



## Rio Pavilion Session Summaries

*The Pavilion is a collaborative effort between the Secretariats of the three Rio Conventions and the Global Environment Facility, in addition to a growing list of other global and local partners*

### Day 1 Tuesday 29 November, Durban

#### SESSION 1. COORDINATOR OF THE INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATION OF THE AMAZON RIVER BASIN (COICA)

**Chair:** Egberto Tabo Chipuai

**Speakers:** Juan Carlos Jintiach, Gonzalo Griebenow, Edwin Vasquez Campos, Ryan Sarsfield, and Milagros Sandoval.

**Summary:** Indigenous peoples from Latin American discussed the role of indigenous people in adaptation to climate change and in REDD+; climate change and the indigenous peoples of the Amazon were also discussed. Specific presentation included:

- Ryan Sarsfield who delivered a talk entitled *Territories, Rights, & Participatory Approaches: Recommendations for Implementing an Indigenous REDD+ Program in the Amazon Basin*,
- Milagros Sandoval who delivered a talk entitled: *Apoyo al proceso de participación y fortalecimiento de capacidades de los pueblos indígenas de San Martín, Peru*.

#### Coordinator of the Indigenous Organization of the Amazon River Basin (COICA)

COICA was formed twenty years ago by indigenous peoples in the Amazon basin and is aimed at building the capacity of indigenous leaders and communities to represent themselves in national, regional and international climate change dialogues. They also aim to provide technical assistance to indigenous leaders and communities in order to enable them to better manage the short and long term impacts of climate change.

The main components of COICA are: community-based training for REDD+ readiness, participation and networking, and pilot projects. In collaboration with Yale University and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), they are also working together to address the following questions:

1. How does an indigenous-led REDD+ project differ from other REDD+ projects that have been implemented to date?
2. How does traditional decision making in the indigenous cultures of the Amazon impact the design and implementation of a REDD+ project?
3. What are some of the outstanding issues that will negatively impact the implementation of REDD+ in indigenous communities and territories?

While COICA is looking forward to active participation in Rio+20, it is concerned that the ongoing COP 17 negotiations might not save the Kyoto Protocol. COICA members are willing to be flexible to adapt and work to achieve the Kyoto



Protocol's goals through the application of traditional knowledge. COICA's members value the importance of the environment for its provision of food, spiritual places and energy. COICA would like to see a better interface between traditional knowledge and science and urges the Rio+20 summit to consider COICA's activities. Finally, COICA would also like to see indigenous knowledge incorporated in both REDD+ and other climate change issues.

- As a member state, Panama reported that land tenure is still a critical issue. Panama also indicated that they value the participation of women and youth in climate change adaptation strategies.

**Yale Study on REDD+ and Indigenous Communities**– A study conducted at Yale University was also presented and noted that the participation of indigenous peoples is one of the most controversial aspects of REDD+.

**Summary.** Indigenous peoples are disproportionately impacted by climate change but are also some of the world's most sustainable forest managers. REDD+ with the participation of indigenous communities has been heavily promoted as a win-win program. However, REDD+ projects should not be promoted as a substitute for development and rights-based priorities and projects. REDD+ projects do not exempt national governments from their responsibilities nor should they encourage indigenous groups to weaken their efforts to fight for their rights. The REDD+ process must see indigenous peoples as equal partners in order to avoid missteps and to improve the probability of a successful outcome. Efforts should be focused on fewer, but higher quality projects that can constitute powerful examples for south-south learning, and serve as a model to other communities or territories. Only if the fundamental requirements of a secure legal situation, well-informed local stakeholders, and a participatory process to achieve Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) have all been achieved, should a REDD+ project proceed beyond the pilot stage. However, this does not preclude the low risk testing of training modules.



## **SESSION 2. TAKING COMMUNITY VOICES TO COP17 THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF PHOTO STORIES AND THEATRE– RESOURCE AFRICA**

**Chair:** Dhanishree Ndebele

**Summary:** Resource Africa gathered stories from several African countries (Senegal, Mozambique, Botswana, Kenya and South Africa) to communicate their understanding of climate change and changes around them.

### **Mozambique–Covane Village**

There is a lack of water and natural resources in areas that were once farmed. The village has made significant changes by making charcoal from logs; the challenge is that they are also cutting down protected or sacred species. The fishing industry is also experiencing problems and villagers must now fish, dry and pack their fish for future use. There are also problems with medicinal plants, as species are becoming scarce, with few individuals left in the wild.

### **South Africa–Philippi Township**

There are problems with an excess of water in the settlement that results in flooding of housing areas. The question raised was: why is Philippi not included in the framework adaptation to climate change? People are currently living in areas where there is a high degree of water-logging.

### **Botswana–Satau Village**

Grazing areas are flooded. Government policies need to be revised because people on the Namibia side of the border are fishing in an unregulated manner whereas in Botswana fishing is regulated. There is a serious concern about livelihoods options, both with or without resources. There are also health and human rights issues. An example of the challenges facing the community is that students are now fetching water during study periods; therefore, serious adaptation measures have to be formulated.

### **Senegal–Joal Fadiouth**

Due to storms and flooding, there is huge damage to infrastructure. The community has decided to plant mangroves. Women are facing challenges when it comes to the harvesting of oysters: can this bring about better innovations in adaptation? Local people think that the water temperature and the saltiness of the seawater are causing the slow growth of fish—could this be exploitation instead?

### **Kenya–Makueni Village**

People now walk a long distance to fetch water and dig wells which dry out quickly. This poses a serious problem for the agricultural sector. People tend to cut down trees for firewood and sell this wood to have income but they also depend on fruits as a food source.

### **Comments and Questions on the Presentation:**

- Are the rural people voice's too small or are they simply not being considered?
- Does this mean we should reconsider the role of science and policy on climate change issues?
- Do communities understand what climate change is?
- Were the communities involved in this project aware of the implications of climate change?
- Is the villagers' original message preserved throughout the data collection methodology and the interpretation and discussion of the collected data?
- Are there platforms for science, policy, indigenous peoples and governments to discuss climate change and adaptation?
- How did they go about selecting participating countries and communities in Africa?
- Some of the studies need scientific support to have enough substance.
- How important are COP 17 decisions to these rural people?



### SESSION 3. INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

**Chair:** Prof. Yonah Seleti (Department of Science and Technology [DST], South Africa)

**Speakers:** Prof. Kaya, Mr. Papa Gora Ndiaye, Mr. Herbert Lwanga and Prof. Seleti.

**Summary.** Can Africa afford to undermine its indigenous knowledge in the interest of international knowledge? Africa is one of the most vulnerable continents in terms of the adverse effects of climate change. Yet, many African communities have a lot to offer with regard to climate change adaptation and mitigation. The primary focus on the presentation was to give background on the African Young Scientists Initiative on Climate Change based on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AYSICCIKS). African knowledge resides with the older generation and has not been transferred to the younger generations despite the fact that indigenous knowledge (IK) can contribute to global knowledge by empowering young scientists.

The aim of the AYSICCIKS initiative is to create a platform for young scientists from various parts of Africa to meet and share experiences. The adverse effects of climate change on sustainable development, food security and livelihoods, in general, have been the centre of discussions during major international conferences on the environment including the Earth Summit in Rio (1992), the Kyoto Protocol (1997), the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (2002), the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (2009–COP15) and the UN Climate Change Conference in Cancun, Mexico (2010–COP16), among others.

We need achieve the following:

- the generation of knowledge and research training programmes needed to build capacity in youth,
- the creation of a cadre of young scientists able to contribute to global knowledge,
- an exploration of issues concerning the role of youth,
- a review and examination of policy implications for African Youth Scientists, and
- an approach to climate change issues through an understanding of our own community knowledge systems.

The AYSICCIKS initiative needs to change the dominant educational and methodological approaches by focusing on indigenous knowledge (IK) as a base to address climate change and other African issues through knowledge sharing, awareness creation and technology transfer. African Young Scientists and Youth Capacity Development aim to contribute towards the critical mass of scientists on indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and climate change in Africa through the creation of:

- an all Africa think-tank on IKS and climate change research,
- a database of young African scientists involved in IK and climate change research to facilitate network building, and
- a continental post-graduate programme at the Master's and Doctoral levels on IKS and climate change.

**Mainstreaming traditional knowledge in fisheries climate change adaptation strategies of West Africa**—Climate is an important factor affecting the fisheries sector. The impacts of climate change and new sociocultural and economic realities have forced fishermen to draw upon their knowledge to adapt to environmental change and mitigate its impacts. Local knowledge is important for the fisheries industry through adaptation to changing fishing stocks; this knowledge can be used to most effectively understand adaptation to climate change. Local actors should progressively take the lead while external partners should support their efforts to assume greater responsibility for their own development.

Acknowledging indigenous knowledge provides communities with the capability to deal with past and present vulnerabilities to climatic extremes and other stresses. The reduction of vulnerability results from the strengthening of the adaptive capacities of vulnerable individuals and groups. Best practices for vulnerability reduction result from the articulation of indigenous knowledge with modern techniques. Before indigenous knowledge is adopted, integrated it into development programs, or even disseminated, practices need to be scrutinized, like any other technology, for their appropriateness. In addition to scientific proof, local evidence and the sociocultural background in which the practices are embedded must also be considered during the validation and evaluation process.

**Engaging and involving youth in biodiversity conservation and management through the application of indigenous knowledge systems to reduce climate change hazards in Uganda**—Indigenous knowledge is unique to every culture or



society and is dynamic (i.e it responds and adjusts to new conditions in a given environment). In Uganda, various sociocultural systems incorporate traditional knowledge. In agriculture, farming systems that incorporate traditional knowledge systems are in place. Traditional medicine is now also widely practiced and promoted. Conflict management in low level governance structures broadly utilizes IK systems. Environment management among communities also makes use of IK. The management of HIV/AIDS (and the treatment of opportunistic diseases using local medicine e.g. diabetes, diarrhoea, high fever, etc.) is increasingly being adopted and practiced. Agricultural biodiversity and local storage methods are also being actively promoted among communities.

Despite the fact that Uganda is one of the many African countries that are rich in indigenous knowledge and biodiversity, these resources are increasingly endangered. One reason for this is that Ugandan youth, who would naturally be the future custodians of IK, are becoming increasingly less interested and engaged. This unfortunate reality is cause for alarm and necessitates serious attention and intervention. A key recommendation to address this challenge is to find ways and means of supporting youth-led interventions. These interventions hold significant prospect for contributing to the transformation of the social, economic, cultural and political landscapes of Uganda and, more generally, of Africa.

A nation's ability to convert knowledge into innovations and wealth is a determining factor of its position among other nations. The state of a nation's research and information infrastructure is a leading indicator of its future economic and human development. What is the basis of the African development agenda in the image/shadow of the west?

- failure to address the role of the governments in the information value chain,
- failure to analyze and evaluate existing policies and a propensity to constantly start *de novo*, and
- failure to link information policies to other policies such as education, industrialization and commerce, science and technology.

This is a silo mentality in the face of an embedded integrative and interactive learning and business process– a very shocking discovery! The current knowledge system does not enable people to have hope, yet still increases competition. All knowledge in the world is local knowledge, until it is expanded to other parts of the world at which point it becomes universal knowledge.

**In summary, AYSICCIKS' main purpose is:**

- To galvanize efforts through research to minimize the impacts of climate change on African communities
- To develop a truly regional and global partnership to minimize these impacts and find solutions
- To advocate for the incorporation of research findings into policy
- To promote a multi-disciplinary approach and to mainstream IKS as a knowledge domain
- To build research networks
- To develop human capital
- To build capacity to shift from disaster management to knowledge management
- To search for sustainable methodologies
- To promote pluralism in science and IK

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