

BIODIVERSITY

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities reps issue a final plea to world leaders at Post-2020 Framework negotiations

The UN's goal is that by 2050, we will all be 'living in harmony with nature'. Indigenous peoples have been doing this for millennia, and their rights are key to a successful framework. As the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) negotiations conclude, Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' representatives issued a final plea to world leaders:

"A Human Rights approach—including respect and recognition to the land, territories, traditional

knowledge, and the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities—is key for the [Global Biodiversity] Framework to succeed. We are concerned with the lack of consensus in negotiations, especially around this language, and we encourage Parties to work together to reach agreement.

If we don't have a framework to protect nature that truly recognizes and respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs)—

those who are actually conserving biodiversity—humanity is going to be in danger," said Co-chair of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB), Ramiro Batzin, speaking in Geneva. In any proposal for conservation, land and territory rights for IPLCs are vital for protecting the powerful links of peoples to their land and territories, ensuring the survival of biodiversity, and safeguarding the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples on how to live in harmony with nature."

In its closing statement, the IIFB said:

"IIFB welcomes the work undertaken by the Geneva meetings. Despite the many challenges, there have been some improvements and progress on the GBF,

particularly for Targets of high priority for IPLCs. However, we are concerned with the slow progress and lack of consensus in the negotiations."

Lucy Mulenkei, Co-Chair of IIFB, said: "There is irrefutable evidence that the only way this can be a strong instrument is by incorporating and ensuring a strong human-rights element—respecting the role of IPLCs—into the new global biodiversity framework."

Batzin said: "Now is the time for IPLCs to show the scientific knowledge that we have. Now is the time for Indigenous Peoples to tell the world that we need to take action."

"We all need to have a way of life that has an intrinsic relationship and balance with mother nature,

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ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

District Fishermen's Youth Welfare Association (DFYWA), Andhra Pradesh, India

The District Fishermen's Youth Welfare Association (DFYWA) is a community-based NGO that has been working with small-scale fishing communities on the east coast of India since 1992.

Its objectives are to promote access of fishing communities to natural resources and markets, cost-effective technologies and infrastructure, and affordable credit in order to improve their livelihoods. It seeks to do this while discouraging environmentally and socially destructive technologies and practices in fisheries.

In collaboration with several international and national research and

development organizations, DFYWA has undertaken numerous initiatives to disseminate new livelihood technologies, develop skills

and build capacity, both for fishers and post-harvest fishworkers, with positive results. One of DFYWA's core priorities has been to develop sustainable fisheries initiatives to assist fish-vending women, both independently and through collectives.



Such endeavours were frequently followed by the realization that more needs to be done to obtain sustainable outcomes for the fishers and fishworkers. They need research and policy to be made available to them, and policy advocacy efforts to promote more holistic and sustainable support systems. In the long term, DFYWA seeks to develop and strengthen community institutions for more effective participation in policymaking and implementation.

Based in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, DFYWA's experienced and well-trained team of field staff help the organization carry out its mission of providing

sustainable livelihood support for small-scale fishing communities.

DFYWA has won several State and national awards for its work on training fishworkers in fish drying, vending and marketing. It conducts awareness raising on fish handling and preservation, and provides support to communities in terms of occupational safety and health, coastal protection and access to markets.

For more: <https://driedfishmatters.org/blog/living-on-the-edge/> and <https://dfywa.wordpress.com/>

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the human being, and the universe,” said Batzin. “Only then can we truly be seen to be living in harmony with nature.”

In their closing statement at the talks, the IIFB stated the importance of human rights in an agreement to save nature: “It is necessary to recognize, and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [within the GBF].”

They also pointed out the key requirement for this to be backed up with funding:

“Currently, 1% of the funds available for climate and the environment goes to IPLCs, despite growing evidence that supporting IPLCs directly is one of the most cost-effective measures for conservation. Therefore, it is necessary to increase funds to support our strategies. We require flexibility and specific guarantees to access resources directly, that the allocation of funds prioritizes the recognition and respect for indigenous land, territories and the strengthening of governance.”

“IIFB firmly believes that for this framework to be successful and inclusive, it will require further improvements, and the full and effective participation of [IPLCs] in the process leading up to COP 15 and beyond. [We] are looking at this process with the hope that the GBF will be truly transformative and will recognize the contributions and rights of Indigenous Peoples to protect Mother Nature.”

“A human rights based approach is crucial to a successful Global Biodiversity Framework,” said Lucy Mulenkei, Co-Chair of the IIFB.

“Such an approach would mean that biodiversity policies, governance and management do not violate human rights, and those implementing such policies should actively seek ways to support and promote human rights in their design and implementation,” she said.

The effective implementation of a real human-rights-based approach requires a more holistic approach than currently suggested in the draft of the framework. It requires strengthening and improvements across all aspects of the framework but especially regarding: goals, targets, monitoring framework, enabling conditions, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

“The future of any successful framework requires the integration of human rights across all issues—not just in environmental agreements, but more holistically, in agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and our entire ways of life,” said Mulenkei.

Source: <https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO2203/Soo302/indigenous-peoples-local-community-reps-issue-a-final-plea-to-world-leaders-at-biodiversity-framework-negotiations.htm>

INLAND FISHERIES

Mekong under threat: MRC

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) called for urgent action to protect the river for the benefit of the millions of people

throughout Southeast Asia who depend on it. The Mekong is severely impacted by water infrastructure projects and climate change, it said.

In March, the MRC issued a 174-page report highlighting its major accomplishments and actions taken, and giving key indicators that have raised region-wide awareness of how development and increasingly severe flooding and drought all impact the Lower Mekong River Basin.

“With the vital river now impacted by both water-infrastructure projects and climate change, the new report calls for urgent ‘water diplomacy’ to protect Southeast Asia’s largest river and promote sustainable development for the millions across the region,” the MRC said in a 15 March press release.

The MRC confirmed that these activities have spurred its member countries—Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam—to take unprecedented steps along with their two neighbours, upriver China and Myanmar.

The report recommends that accurate data and scientific knowledge should drive planners and policymakers in their decisionmaking and execution.

The press release quoted Prawit Wongsuon, chairperson of the Thai National Mekong Committee, as saying: “In the Lower Mekong River Basin, the impact of climate change presents profound implications for the social and economic well-being of our constituents, and represents an ongoing challenge for policymakers”.

He said that water diplomacy was increasingly important in the region,

particularly with respect to the growing number of hydropower and other water infrastructure projects and development activities.

The report cited the specific example of its Regional Flood and Drought Management Centre, which, in 2017, was expanded to include drought forecasting. This capability to forecast has since helped to save lives and protect property of the people living in the Basin.

According to the report, one thing that is particularly noteworthy is the improved forecasting, which, it said, is the product of deepening regional relationships, especially with Beijing. For the first time, China has agreed to share its dry-season hydrological data.

In 2021, the MRC and ASEAN launched the Water Security Dialogue to promote innovative solutions to emerging water security challenges.

So Sophort, secretary-general of the Cambodian National Mekong Committee, could not be reached for comment on 15 March.

Ro Vannak, co-founder of the Cambodian Institute for Democracy, said the Mekong River is an important source of livelihoods and economic activity in Southeast Asia. The river is home to the world’s largest freshwater fisheries industry, and is critical to food security in the region.

The Mekong River is a huge biodiversity habitat that provides protein for animals and the more than 60 mn people living along it, he said.

Source: <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/mekong-under-threat-mrc>

INFOLOG: NEW RESOURCES AT ICSF

Publications and Infographics

Handbook on Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for small-scale fishing communities by ICSF and Crocevia

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/handbook-on-convention-on-biological-diversity-cbd-for-small-scale-fishing-communities/>

This Handbook, developed by Ramya Rajagopalan, describes marine and aquatic biodiversity components in the CBD

Video: Why is biodiversity important for small-scale fisheries: New Handbook by ICSF and Crocevia

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/why-is-biodiversity-important-for-small-scale-fisheries/>

This video, developed by Tushar Menon and Basim Abu, introduces the CBD Handbook developed by ICSF and Crocevia.

A review of governance and tenure in inland capture fisheries and aquaculture systems of India by Nachiket Kelkar and Robert I. Arthur

<https://www.icsf.net/resources/governance-of-inland-fisheries-and-aquaculture-in-india-situation-paper-in-the-context-of-indias-draft-national-inland-fisheries-and-aquaculture-policy-and-the-fao-ssf-guidelines-2/>

This ICSF-FAO situation paper is a background document that summarizes the diversity, complexity and relevance of tenure systems, rights and the institutional management of inland fisheries in India.

Methodological guide for mapping women's small-scale fishery organizations to assess their capacities and needs—A Handbook in support of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines

<https://www.fao.org/3/cb8235en/cb8235en.pdf>

This methodological guide is a tool that can be used in efforts to implement the SSF Guidelines, particularly in relation to Chapter 8 (“Gender Equality”).

The IPCC 6th assessment report assesses the impacts of climate change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>

The IPCC Sixth Assessment Report assesses the impacts of climate change, looking at ecosystems, biodiversity, and human communities at global and regional levels.

Blue Justice: Small-Scale Fisheries in a Sustainable Ocean Economy by Svein Jentoft et al.

<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-89624-9>

The present copious volume corresponds with international concern (as reflected, for example, in the SDGs) about waxing societal inequalities between and within nations.

Film: What is the value of African artisanal fisheries?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s81PmzzhOUc>

For thousands of years, artisanal fisheries have been the pillar of coastal communities in Africa.

FLASHBACK

From Rhetoric to Reality

As the implementation of the SSF Guidelines gets under way, it is imperative to lobby for policies and processes that will empower small-scale fishing communities

The Thirty-third Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), held in Rome in July 2018, proved to be a watershed for small-scale fisheries. This COFI discussed, among other things, several exciting initiatives for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.



These initiatives, focusing on men and women from small-scale artisanal fishing communities and indigenous peoples, were reported by delegates from both developed and developing countries, including Small-Island Developing States (SIDS). It was gratifying to note that some countries that had not been so enthusiastic during the negotiation stage, are now actively promoting the SSF Guidelines at various levels.

Considerable support was expressed for the civil society-initiated SSF Guidelines Global Strategic Framework (SSF GSF) to facilitate interaction between COFI Members and interested State and non-State actors to promote the implementation of the SSF Guidelines at all levels. Significant enthusiasm was shown in celebrating 2022 as the “International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture”, as proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly, and in developing a road map towards it. There was eagerness to meet the Sustainable Development Goal 14.b to provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets. In addition, delegates solidly backed the proposal to establish a new sub-committee on fisheries management under COFI, also with a focus on small-scale fisheries.

We hope these initiatives to strengthen small-scale fisheries will transform into policies and processes that will empower small-scale fishing communities and indigenous peoples who are dependent on small-scale fisheries for their life, livelihood and cultural wellbeing, at both the local and, particularly, the national level.

Evidently, now is the time to move from rhetoric to reality. We hope there will be global support to assist small-scale fishing communities and indigenous peoples to address, in a coherent and consistent manner, local and national threats challenging their existence. In this connection we do need to be cautious that the economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions essential for the wellbeing of small-scale fishing communities and indigenous peoples are not forgotten. Prudence is required to ensure that small-scale fishing communities are understood to be integral to small-scale artisanal fisheries, and that the SSF Guidelines implementation process protects their interests in all time frames across the world.

—from SAMUDRA Report, No. 79, August 2018

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEETINGS

ICSF's Bangkok workshop:

International Workshop “IYAF 2022-Celebrating Sustainable and Equitable Small-scale Fisheries: Asia”, from 5 to 8 May 2022

www.icsf.net

The workshop is an opportunity to take stock of how the SSF Guidelines are being implemented across the world to eradicate poverty, ensure food security and nutrition, and promote the tenure rights of small-scale fishing communities. The

workshop will include 30 participants from community-based organizations, national and international fishworkers' organizations, women in fisheries networks, and civil society organizations from 12 South and Southeast Asian countries - including Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

4th World Small-Scale Fisheries Congress (4WSFC)-Asia Pacific: Building forward better, 10 to 13 May 2022

<https://www.4wsfccongress.com/asia-pacific-may-2022>

Under the theme ‘Building Forward Better,’ the congress aims to discuss bold, innovative ideas and strategies needed for SSF to rebalance, rebuild and revitalize.

WEBSITES

ICSF's Digital Archive

<http://icsfarchives.net/>

ICSF's Archive/ Digital library contains collections of more than three decades,

built up since ICSF's Documentation Centre was set up in Chennai in 1999 with the twin objectives of gathering all kinds of information pertinent to small-scale fisheries and making it available to all stakeholders in an easy and rapid-access format. Currently, the digital archive has over 2,000 original documents and more than 12,000 curated links.

ICSF's website

<https://www.icsf.net/>

ICSF's redesigned website is now live online.