

Report of the Colloquium on the Role of ICCAs in Achieving the Aichi Targets

13 October 2012, at CBD COP11, Hyderabad, India

Organised by
CBD Secretariat, ICCA Consortium, Governments of Brazil, India, the Philippines,
Senegal and South Africa, the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity,
UNDP, and Conservation International



Background

A full day Colloquium was organised at the CBD COP11 in Hyderabad, India, on the *Role of Indigenous Peoples and Local Community Conserved Territories and Areas in Achieving the Aichi Targets*. The colloquium agenda was framed around the key lessons and recommendations emerging from a study conducted by the ICCA Consortium, coordinated by the Indian NGO Kalpavriksh. This study, published by the CBD Secretariat as its Technical Series 64, titled “Recognising and Supporting Indigenous Peoples and Local Community Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCAs)”, was released by Mr. Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the CBD.

The Colloquium involved presentations by a number of indigenous peoples and local community representatives, government and intergovernmental agencies (including the GEF Small Grants Programme implemented by UNDP, and the Global Protected Areas Programme of the IUCN), and civil society organizations. A global overview on ICCA recognition and support was provided by the ICCA Consortium, followed by country-level case studies from India, Australia, the Pacific, the Philippines, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Guatemala, Panama, and Argentina.

Key issues

Presentations at the Colloquium as well as the studies contained in the publication released today, demonstrated that Indigenous Peoples' and Local Community Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCAs) contain significant levels of biodiversity and related cultural diversity. ICCAs are the world's oldest conservation initiatives, much older than the formally designated protected areas of the modern times, and in fact many such protected areas have been carved out of ICCAs. They range from tiny patches of nature to tens of thousands of square km in size. They include sacred sites, habitats of threatened or culturally important species, indigenous territories including those of mobile peoples, sustainable resource use areas such as community managed marine fisheries and community forests, and others.

The knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities in such sites have contributed greatly to conservation of ecosystem, species, and genetic diversity. The study suggests that **much of the world's area is under officially designated protected areas (about 13%), and an equal area, if not more, may be conserved in ICCAs.**

In 2010, at the 10th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the CBD (Nagoya, Japan), governments committed to a Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. This included a set of 20 targets ('Aichi Biodiversity Targets'), covering aspects such as integrating biodiversity into economic development, enhancing the coverage of protected areas and other forms of effective conservation, protecting threatened species, ecological functions alleviating poverty and providing secure livelihoods. The global study, and a number of presentations at the colloquium, demonstrated that ICCAs can help meet many of these targets. This includes Target 11 ("By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes"). But it also includes all other Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including those related to biodiversity-based local development, ecosystem services and resilience, vulnerable ecosystems, preventing extinctions, sustainable use, livelihood security, agricultural biodiversity, enhancement of awareness and use of traditional and biodiversity knowledge. ICCAs can also help meet commitments under other global agreements such as the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA), the Millennium Development Goals and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Colloquium participants, however, noted an important issue that is also highlighted in the study: that ICCAs face serious threats from inappropriate development (such as extractive industries and large-scale infrastructure projects), absence of clear tenure rights and imposition of inappropriate conservation policies, among others. The absence of appropriate recognition to ICCAs, or weak recognition, makes it difficult for indigenous peoples and local communities to deal with such threats.

Several countries are moving substantially to fill this gap in recognition and support of ICCAs. This includes policy and legal recognition. For instance, in Australia, Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) make up about 30% of the official protected area estate, while in the Philippines legislation relating to Ancestral Domain rights is providing backing to indigenous peoples in their efforts to conserve and sustainably manage their territories. In other countries there are also substantial steps to provide social recognition, facilitation for documentation, technical and funding support, and facilitation of advocacy and networking by or with indigenous peoples and local communities.

Yet, many countries are still weak in their recognition of indigenous peoples and local communities in general, and of their ICCAs in particular. Key gaps include poor documentation of ICCAs and their values, weak recognition of territorial and resource rights, lack of respect of customary collective governance, absence of free and prior informed consent (FPIC) processes, and so on.

Key suggestions

The Colloquium noted the urgent need to provide recognition and support to ICCAs, but also the necessity of doing this in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the diversity of situations in different parts of the world, and are based on the voluntary desire of the relevant people or community. **It stressed that, in order to maintain and enhance the values of ICCAs, indigenous peoples and local communities governing them need adequate and appropriate recognition and support, including:**

- **Clear, indivisible and inalienable common rights to territories and natural resources, in both terrestrial and marine areas**
- **Recognition of their institutions of collective governance**
- **Rights to exclude destructive activities like mining and major infrastructure**
- **Respect of diverse cultures, lifestyles, economic systems**
- **Recognition of ICCAs as protected areas or other effective area-based conservation areas as deemed appropriate by the concerned peoples and communities**
- **Support of various kinds other than legal, including in relevant official programmes (e.g. land use and development), capacity enhancement, technical, financial, and networking**

Participants also noted that market-based measures for conservation, including climate-change related ones, need to be seriously reviewed for their possible impacts on ICCAs, as they could convert ethical and spiritual relationship of indigenous peoples and local communities with nature into more commodified or commercial relationships and, in general, further disempower such peoples and communities. Full and comprehensive dialogue at national and international levels, and free and prior informed consent (FPIC) processes are needed before any such measures are considered.

Additional suggestions by participants were: inclusion of ICCA recognition and support in the Aichi Biodiversity target indicators; the use of the ICCA Global Registry

maintained by UNEP WCMC as one form of voluntary recognition (building in appropriate peer review and FPIC processes); measures to ensure effective implementation of the CBD (including the PoWPA and reaching the Aichi Biodiversity Targets) at national levels; orientation of donor funds, including those of GEF, towards ICCAs; and inclusion of ICCAs into National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

Global cooperation is needed to enable all countries to achieve recognition of ICCAs, to enhance their contribution to conservation, livelihood security, and cultural sustenance. The Colloquium provided pointers on how this can be done through legal, administrative, social, financial, advocacy, networking and other forms of recognition and support. It recommended that the study published by the CBD Secretariat with financial support from The Christensen Fund, UNDP and the European Union as Technical Series 64, mentioned above, could be used by all CBD Parties towards the above objectives.

(For further details, pl. see www.iccaconsortium.org; www.iccaregistry.org/)