

PROJECT ACCESS

GLOBAL CAPACITY BUILDING
FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

2005



PROJECT ACCESS, a cooperative effort of Tribal Link Foundation and Land is Life, supports indigenous peoples' participation in international meetings and conferences where decisions are being made that affect their rights, cultures and livelihoods. Initially, the project is placing a special emphasis on funding indigenous peoples to attend the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, May 16-27, 2005.

PROJECT ACCESS is a collaboration between Tribal Link Foundation and Land is Life

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FALL 2005

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SUMMARY

PROJECT ACCESS was able to provide funding for 16 indigenous peoples' representatives to attend two full weeks of the 4th session of the Permanent Forum. Also, in order for the representatives to be able to participate more effectively at the Forum, we organized a capacity building workshop before the Forum – one in English and one in Spanish.

Each of the representatives sponsored by Project Access was also provided individual support by the project coordinators, steering committee members and instructors. We organized media interviews, arranged meetings with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other UN bodies, and also assisted in writing interventions, and lobbying.

Trainings were led by some of the world's most experienced indigenous rights experts, and were geared towards giving participants practical knowledge and skills that could be put to use immediately to forward their peoples' struggles. Special emphasis was given to understanding and participating effectively in the Permanent Forum.

Participants and trainers unanimously agreed that the trainings were effective and they were eager to work with Project Access to organize regional trainings and expand upon the Permanent Forum trainings.

BACKGROUND

At the first session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in May of 2002, Land is Life and Tribal Link brought together a group of indigenous leaders to discuss the urgent need to strengthen the ability of indigenous peoples to participate effectively in international meetings, conferences and policy-making processes that affect their rights, cultures, health, lands and/or sovereignty. A Steering Committee, made up of indigenous representatives from around the world was formed, and Project Access was created. The Steering Committee guides the work of the project and consults with indigenous communities and organizations from different regions of the world to ensure that there is broad based participation in the project's activities, and that the project most effectively addresses the needs of indigenous communities.



PROJECT ACCESS FUNDING RECIPIENTS

AFRICA

Sinafasi Makelo (Mbuti), DRC
Pacifique Mukumba-Isumisho (Mbuti), DRC
Mary Simat (Maasai), Kenya

ASIA

Umakanta Meitei (Meitei), India
Anna Pinto, India

CENTRAL AMERICA

Marcelino Diaz de Jesus (Nahua), Mexico
Onel Masardule (Kuna), Panama

THE CARIBBEAN

Naniki Reyes Ocasio (Taino), Puerto Rico

THE PACIFIC

Viktor Kaisiepo, West Papua
Yoab Syatfle, West Papua

SOUTH AMERICA

Tomas Alarcón (Aymara), Peru
Justa Cabrera de Flores (Guarani), Bolivia
Moi Enomenga (Huaorani), Ecuador
Marcos Terena (Terena), Brazil
Felipe Ushigua (Zapara), Ecuador
Gloria Ushigua (Zapara), Ecuador



PROJECT ACCESS · CAPACITY BUILDING

TRAINING SESSION, MAY 11 -13

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THEIR ROLE IN THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ARENA

Classes were given on the following themes:

- ✦ The UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations
- ✦ The UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- ✦ Indigenous Rights and International Labour Organization Convention 169
- ✦ Protection of Indigenous Knowledge
- ✦ The Conventions on Biological Diversity and Climate Change
- ✦ The UN System and Indigenous Peoples
- ✦ World Bank and Indigenous Peoples
- ✦ The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

FILING HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLAINTS IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Participants learned:

- ✦ History and structure of the UN Human Rights system
- ✦ Filing complaints using Procedure 1503
- ✦ Human Rights Conventions and Committees
- ✦ How to Monitor Compliance with Conventions
- ✦ Working to Ensure Compliance with Conventions

Special emphasis was placed on preparing for effective participation in the upcoming meeting of the Permanent Forum, with practice in elaborating interventions and recommendations before the Forum, lobbying Forum members, and taking advantage of their time at the UN by meeting with government representatives, UN programmes, funds and agencies, foundations and media. Additionally, the UN library gave a special training on how to utilize the UN website. The instructors for this training were Tomas Alarcón and Joshua Cooper. This training was done in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

OPENS FOURTH SESSION WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In Efforts to Achieve Goals, Indigenous People Must Not Be Forgotten, Discriminated Against or Marginalized

Some 1,500 indigenous leaders, activists and representatives gathered at UN Headquarters for this year's Forum (May 16-27, 2005). The special focus of the Forum was the Millennium Development Goals of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, and achieving universal primary education. The Forum's ultimate aim is to draw up recommendations for the United Nations system, based on discussion in its mandated areas of economic and social development, environment, health, human rights, culture and education.

Addressing the Millennium Goal on poverty, Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana), Acting President of the General Assembly, stressed that the poverty faced by millions of indigenous people must be eradicated if the Millennium Goals were to be achieved. Emphasizing the need to consider development models needed by indigenous people, she said too many indigenous groups faced threats to their land, natural resources, identities and even existence. Indigenous perspectives should be integrated into the Millennium Goals process, using local and national priorities for their implementation and evaluation.



During the discussions on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, several speakers highlighted the link between poverty and human rights, noting that those born into poverty remained where they were unless relevant rights were implemented. Pointing to studies showing that extreme poverty impacted disproportionately on indigenous people, Louise Arbour, High Commissioner for Human Rights emphasized that such groups had a right to participate fully in development efforts. Poverty reduction programmes should not lead to injustices against indigenous peoples, such as depriving them of their lands or traditional means of existence.

Underscoring the importance of community involvement in reducing poverty, Jeffrey Sachs, United Nations Millennium Project Director and Adviser to the Secretary-General, stressed the importance of considering the specific conditions of each community. Comparing the Forum's goals to those of the Millennium Project, he said they both focused on local empowerment and active community participation in their own futures.

In its concluding session, the Permanent Forum decided that next year's Forum would once again be held at UN Headquarters for 15-26 May, 2006. The special theme would be the Millennium Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples: Redefining the Goals. Goals 3 to 8 will be addressed through indigenous approaches to cultural diversity, traditional knowledge and human rights; this applies equally to Millennium Development Goals country reports and poverty reduction strategy papers.

BACKGROUND

ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Millennium Development Goals summarize the development goals agreed on at international conferences and world summits during the 1990s. At the end of the last century, world leaders distilled the key goals and targets in the Millennium Declaration (September 2000). The Declaration reaffirms universal values of human rights, equality, mutual respect and shared responsibility for the conditions of all peoples and seeks to redress globalization's hugely unequal benefits and governments' have committed themselves to fulfilling their obligations by 2015.

Emanating from the Millennium Declaration, the eight Millennium Development Goals bind countries to do more and join forces in the fight against poverty, illiteracy, hunger, lack of education, gender inequality, child and maternal mortality, disease and environmental degradation. The eighth goal, reaffirmed in Monterrey and Johannesburg, calls on rich countries to relieve debt, increase aid and give poor countries fair access to their markets and their technology. The Millennium Development Goals are a test of political will to build stronger partnerships. Developing countries have the responsibility to undertake policy reforms and strengthen governance to liberate the creative energies of their people. But they cannot reach the Goals on their own without new aid commitments, equitable trading rules and debt relief. The Goals offer the world a means to accelerate the pace of development and to measure results.

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Millennium Development Goals are an ambitious agenda for reducing poverty and improving lives by the year 2015.

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

BACKGROUND

THE UN PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

The UN, governments, international organizations, civil society groups, private businesses and, above all, indigenous peoples themselves, can form partnerships to promote development, human rights and peace. These partnerships will only work, however, if there is genuine participation of indigenous peoples in the decisions that affect them – and if there is genuine sensitivity towards their cultures.”

– Kofi Annan, UN SECRETARY GENERAL

Indigenous peoples began asking the United Nations to set up a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in the late 1980's. For indigenous peoples, participation in the United Nations was very limited, and the UN system was not addressing their real life needs and concerns. They proposed the establishment of a new body that would offer all indigenous peoples of the world a space to participate in the UN system and would focus on the global issues that are of concern to their communities.

In April 2000, the Commission on Human Rights adopted a resolution to establish the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and three months later the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) endorsed the resolution, and created the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues as a high level advisory body to ECOSOC. The first meeting of the Forum was held in 2002.

The Forum is composed of sixteen members, eight of whom are nominated by indigenous peoples and eight nominated by governments. Governments may nominate indigenous experts if they choose, and some have done so.

Their mandate is to:

- † Provide expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the Council, as well as to programmes, funds and agencies of the United Nations through the Council
- † Raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues within the UN system
- † Prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues

The Forum holds public sessions for two weeks every year, where the Forum members receive the testimony, requests and recommendations of indigenous peoples. The work of the Permanent Forum is divided into the following themes:

- Economic and Social Development
- Culture
- The Environment
- Education
- Health
- Human Rights

This new UN body creates a unique opportunity for indigenous peoples to monitor and influence the work of the UN, and creates a space, for two weeks every year, where indigenous peoples can voice their concerns about issues that are not being addressed by States or the international community. Members of the Forum, as well as the Secretariat, work throughout the year to ensure that the recommendations of the Forum are enacted and to expand upon important dialogues that were initiated during the Forum.

The establishment of the Permanent Forum represents an historic gain for indigenous peoples around the world, and they are working hard to ensure that its work is relevant, productive and contributes to making real and positive change.

PROJECT ACCESS · STEERING COMMITTEE



ROBERTO MUCARO BORRERO is a long-time Boriken Taino community activist, artist and historian. He currently serves as the President and Chairman of the United Confederation of Taino People's U.S. Regional Coordinating Office. Roberto has over 15 years' experience within the United Nations system, and is the Chairman of the United Nations NGO Committee on the UN International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples.



VIKTOR KAISIEPO is Biak from West Papua. He lives in exile in The Netherlands. Viktor is a founding member of the Papua Presidium Council, which represents over 1 million indigenous West Papuans in their non-violent struggle for self-determination. Viktor has been representing the indigenous peoples of West Papua at the United Nations for over twenty years. He is also Chairperson of the World Bank's Fund for Indigenous Peoples.



MIRIAN MASAQUIZA is a Kichwa from the community of Salasaca in Ecuador. As a teenager, Mirian became a leader of the indigenous youth movement in Ecuador. She received a fellowship to work at the peaceful protests. She presently works for the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.



ONEL MASARDULE is a representative of the Kuna people of Panama. He is Coordinator of the Foundation for the Promotion of Indigenous Knowledge, and also is Director of the Institute for the Holistic Development of Kuna Yala, and a representative of the Coalition of Indigenous Peoples of Meso-America.



ANNA PINTO represents the Center for Organization and Research on the Environment. Her work's focus is the rights of indigenous children and women. Anna has brought the issues that concern indigenous children before the United Nations General Assembly, and is working to ensure that the UN Children's Fund understands the situation of indigenous children around the world, and to ensure that their work effectively addresses children's issues.



JOHN GORDON SCOTT is a descendant of the Iningai people – the Aboriginal people who traditionally lived in central Queensland, Australia. Throughout the 1980s and early 90s, he worked as a teacher and an Aboriginal education advisor in Australia. In the 1990's, John worked with the Aboriginal Social Justice Commissioner, Mick Dodson, on indigenous legal education programmes. In 2000, John worked with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (in Geneva) within the Indigenous and Minorities Team. He then held another UN position in New York focusing on establishing the UN Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Presently, John is Policy Officer for Traditional Knowledge at the UN Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity, which he commenced in October 2004.



MARCOS TERENA is of the Terena people from the Pantanal region in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. He founded the first indigenous peoples rights movement in Brazil, the Union of Indigenous Nations, in 1977. In 1992 he organized the historic World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territories, Environment and Development. Marcos is a founding member of the Inter-Tribal Committee, Land is Life, the International Alliance of Indigenous-Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests and the Brazilian Indigenous Institute on Intellectual Property.

PROJECT ACCESS • INSTRUCTORS



TOMAS ALARCÓN is Aymara from the Andes in Peru. He is a lawyer, and the Director of CAPAJ, an organization that works for the rights of the Aymara people in Peru and Bolivia. Tomas has been participating in United Nations conferences and meetings for over twenty years. He has special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and is Chair of the meetings of the UN Experts on the Administration of Justice and Indigenous Peoples. Tomas teaches indigenous peoples rights at the International Training Center for Indigenous Peoples in Nuuk, Greenland.



JOSHUA COOPER is a professor of Human Rights Education at the University of Hawaii and the Director of the Hawaii Institute for Human Rights. Joshua teaches Human Rights Workshops around the world and works closely with many indigenous peoples organizations. He is the Chair of Amnesty International's Working Group on Indigenous Peoples.

PROJECT ACCESS • COORDINATORS

Tribal Link Foundation and Land is Life have been working together on developing this project since 2002. Since beginning, we have assisted indigenous peoples' representatives to participate at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (and its preparatory meetings), United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Conference of the Parties to the RAMSAR Wetlands Convention, meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other important international fora.



BRIAN KEANE, Coordinator

LAND IS LIFE is a coalition of indigenous communities and their representative organizations from around the world that was founded at the historic World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territories, Environment and Development (1992). Land is Life works for the recognition of indigenous peoples' human, economic, social, cultural and territorial rights.



PAMELA KRAFT, Director

TRIBAL LINK FOUNDATION, INC. is a communications network linking indigenous peoples to information, media, resources and relevant networks, with a special focus on the United Nations system. Tribal Link provides outreach to the public regarding indigenous peoples and their issues, emphasizing the significance of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

PROJECT ACCESS · PARTICIPANTS

AFRICA



SINAFASI MAKELO and PACIFIQUE MUKUMBA-ISUMISHO are of the Mbuti people that live in the forests of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Mbuti are commonly referred to as Pygmies, and they have suffered a long history of human rights abuses. Fighting in the DRC over control of resources has had a devastating effect on the Mbuti. Sinafasi and Pacifique, along with a coalition of communities, are leading the struggle to get the Mbuti a space in the peace process, and to get Mbuti rights recognized and Mbuti lands demarcated as part of the new DRC.



MARY SIMAT is Maasai from the Narok District in Kenya. Mary is the Chairwoman of Maasai Women for Education and Economic Development, which works for the rights of Maasai women and girls. Mary is also a member of the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC), a cooperative network of indigenous peoples from the entire continent.

ASIA



UMAKANTA MEITEI is General Secretary of the Threatened Indigenous Peoples Society, an indigenous organization in Manipur, India that documents human rights abuses, works to bring the perpetrators to justice and carries out human rights awareness campaigns throughout Manipur. Umakanta is also the spokesperson of Apunba Lup, a coalition of 34 human rights organizations.

THE CARIBBEAN



NANIKI REYES OCASIO is a grandmother, a Taíno tradition bearer and community leader from Puerto Rico. Naniki has a background in law and is a respected activist internationally. She has consistently participated in the United Nations and Organization of American States systems promoting indigenous rights for Caribbean and other aboriginal peoples. Naniki is the founder of the Caney Quinto Mundo (5th World Learning Center), which includes a 150 acre organic farm.

THE PACIFIC



YOAB SYATFLE is from Sarong, West Papua. He is a member of the Papua Traditional Council, which represents over 1 million indigenous West Papuans in their non-violent struggle to protect their rights and practice self-determination.

PROJECT ACCESS · PARTICIPANTS CONTINUED

SOUTH AMERICA



JUSTA CABRERA DE FLORES is a leader of the Guarani people of Bolivia. She is a traditional midwife, and is working on community health, fair trade, environmental protection and recognition of collective rights to land, resources and knowledge.



MOI ENOMENGA represents the Huaorani people of Ecuador. Moi is a leader in the struggle to protect Huaorani rights in relation to oil development that is taking place on their ancestral homelands. Moi founded the first Huaorani representative organization. He is well known because of Joe Kane's book "Savages".



FELIPE USHIGUA and GLORIA USHIGUA are leaders of the Zapara people who live in Ecuador and Peru. Until a few years ago, the Zapara were thought to have been extinct. Starting with the rubber boom in the early nineteenth century, the Zapara have experienced a history of slavery, massacres and sickness that has reduced their population from 20,000 to 350 (approximately 200 in Ecuador and 150 in Peru). The Zapara are now fighting to preserve their culture, language and traditional knowledge, and to have their lands legalized and demarcated. Their lands and cultures are currently threatened by oil development.

CENTRAL AMERICA



MARCELINO DIAZ DE JESUS is a Nahua community leader from the state of Guerrero, Mexico. Marcelino has represented his people at the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and other international fora. Marcelino has also been a leader in Mexico at the national level. He was the first indigenous person elected to the Mexican Congress, and also participated in the National Indigenous Congress. Marcelino was a leader in the successful struggle to stop construction of the San Juan Tetelcingo Dam, which would have destroyed two dozen communities and forced the relocation of 40,000 people.

THANK YOU TO AVEDA CORPORATION

On behalf of the 16 indigenous representatives Aveda sponsored to attend the 2005 session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (May 16-27), we wish to express our gratitude for your generosity and ongoing commitment to strengthening the participation of indigenous peoples in the international arena, where they can influence policy and be involved in all decisions that affect them. These indigenous peoples have found a true extended family at the Aveda Corporation.



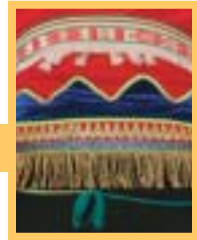
INDIGENOUS VOICES

We have highlighted the stories of a few of the indigenous representatives Project Access funded to attend the Permanent Forum. The following stories are true testimonies of the power of participation. By joining together, the voices of the world's indigenous peoples are not only being heard, but are also inspiring the United Nations to work in partnership with them on addressing issues of concern. Their stories encourage us to do all that we can to support them at strategic moments in their efforts to preserve their communities and cultures.



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FROM AFRICA

THE POWER OF PARTICIPATION

PACIFIQUE MUKUMBA-ISUMBISHO (pictured right)

SINAFASI MAKELO (pictured left)

Mbuti Pygmy

Ituri Region

Democratic Republic of Congo



“This is nothing more, nothing less, than a crime against humanity”

–Sinafasi Makelo

The Mbuti are commonly referred to as Pygmies, and have endured a long history of human rights abuses. Fighting in the DRC over control of resources has had a devastating affect on them. They have been killed, taken into slavery, and even cannibalized by armed factions who believe that eating the Mbuti will give them supernatural powers. Sinafasi, of the Support Action for the Protection of the Rights of Minorities in Central Africa, DRC and Pacifique, of the Center for Accompaniment of the Indigenous Pygmies and Minority Vulnerables of the Democratic Republic of Congo are members of a broad coalition of Mbuti organizations and communities that have been leading the struggle to get the Mbuti a space in the new and tenuous DRC peace process. They believe that if their people are going to survive they must get their rights recognized and their lands demarcated as part of the new DRC.

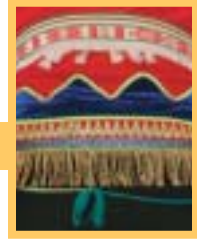
During 2003, aid workers reported finding the bodies of more than 200 people killed on the streets of the provincial capital Bunia, including women and children. Some of them were decapitated and the hearts, livers and lungs were missing in others. Rival factions engaged in a bloody civil war and were backed by neighboring states of Uganda and Rwanda. The International Rescue Committee estimates, close to 3 million people lost their lives to war, starvation and disease in the country. Pacifique explains that numerous countries have been involved in the civil war, all of them vying for a piece of the DRC’s natural resources. At one stage six African nations had troops in the Congo, plundering the country’s resources of diamonds, gold and oil and lending support to rival factions. Sinafasi said “Military tools today include rape, live burial and cannibalism, all aimed at extermination so that the perpetrators can have access to minerals and timber.”

continues ➤

Sinafasi and Pacifique's inclusion in the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and other international fora has led to many opportunities and accomplishments:

- + Have brought their cause to DRC government officials including the DRC's Ambassador to the United Nations. As a result they asked them to hand in to the National Assembly a project of laws about the problems of the indigenous peoples that they would follow up at the National Assembly of Congo. (this was the first time a delegation of Mbuti met directly with a delegation of the Congo government during a session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.
- + Met with representatives of United Nations Programmes and Agencies, NGOs, and others to discuss the peace process and propose steps that the new DRC government should take towards recognizing their rights and stop the atrocities against their people.
- + Developed partnerships and projects with the European Union and the International Labour Organization.
- + Collected evidence and testimony that has been presented to the International Criminal Court in the Hague, where crimes committed during the DRC conflict will be the first case heard by the Court.
- + Met with World Bank officials to discuss the need for funding from the World Bank to the DRC to be used in a way that recognizes and respects the Mbuti's rights, and that funding should also be provided for the Mbuti communities directly for health care, education, and land demarcation.
- + Secured funding for and attended The World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, the Nineth Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Montreal, Canada; the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the Fourth Session of the United Nation Forum on Forests in Geneva Switzerland, and the Third World Congress of the IUCN in Bangkok, Thailand.
- + Sinafasi participated in a UN press conference which generated a great deal of coverage internationally, including articles by the BBC, CNN, the London Times, and others. He also did individual interviews with UN Radio, Reuters, France International Radio and Pacifica Radio's Democracy Now, which is the most distributed commercial-free radio show in the United States.
- + Sinafasi had a briefing with the then Chair of the Permanent Forum, Ole Henrik Magga on the situation in the DRC. He was able to use this information in his presentation to the President of the Security Council; soon after this meeting, the Security Council made a decision to send additional peacekeepers to the DRC.
- + After they arrived back to their community they held sessions on restitutions as well as included reports and books from the Permanent Forum in a local library.

Since its inception in 2002, each year, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is attended by over 1200 delegates - representatives from indigenous organizations, NGOs, governments, UN agencies and the media. It was an ideal venue for Pacifique and Sinafasi to bring worldwide attention to the atrocities that are being committed against the Mbuti who are struggling for their human rights, political autonomy and territorial integrity. Their remarkable outcomes say it all.



FROM AFRICA

THE POWER OF PARTICIPATION

MARY SIMAT

Maasai

Narok District in Kenya



“Indigenous women around the world, from both traditional and non-traditional societies, agree that one of their greatest concerns is the negative impact of their exclusion from decision-making processes, whether involving local, governmental, intergovernmental or civil society institutions. Indigenous women have an important contribution to make at all levels of negotiation and planning having to do with families and communities – in peacetime and in times of conflict. Their inclusion usually supports better, more environmentally sustainable outcomes that preserve the health of their communities as well as their cultural identities.”

– Mary Simat

Mary is the Chairperson of Massai Women for Education and Economic Development (MAWEED) which works for the rights of Maasai women and girls. She is also a member of the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC), a cooperative network of indigenous peoples from the entire continent.

Mary’s inclusion in the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and other international fora has lead to many opportunities and ;accomplishments -

PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES 3RD SESSION • MAY 10–21, 2004

- + The theme of the 3rd session was women’s issues. This gave Mary the opportunity to bring up issues and read interventions on behalf of the indigenous women of Kenya. She stated “for me the PF II was very useful, for one it gave me the opportunity to make interventions, share experiences and challenges with other indigenous brothers and sisters and also to give me the confidence to continue because I realized that I am not alone and where there is a will there is a way.”
- + She helped to initiate a caucus of African women at the Forum, including organizing a regional meeting beforehand.
- + The 3rd session of the Permanent Forum created an opportunity for Mary to have a successful fundraiser for MAWEED.

continues ➤

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW) · MARCH 8–15, 2005

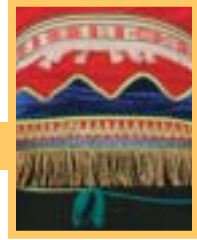
- + Raised issues affecting the Maasai women and children including violence against Maasai women i.e. wife beating, rape, HIV/AIDS, Female Genital Mutilation.
- + Participated in the African Women's Caucus
- + As a result of attending the CSW, MAWEED is now a member of a recently formed network called The Women's Agenda, whose main activities are to follow up on the Beijing Platform of Action and to lobby the Government of Kenya to implement the recommendations of this Platform. After the CSW Mary helped to organize a meeting with the Minister of Gender as well as organize a briefing for women back home on the CSW. As an outcome of these meetings there was a press statement that was issued to all the major media houses in Kenya.
- + Inspired by the CSW, Mary made appointments with Kenya's League of Women Voters, FEMNET, and Education Center for Women in Development. Most of which have promised to begin programs with MAWEED.

PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES 4TH SESSION, MAY 16 – 22, 2005

- + By attending the Permanent Forum Mary said: "It has given me the strength and courage to speak courageously at the local level. I have led big demonstrations against the government back home and I have been able to do that because of the capacity I have derived from attending this kind of forum."
- + Mary was elected as the Chair of the African Caucus at the Permanent Forum.

DIRECTLY AFTER ATTENDING THE PERMANENT FORUM:

- + As one of the sponsoring organizations of the Community Commons, Tribal Link invited Mary to participate in this important conference from 16–18 June at Fordham University in New York. This was a very important initiative launched by UNDP's Equator Initiative, Fordham University, and a number of other sponsors. The Community Commons was a global meeting of grassroots and community groups that came together to work on poverty and sustainable development. The event provided a strategic opportunity for local people from around the world to voice their concerns, hopes and perspectives on the state of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the aspirations of the Millennium Declaration. The outputs of the meeting included a set of recommendations for progress towards the MDGs, and will now serve as important inputs to the Civil Society Hearings process (23-24 June) of the Millennium Review Summit. A workshop will be held in Kenya soon as a follow up of the one above.
- + Directly after the meeting at Fordham University, Mary traveled to the Hague to attend a General Assembly meeting of UNPO-UN made up of representatives of Nations Peoples. During this meeting, Mary was elected Vice Chair of UNPO.
- + Mary recently was given a grant by the World Bank for MAWEED to develop an HIV/AIDS project, making her one of the first beneficiaries of the Bank's new global grants program for indigenous peoples.
- + With all of Mary's international experience, she now has the courage and confidence to be the first Massai woman to run for Parliament in the history of the country.



FROM SOUTH AMERICA

PROJECT ACCESS TRAINER

TOMAS ALARCÓN

Aymara

Peru



Tomas Alarcón is Aymara, from the Andes in Peru. A lawyer by training, he is also Director of CAPAJ (the Justice Commission for the Self-Development of the First Nations of the Andes), an organization that champions the rights of the Aymara of Peru and Bolivia. Tomas has been participating in United Nations and other international agency conferences and meetings for over twenty years. CAPAJ has special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and Tomas is Chair of the meetings of the UN Experts on the Administration of Justice and Indigenous Peoples. Tomas is also a professor of indigenous and human rights at the International Training Center for Indigenous Peoples in Nuuk, Greenland. The training center holds seminars and courses in several disciplines and languages to support the empowerment of indigenous leaders.

With 28 years of expertise in matters of human and indigenous rights, Tomas was invited by Land is Life and Tribal Link to conduct a 3-day, intensive training seminar for their sponsored participants. The goal of the training was to enable the participants to make better use of attending the Permanent Forum. He developed a curriculum that detailed the following four subjects based on international standards:

- Exposition of the United Nations organizational system including the functions and goals of the several agencies and commissions linked to the UN;
- Elucidation of the history and status of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, its goals and functions and how it works;
- Overview of the rights of indigenous peoples based on international law and case studies;
- The Millennium Development Goals and how the agenda of indigenous peoples fits into the overall MDG scheme

To complement the syllabus, Tomas also put together a comprehensive manual with detailed documentation to support the curriculum.

Tomas used Spanish as a “bridge language” to conduct the trainings even though this year’s group represented 8-10 languages and for most participants, Spanish is a second language. His expertise in teaching and training indigenous populations also enabled him to overcome the barrier of illiteracy amongst some of his students. As an Aymara himself, he is skilled in using indigenous world views to make the material come alive for participants with traditional backgrounds. “Each participant,” explains Tomas, “brings to the training issues of particular

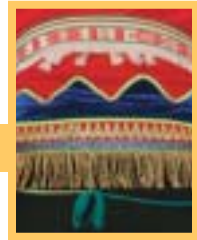
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concern to his or her own peoples. We use the issues as case studies and continual examples during the training, so as to render the regulatory, legal and theoretical material practical for their use.” For 2005, the class also conducted somewhat of a “field trip” to the offices of the World Bank, where they learned more about the functions and resources available there.

This year, it appeared to Tomas that most of the participants had concerns with respect to transnational (corporate) exploitation of tribal lands, and the impact of “extraction” industries on indigenous territories. Another general theme appeared to be the forced movement or relocation of indigenous peoples. He used these problems regularly in working through examples of the rights, resources and methods available to the participants in defending their causes.

Tomas believes that his students valued the trainings and were particularly appreciative of the technique of merging the theoretical and practical, using their own issues as examples. He says he is confident that trainings are effective when the questions that come from the participants are germane and particularly when they refer to material presented in earlier sessions.

This year participants requested more training in human rights defense, more detail with respect to defending the environment, and much more specific training with respect to how to put complaints and reports before international organizations that could be of assistance. For his own part, he believes that the trainings should become more regular and somewhat “permanent.” Tomas believes his students would benefit from some sort of forum where they could regularly interact with each other or with him on specific subjects, perhaps an internet solution for regular meetings or teaching. Another approach would be to establish an ongoing course of study that meets, say quarterly, for 3 days at a time, (perhaps rotating regionally) so that participant education on these subjects can evolve.



FROM SOUTH AMERICA

FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT

JUSTA CABRERA DE FLORES

Guarani

Santa Cruz Zone

Bolivia



Justa is the President of the Association of Art and Culture of the Guaraní people of the Santa Cruz metropolitan area of Bolivia. There are 20 “Zones” that contain the approximately 100,000 Guaraní dispersed throughout Bolivia. The Santa Cruz community represents approximately 1/10th (10,000 people.) Justa is a traditional midwife and works on community health issues, fair trade, environmental protection and matters regarding recognition of collective rights to land, resources and knowledge.

Unlike many of the other Guaraní communities in Bolivia who have remained in their ancestral lands and therefore have limited territorial rights, those in the Santa Cruz area are not as formalized or organized. Santa Cruz is considered the “petroleum capital” of Bolivia and is located near the borders of Argentina and Paraguay. Most of the Santa Cruz Guaraní, like Gloria’s parents, migrated to Santa Cruz for economic opportunities but found that in order to benefit from them, they would have to forfeit their traditions by integrating into the language and culture of the

Hispanic majority. The Guaraní of the Santa Cruz area struggle constantly to preserve their own traditions and culture in the context of a modernized society.

Justa grew into her responsibilities on behalf of the Guaraní due to early experiences. When her family (she has six siblings) moved to Santa Cruz, her parents found that they couldn’t make ends meet by pursuing their traditional farming work. The children were sent out to labor. Justa worked as a nanny for a wealthy family. This, combined with the two years of formal schooling that her family could afford, enabled her to learn Spanish. Because of her ability to communicate, by the age of 17, she had become an informal liaison between the Guaraní communities of the Santa Cruz area and the local peoples. She frequently translated for Guaraní speakers in hospitals, where she became interested in midwifery and sensitized to women’s issues. Soon she became involved in organizing the Guaraní of the Santa Cruz area as well as allying this community with other Guaraní communities nationwide.

Justa comes to the forum with specific concerns about the resource depletion that comes along with oil development, and the failure to appropriately include and inform those affected by oil development plans. She explains that the oil companies often take over areas for exploitation without consulting the local communities who might be affected; not necessarily because they may not want to consult them, but because often there simply is no organized local body to consult (as was in the past the case with the Santa Cruz Guaraní.) In those instances, the oil companies would (for example) approach the body that represents the Guaraní on a National level. Uninformed

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or politically ambitious “representatives” would glibly concede the rights of other Guaranis without consulting them at the local level.

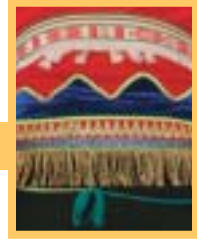
Justa notes that currently, “alliances” are being formed between indigenous groups and oil companies in order to “organize” the oil exploitation in such a way that local communities are both better informed and can benefit from the development. She worries, however, that the indigenous representatives are inadequately informed about their own rights and altogether ill prepared (many are illiterate) to make good decisions and solid agreements on behalf of their people. The large developers are powerful companies with teams of highly educated lawyers and publicists skilled at hoodwinking indigenous representatives. “The bargaining table is slanted,” she says, “so that the chips always end up sliding in the direction of the developers.” For example, representatives accept land allotments that aren’t as productive as the lands that will be developed, without knowing that these replacement lands have already been greatly depleted (so that farming, etc. cannot be as prolific.) Justa aims for future land allotments to also include specific development and resource recovery plans.

The social problems that come with oil development are also of concern to Justa, particularly those related to Guarani women. She explains, for example, that wealthy oil exploitation workers tempt, influence and confuse the Guarani girls whose families are trying to raise them in a traditional fashion. The youngsters rebel against their own traditions, get pregnant, run away to “marry out” young, or end up semi-prostituted.

In attending the PFIL, Justa seeks support and further competence in learning how to obtain territorial rights and also to negotiate (or avoid negotiating) with oil developers. She also seeks support in dealing with the social and environmental effects of oil development.

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples has been examining the international and domestic instruments and practices relevant to the principle of free, prior and informed consent and indigenous peoples, in particular as it is associated with indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination, treaties, lands, territories, natural resources and other human rights. For Justa her participation in the Forum and the knowledge and support she has received from attending it will greatly help her educate her community back home on their rights as indigenous peoples.

For Justa, one of the most important benefits of attending the PFIL have been the contacts. She explains that before attending the conference, her community was not clear that so many foreign organizations were in a position to assist so robustly or in so much detail. More importantly, she came into contact with Bolivian organizations that she never knew of, which can support her causes. The interventions and trainings have been helpful in terms of making progress in developing a petition and declarations. They have assisted her in clarifying the rights of indigenous peoples. She is certain that the documentation she has gathered will assist those representing the Guarani in better defending their rights and positions, particularly when negotiating with “exploiters.”



FROM SOUTH AMERICA

PROJECT ACCESS STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER

MARCOS TERENA

Mato Grosso do Sul

Brazil



Marcos is of the Terena people in the Pantanal region of Mato Grosso do Sul in Brazil, near the borders with Bolivia and Paraguay. In 1977 he founded the Union of Indigenous Nations, the first indigenous political movement in Brazil. By 1992, Marcos organized a landmark event in the struggle for Indigenous peoples' rights, the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territories, Environment and Development, which was held the week before the United Nations Earth Summit. At this historic gathering Marcos was chosen by over 700 indigenous leaders from around the world to deliver their message to world leaders at the Earth Summit. Marcos was instrumental in helping to establish the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. He was also one of the indigenous leaders that helped articulate and move forward the process of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. He is a founding member of the Inter-Tribal Committee, Land is Life, the International Alliance of Indigenous Tribal peoples of the Tropical Forests,

and the Brazilian Indigenous Institute on Intellectual Property. Marcos has published two books on indigenous diversity, culture and identity. He studied Business Administration and is a professional pilot.

This year, Marcos is most concerned with matters of “development” and how the word is defined. He believes that the definition of development in modern economies has too much to do with the accumulation of consumer goods and not enough to do with matters of quality of life. “This thing we call development,” he explains, “is contributing to the destruction of indigenous lifestyles and territories. Should it be considered development nonetheless?” Marcos explains further that without a definition of economic development that includes peace, education, propagation of culture, continued health and general quality of life, the notion of economic prosperity is insufficient. He believes that the model of material wealth being propagated by modern economies is not a model that can work comfortably in traditional and indigenous settings, and that the attempt to impose it or integrate it tends to bring more harm than good.

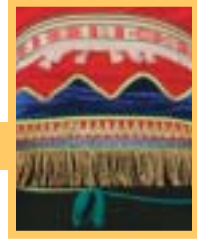
He raises a specific concern that despite industrial development in the region and concomitant health and nutrition programs that the Brazilian government is supposed to have implemented in the Mato Grosso area, already this year, more than 105 children (aged 0 – 5) have died in the towns of Kaiwa and Xavante from malnutrition. He believes that this has to do with the challenges of forcible “transitioning” of traditional societies into semi-modern economies. He explains that indigenous cultures have an alliance with the land that’s not exploitative. He calls it “co-dependent.” For a traditional society, land isn’t just property, it’s a space that supports and enables a way of life. Changing their relationship to the land, changes their relationship to all aspects of living.

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This year, the participants at the PFI have requested Marcos' assistance and leadership in two key areas, for which he seeks continued support and funding:

- ✦ In preparation for the international Convention on Biodiversity (March, 2006), Marcos has been elected to coordinate the indigenous leadership to ensure that there is a space and an agenda for indigenous issues, including conservation and protection of indigenous lands. He believes there will be a lot of work and study related to ensuring that he follow the conventions of the past 7 conferences in order to ensure that the indigenous agenda is incorporated.
- ✦ In preparation for the World Summit on the Information Society (November 2005, Tunisia), Marcos has been asked to help organize the indigenous leadership to devise an indigenous component to be included in the Conference agenda. He will be working with indigenous leadership at preparatory meetings in Brazil (June) and again in Geneva (September), to ensure that issues relevant to "informatizing" indigenous populations get addressed at the World Summit.

Marcos stresses that the incorporation of an indigenous agenda into the WSIS must be undertaken with care and deliberation. The notion of including an indigenous agenda is new to the international community and the event of indigenous access to information technologies is fairly new as well. That said, Marcos aims to approach the whole matter comprehensively and with great sensitivity. He says it should not be assumed that all indigenous cultures want or can effectively use information technologies to their best advantage. He believes that indigenous leadership must step back and look at the "whole picture," attend to matters of ethics, and establish principles by which the larger community can be guided in making decisions as to whether and how to enter the information society.



FROM SOUTH AMERICA

A MASTERPIECE OF THE INTANGIBLE HERITAGE OF HUMANITY

FELIPE USHIGUA

Zapara

Central Pastaza Province

Ecuador



Felipe is President of the Organization of the Zapara Nation of Ecuador. The 200 Zapara of Ecuador live in the central Pastaza province on the Peruvian border between the Conambo and Pindoyacu rivers. They occupy about 54,000 hectares of land surrounded by Quichua, Achuar, and Shuar communities. Traditionally they lived a nomadic life, based on hunting, fishing, and subsistence farming, with communities changing locations periodically to avoid depleting the natural resources. However, with encroachments on their territory by Mestizos and neighboring indigenous people alike, they have been forced to change their way of life and settle in permanent villages. The Zapara struggle to hold on to what they can of their culture, but today the main threat to Zapara land comes from oil development.

Felipe explains that a century ago the Zapara were one of the most powerful and numerous indigenous groups in the southern Oriente and northern Peru, estimated to number as many as 20,000. But in the 20th century, the forces

of conquest combined to destroy the Zapara and their way of life. Even the Ecuadorian government did not grant them legitimacy as an indigenous tribe, finding them too few in number. By the 1970s, anthropologists declared them an extinct nation. But in fact, there remain five remote Zapara villages in Pastaza province, and in recent years the Zapara, have organized to fight against all odds for their survival. Another 150 members of the Zapara community live in Peru.

Through the work of Zapara community leaders, in May of 2001, UNESCO declared the Zapara culture a “Masterpiece of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity,” for its oral traditions and other cultural treasures. This distinction breathed new life into the Zaparas’ struggle to be legitimized and obtain recognition by the Ecuadorian government so that they can have greater access to development funds for indigenous peoples. Work has also begun to preserve their culture and record the traditional stories of the community.

Felipe worries that in the last ten years even their permanent villages are now being threatened by the advent of oil exploration upriver by companies such as AGIP and CGC. The effluent from the oil drilling is contaminating the rivers on which the Zapara rely for both fishing and irrigation. The fish are turning up dead, the people cannot bathe or wash in the rivers without suffering diarrhea and fevers, rashes or hives. He is most concerned that the environment remains foul even after the drilling stops.

While he shares some of the similar concerns for environment and education that affect all the indigenous representatives at the PFI from Ecuador, Felipe is striving to distinguish the Zapara from the more populous tribes that

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surround them. He fears that the specific “extinction related” issues of the Zapara aren’t relevant to the more populous tribes. He notes that unlike the Kichwa, for example, the Zapara never integrated into Hispanic culture. They have kept their own gods, their own language and their own systems of healing. In order to survive and retain their own culture, they tend to resist transition to the mainstream educational assistance that the government can extend to them. There is a tension between their need to preserve their own culture for survival and the kind of programs available to indigenous populations that require them to integrate. He thinks this leads to more discrimination against the dwindling Zapara.

Felipe seeks specific assistance with development of traditional education within the Zapara culture. He would like to see that the few Zapara children, in addition to having access to funds to integrate into Hispanic schools, also be given a Trilingual education (to include Kichwa and Zapara as well as Spanish). Also, the Zapara elders need assistance in methodologies of training so they can pass on their dying traditions.

Felipe also notes that, for example, the Zapara have an advanced system of natural, traditional medicine. None of the curative formulas have ever been documented, the last Shaman of the tribe (his own father) died not long ago, and the Shamanic tradition is threatened. It is fading even faster now, because the land and plants on which the Zapara rely for their medicine are being contaminated. The Zapara curative tradition has enabled them to survive through centuries of colonization, conquest, encroachment by neighboring tribes, and diseases, but now pollution threatens to extinguish those remaining. He seeks funding that would enable formalized learning and documentation of the medical traditions as well as scholarship or travel grants so that there can be “cross interaction” between the Zapara of Peru and those of Ecuador.

Felipe is pleased that at the FPPI he has encountered other indigenous tribes, equally small, which suffer the similar fate of inattention due to the overwhelming numbers in more populous tribes. He wants to be able to remain in contact with these others in order to learn from their approaches to gaining legitimacy, funding and access to resources.