

# **IPACC Report to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues concerning African Hunter-Gatherers' Lands, Territories Natural Resources and Traditional Knowledge of Biodiversity**

**2006 – 2007**

## ***Summary***

In 2007, the 6<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is considering the role of United Nations agencies in relation to the current status of indigenous peoples' lands, territories and natural resources. This paper, prepared by the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee (IPACC), is submitted to consider the link between lands, territories and natural resources on the one hand and the rising recognition of the value of traditional / indigenous knowledge systems of hunter-gatherers in Africa. It outlines the problems of hunter-gatherers currently face in Africa, presents results from several recent IPACC projects related to indigenous knowledge systems, and offers recommendations for how UN agencies can better target these issues.

## ***Introduction***

In April 2007, IPACC's Executive Committee participated in a four day workshop on strategic approaches to natural resources. The indigenous leaders concluded that the future of indigenous peoples in Africa depends on convincing policy makers of the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) into environmental and natural resource policies and mechanisms. Recognising the value and wisdom of IKS strengthens the claims of indigenous peoples to be custodians and stewards of natural resources, lands and territories. It also ensures a sustainable environmental future for all Africans. IPACC argues that UN agencies have a catalytic role to play in helping African governments recognise the relationship between land security and the maintenance of traditional IKS relevant to monitoring, using and sustaining biological diversity. The UNPFII is the forum where States, UN agencies and indigenous peoples have an opportunity to review these inter-related themes and find points of mutual interest.

For millennia, the hunter-gatherer peoples of Africa have sustainably managed the natural resources in their territories through the combination of a value-system based on an equilibrium principle and their sophisticated and innovative indigenous knowledge systems (IKS). During the period of colonialism, hunter-gatherers were marginalised and victimised by European farmers and administrators, including an almost total genocide in South Africa. During the post-colonial period, hunter-gatherers have remained outside the domain of governance, often without the benefits normally associated with citizenship, and often without being recognised as distinct peoples. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,

most hunter-gatherers in Africa find themselves without secure land tenure, threatened by changes to the environment and the economy of their neighbours, with a predictable pattern of being displaced and becoming a permanent and invisible under-class. In most cases, hunter-gatherers have no mechanism for dialogue with the government about their precarious situation.

However, there are three factors which are causing African states and the private sector to reconsider the fate of hunter-gatherer peoples. These include:

- a) the relevance of IKS to the monitoring and management of biological diversity (including conservation related to tourism)
- b) climate change which makes arid area and water related IKS more valuable
- c) the potential for massive revenues from pharmaceutical exploitation of IKS in the world market.

Though each of these factors foreshadows further extraction of knowledge and resources from poor communities, they also suggest a possible basis of negotiation and dialogue, which could result in strengthening indigenous claims over lands, territories and natural resources.

**IPACC recommends that** to reverse the trend of dispossession and knowledge loss amongst hunter-gatherers and other indigenous peoples in Africa, UN agencies need greater cooperation and result targets which help create spaces for cultural, technical, scientific and policy dialogue between hunter-gatherers and African states. The UN agencies have the opportunity of playing a catalytic role in supporting pilot projects which explore how Information Communication Technology (ICT) can create a platform where scientists and policy makers can understand and appreciate the IKS of hunter-gatherer peoples regardless of the ecosystem in which they occur (e.g. whether in the Kalahari Desert, the Kenya Highlands, the Yaeda Valley or the equatorial rainforests of the Congo Basin).

The emphasis on ICTs as the site of intercultural dialogue permits indigenous knowledge to become data necessary for managing on monitoring biological diversity, climate change, desertification and wildlife management. This conversion of knowledge into data, if handled appropriately would give new value to indigenous cultures, knowledge and eventual indigenous peoples in Africa.

### ***Principles and Guidelines***

In 2006 – 2007, indigenous hunter-gatherers<sup>1</sup> in the IPACC network in Southern Africa and East Africa undertook particular projects to explore how their advanced knowledge of biodiversity could be more effectively used to secure partnerships with National authorities, conservation agencies, other lobby groups and the private sector. These activities were undertaken to redress issues of marginalisation and poverty, but also to highlight the relationship between the knowledge of indigenous peoples and their continuing access to their lands and natural resources.

---

<sup>1</sup> Hunter-gatherers refers to those peoples who lived by hunting and gathering during the 20<sup>th</sup> century but are not primarily involved in this cultural and livelihoods practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Even those communities which have converted to small scale gardening and livestock maintain substantial amounts of IKS associated with hunting and gathering in the older generations.

From 25 – 29 September 2006, San communities from Botswana, Namibia and South Africa held a workshop near Tsumkwe, Namibia to discuss the formalisation of assessment and accreditation of the traditional skill of animal tracking and related knowledge of biodiversity. The event was hosted by the Ju|'hoansi people, traditional owners of the territory and managers of the Nyae Nyae Conservancy. From 9 – 20 August 2006, East African hunter-gatherers from Tanzania and Kenya participated in the application of Participatory 3-Dimensional Modelling (P3DM) by the Ogiek people of the Eastern Mau Forest Complex in the village of Nessuit<sup>2</sup>. These are discussed in more detail below.

Both events were designed to help specific local communities explore their knowledge systems and consider advocacy opportunities for greater interaction with the State and private sector to both protect fragile knowledge transmission, and to revitalise community agency – promoting a sense of control over their destiny. Each event also invited visiting indigenous hunter-gatherers to share the experience and reflect on the usefulness and limitations of the methodology.

The following conclusions were adopted by the different forums.

**African Principles and Guidelines  
on a Sustainable Future for Hunter-Gatherers**

1. African hunter-gatherer peoples are highly vulnerable due to their almost total exclusion from political power, their small population numbers and historic biases by both colonial authorities and independent African governments which served the interests of agricultural and agro-pastoralist peoples;
2. Hunter-gatherers are holders of diverse and sophisticated knowledge of biodiversity which is of increasing global significance due to climate change, threats to biodiversity and the global market for pharmaceutical products derived from indigenous peoples' knowledge;
3. The intergenerational transmission of indigenous knowledge of biodiversity is gravely threatened by the separation of indigenous hunter-gatherers from their lands and territories, the invasion of their lands by other peoples, the banning of or bureaucratic and legal barriers to the daily practice of hunting and gathering, and the destruction of biodiversity necessary for sustaining both the cultural and natural systems;
4. Hunting is seen by Western NGOs and conservationists as primitive and unsustainable. In practice, agriculture is a much greater threat to biodiversity both in forest and desert territories. Hunting and gathering as practical and cultural events are the basis of learning about and appreciating biodiversity. Were hunter-gatherers able to convert their complex knowledge and monitoring capacity into data to protect wildlife, new alliances could be made with the major conservation agencies in Africa;
5. Indigenous knowledge is invisible to decision-makers and is undervalued by national authorities. The solution is to make indigenous knowledge visible and measurable where this is appropriate and with the free prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples. It is important that these processes are designed, controlled and managed by indigenous peoples;

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.iapad.org/applications/ich/mauforest.htm> and [http://spore.cta.int/spore126/spore126\\_brief.asp](http://spore.cta.int/spore126/spore126_brief.asp)

6. Information Communication Technology, such as Cybertracker (palm pilot technology linked to GPS and based on IKS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), can help bridge the communication systems of indigenous peoples, bureaucrats and professional conservationists and scientists;
7. Modern management of protected areas would be substantially improved by applying IKS to the monitoring and management of plant, insect and animal biodiversity;
8. Indigenous peoples distinguish between traditional hunting, commercial hunting and illegal commercial poaching. Where states stop traditional hunting, there is a pattern of illegal commercial poaching. In the case of Namibia which permits traditional hunting and quota controlled commercial hunting, poaching is apparently reduced and communities benefit from the both the revenue from commercial and the experience and nutritional advantages of traditional hunting;
9. Hunter-gatherers request that African governments and conservation agencies study and take seriously the application of the Convention on Biological Diversity, with particular reference to Article 8J and the 2002 Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity.

These observations and principles which emerged from series of workshops and discussions with hunter-gatherers, NGOs and governments create the basis for restructuring the relationship between the different actors, influence-holders and decision-makers. UN agencies are involved in several aspects of these relationships, but as yet there is not a coherent integration of UNESCO's work on intercultural dialogue and ICTs, with the work of UNEP, GEF and the Rio Conventions on the protection and promotion of IKS. The Permanent Forum is in the position to ask the Inter-Agency support group to strengthen the understanding between the UN Agencies and have a more integrated approach to the application of IKS in a conflict-ridden multicultural context and in the face of rapidly declining biological diversity.

### ***Stating the problem***

The origin of the problem of exclusion and vulnerability of African hunter-gatherer peoples can be traced back to their almost total exclusion from political power during the formation of the colonial state. European powers wanted access to African labour and products of agriculture. Hunter-gatherer peoples were too independent to be controlled by leaders and their small population numbers made them of little use for recruiting labour.

Hunter-gatherer land tenure systems were not normally governed by legal or bureaucratic procedures, but rather by a series of reciprocal rights and responsibilities, usually held by families. The European legal principle of 'terra nullius' was often applied to the lands of hunter-gatherers who were considered not to have any grounds for defending land tenure.

This bias carried over into the post-colonial system and legal biases. Though theoretically indigenous hunter-gatherers should enjoy the same rights as other Africans in the post-colonial regimes, in practice they are almost totally absent in all levels of governance. In Congo Basin and Southern African states, where chiefs play a role in representing the village or the district within formal governance, this has meant that only Bantu speaking agricultural or agro-pastoralists chiefs can participate in governance, to

the exclusion of the so-called “Pygmies”<sup>3</sup> and *San* peoples. Likewise in East Africa, hunter-gatherers, known as *Dorobo*, *Sanye* or *Boni* did not even merit being identified by their own ethnic / tribal name.

The problem was acute in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but has been accelerated in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as indigenous peoples must now also compete against the interests of globalised multinational corporations, expanding protected areas and new methods of agriculture.

The CBD Secretariat has commissioned a series of regional papers and a consolidated global report on the threats to TK transmission. For Africa, a few main points stand further elaboration. The most acute and devastating threats to knowledge systems arise from:

- Destruction of desert biological diversity (mostly by agriculture and overgrazing);
- Destruction of forest canopy biodiversity (mostly by industry or agricultural encroachment);
- Reduction in rights or opportunities to track and hunt (including alienation of resources by protected areas);
- Displacement from or serious reduction of access to traditional hunting-gathering and transhumant herding territories (by agriculture, industry or protected areas).

The intergenerational transmission of indigenous knowledge of biodiversity is gravely threatened by the separation of indigenous hunter-gatherers from their lands and territories, the invasion of their lands by other peoples, banning or bureaucratic and legal barriers to the daily practice of hunting and gathering, and the destruction of biodiversity necessary for sustaining both the cultural and natural systems.

Central Africa is less hostile to the idea that hunting is an important livelihood, but even the Congo Basin states reproduce European and agricultural biases that communities should be sedentary and live off high starch diets and declining IKS, rather than be mobile and live off high protein diets, which require a constant transmission of biodiversity IKS between generations.

African state bias against subsistence hunting is reinforced by Western conservation agencies. Hunting is seen by some Western NGOs and conservationists as primitive and unsustainable. Major conservation agencies, locked in a fight with poachers in Africa have until recently not recognised that hunters are healthier than sedentary peoples and more likely to monitor the state of biological diversity in their territories. In practice, agriculture is a greater threat to biodiversity through the destruction of forest lands and desert territories. Hunting and gathering as practical and cultural events are the basis of learning about and appreciating biodiversity.

Despite hunter-gatherers holding sophisticated knowledge of natural resources and biological diversity they are almost always systematically displaced from protected areas instead of being integrated into the management systems. The staff of National Parks are typically not indigenous people and do not hold IKS about the territory<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> This term is considered colonial and offensive by some communities.

<sup>4</sup> Displacements of hunter gatherers include the following examples: Hai||om displacement from Etosha National Park (Namibia), †Khomani and !Kung displacement from Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (RSA and Botswana), Batwa from Nyungwe National Park and Parc National des Volcans

The failure of the State, conservation agencies and indigenous peoples to hear each other and recognise the importance and urgency of greater cooperation on monitoring and protecting both biodiversity and cultural diversity can be seen as a problem of **intercultural dialogue**. Improved facilitation can lead to changes in relationships and prejudices, and generate new ways to recognise and respect indigenous knowledge systems (IKS).

In 2006, the African Biodiversity Network (ABN) and the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee (IPACC) held a joint workshop on traditional knowledge and biodiversity in Nanyuki, Kenya. One of the conclusions was that there has been a knock-on effect due to globalisation and poor governance of resources in rural areas. Commercialisation of agriculture and forestry is impacting negatively on subsistence farmers; they are encroaching on the semi-arid lands of pastoralists and destroying forests of the hunter-gatherers. In turn, pastoralists are pushed into more marginal lands and are displacing or assimilating hunter-gatherers. In each case, there is a related loss of biodiversity, indigenous knowledge systems and livelihoods.

The damage to natural biological diversity is compounded by policy / political problems, including:

- Non-recognition of indigenous peoples by the State (despite the ACHPR decision of 2003 to recognise indigenous peoples);
- Hunter-gatherers in particular are small remote rural communities with no voting power, no political representation, and very low levels of education and organisational capacity, i.e. they are some of the most vulnerable people in Africa;
- Even large pastoralist communities struggle to be included in policy making and implementation in rural areas;
- There is a low interest in human rights and democratic or efficient governance in many African states;
- Many African governments have limited capacity to spend time in rural areas getting to know indigenous communities and understanding how IKS can be supported;
- African education systems are remarkably resistant to change, innovations, or using local and traditional IKS in meaningful ways that can help fight poverty;
- Conservation organisations tend not to be competent in indigenous languages, and do not have the time, personnel or funding to spend adequate time with indigenous peoples to help them audit, valorise, and apply IKS to nature conservation and new livelihoods.

Though the conditions for the degradation of IKS are almost entirely created by external forces (i.e. neighbouring peoples, the State, the private sector) there are negative

---

(Rwanda), Naro, |Gwi and ||Gana peoples from Central Kalahari Game Reserve (Botswana), Waata from Tsavo National Park (Kenya), Batwa from Bwindi Impenetrable Forest (Uganda), and others. Currently Gabon is negotiating the resource rights of Babongo around Waka National Park and Baka people around Minekebe. Aka indigenous peoples have certain usage rights in Dzanga-Sanga National Park in Central African Republic. Namibia and Tanzania provide community based conservancies which provide rights to Ju'hoansi and Hadzabe people respectively. Baka are disputing land use regulations in Lobéké, Boumba-Bek and Nki conservation areas where parks were established without consulting indigenous peoples living on the land;

sociological processes and reactions found within hunter-gatherer communities. The cumulative impact of these two preceding sets of conditions means that at community level:

- Adults and youth see hunting as something shameful and possibly illegal;
- Youth are losing interest or opportunities to learn biodiversity IKS in the normal way through daily hunting, gathering or herding;
- Elders lose confidence that their knowledge is useful, and may not understand the new types of livelihoods which could be gained by youth with access to IKS;
- IKS is intangible and people do not see how fast it is disintegrating;
- Constant racial / ethnic bias and discrimination against indigenous peoples make some of the youth want to avoid IKS;

## **Knowledge and Power**

'Knowledge is power' – or so goes the saying. This apparently is not the case in Africa, where rural hunter-gatherer peoples are holders of complex and unique knowledge of biological diversity but find themselves vulnerable as peoples and marginalised from external efforts to conserve nature.

This paradox may be changing as IKS becomes more significant in the efforts to protect the planet's biodiversity, to monitor and counter-act the man-made causes of climate change, and most importantly the changing perception in Africa with regards the profitability of pharmaceutical products derived from the knowledge of indigenous and local peoples.

A single legal case of intellectual property rights may radically have changed the way that African states look at IKS, and in so doing rethink their relationship with indigenous hunter-gatherers. In June 2001, the *Observer* published an article on attempts by Pfizer, a major pharmaceutical multinational corporation, to convert the ingredients found in *hoodia gordonii* into a pill to help fight obesity. Pfizer failed to make an affordable synthetic substitute for *hoodia*, but in the process the San peoples of southern Africa launched a legal appeal to protect their intellectual property rights over *hoodia*, known as !xoba in their languages and widely used in the desert regions. In 2003, the San signed a benefit sharing agreement with the patent holders in South Africa and in March 2007 a second agreement was signed the Southern African Hoodia Growers association again on benefit sharing.

Politically, *hoodia* has received a lot of attention. The South African government has reacted by studying the case and promoting supportive legislation including the 2004 Biodiversity Act and a new intellectual property bill will clamp down on those who violate the benefit sharing agreements. The whole Southern African Development Community (SADC) has woken up to the significance of indigenous knowledge as a major national resource. At the end of 2006, the Republic of Botswana has adopted new legislation on Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) which is compliant with the CBD clauses on IKS. The message is spreading in East and Central Africa.

The Rio Conventions which deal with IKS have been around since 1992 but with *hoodia* and evident climate changes, African states are showing a marked increase in protecting and working with IKS, including protecting rights and generating new legislation. This is

PC08 27/4/07 10:34

Formattato: Tipo di carattere:Corsivo

a substantially different approach to the reluctance to protect land rights or guarantee indigenous peoples involvement in the protected areas.

Africa stands at a crossroads where effective lobbying of States to create an enabling environment for the sustainable transmission of biological diversity IKS within indigenous communities can be linked to security over land and natural resources, even if this is not outright ownership but various forms of State-indigenous partnership agreements, such as the Namibian Conservancy system, or variations on the emerging Gabonese mechanisms. Following the theme in the 2002 CBD Addis Ababa Guidelines and Principles on the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, it is possible for indigenous peoples in Africa to secure the right to use natural resources to ensure sustainability of valuable knowledge. This marries conservation, human rights, cultural and economic interests in a given country.

### ***Convincing the States: Mutual Interest Arguments***

European governments and development agencies have defined their co-operation framework as being one built on human rights. Economic development cannot be sustained in the long term without also ensuring basic human rights, and if possible, to grow a culture of human decency in governance and in public. The indigenous peoples' movement has been nourished by this discourse of human decency, fundamental rights, and a contract between citizen and State.

A number of African governments do not share the same values and have limited interest in the human rights *per se*. This may be because the governments themselves are not rooted in a legitimate culture of democracy. They may be holding themselves in power through the use of force and manipulation of the political system. Or it may be that they do not have the capacity to seriously address issues of crime, corruption, and be able to keep the police and military from going beyond the bounds of decent and ethical behaviour.

The reality of the gap in values and priorities between Europe, African states and indigenous peoples means that we need to look strategically at the points of mutual interest where African elites would be willing to grant certain rights and opportunities to indigenous people, in return for some kind of *quid pro quo* or reciprocity.

An evident area of this mutual interest is where indigenous peoples' knowledge system can be drawn into the capitalist aspects of natural resources management. Hunter-gatherers have the skills to help track wild animals and assist researchers and conservationists with animal behaviour studies. Indigenous guides are used for gorilla habituation, elephant tracking, leopard behavioural research, honey badger research, and many other technical areas of co-operation. The *hoodia* case demonstrated that knowledge which may appear inconsequential may suddenly emerge as a major source of income for communities, the private sector and the State.

### ***Formalisation***

Norway and the other Nordic States are supporting the work of the Commission on the Legal Empowerment of the Poor (CLEP). CLEP is focussing on finding innovative ways to strengthen the legal situation of the poor. Undoubtedly, many poor people would

benefit from having more rights and a better-organised legal system in Africa. The chaotic bureaucracies in Africa and the arbitrary use of power and wide spread corruption are a threat to everyone's wellbeing and ability to co-operate with the State.

Formalisation, an important aspect CLEP's mandate, means that the State acknowledges the chaos and problems that its own disorganisation visits on its citizens. As a point of departure, many indigenous peoples around Africa have stated that their greatest problem is not being recognised by the State. Indigenous peoples often do not have national identification cards, they are outside governance structures and have no voice in elections or administration, their economic priorities are misunderstood or ignored in the government bureaucracy, and their value systems do not inform decisions made about their territories and economic options.

In Southern Africa, the IPACC network is emphasising the issue of formalising certain types of indigenous knowledge to generate greater recognition of the IKS as a national resource. Tracking, for example, is both a traditional skill and an employable profession. Currently, it is easier for people of European descent to get certified as there is a bias towards people with wealth and education. However, Louis Liebenberg of the Cybertracker Foundation, has demonstrated that talented traditionally-educated San trackers tend to have higher skill levels and a broader base of knowledge than some senior non-indigenous trackers. Reliable assessment of IKS, in this case tracking, helps render visible the complexity of both knowledge and skills, and makes the indigenous standards the norm for certification.

African governments are not generating assessment and certification methods for IKS. They are struggling with existing formal education delivery, let alone important reforms to merge African knowledge systems with schooling. Considering the Southern African situation, which is similar to East and Central Africa, governments are willing to let the civil society and the private sector come up with the assessment protocols and standards for certification. They still need to be lobbied to even agree that formalising of IKS is a step in the right direction.

One example of where certification and formalisation could have a transformative impact is in protected areas. Indigenous peoples in Africa struggle to be employed in National Parks, even when they evidently have higher competence in species identification, tracking, spoor recognition, animal behaviour competence and so forth. Usually the problem is that the indigenous youth do not have high school leaving diplomas. National Parks and major conservation agencies rely on standard high-school leaving certificates to establish the competence of their employees. This habit can be reversed by creating assessment standards which emphasise real knowledge and skills related to biodiversity rather than basic literacy and irrelevant school certificates. African bureaucrats have a general idea of what IKS involves, but in terms of legislation and the public service standards, they need IKS to be measurable and certifiable before they can convert this into equivalences worthy of employment.

In September 2006, IPACC co-operated with Cybertracker Foundation and WWF Namibia to run a workshop on the assessment and certification of the traditional knowledge of tracking. San trackers from three countries attended the workshop in a bush camp in Nyae Nyae Conservancy, outside Tsumkwe, Namibia. The workshop was opened by the Namibian Deputy Minister of the Environment and Tourism who emphasised the importance of local initiatives to conserve knowledge and help apply it in

protecting the environment, and creating new livelihoods through conservation and tourism. The Tsumkwe workshop concluded that San people need to have more inter-generational dialogue about knowledge transfer, and that young people need partnerships with NGOs to convert traditional knowledge into recognised qualifications to create jobs and have more of a role in managing their traditional territories. CBD and CCD with support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) are creating new opportunities for cooperation between the State, the private sector, communities and conservation agencies.

### ***Ogiek Participatory Mapping in Nessuit, Kenya***

In August 2006, the Ogiek community of Nessuit, Kenya, contracted with Environmental Research Mapping Information Services (ERMIS-Africa) and CTA to conduct a 10 day participatory mapping exercise about their culture, territory and natural resources. The Ogiek were hunters and gatherers who were experts in honey-gathering. They lived throughout the Mau Forest Escarpment. Their total population is estimated at 20 000 people. They speak a distinct Nilotic language variety.

Over the past decade, the Eastern Mau Forest area has been denuded of its indigenous forest and the economy and livelihoods of the Ogiek have been destroyed. The Ogiek have taken the government to court on several occasions to try to regain control over some of their territory.

The Ogiek community, through a series of consultations and participation of all relevant clan leaders agreed to conduct a participatory mapping exercise which would create an image of the forest and Ogiek culture as it was before the massive deforestation and the collapse of their livelihoods.

IPACC financed the participation of hunter-gatherer activists from other Ogiek areas, from the Sengwer (also called Cheranganyi) and Yiaku from Kenya and the Hadzabe from Tanzania. The activists worked with the community to build a model of their territory and have the elders code it with their own conception of geography, place names, natural resources and cultural spaces. The model was later converted into GIS electronic format to make it mobile and more useful for negotiations.

The mapping experienced was powerful in helping young people realise how complex, rich and value-infused is the knowledge system of the elders. Neighbouring peoples emphasise that the Ogiek are no longer hunter-gatherers, yet the mapping demonstrated both a memory of the details of the biodiversity but also a hunter-gatherer intellectual and value system associated with natural resources.

The indigenous activists who attended the workshop and mapping expressed the following views:

- P3DM was a useful technology because it enables indigenous hunter-gatherers to show what it is that they know about the territory and resources;
- The process was good for the community, though more attention could have been given to what would happen afterwards;

- GIS and mapping help bring indigenous peoples back into dialogue with policy makers, it makes them visible as stakeholders;
- Participatory mapping is a good way to bring elders and youth together and share traditional knowledge in a new and interesting way;
- The model remains with the community so that it stimulates further learning and can be a focal point for discussions about managing biodiversity and reforestation.

On reflection, all of the participating indigenous peoples felt that P3DM would be useful advocacy tool for them in their respective situations. CTA is cooperating with IPACC to conduct three further exercises around Africa. CTA is building the capacity of African GIS agencies to conduct participatory mapping work.

### ***San Regional Workshop on the Assessment, Certification and Promotion of Traditional Knowledge of Tracking and related knowledge of biodiversity – Tsumkwe, Namibia***

IPACC worked with regional San organisations and traditional trackers to organise a week long advocacy training workshop on the assessment and certification of traditional knowledge of tracking.

The workshop was an element in the IPACC plan to help the regional indigenous peoples' organisations focus on how traditional knowledge can be formally recognised and used as a resource in both livelihoods and inter-generational transmission of knowledge.

The workshop was designed in consultation with regional San leaders and in cooperation with the major San organisations of the region, Trust for Okavango Culture and Development Initiative (TOCADI), Kuru Family of Organisations, Komku, WIMSA, SA San Council, !Xun and Khwe Councils, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC - Namibia), Letloa and the South African San Institute. Logistical support was provided by WWF Namibia and Ms Stacy Main working for Mount Burgess Mining.

San participated in the workshop from the following communities:

- !Kung from Omaheke, Namibia
- !Xun from Platfontein, South Africa
- ‡Khomani from Andriesvale, South Africa
- Hai||om from Outjo area, Namibia
- Ju|'hoansi from Tsumkwe East and Tsumkwe West areas
- Khwe from Platfontein, South Africa
- Khwe from Rundu / Caprivi, Namibia
- Khwe from Shakawe, Botswana
- Naro from D'Kar, Botswana

The workshop took place from 25 – 29 September 2006 in the Klein Dobe camp, north of Tsumkwe, Namibia. Tsumkwe is the main town of the Nyae Nyae Conservancy, the first community based Conservancy in Namibia and home to the Ju|'hoansi people, the largest San community in Southern Africa.

The Deputy Minister of the Environment and Tourism for Namibia, the Honourable Leon Jooste, came to the remote location at Klein Dobe in the Nyae Nyae Conservancy to open the event. The meeting was also attended by the Tsumkwe East Councillor, Mr Kxao Moses †Oma, previous manager of Nyae Nyae Conservancy and previous Chairperson of the WIMSA Board.

Practical components of the workshop included going out into bush sites and learning how tracks are graded for difficulty of identification. Louis Liebenberg, of the Cybertracker Foundation, explained that it takes up to 10 days to do a high level tracking assessment and the maximum team of people is eight. It sometimes takes a full day to track animals like lions and identify their precise details (number, sex, age, health) without putting the tracking team at risk.

The following observations were made by participants:

- IKS is dying out as San people lose their lands and young people have to go away to school;
- IKS of tracking comes from the experience of hunting and gathering;
- Women are sometimes better trackers as they pay attention to small animal tracks like birds and insects;
- There is a lot of employment available for good trackers, but there are very few programmes for training people from poor communities. Only one community has organised their own training programme with certification;
- South Africa has the best system of assessment and accreditation but it is still not designed to facilitate certification based on indigenous skills and actual competence;
- Namibia is likely to adopt national qualification standards for trackers and would be open to connecting these to IKS based competences and skills.

It was noted that even though Botswana generally does not value cultural diversity, there is a change of attitude at a high level in the political system. This is reflected in the new interest by government in Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) and new attention to wild plant pharmaceutical opportunities. San trackers should organise assessment and certification standards and training capacity while lobbying the government to take IKS into consideration when setting national qualification standards.

### ***Conclusion: facilitating intercultural dialogue***

Hunter-gatherer peoples have been rendered vulnerable due environmental changes and political marginalisation. Unsustainable expansion of agriculture into forests and arid lands has destroyed biodiversity necessary for hunter-gatherers and now commercial extraction of natural resources. Colonialism structurally marginalised hunter-gatherers by concentrating on integrating food producing peoples into the education system, modern economy and State bureaucracy. Today, the State is overtly or passively contributing to the reduction of biodiversity and consequently cultural diversity.

Without concerted interventions and a paradigm shift, we can predict that hunter-gatherer economies will all eventually collapse and the sophisticated knowledge held by the elders of these communities will die out with them. It is clearly not in the interest of the planet to eradicate IKS that was born in biodiverse ecosystems and would be a vital

resource in monitoring and conserving natural resources. Yet, it is not clear who will create the platforms to change the perceptions and relations between States and hunter-gatherer peoples, and between conservation agencies and indigenous peoples.

The first UN International Decade on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples placed most of its emphasis on human and civil rights of indigenous peoples. Though human rights is an important and ongoing process, it needs to be recognised that this topic is not of much interest to the powerful consumers of resources in Africa.

Globalisation, it can be argued, weakens the States ability to protect its citizenry from abuses by industries, particularly in remote rural areas and with endemic corruption. Hunter-gatherers are small minorities that are not usually even acknowledged as distinct people within the country. They have no political voice, and they sit typically in fragile ecological systems. Focussing purely on human rights claims against the state is not necessarily going to be effective in changing the current trend of land degradation, displacement, poverty and cultural disintegration.

There are other international instruments which provide opportunities for indigenous peoples to connect with the multilateral system, and use this at home to strengthen new types of partnerships and visibility. Policies, standards and mechanisms that govern the use of natural resources and protected areas can also provide new hope and opportunities for indigenous peoples. They also hold new threats. Commoditisation and privatisation of land threatens African holistic concepts of collective natural resource management. Indigenous peoples should be able to rely on alliances with African National Parks, but thus far environmentalists have been slow to act on this partnership. There is, arguably, a conflict of paradigms in the communication between indigenous peoples and conservationists.

More attention to intercultural dialogue between indigenous peoples, conservationists, UN agencies and government officials could help focus attention on the strong mutual interest that is present when considering the sustainable management of biological diversity. The non-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian nature of hunter-gatherer and even post-hunter-gatherer societies often makes it difficult for policy makers, conservationists and civil servants to understand the entry points for consultation with indigenous communities, and how knowledge systems are maintained, transmitted and owned.

UN agencies are uniquely placed to bring indigenous peoples from the physical and conceptual periphery of the world to the centre stage of action for keeping the planet intact. Indigenous peoples bring knowledge, but they also bring a value system and an equilibrium oriented paradigm for sustainable development that needs to be considered side-by-side with globalist models of growth and trade-centric development. ICTs create a technical interface where IKS can be expressed as scientific knowledge and ethical wisdom, as well as data on biodiversity. ICTs become a site of intercultural dialogue between indigenous hunter-gatherers, bureaucrats within the State, and conservation agencies.

The combination of programming efforts from UNDP, CBD, UNEP, IFAD, FAO, UNESCO and other UN agencies could play a major role in creating the type of technically facilitated intercultural dialogue necessary to encourage African states to value IKS and give more attention to local and indigenous peoples' cultures and strategies for sustainability. The growing success of the *hoodia gordonii* experience in

Southern Africa is a strong incentive for states to rethink the link between indigenous knowledge and a viable economic future for Africa.

Pilot projects which explore how tacit and intangible knowledge can be surfaced and made visible through technology are one way of creating platforms for greater intercultural dialogue. The other theme to be explored is the formalisation, assessment and accreditation of IKS to make it measurable and sufficient to secure employment and status as 'experts'. The *quid pro quo* making indigenous IKS more accessible to the State and other external actors is that states are obliged to recognise that indigenous peoples are important partners, as well as rights-holders and that new forms of tenure (hybridised from traditional African systems) are articulated to ensure indigenous peoples natural resource security in perpetuity. Economies will change, biodiversity will change – but reinforcing local and indigenous custodianship will help make old knowledge valuable and accessible for future generations.

If governments can accept that African traditional knowledge systems are a major resource for dealing with environmental threats and creating sustainable livelihoods, then it is a natural progression to recognising that knowledge systems are themselves rooted in ecosystems and livelihoods. The right of indigenous peoples to survive is part of the equation of sustainably using cultural diversity and biodiversity.

As Rachel Olson, a First Nations Canadian geographer, noted in a UNESCO workshop on participatory and cultural mapping in November 2006: First Nations Canadians were once tricked out of their land by not having the same type of literacy as the European colonisers. For First Nations Canadians today, competence in GIS is part of being indigenous, part of their way to manage their own knowledge and set the facts straight when dealing with government. Through technology, aboriginal Canadians are empowered to link their IKS with rights and natural resource management systems.

**IPACC hereby recommends** that the 6<sup>th</sup> session of the UNPFII ask the United Nations' inter-agency support group and relevant UN agencies to consider how they can better integrate issues of IKS, with intercultural dialogue, ICTs, scientific research and capacity building for monitoring biodiversity, desertification and climate change. The UN agencies should think strategically about how to rationalise and make more coherent their various programmes in Africa to create a mutually supportive policy climate, and to be catalysts in helping African governments recognise and work with IKS as a national resource. This approach should be undertaken with full respect for the dignity and rights of indigenous peoples and respect for the sovereignty of African states.

**IPACC recommends** an initial working group on IKS, ICTs and biological diversity should include UNESCO, UNEP, UNDP, ILO, FAO, IFAD, UNCBD, UNCCD and the World Bank.

#### **BOX ON THE BACK PAGE**

Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee (IPACC) is a network of 150 indigenous peoples' organisations in twenty African countries. IPACC was formed by the African caucus at the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations during the First UN International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples. In 1997, the IPACC General

29/4/07 17:07

Formattato: Evidenziato

Assembly adopted its first constitution and in 1998 the General Assembly approved a policy recommendation to give special attention to the situation of hunter-gatherers in Africa. IPACC members elect an 18 member Executive Committee which carries out a mandate to represent African indigenous peoples and engage in projects that increase the visibility of indigenous peoples in policy processes and addresses issues of marginalisation and poverty.

Funding for the projects described in this report were provided by:

Finnish Embassy, Cape Town, South Africa  
Centre for Agricultural Technical Cooperation with Rural Areas (ACP – EU)  
Norwegian Church Aid  
Bread for the World (DE)  
Miserior (DE)

IPACC Secretariat  
PO Box 106 Newlands 7725  
Cape Town, South Africa

[www.ipacc.org.za](http://www.ipacc.org.za)  
[ipacc@iafrica.com](mailto:ipacc@iafrica.com)

Tel: +27 21 674 3260 / 61