates, over-exploitation of natural resources and tribal conflicts. The continent's high physical sensitivity to climate change is expected to result in increased average temperatures and more rainfall variability, both of which are going to severely impact people's livelihoods.

Africa is, it is clear, already under pressure from climate stresses and this increases the continent's vulnerability to further climate change and reduces its adaptive capacity. Floods and droughts can occur in the same area within months of each other. At present, water availability is decreasing in Africa, biodiversity is currently under threat from natural and human pressures and climate change will be an additional stressor and may lead to changes in habitats causing species migration or extinction for both flora and fauna. The food security threat posed by climate change is great; health effects of a rapidly changing climate are likely to be overwhelmingly negative. Droughts in Africa often lead to famine and widespread disruption of socio-economic well-being

Communities cannot go on this way for long, they cannot continue with business as usual. The time has come for decisive action on a global scale and everyone must commit to the search for solutions for instance as the pastoralists in Ngong have tried to do as everyone is part of the problem. Dry lands people often rely on access to indigenous plant resources to carry out their drought coping strategies, including grazing, food supply and handicrafts. These practices can be inappropriate in cases where governments legitimize control over dryland resources- protection of vegetation from human activity. Climate adaptation though, demands support for drought livelihoods through continued, sustainable access to resources during times of climate stress. Measures designed to address dry land degradation need to be checked.

The enormity of the issue cannot be addressed by

mitigation alone. It requires adaptation and a fundamental rethink of the way we live, and how we travel and transact business. The most vulnerable developing countries, which have contributed the least to this phenomenon, yet remain most at risk from it, need assistance to improve their capacity to adapt. Adaptation activities have two main purposes; to reduce climate change damage and to increase social and ecosystem resilience in response to the impacts that cannot be avoided.

In spite of the low adaptive capacity of Africa, there are some African communities that have developed traditional adaptation strategies to cope with climate variability and extreme events. Indigenous and other local people are vital and active parts of many ecosystems and may help to enhance the resilience of these ecosystems. In addition, they interpret and react to climate change impacts in creative ways, drawing on traditional knowledge as well as new technologies to find solutions, which may help society at large to cope with the impending changes. Adaptation is necessary because humans are either unwilling or unable to collectively change their behaviour in order to mitigate human induced climate change. Adaptation activities could involve migration and resettlement, changing cropping patterns and early warning systems to help with disaster forecasting.

Successful adaptation requires advances and technological transfers; supportive cultural, educational, managerial, institutional, legal and regulatory arrangements; both domestic and international; the availability of financing and exchange of information.

Biodiversity which has both a local and a global value can be used as a means of alternative livelihood. At the local level, biodiversity is necessary for the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity-based livelihoods. At the global level, biodiversity contributes to the regulation of ecosystem services, such as water and nutrient cycling, and to the development of products such as food and medication.

Examples of coping strategies in African countries

- Diversification of herds and incomes, such as the introduction of sheep in place of goats in Bara Province in Western Sudan
- Reliance on forest products as a buffer to climate-induced crop failure in climatically marginal agricultural areas
- Decentralization of local governance of resources, (Community-Based Natural Resource Management approaches) to promote use of ecosystems goods and services as opposed to reliance on agriculture in climatically marginal areas
- Manipulation of land use leading to land use conversion

Approaches that address multiple environmental stresses and factors hold the greatest promise for Africa, particularly given the limitations in capacity, in terms of both human capacity and financial resources. Efforts to design implementation strategies that address land degradation (which leads to desertification), loss of biological diversity and ecosystem services, as well as adaptation to climate change, such as through enhancing adaptive capacity, will be more likely to succeed than uncoordinated efforts.

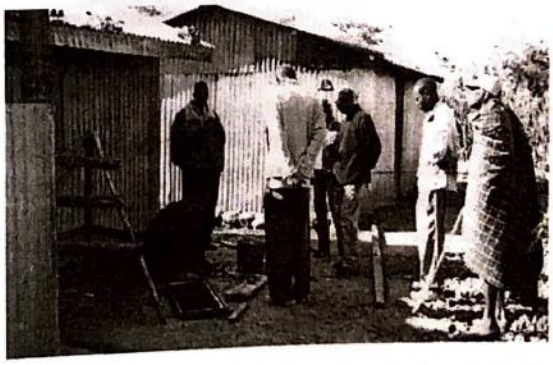
Many African countries have ratified the international conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification. Support is still needed, though, from their development partners to ensure effective implementation of their emerging strategies and plans, as well as to fully exploit the opportunities that could be achieved.

There is also a need for employing an integrated and synergetic approach among national level development partners for addressing sustainable development. Currently, various national institutions have enacted environmental action plans to address environmental degradation. Several strategies and plans have been formulated in a number of countries including national environmental action plans, forestry management plans, biodiversity plans, coastal management plans and wetland conservation strategies.

In conclusion, it is clear that although Africa is highly vulnerable to changing climate conditions and to environmental stress, with a full commitment to cooperation and utilization of the many mechanisms that are available, the continent can take positive advantage of adaptation opportunities to ensure a sustainable future.

Climate adaptation measures as implemented through the National Adaptation programmes of Action will necessarily have to focus on dry lands.

At the same time however, indigenous peoples will also need the support of the International Community to continue their role as traditional caretakers of marginal and fragile ecosystems. Projected climate changes will exceed any previously experienced changes and traditional coping mechanisms may therefore not in themselves be sufficient to deal with impacts.



Learning technology on Solar in Maasai land.

It's multiplying

by Mia MacDonald - Brighter Green

I'm sure I'm not alone in feeling besieged by plastic. Over the past few years especially, it seems like it's hard to buy electronics, a sandwich or books from Amazon.com without getting a load of hard or soft curbside unrecyclable junk. Even most healthy restaurants pack take out food in plastic containers now; paper boxes have disappeared. Because of this, I rarely get food to go and yet I, too, have bags full of plastic containers that I can't bring myself to throw out. Some are holding papers, beads, stamps and earrings. But there's so much. I can't find productive uses for all of it. (I brought an enormous plastic box, complete with hotel logo, home from Las Vegas. My sandwich has been inside it precisely ten seconds before the container would be rendered obsolete. It's still waiting for an assignment.) When, I wondered, did plastic become *de rigueur* for almost any transaction?

I had confirmation of my fears. We *are* drowning in plastic. According to the **U.S. Census Bureau's 2007 Statistical Abstract**, each American produces 4.4 pounds of solid waste every day. That's up from 3.7 pounds (already astonishingly high) in 1980. We're well on our way to creating a ton of solid waste each, each and every year. Think of how comparatively light all the plastic packaging is—and the volume of just a few ounces of it, let alone a pound or so. The Census Bureau also found that each of us drank 23 *gallons* of bottled water in 2004, 10 times as much as 1980. Nearly all of that reaches our lips via single use plastic bottles. No wonder the landfills are bulging, the incinerators straining, and our closets or garbage pails groaning under the weight of all that plastic. This time of year plastic seems omnipresent. While this is not exactly a holiday season-themed thought, it does tie into the theme of New Year: plastic has a very, very long life.

It can also travel very far. I heard a story on WNYC's **Leonard Lopate Show** of how far and wide 28,800 plastic animals (ducks, frogs and others) ended up after spilling from a freighter in the north Pacific in 1992. Many ended up on the floor of the ocean, others in Alaskan waterways. Donovan Hohn, the interviewee, said we use 200 million million tons of plastic a year. When I was on the northern coast of Kenya several years ago, I learned that plastic flip flops could end up in a remote marine reserve from as far away as Malaysia, carried on ocean currents. A film, **Flip Flotsam**, was made about the phenomenon. Local women carve and fashion the long-travelling flip flops into key chains, mobiles and jewelry. They're beautiful...but they can't stem the plastic tide. Like the water bottles, the packaging and the rubber ducks for our baths, the plastic flip flops keep showing up in their multitudes.

Permalink

This scene is familiar to many who visit Africa cities

Wangari Maathai, Nobel peace laureate (and **Lantern author**) has been waging a campaign in Kenya to get the government to ban thin plastics, especially those ubiquitous flimsy bags, and to get consumers to use "eco-friendly" carrying devices like baskets made from grasses. The effort is taking off, and not a moment too soon. It's sad but true that even here in the Maasai Mara ecosystem, one of the world's great wildernesses, plastic bags are around. Inside the Maasai Mara reserve it's rare to see anything other than biological material–thick grasses, trees, shrubs and of course an amazing number of animals and birds. But outside the reserve it's a different story. On the drive here from Narok, the honky-tonk town that is the gateway to the Mara, near every town and village a thousand (or so) plastic bags seemed to bloom.

In bushes, in the grasses, in trees. Mostly clear, but also the occasional blue-green variety. It's depressing to see, as it must be depressing to live around. So why do people toss the bags into their environment? It's hard to know, which means it may be hard to stop. Yet nearly everyone would agree that the bags are a nuisance. And an unsightly and unhealthy one at that (they can lodge in the stomachs of domestic and wild animals and serve as a petri dish for malaria-carrying mosquitoes). So why do these bags continue to bedevil us and the landscape? They're cheap, they're everywhere, and even though they're a relatively new invention, they have become a staple of everyday life, even here in a remote region of Kenya. And their manufacturers want to keep churning them out. After all, there's money to be made. Kenyan industrialists cite the jobs created by creating all of those plastic bags.

Of course, the calculus is false: they're costing an arm and a leg and more. I hope San Francisco and Ireland and Dhaka, Bangladesh can withstand the caterwauling of the bag manufacturers so their bans and taxes on the flimsy nuisances hold up. Then, on my or your next visit to the Mara, perhaps Kenya will have done the same–and the most infinite variety of species to greet you on your way in won't be those made of petrochemicals and oil.

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First Experience at the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

- Catherine Mututua

Catherine Mututua is the project manager for the Namayiana Women's Group in Ngong Town, Rift Valley. The Group has 112 members and is managed by a committee of 16. Catherine is the project manager, overseeing the group's income-generating activities. The goal of the women's group is to empower women, protect their human rights, and give them their own voice, separate from that of their husband's and male relatives'. Another goal of the group is the preservation of the environment. To do this, it is necessary to provide women, who often burn charcoal to make a living, an alternative source of income so that they no longer need to pursue this activity. Namayiana promotes an alternative livelihood of jewellery-making and they are quite successful at this endeavour.

In May of 2007 Catherine travelled to New York City to attend the Sixth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which was themed *Territories, Lands, and Natural Resources*. The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues holds a two-week session each year in New York City, welcoming participants from indigenous communities around the globe. The Forum acts as an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council. Discussions about its creation began in the 1980s, when indigenous peoples complained that the structure of the UN did not encourage their participation and they were therefore not adequately represented. The establishment of the Permanent Forum was one of the objectives of the Decade of the World's Indigenous People, and in 2002 it was officially created and began its activities.

The mandate of the Forum outlines three main goals: to provide expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the Council as well as to programmes, funds, and agencies of the United Nations; to raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues within the UN system; and to prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues.

Ms. Mututua decided to attend the Sixth Session of the Permanent Forum of her own accord - she'd heard about it at a training session in which she took part, and decided submit an application via the internet. The Permanent Forum is open for any indigenous person to attend, and the United Nations is often able to help finance travel and accommodation expenses so that even those from far away and marginalized communities are able to participate. Catherine felt that her experiences as a Maasai woman and as project manager of the Namayiana Women's Group gave her knowledge and experience relevant to be able to participate. Apparently so did the NGO MADRE, as they asked Catherine to speak at a side event concerning women and inheritance.

One of the best things about the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is that since participation from indigenous people around the world is encouraged, the knowledge that is gained by each individual participant is spread to all of these indigenous communities across the globe. Catherine explained emphatically that once she returned from New York in May, the first thing she did was to sit down with the committee of her women's group and share her experiences so they would be better able to improve on their existing projects and develop new ones as well. She also taught her family and friend what she had learned, members of her church, and she plans on soon speaking on the Maasai community radio programme in the region so that the whole community can benefit.

Catherine Mututua had a very positive experience at 2007's Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. She was able to learn a lot, both from official presentations and informal discussions with other participants, and share what she learned with her community. Hopefully Catherine will be able to attend future Forums and contribute and participate even more.

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Anglo-phone Africa sub-regional workshop on the review of, and capacity building for, the implementation of the CBD programme of work on protected areas

Statement by indigenous peoples, local communities and traditional fisher folk

Madam Chairperson,

- We, the Indigenous Peoples, local communities and traditional fisher folks from the Anglo-Phone Africa Sub Region are pleased to be part of this review process of the implementation of the CBD program of work on protected areas.
- Noting and acknowledging the recognition by the CBD on the important role played by Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and traditional fisher folk in the conservation of biodiversity and subsequent implementation of the program of work on protected areas;
- Recognizing the value and importance of partnership by all stakeholders in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity through participatory establishment and management of protected areas with regard to the inclusion and application of traditional knowledge and practices in accordance with Article 8(j) and the related provision;
- Aware of the disconnect existing between the national processes and community initiatives thus leading to the delay of achieving the target of Goal 2.2 of the implementation of the CBD program of work on protected areas;
- Noting with concern the existing financial, capacity and technical gaps that have greatly hindered the implementation of the CBD program of work on protected areas;
- We, the Indigenous Peoples, local communities and traditional fisher folk wish to put forward the following recommendations:

1. The governments should improve communication with indigenous peoples, local communities and traditional fisher folk by using the existing local, national and regional indigenous organizations and/ or existing government administration structures.

   The governments should put up effective mechanisms including financial mechanisms, of empowering and building the capacity of indigenous people's local communities and fisher folks to fully and effectively participate in the management of existing and the establishment and management of new protected areas.

3. The governments should provide an enabling environment by formulating policies and legislation in a consultative and participatory manner for more effective establishment and management of community managed and owned conservancies.

4. There is need to obtain prior informed consent from the indigenous Peoples, local communities and traditional fisher folk before implementing not only the program of work on protected areas but all other development projects.

5. While implementing the program of work of protected areas, there is need to respect and uphold the livelihoods and traditional lifestyles of indigenous peoples, local communities and fisher folk.

6. We call upon our respective countries, in consultation with Indigenous peoples, local communities, traditional fisher folk and other stake holders, to develop guidelines that ensure real and effective engagement and participation which also takes into account the marginalized groups in society such as women and the youth.

7. Tourism developments projects with regard to protected areas, just like other development projects, must be planned and implemented with full participation of indigenous peoples', local communities and traditional fisher folk and these groups should access and derive equitable benefits from these projects.

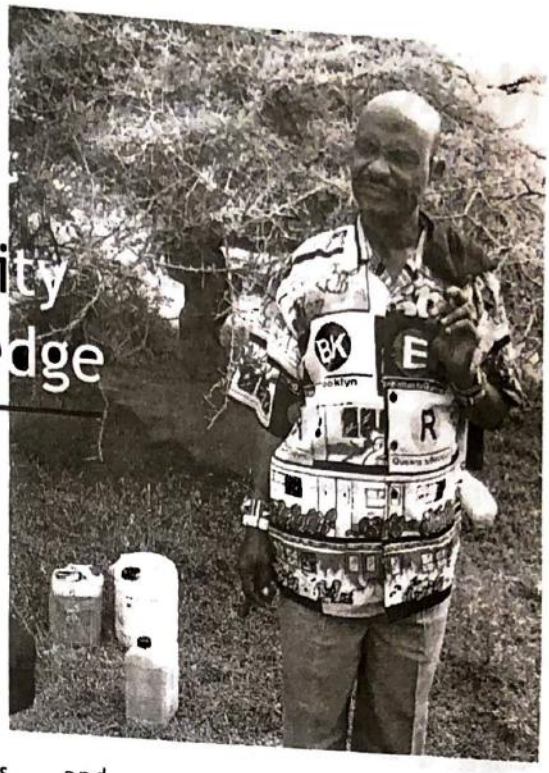
8. We call upon the Governments to respect the Akwe Kon guidelines with regard to concessions on fragile ecosystems that could negatively impact on biodiversity conservation especially where trans boundary movement of species is involved.

We, indigenous peoples, local communities and traditional fisher folks are hereby emphasizing the importance of collaborating and working in partnership with the CBD secretariat, our respective national governments and other stakeholders in achieving the 2010 and 2012 biodiversity targets and the implementation of the programme of work on protected areas.

Thank You!

Dr. Kishajian Ng'usurr

Keeping the health of the community through traditional knowledge



Among the many different things featured at the SIMOO Maasai Cultural Show were a few examples of traditional herbal medicine and healing. Dr. Kishajian Ng'usurr, who is a traditional Maasai healer very popular in the area, was exhibiting his wares at the Cultural Show and described for us the different products he was offering. Dr. Ng'usurr explained the different components of the mixtures - most are made of bark, leaves and roots - and the different purposes they serve. There are 17 different herbs that he uses to make his treatments, and they are mixed together to create different treatments. At the cultural show, he had mixtures to treat colds, coughs, stomach upsets, joint pain, flu, STDs, and impotence. Most of the medicines Dr. Ng'usurr offers either induce diarrhoea or vomiting, which serves to expel whatever is in the body that is causing the illness.

Dr. Ng'usurr is a respected member of the community and his services are well regarded far and wide. Many people seek his advice before heading to a clinic, as he is able to successfully treat many of the illnesses that commonly plague people. The doctor is even sought out by medical doctors!

To become knowledgeable in traditional medicine and healing, Dr. Ng'usurr trained for two and a half years with Medical Assistance Programs International (MAP), which is an international NGO dedicated to promoting the total health of the world's poorest populations. MAP has an initiative that supports and promotes local health workers so that they are able to care for the basic needs of their communities. The mandate of this program states that "MAP International seeks to promote the **total health** of the communities it serves through the identification, training, equipping and supporting of community leaders as a primary tool for improving the health of individuals, families and communities."

There are a number of roles the community health provider must fulfill. They are responsible for education about health issues that will assist in their control and prevention, they must promote activities such as safe food production and access to potable water, they must promote immunization campaigns, and they must treat diseases and injuries among community members and provide essential medicines.

MAP has completed a number of successful projects in Kenya over the last few years. In Nairobi's Korogocho slum, MAP trained 40 community health providers and 20 traditional birth attendants to assist in meeting the medical needs of the community. In Olooseos, a Maasai settlement, 30 community health providers were trained to help treat the 10,000-member community's health problems. Both programs were very successful.

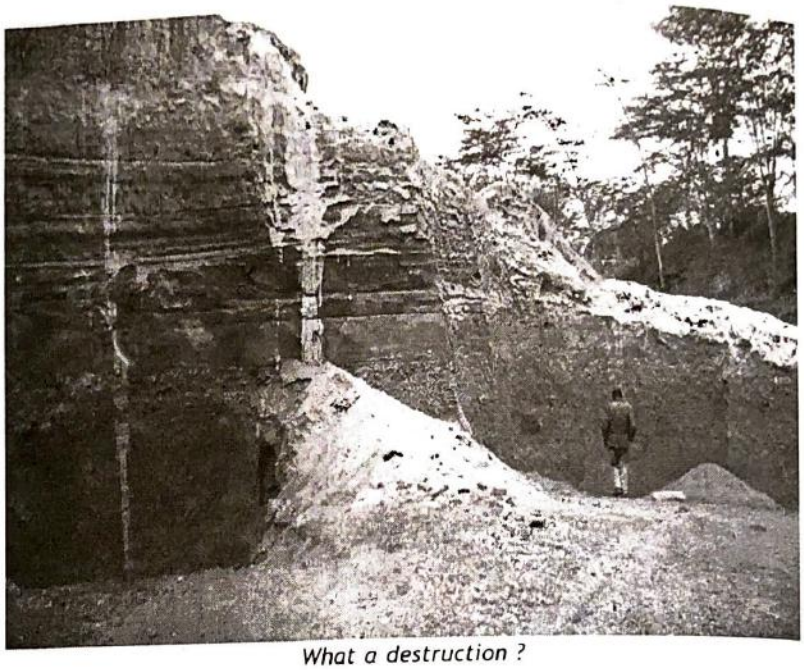
It seems that Dr. Ng'usurr's practice is very successful, and that his MAP training has proved quite useful in serving the community. Programs such as this help to maintain traditional knowledge and provide essential services to communities that have otherwise been ignored by the medical community. By promoting traditional knowledge and healing, knowledge is preserved for future generations and rural communities receive badly needed healthcare.

www.map.org

Such women from Kimuga, Ngong hills depend on him for medicine

Nakuru Sandmines (Kaptembwo)

by Joel Tanui-Farm Systems Kenya.



What a destruction ?

The problem

For hundreds of years in Kenya, sand, gravel and stone have been used as key components in the construction industry. With the growth in urban centres and the growing need to put up buildings for both residential and business purposes, the demand for sand has increased considerably and is set to go on the high.

Nakuru town is situated in the North Midwest of Kenya, at the heart of the great Rift Valley 160 Km from Nairobi. It is the administrative headquarters of Rift Valley Province which started as a railway outpost in 1900. It is famous for its saline lake which is a breeding site and home of the world's rare species of Lesser flamingos and has about 450 species of birds. The town is the fourth largest in Kenya whose population was 360,000 in 1999 growing at an annual rate of about 7% it is expected to be over 700,000 by the year 2005.

There are a number of sand, gravel and stone quarries within the municipality. The products from these quarries are not only utilized in the construction industry in the town but are also exported to other regions outside the municipality. Though these outputs are not properly recorded, the final product thereof is valued and accounted in form of buildings and other infrastructural facilities. The impacts of sand mining have been far reaching ranging from dead bodies of miners who are buried alive by collapsing walls, siltation of the Ndarugu River which is the main tributary of Lake Nakuru and destruction of soil structure and vegetation along the river channel.

Kaptembwa informal settlement in Nakuru Municipality is close to the sand mining area. In this settlement, securing a livelihood is complex and confusing. Residents live in uncertain environments, with overcrowded households which outstrip economic opportunities, social services, rapid cultural change and increasing crime with overall deteriorating status. People apply various survival strategies often living on credit and support networks, temporary employment, earning incomes in the informal economy, and shifting temporary household arrangement to new ones and the outcomes are never adequate for their basic needs. With most of the residents dependent on the land mines as either miners, loaders or brokers, impacts of land degradation are strongly felt.

Farm System Kenya - a non governmental . It promotes sustainable practices of earning a livelihood from the resource so as to supply the existing demand at optimal levels, with minimal impacts on the complex ecosystem. The projected UNDP is supported by small grants project.

Key Objectives

The project is formulated to achieve the following three objectives:

- Utilise community skills and resources to enhance the conservation of River Ndarugu and rehabilitation of the river ecosystem, land and social livelihood systems
- o Demonstrate technologies and models for rehabilitation of degraded land to be incorporated in the mining processes
- o Capacity of key stakeholders built so that they are able to undertake measures to rehabilitate and conserve the natural resource base (land, vegetation and the river)

These activities target both the inactive mines that have already been exhausted as well as the active sites. The project will work together with the sand miners in the establishment of various options for rehabilitating the land as well judicious harvesting. The options will include among others:

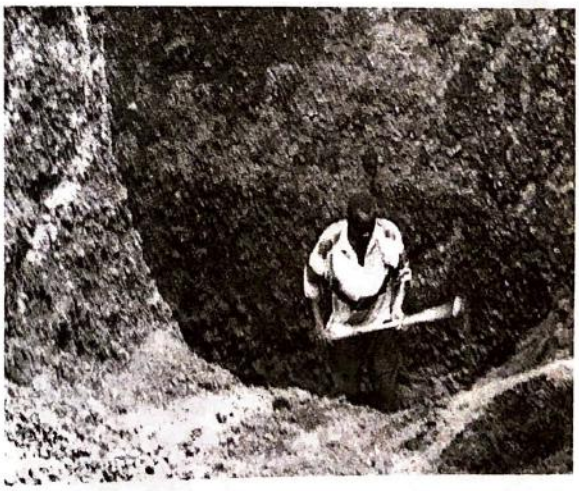
- Landscaping to facilitate proper drainage
- Protect the Ndarugu river bank through tree planting and cover crops such as napier grass. The communities will be encouraged to plant cover 30 meter from the bank all along the Ndarugu river.
- Kitchen gardens after soil enrichment through introduction of tithonia and other soil nutrition improvement
- Source and set appropriate mining equipment (sand scoopers) that will enhance proper and sustainable mining. These will be demonstration sites. It is expected that this will create a need for such equipment once people realize the positive effect they could have on protecting the environment. It is expected that this project will lead to replication of this initiative in other sand mining sites. Similar technologies are already being used in other mining areas as such as **makueni** and **kitui**.

With the future success of the project, minners wil venture into alternative income sources other than sand mining. It is assumed that people prefer quarrying because they have no alternative sources of income or they do not have the technical capacity/ training to undertake other activities. The people targeted in this category will include the active and potential sand miners as well as the surrounding community.

The Project will seek to support the participants through training to give life skills to the target people by training them on entrepreneurship. The project will also link the participants with MFIs for financial support. The formation of the association will be very significant as a majority of MFIs insist on working with organized groups.

The Sand mines are surrounded by a farming community, which directly contributes to the source of labour to the sites or affects the ecosystem. The project will encourage the community to protect their environment by;

- Supporting tree planting activities and thus establish community forest associations in the surrounding areas.
- Supporting establishment of water harvesting techniques within the community so to increase the water percolation and thus reduction of direct use of the river,
- Supporting food security initiatives among the neighboring communities: This will keep the people on their farms and thus reduce the tendency of looking for jobs at the mines.
- Establishment of a revolving fund: This will be established for both the neighbouring communities and the sand harvesters. A dynamic and friendly SACCO will be sought and facilitated to support the target community access finance for their business initiatives. This will be after the beneficiaries have been enlightened on the need for savings. The project will facilitate the process through which the initial capital will be invested. The members will be expected to fulfill the conditions of the MFIs
- The capital will also support the neighboring farming community to undertake small scale commercial farming activities which is a viable alternative to sand harvesting such as dairy goat production. High value crops will also be introduced bearing the close proximity of the target area to Nakuru town.
- Establishment of marketing structures and networks: Using the approach used by FSK in organizing the smallholder farming community into functional and dynamic marketing associations, the various groups undertaking various enterprises will be facilitated to form such organized structures. This will enable them to curve niches in the various market outlets to enhance the productivity of their enterprises.



A miner at work in Kaptebwo mines, Nakuru

Brazil: Historic Indigenous Peoples' Victory

The Tupinikim and Guarani peoples reconquer their lands

On 27 August 2007, Tarso Genro, the Brazilian Minister of Justice, signed the ministerial resolutions delimiting the Tupinikim (14,227 hectares) and Comboios (3,800 hectares) Indigenous Lands, totalizing 18,027 hectares.

According to the resolutions, the Brazilian Government recognizes that the lands have traditionally been occupied by the Tupinikim and Guarani peoples and that, over the past 40 years, they had been illegally occupied by Aracruz Cellulose.

It was a victory for indigenous resistance against the economic and political power of the company and its many allies. A victory of life and a defeat, although localized, of monoculture plantations and the green desert. It was also a victory of national and international solidarity encouraging and filling with hope all those who are struggling for their rights and who believe in the construction of a fairer and more equal society.

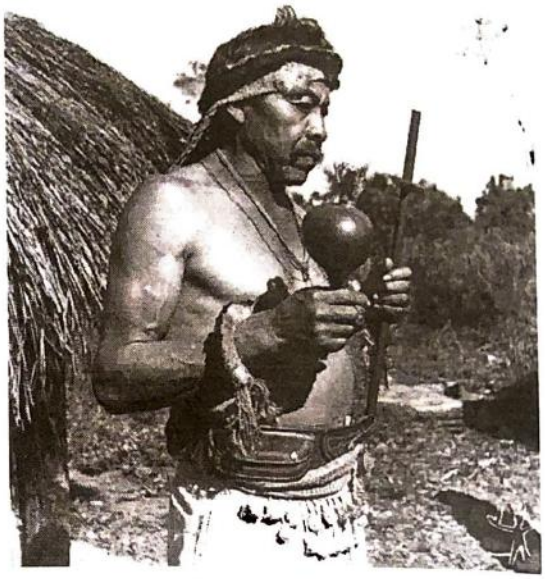
Over these past 40 years, neither the successive Governments nor the company were able to break down this resistance. The use of police force, unlawful agreements and financial compensations could not prevent the communities from continuing their struggle to recover their lands and to guarantee an autonomous territory without the economic dependency that the company has always tried to impose on them.

The resistance struggle

The process of occupation of indigenous lands by Aracruz Cellulose started at the end of the sixties and very quickly caused a profound breaking down of social, economic and cultural forms, particularly in the case of the Tupinikim, almost leading to their extinction. Their lands were immediately expropriated and almost all their villages destroyed (of some 40 villages only Caieiras Velhas, Pau Brasil and Comboios were left). The replacement of native forests by eucalyptus made their traditional subsistence practices unviable. Rivers and streams dried up and the few left were contaminated by agrochemicals used by the company.

Fenced in by the eucalyptus trees and with few alternatives for economic survival the Tupinikim and Guarani decided to act. In 1980, while the military dictatorship was in full swing, they carried out the first self-demarcation of their lands and recovered 6,500 hectares. The following year, an agreement between the military government and the company reduced this area to 4,491 hectares.

In 1993, the Indigenous Peoples claimed an extension of their lands from FUNAI (the state agency for



Guarani elder from Brazil

indigenous issues). Studies by this organization carried out between 1994 and 1997 recognized their rights and the need to extend the land by some 13,579 hectares. However, in 1998 the Brazilian Government yielded once again to the company's interests and agreed to the demarcation of some scant 2,571 hectares.

Rising up against this Governmental decision, the Indigenous Peoples carried out their second self-demarcation. When they were about to conclude the demarcation of 13,579 hectares, the federal government ordered the Federal Police to intervene. The villages were occupied by the police, the defenders of the indigenous cause were arrested and brought to trial and the indigenous leaders were taken to Brasilia and obliged to sign an unlawful agreement with the company. In exchange for the reduction of their lands they received monetary compensation.

Seven years later, the Tupinikim and Guarani decided to breach this agreement. On 19 February 2005, some 350 Indigenous Peoples, gathered in a General Assembly, with the slogan of "Our Land, Our Freedom", resolved to recover the 11,009 hectares in the hands of Aracruz Cellulose.

On 17 May they started their 3rd self-demarcation. A few days later they rebuilt the villages of Olho D'Água and Córrego do Ouro, two of the almost 40 villages destroyed by the company at the end of the sixties.

At the same time, the Federal Public Ministry of Espirito Santo (MPF-ES) launched a public civil investigation, during which various unlawful actions undertaken in the 1998 demarcation came to light. The Ministry immediately sent recommendations to the President of

the Republic and to the Ministry of Justice to proceed with demarcation of the remaining 11,009 hectares.

Since then the indigenous people carried out a number of actions to have the Ministry of Justice enforce the MPF-ES recommendations.

In 2005 they occupied Aracruz Cellulose's factories for 2 days. This action was coordinated by the Chiefs' Commission and had wide international repercussions.

In January 2006 the indigenous people were surprised by a violent Federal Police operation, enforcing a legal decision to return ownership to the company. This action, considered to be unlawful by the MPF-ES caused the destruction of the villages of Olho D´Água and Córrego do Ouro, during which 13 indigenous people were injured. One of the main irregularities noted was the active participation of Aracruz Cellulose, originator of the legal action and consequently benefitting from its enforcement.

The police operation turned out to be a blunder made by the federal government and the company, due to its international repercussions and to the action launched by MPF-ES against the federal government because of the existence of countless irregularities. The federal government quickly attempted to correct its mistake. During a public meeting of the Espirito Santo Legislative Assembly, the then minister of Justice, Marcio Thomaz Bastos, promised to conclude demarcation of the 11,009 hectares before the end of 2006.

However, the administrative process continued at a slow pace. The indigenous people then decided to carry out further actions having a high impact. In September 2006, over a period of 15 days, they slashed and burnt 100 hectares of eucalyptus trees to show that, contrary to accusations, they were not interested in the trees and that the struggle was to recover their lands. The company's reaction was immediate. A defamatory and racist campaign against the indigenous people invaded the streets, the schools and the shops in the city of Aracruz, and even involved other companies in the region. Posters were put up in the main streets of the city publicizing racist and offensive slogans against the indigenous people. Two important demonstrations took place, one in Aracruz and the other in the state capital, Vitoria. An action brought by MPF-ES, and backed by Justice, condemned the company for the crimes of racism and defamation, obliging it to retreat. In spite of this, the campaign had succeeded in putting part of the Aracruz population against the indigenous people.

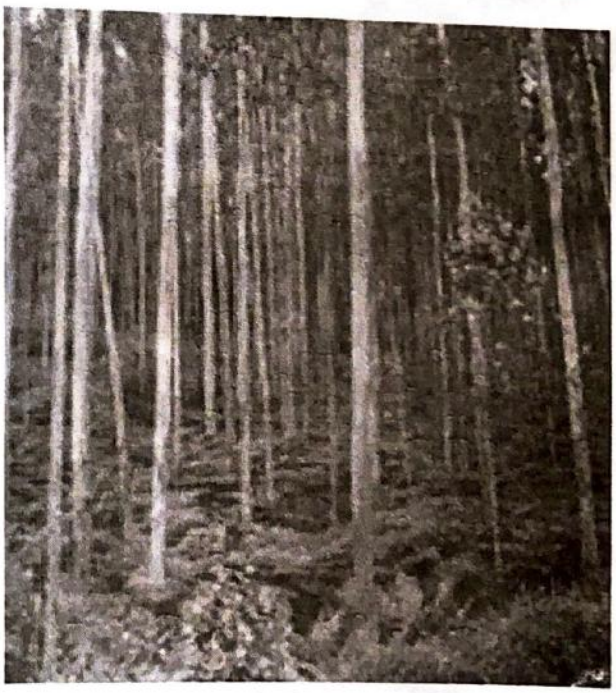
Weakened but not intimidated, the indigenous people occupied the port from where the company's pulp is exported (Portocel) to step up pressure on the Minister of Justice. However the company managed to mobilize some 1500 company and outsourced workers, removing the indigenous people by force, which almost led to their massacre.

In January 2007 the former Minister of Justice, although he had all the necessary elements to sign the ministerial resolutions for delimitation of indigenous lands, returned the files to FUNAI for this organization to seek an understanding (agreement) between the parties. In turn, FUNAI, refused to do so, but the Federal Justice of the city of Linhares (ES) decided to take on the task and ordered the parties to come to an agreement over the lands. Following two attempts, frustrated by the firm position of the indigenous people, the negotiation process was concluded and the decision on the dispute again sent to the executive.

Tupinkin Lady watching from her window on the sad distribution of her land

On 5 July this year, FUNAI sent the proceedings to the Ministry of Justice and on this occasion, the minister, in an act of great steadfastness and political skill, signed the resolutions guaranteeing the Tupinikim and Guarani people the rights over the 11,009 hectares of land, thus putting an end to an almost 40 year old dispute. A few days later the indigenous people had again reconstructed the villages of Olho D´Água and Areal as further proof of their resistance, courage and determination.

Brazil has the 3rd largest block of forests in the world



By Fabio Martins Villas: fabio.villas@bol.com.br, Fase/ES and Rede Alerta contra o Deserto Verde (Alert Against the Green Desert Network)

Elephant Walk

by Mia MacDonald - Brighter Green

I've seen elephants in my time. In zoos, as a child, where I'd be amazed at their size and deflated by their small often concrete enclosures. I've seen the wretched parade of elephants through the Queens Midtown Tunnel and the streets of Manhattan when the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus comes to town. I've been explored by an elephant's trunk outside the Cathedral of St. John the Divine while trying to get the Cathedral to stop having elephants walk up its aisle for the St. Francis Day Blessing of the Animals celebration. (At the time, the Dean defended the elephants' presence as evidence of the spectacle of God's creation.)

I'd even seen elephants in the wild. It was several years ago and my last morning in the Maasai Mara National Reserve in southern Kenya. The reserve, and surrounding ranch lands that are home to many Maasai communities (traditional pastoralists), is the northern extension of Tanzania's great Serengeti Plain. It is also a veritable Mecca for wildlife. On that trip, we saw lions, wildebeest, giraffes, gazelles, warthogs and many birds. But until that final day, we hadn't seen any elephants. Our driver was keen that we find some, if possible a large herd. Instead, we ended up coming across two: a mother and her baby, probably younger than a year, eating in an open area.I was struck by how relatively still they were and seemingly untroubled by our being there. They were very gray, not speckled with pink like

so many captive elephants. We could hear them the soft swoosh of their bodies even though they didn't move much. We only stayed for a few minutes, time enough to snap photos. As we drove away, their large, elegant, unmistakable shapes receded into the distance.

Elephants Being Elephants

A few weeks ago, I was back in the Maasai Mara. It was the rim of the rainy season and the grass was tall and intermittently a soft green. My companions were six Swedes, members of an extended family and friends, all on their first visit to the Mara. All of us stayed in an eco-lodge just outside the reserve called Base Camp, which seemed to be walking the green talk: lights and hot water provided by solar power, composting toilets and sensitive building. The permanent tents on the riverbank had been constructed around and amid large trees. Vervet monkeys wandered the unmanicured grounds and even played on my porch. Each morning, a family of baboons processed past some of my companions' tents to the river and the trees and prairie-like land beyond.

On our first morning drive, we spotted giraffes, elands, warthogs and ostriches, all in the ranch lands surrounding the park. Then we saw the elephants first looming in the distance and then closer. They were moving toward the river and us. We counted: at least two, no three, another there behind a tree, two coming in from the left. As their bodies became distinct, we saw big, full-grown females, younger adolescents, and some who, on an elephant scale, were tiny. If an elephant is less than a year, our driver Gideon informed us, he or she can fit under the mother's belly. Two fit this description, their trunks flapping in a way that indicated it was still something of a mystery to the near-infant elephants.

As we watched from the confines of the van, we could see the elephants converging, heading to the river, which was just beneath us. Fourteen in all we counted as we watched them walk. We could hear the sounds of soft calls, mini-trumpets, and the elephants's footfalls as they walked down the sandy banks to the water. En route, one of the adolescents lay down in the sand and rubbed; one of the babies tried to do the same, not quite as gracefully. When they got to the river, they moved along, making way for the others, the youngest ones protected within the legs and trunks of their elders.

I'm sure they saw us: how could they not? We were perhaps only 50 feet away. But I couldn't detect any fear or disdain in them, even as our digital cameras buzzed furiously. They kept doing what they were doing: drinking, a few moving their feet into the water, and observing each other and their surroundings. It was a warm sunny day, and with the elephants drinking right across the river, we didn't think of looking for other animals. They were our sole focus.

Pachyderm Power

Here's what startled me most, apart from the mere fact of our being there with them. While large and broad, the adult females had a leanness about them. They weren't wide. Theirs was a self-containment, both physical and essential. I thought of their cousins, the Asian elephants in circuses, and how large they are in comparison. And how different. I thought how captive elephants, performing or in zoos, must be so bored, so denied the chance to be who they are, so frustrated kicking against the goads of their confinement (physically and metaphysically) that

never give way, that they must eat to fill the voids. And the food is readily available.

There's an agenda here, too. There's a dismaying cuteness to a fat elephant that curtails the elephant's power, makes her (most often) or him seem no longer the giant of the forest or grasslands, but a cartoon, Dumbo created just for your amusement no need to be scared.

He's just a big baby. Surely this is an intentional diffusing and diversion of power, from the elephant to her captor or keeper (often it's hard to know the difference).

It was depressing, this contrast, and the starkness of it. As I watched the elephants, I wondered why this hadn't been obvious to me on my first visit to the Mara. It made the tragedy of captive elephants more visceral, my watching their extended family drink and trumpet and simply enjoy who they were and where they found themselves. A-ha, I thought.

This is what it means to be an elephant, here in the Maasai Mara on an April morning. These elephants were inhabiting their beingness, their elephantness, which, of course, is what those of us watching were finding exhilarating and awe-inducing, too.

Those other elephants, I reflected, in zoos and circuses, or working in the logging industry or assisting panhandlers in Asian cities, are shadow selves. But I can't blame them for the blunted power of their elephantness. That was done to them and can only be undone by granting them the freedom to rediscover who they are in the world. In a place like this.

It must have been an hour that we watched the elephants at the river.

About ten minutes before we left, I heard a call, not a trumpet and not a grunt, but something low and slightly musical and, to my ear, kindly cajoling. I saw the other elephants begin to shift, backing up and taking their feet out of the water, bringing the youngest among them closer with a movement of trunks, looking up and out and just slightly, back across the plain from where they'd come. That's the matriarch, I thought to myself, and isn't it amazing to see her doing what the books and public television specials and scientific studies tell you she does: lead the group not by dominating but directing?

Each of the three days I was in the Mara we came across elephants, in groups of full-grown females, adolescents and toddlers. We also got very close (too close, I told Gideon) to a single male, an august and ornery old pachyderm who, justifiably, was not happy to be disturbed and made as if to charge, but didn't. Each time I was struck by how elephant-like they were, and how their elephantness had absolutely nothing to

do with us. We could observe and appreciate it, but had no role in its being or its denial. We were animals together and on these grasslands, the elephants were at home. We were only passing through.

When I got back to New York, I told Ingrid Newkirk of PETA about my experience with the elephants in the Mara in an e-mail. Seeing elephants being elephants is always stunning, isn't it! she replied.

That's it exactly. Until that morning in the Mara, though, I didn't realize, how rare that experience is, or how much elephants in captivity

have been denuded of themselves. It made me want to work to get those elephants free and to be with elephants being themselves again soon.

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The medicine man of the desert.

Gert Swarts is a Khomani San from the Kalahari South Africa. He is 53years old and started is work his practice as a medicine man when he was 26years old .Traditional medicine men are very important among the san people and in other African Indigenous Peoples. They protect the community in any sickness

Who taught him? He was taught by his mother and other traditional healers in the village that he grew up. *Why him?* When he was born his grand father called him Kukai Makip which means ***the beginning and the end*** and that is why he had to be taught by his mother with instruction from his grandfather, he had some powers which made him special. They all believed that this was the work he was supposed to do.

How was he accessing his medicine? He remembers that long time when they were young and growing up it was very easy to go out and collect in the diverse flat desert where they could find many varieties of plants and animals, nothing was difficult but when the white man came they were pushed out and were forced to go to higher mountain areas, it became difficult because this is a place he did not know, the plants well and it was also an area where it was humid and therefore difficult to get the right type of medicinal plants. It was not like the Kalahari where the medicinal plants despite the fact that it is a desert, they very strong and very effective.

What about now that they have come back and gotten their land back? It was not the same because the land is not accessible still it is not in the wild. People now have many activities that do not make the plants fresh and good any more. There are no enough animals in the Park. It is important to have the animals there

because the waste from animals contributes a lot to the strength of the medicinal plants because it is nature and it all needs each other. Now the park is not easy to access it is all controlled making it difficult, ***"you cannot just walk in to the park and collect what you want,'***

'There has also been the effect of frequent drought the little vegetation that was left is all gone. Life is just different and even difficult to know when you can pick what and at what time because the patens of the rains have completely changed.' The world has changed for us all. *Is there future for the medicine men and women of the desert?* No nothing we are left to just look and wait to die. But I do believe there is no need to cry over split water but to keep on."

The old medicine man of the desert do believe in an old Biddha saying that.....***The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, worry about the future, or anticipate troubles but to live the present moment wisely and earnestly. Buddha, Philosopher***

Compulsory Education:

Curse or blessing for Indigenous Peoples?

By Daniel Salau Rogei

In a rare feature highlighting the situation of pastoralists, and in a slight departure from the infamous cattle rustling stories, we saw the administration undertaking a "kids rustling" exercise in West Pokot District in the name of free and compulsory primary education. While I applaud the determination by the government to realize one of the most essential millennium development goals, I beg to differ with the procedure of doing it. In this particular story, we saw a distressed, blind old man finding it practically impossible to let all his sons abandon the shepherds career for the yet to be realized conventional modern career. Saying that he is blind and his wife is sick means that their livestock are therefore left at the mercy of the marauding hyenas. This family has been condemned to starvation. If lucky, relief food will come in handy, an increasingly common characteristic of semi-arid areas. As nomadic pastoralists, livestock keeping is the only livelihood that, at the end of the day, puts food on the table.

With due respect to the importance of free primary education, and especially to the indigenous peoples who find it as a privilege after perpetual marginalization, I would like to bring to the fore some salient issues. But before going far, I would like to shade some light on who are Indigenous Peoples? According to the UN definition.

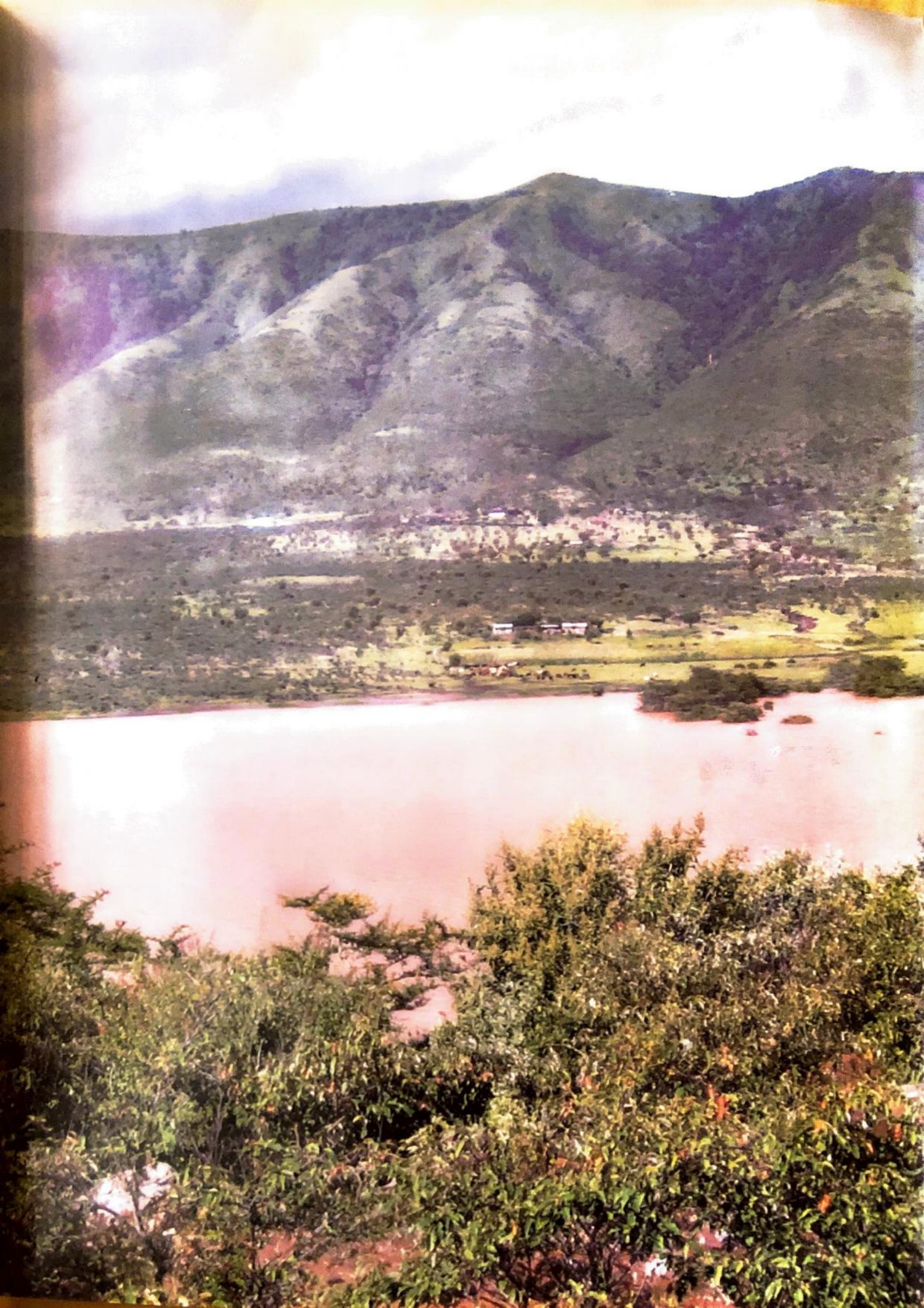
Indigenous Peoples are communities who embody their traditional livelihoods and natural environment using their indigenous knowledge and are culturally distinct from the rest of society; and as a result have been politically and economically marginalized by the dominant society.

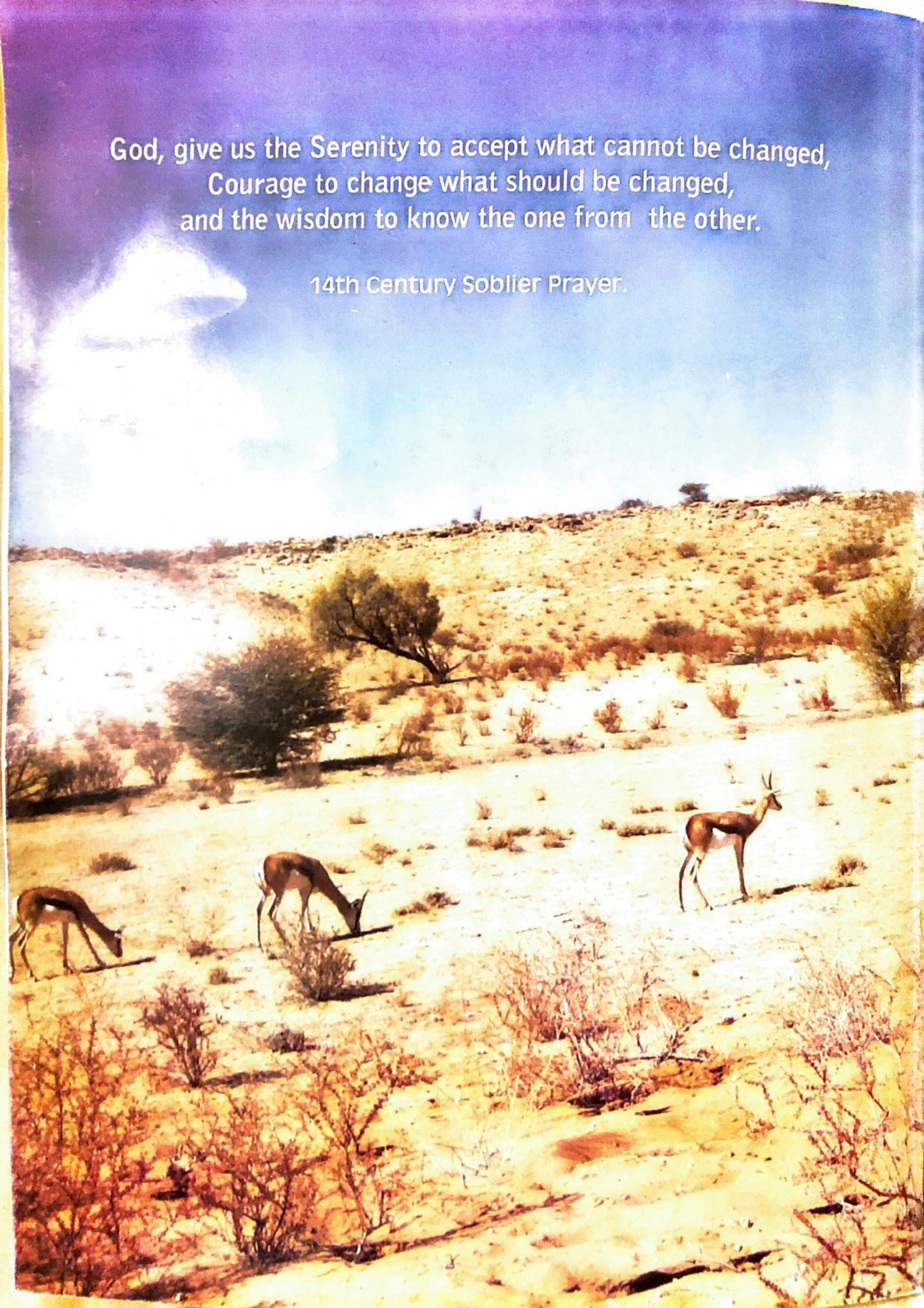
Going by this definition, most of the pastoralists and hunter – gatherers communities fall under this category. Indigenuity therefore, does not imply the generational notion of who came first as many Africans allude, but rather the circumstances surrounding this definition.

Indigenous peoples the world over are characterized by loss of land as a result of aggressive capitalism first precipitated by the colonial masters and their predecessors following suit thus leading to unabated poverty. Changing terminologies but concepts remaining the same, 'development' is now the catch phrase of the 21st century and education is the driving engine. How sustainable these 'development projects' are depend on the holistic approach and participation of the community. The Pokot for example, will definitely give priority to herding which is their lifeline. They may not be opposed to education, but rather concerned where the next cup of milk is coming from. Unlike crops, livestock need vigilant attention all through. Looking at the forced abduction of young boys tending their stock depicts an insensitive and naïve government that is hell bend against pastoralism. It underscores the skewed approach to this dry land, ecologically friendly livelihood that has been practiced for centuries. Despite contributing immensely to the national GDP, pastoralism is not weighed on the same scale as agriculture. I am tempted to believe that education system was crafted with agriculture in mind. It may not be sheer coincidence that the April holidays are on the rainy season when weeding need to done. August holidays coincides with the harvest season while December is the time to prepare land for the next growing season. This may have been deliberate for the simple reason that school going children need to help in these domestic chores.

Pastoralists would have preferred 'summer holidays' to coincide with the dry season so that they can move around with their livestock. Alternatively, there is need to have the 'shepherd program' where boys can go to school in turns. By balancing access to education and sustainable livelihood, is the only way to achieve the universal education goal. But indigenous peoples should be given a chance to determine how they want to change. This is clearly stipulated by the UN Draft Declaration on Indigenous Peoples Rights which the Kenyan Government abstained from it, when it was adoptedby vote on 13\9\07. Having the right to self determination is the only sure way for indigenous peoples to master their destiny.

Meanwhile education to the Pokots, just like other development projects, remains to be a mixture of holy grails and poisoned chalice.




God, give us the Serenity to accept what cannot be changed,
Courage to change what should be changed,
and the wisdom to know the one from the other.
14th Century Soldier Prayer.