

# **The Yunnan Initiative: Visions and actions for the enhancement of biological and cultural diversity**

Cultures and Biodiversity Congress

2000

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## **1. Preamble**

The Yunnan Initiative calls attention to the large uncertainties that local (and indigenous) cultures face as they strive to use, nurture and sustain the diverse landscapes in which they live and on which they depend. Among the most powerful contemporary forces that influence both local cultures and biodiversity are various government policies and the expansion of regional, national and international markets. These forces are positive in some cases and not in others. The participants of the Cultures and Biodiversity Congress (CUBIC) 2000, held in Yunnan Province, China, designed the Yunnan Initiative. This Initiative provides a vision, principles and actions to enhance the ability of local groups to strengthen their evolving cultural traditions while finding innovative solutions for improving their livelihoods and enhancing biodiversity.

While recognizing that some local groups are more resilient than others, the activities of local groups can be strengthened when appropriately assisted in partnerships with government and non-government organizations and the commercial sector to ensure an equitable and sustainable stream of benefits. These partnerships must be based on participatory processes and intercultural dialogue, achieving an interaction between both local and scientific languages and knowledge.

Thus, the Yunnan Initiative supports the strong link between cultural and biological diversity as expressed in the Declaration of Belem, the Kunming Action Plan and the Code of Ethics of the International Society of Ethnobiology.

The Yunnan Initiative also endorses the Convention on Biological Diversity's recognition of the importance of local communities in conserving biodiversity and the necessity of respecting cultural and spiritual values in efforts to achieve sustainable development in areas where local communities live and work.

## **2. Principles**

1. The basic precautionary principle is that no activity should be undertaken that might have negative impacts upon indigenous or local communities.
2. Local and indigenous peoples should not be treated as passive objects in activities related to biodiversity and cultural conservation.
3. Local and indigenous peoples may need to be assisted to better understand the value of their knowledge in relation to the larger world, global markets, and policy development.
4. Respect for the integrity of indigenous culture and their rights requires recognition of the complexity of indigenous cultures, local social, political and economic contexts, and recognition of local capacities for learning and change.
5. Intercultural dialogue between rural-urban, inter-ethnic, intergenerational and inter-sectoral groups is essential to enhance strategies to promote cultural and biological diversity, equitable benefit-sharing and the improvement of well-being.
6. There is an inextricable link between cultural, linguistic and biological diversity that emerges from historic ties to landscape.
7. Knowledge and genetic resources cannot be separated from local communities because they are spiritually linked to culture and land in a holistic way.
8. Knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities are essential for effective in situ conservation of biodiversity and culture. Indigenous and local knowledge, innovations and practices not only refer to the natural and human worlds, but also to spiritual concepts, beings and practices.
9. Knowledge, innovations and practices are collectively held at different levels and should be guarded by different subgroups with gender and intergenerational equity.
10. Effective use of knowledge, innovations and practices depends on local participation and collaboration through partnership and dialogue that require equity of power relationships, including those between generations and genders.
11. “Enhancement” of local communities depends upon development of adequate mechanisms for benefit-sharing, capacity building, and protection.
12. The effectiveness of human actions requires proactive promotion of principles and actions that are culturally and politically appropriate, such as those found in the Yunnan Initiative.

### **General actions**

1. FULL DISCLOSURE AND PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT (The Convention on Biological Diversity and other international agreements guarantee that indigenous and local communities be completely informed about the intentions, objectives, and outcomes of all projects, programs and actions that affect them. Furthermore, they have the right to approve or disapprove of such activities.)

## 2. SUPPORTING COSMOVISIONS AND BIODIVERSITY

(Interventions to support the conservation and evolution of biodiversity should support local cultural communities to act within their own cosmovisions, and draw on their own indigenous beliefs and knowledge.)

## 3. CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

(Biodiversity is manifest at genetic, population, community, ecosystem, landscape and global levels. Biodiversity includes forest diversity, agrobiodiversity, wildlife, aquatic, useful plants, and other forms of biodiversity.

Programs need to integrate conservation efforts at these different levels and among different types of biodiversity which themselves are interrelated.)

## 4. CREATION OF LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS FOR PROTECTION OF CULTURAL AND NATURAL DIVERSITY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

(It is necessary to develop new legal and political systems that protect and support the links between culture, nature, land and territory. Until such frameworks are in place, access to indigenous knowledge and resources should be restricted. This will imply major changes in current national and international legal practices.)

## 5. DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS FOR BENEFIT-SHARING AND INFORMATION-SHARING

(Successful examples of adequate benefit-sharing need to be developed and shared. Networks of communication to support and share these examples need to be established between and within indigenous and local communities and among organizations dedicated to partnerships and dialogue with local cultures.)

## 6. ADEQUATE PARTICIPATION ACCOMPANIED BY SHIFTS OF POWER TO INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES SHOULD BE SUPPORTED BY CAPACITY BUILDING

(Capacity must be built into all efforts to promote cultural and biodiversity conservation. Capacity building among community members, NGO and government staff should ensure that adequate skills are possessed at the appropriate level. New technologies and strategies require effective training, impact assessment, and follow-up support. External agencies may have to develop these skills first in order to assist regional and community groups.)

## 7. COMMUNITY-BASED (ENDOGENOUS) DEVELOPMENT BASED ON LOCAL VALUES

(Directed change, or “development”, should be guided by local cultural and spiritual values, priorities, and economic and social traditions. Indigenous and local communities should develop their own priorities and policies to guide change, alleviate poverty, and support self-reliance. All phases of development should be community led.)

## 8. BUILD LATERAL, MULTI-COMMUNITY AND MULTIORGANIZATIONAL

**LINKAGES TO PROMOTE BROAD BASED BIODIVERSITY, ECOSYSTEM AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT.**

(The tasks and responsibilities of stakeholders should be appropriately defined to ensure fair and locally controlled decision-making processes at eco-regional and watershed levels. Appropriate agents should be identified as facilitators that can mediate between local communities, private businesses and government agencies.)

9. **SECURE LAND TENURE** (Local groups need to be assured secure access to the lands on which their knowledge and cosmovisions are based. Forced movement of native communities should be discouraged as being profoundly destructive to the human spirit, as well as to biological and cultural diversity.)

10. **DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL CRITERIA AND INDICATORS FOR ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE** (Along with scientific and technical criteria, participatory methods need to be developed for assessing biodiversity and environmental quality based on local concepts and values. This would enable local communities to play key roles in determining practices based on local information to reinforce local autonomy and cultural security.)

11. **PROMOTE INTRA-COMMUNITY DIALOGUE (RECOGNIZING THAT “COMMUNITY” IS NOT A HOMOGENOUS ENTITY BUT CONTAINS DYNAMIC AND CHANGING GROUPS WITH DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES)** (Promote inter-generational and intra-community dialogue among gender, ethnic and economic groups to ensure the transmission and innovation of indigenous knowledge within communities. Interventions should include methods to ensure equitable participation by all members of the community.)

12. **PROMOTE TRADE AND MARKETS THAT ENHANCE CULTURAL VALUES AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION** (Market arrangements that shorten trade links, promote sustainably harvested local products and improve communication channels should be supported in order to ensure fair prices for products with an equitable stream of benefits to the relevant community members, enable local control of industries, and promote awareness of laws that affect resource use and trade. Strategies should be developed that promote diversification of resource use.)

13. **PROMOTE INTER-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION (DIALOGUE)** (Actions to promote dialogue, mutual understanding and respect include supporting indigenous groups to create mechanisms for exchanging experiences in conserving biological and cultural diversity among communities; sensitizing outsiders through immersion programs so as to bring about changes in attitudes toward indigenous cultures and improve skills in communication; including both indigenous and scientific knowledge in local educational curricula.)

14. ENABLE POLICY DIALOGUE WITH LOCAL PEOPLE (Programs to expose policy makers, officials and NGO staff to the daily life of communities should be supported, in order to allow and support them to reflect their own experiences back into the policy making process. This would also involve establishing mechanisms for multi-stakeholder dialogue, cooperation and conflict management.)

15. ADOPT HOLISTIC SYSTEMS THINKING (This involves finding common ground among scientific, local and political worldviews and careful consideration of the important linkages between culture, nature, and the external socio-political environment. It requires also reorienting science towards the recognition of different ways of knowing and the validity of all knowledge systems.)

## **Specific recommendations**

The CUBIC participants divided into 8 Working Groups in order to effectively develop specific recommendations for the Yunnan Initiative: Visions and Actions for the Enhancement of Biological and Cultural Diversity. These groups and their recommendations are:

- Working group 1: Nature Reserves and Local Communities
- Working group 2: Cosmovision
- Working group 3: Agro-Biodiversity
- Working group 4: Community Based Resource management
- Working group 5: Globalization, Markets and Biodiversity
- Working group 6: Eco-Tourism and Cultural Tourism
- Working group 7: Intercultural dialogue and participatory processes
- Working group 8: Indigenous Resource Rights
- Specific topic: Vernacular Geo-Architecture

## **Working Group 1: Nature reserves and local communities**

### **Introduction**

This working group examined the relationships between nature reserves and indigenous and local communities. Our discussions focused on Yunnan Province in Southwest China, but drew heavily on a breadth of related experiences in other regions of the world. As elsewhere, there is an immediate need to develop an integrated and comprehensive plan for the development and management of Yunnan's nature reserves. This planning process should be part of a regional strategy for developing a green, sustainable economy. It also should include an expanded organizational structure for such "protected" areas, as well as an analysis of the complex roles that tourism is to play in their management. The process must be open to all stakeholders, especially local communities whose livelihoods are directly linked to the natural resource base involved. It is important that protected areas not only benefit the larger society and its need for conservation, but they also must yield direct economic, social, and/or environmental benefits to local communities. The following nine points further elaborate on these issues.

#### **1. The concept of protected areas**

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), of which China and 176 other nations are parties, defines a protected area as "a geographically defined area, which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives." The international framework for protected areas' legislation and policy developed by IUCN, and currently in use in most countries of the world,

defines a protected area as: An area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means [emphasis added].

The IUCN international system of categories for protected area management contains six broad categories, ranging from strict protection to sustainable resource use (see Appendix 1). Whenever they overlap, indigenous and local people and their traditional use of natural and environmental resources are considered to be a key component in the comprehensive, sound management of protected areas. Development of protected area systems that appropriately incorporate local people's values, rights, interests, and roles is not a challenge unique to China; it is a challenge currently facing all countries of the world. This is reflected in the fact that the 176 countries party to the CBD have decided to develop guidelines to: promote the effective participation of indigenous and local communities in decision-making, policy planning and development and implementation of the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity at international, regional, subregional, national and local levels, including (...)the designation and management of protected areas.

## 2. The place of culturally sensitive protected areas in developing a green, sustainable economy

Protected areas are a useful tool for conserving biological and cultural diversity, and therefore can play a critical role in the establishment and strengthening of a green, sustainable economy. The development of an integrated, comprehensive management strategy is essential to ensure that ecological, socio-economic, and cultural objectives are compatible and sustainable. In the context of a multicultural environment, where traditional cultures have evolved in intimate association with nature and biodiversity, protected areas should be:

- sensitive and respectful of cultural values;
- respectful of local peoples' rights and needs related to lands, waters, and natural resources;
- inclusive of local strategies and systems for protecting biodiversity and natural resources;
- inclusive of local strategies and systems for protecting biodiversity and natural resources;
- accountable to development objectives at the national, regional, and local levels; and
- part of a larger national and international strategy for the protection of cultural and biological diversity.

## 3. Traditional values related to nature protection

Belief systems and cultural practices have provided conservation strategies for the management of local resources, such as sacred forests, waters, ritual places, and plant and animal species. Potentially these local practices could enhance and/or contribute to biodiversity conservation. As a consequence, traditional practices must be better understood and respected by all, and incorporated as much as possible into the design and management of protected areas. However, communities are not homogeneous units, and differences related to gender and age need to be considered when examining local practices.

The expansion of market economies is having an impact on many cultural traditions within local communities. A significant consequence of this changing context is the loss of inter-generational transfer of traditional knowledge related to conservation beliefs and practices. This situation will likely cause internal conflicts within communities, which they have not experienced historically.

Successful management strategies for protected areas will depend on ensuring the inter-generational transfer of traditional knowledge; better understanding and integration of women into conservation planning; and, when it occurs, the management of conflict within communities.

#### 4. Management practices

Protected area management plans and practices can significantly benefit from understanding traditional systems for biodiversity conservation. Site specific ecological, socio-economic, and cultural factors need to be incorporated in the development of local protected area management and action plans that are consistent with the broader, regional conservation and development objectives.

When developing and implementing management tools, such as zonation, land use and species-use regulations, and biodiversity monitoring, indigenous knowledge should be incorporated in such a manner that traditional practices and customary land and resource management practices are strengthened in ways consistent with biodiversity conservation objectives.

#### 5. Institutions (government and communities)

In protected areas established partially or totally on lands traditionally used by local communities, management responsibilities should be devolved to, or at least shared with, these communities and their institutions and organizations. Government agencies should be dynamic and flexible so as to adapt effectively to the variety of needs and considerations that may arise at specific sites. Policies and practices must be consistent among different branches and levels of government. In this context, customary institutions of local people should be

strengthened through specific, culturally appropriate capacity-building measures.

Local and area-specific planning and implementation bodies with governing power involving the local communities need to be established. The need for protected areas to become increasingly more self-sufficient is generally recognized. Even so, income-generating activities should not become the primary management objective since such a narrow focus may conflict with conservation strategies. However, variations among different protected areas should be expected, and appropriate mechanisms for fair and equitable sharing of benefits among protected area sites may need to be developed.

#### 6. Access to and use of natural resources

Secure access by local people to lands and resources for traditional uses can enhance and support sustainability and conservation as it strengthens their long-term, cultural attachment to such areas. In fact, there are examples where unclear land tenure rights have promoted poor management practices resulting in the loss of biodiversity. Therefore, the development and management of protected areas must include a consideration of livelihood security for local people by protecting their access to lands and resources in ways that are compatible with the specific conservation goals and objectives of the protected area involved.

#### 7. Products and services

Besides securing access to traditional lands and resources by local people, protected areas are meant to provide a variety of goods and services to the society at large, such as water-catchment protection; biological (including genetic) resources; and opportunities for education, research, and recreation. Protected areas should be designed and managed in ways that assure local people are primary beneficiaries of related goods and services. This is especially critical when local communities are facing economic and/or social marginalization. In addition, appropriate compensation measures should be implemented whenever protected areas adversely impact local people's livelihoods.

#### 8. Environmental education

Traditional lands and resources have been fundamental sources of knowledge and cultural development for local people. Protected areas should support local, traditional educational systems by providing them with opportunities and

tools for communicating nature-related cultural values to younger generations. They also should promote an appropriate understanding of, and respect for, local people's cultural values among visitors and the larger public. Providing sufficient and accurate information to visitors and the public about the biological and cultural values of the protected areas must become a management priority for such lands. Local staff should be trained to effectively interact with visitors about these important issues.

## 9. Tourism

Tourism activities associated with protected areas can be a very important source of revenue and a useful tool for the stimulation of local economies. Tourism in protected areas should primarily benefit local people living in or near these areas. However, the rapid infusion of money and different cultures into a community can disrupt traditional values creating a variety of conflicts within the community. Thus, tourism activities should be organized and managed in ways that are consistent with, and respectful of, both cultural and biological characteristics specific to a protected area. The inclusion of local people in the planning process for tourism development and in the implementation of tourism activities will yield long-term results that are more harmonious with the goals of protecting cultural and biological diversity.

### **Working Groups 2: Cosmovision**

#### **Introduction**

Development proposals are frequently in conflict with community values, practices and belief systems. Prevailing scientific concepts and methods often do not adequately capture the diverse ways of understanding natural, spiritual and social interactions in local indigenous communities. Therefore, research and development proposals should respect prevailing indigenous knowledge systems and respond to needs and future visions identified by local communities. Specific attention should be given to the synergy between indigenous and external knowledge systems to promote and enhance innovations.

#### **Actions**

1. Promotion of appropriate practices to enhance agricultural production in a way that is compatible with local practices, capacities and cosmovisions.
2. Create dialogue and exchange of information on traditional agricultural calendars and seeds between community members and outsiders. This dialogue can help to reduce potential conflicts between development policies and local practices and spiritual/cultural beliefs.
3. Sensitize development agencies about the interdependency between local cosmovisions, agricultural practices and biodiversity.

4. Develop opportunities for exchanges between spiritual leaders within and between regions as a means to support and enhance the vital roles of these leaders.
5. Establish and implement collaborative action research among local spiritual leaders, community members and scientists in the following areas:
  - Development of sustainable practices for the collection of forest products
  - Enhancement of local capacity to set the parameters and rules for tourism activities that are consistent with local values and beliefs
  - The specific roles and activities of women within communities
6. Promote women's participation in decision-making and their access to benefits.

### **Working group 3: Agro-Biodiversity**

#### **Introduction**

Agro-biodiversity is one of the most important resources which indigenous communities should have control over and access to. Agro-biodiversity can be defined as the synergy and interaction between the organisms, land, technology and social organisms that serves to fulfill production goals and livelihood systems.

Agricultural intensification in the past few decades has tended to decrease the biodiversity in farmlands. This threatens the sustainability of farming, which is further affected by ongoing development trends such as the spread of genetically modified crops, increasing dominance of large seed companies, globalization and the increasing integration of small-holders into markets.

Farmers in traditional farming communities use and maintain very diverse genetic resources, which are often closely related to their culture. As part of this, they apply wisdom as well as knowledge and creativity in their management and nurturing of biodiversity. Culture and agro-biodiversity in indigenous and other traditional societies are usually intimately linked and there is consequently a need to address agro-biodiversity also from a cultural perspective. Different cultural contexts provide different perspectives on agro-biodiversity, such as those that emphasize mutual reciprocal relationships and the nurturing of life. This is related to culture, spirituality, humans and nature. Genetic material has its own culture, and the introduction and exchange of new genetic material need cultural integration.

#### **Actions**

- Recognize the role of women in agro-biodiversity management and conservation and take this into account in community work and research.
- Assess the use of genetically modified crops in terms of bio-safety, biodiversity and social implications.

- Ensure equity in trade relations between the signatories of the WTO, e.g. regarding the patents to genetic material and farmers' access to genetic materials.
- Promote balance between marketed and subsistence crops as a means to preserve agro-biodiversity in farming systems.
- Enhance farmers' access to information on national level policies that affect their culture and biodiversity.
- Promote the use of diverse genetic material based on both local and exotic crops.
- Recognize the rationality, relevance and values of traditional farming systems and their place in agro-biodiversity management.
- Cultural aspects should be taken in account when introducing new crops, such as with related crops (crop systems or the crop "family") are introduced. Proper food use should be promoted regarding beliefs, traditions and taboos.
- Strengthen farmers and their institutions in their management of agro-biodiversity.
- Support in situ conservation of agro-biodiversity.
- Gain better understanding of locally developed genetic resources and the associated knowledge developed and maintained by farmers.
- Support diversification in agro-biodiversity and its management.
- Promote underutilized and rarely used agro-biodiversity resources.
- Support local supply and management systems that help preserve and develop local agro-biodiversity systems.
- Create awareness about the close relation of food culture and little used and/or native crops (which are the reserve of agro-biodiversity). Fast food habits will increasingly be based on cash crops that will narrow the food variety and decrease the use of marginal and little used grains and greens, tubers, roots and fruits, so causing harm to the health of people.
- Understand the diverse cultural interpretations of food security to develop site specific strategies to overcome hunger and food scarcity in ways that recognize cultural values.

#### Special note: Agro-biodiversity in the Andean Perspective

- For the Andean people, the cosmos is alive: the earth, sun, plants and rain are experienced as living beings. The world is not divided into live and inert beings.
- The relationship between beings is a nurturing relationship. The human community nurtures nature, while nature nurtures the human community. It is a reciprocal and mutual relationship.
- For example, the nurturing of potatoes is experienced as a relationship of care between persons. Peasant women feel that potato plants are their daughters, sisters or mothers, according to the stage of potato growth. All are nurtured.

- This notion of equivalence is the origin of the great plant diversity in the Andes that is of benefit to Andean as well as to global society.
- Diversity cannot be seen simply as a relationship between humans and nature - the deities and spirits are included also. Earth is a deity, mother earth, from whom permission is asked when one wants to cultivate. A relationship of love and care is established in the space in which nurture takes place, known as la chacra.
- We think it is improper to use the term ‘resource’ to refer to nature, or the term ‘management’ to mean the relationship between humans, nature and deities. Can we ‘manage’ the mother?

## **Working group 4: Community Based Resource management**

### **Introduction**

Experiences shared at the CUBIC Congress show that in some countries governments have played major roles in determining local resource management, while in others communities have taken on the major resource management role. Everywhere, communities have been learning how to manage their resources in their own local context. These experiences show that communities can learn on their own and that their learning can be strengthened with good facilitation. Experiences also show that there are significant differences in the interests and understandings of different stakeholders regarding natural resource management and the role of culture. There are often wide gaps between the understandings of government and local people. The perceptions within communities too are neither homogeneous nor static, and conflicts within communities as well as between community and outside agents are all too common. As local communities and community sub-groups deal with a rapidly changing world, many new issues present themselves, such as farmland being lost to urban expansion or population growth contributing to the degradation of local natural resources. In order to support communities to deal with these new challenges, we propose the following principles and actions.

### **Principles**

Environmental protection cannot be achieved through formal declarations alone, such as policy bans on exploitation of certain resources or on the use of resources in certain areas.

- A range of local interests need to be taken into account in all efforts aimed at improving community-based natural resource management and environmental protection, including the interests of governments at different levels, local people, and in some cases international interests.
- Efforts to conserve community resources should also take into account local contexts and variations between local contexts, the capacities of the

implementing agents and should consider approaches to conflict management where appropriate.

- Attention should be paid to inter-generational issues within communities.
- The aim of interventions in support of community-based natural resource management should be the enhancement of local communities' livelihoods and well-being based on their own indigenous knowledge about resource use.
- The introduction of new technologies or management strategies requires effective training, impact assessment, follow-up, facilitation and long term commitment.

### **Actions**

- Facilitate communities to develop indigenous indicators of environment and resource change, including biodiversity, land cover, migration, water, climate and so on.
- Support the improvement of effective relationships between local community and agricultural and forestry extension services.
- Support the establishment of local resource management associations in order to improve their influence and control over resource use and allocation.
- Develop the skills of facilitators to support the capacity building of local government and local people.
- Use modern communication media to inform villagers of available resources, commodity prices and environmental laws originating outside the village.
- Enhance and support traditional information channels.
- Support inter-generational learning processes to transmit indigenous knowledge and promote innovations.
- Support efforts to limit corruption in order to improve the effectiveness of the implementation of government policies.

## **Working Group 5: Globalization, Markets and Biodiversity**

### **Developing a Green Economy**

#### **Principles**

1. Priority should be given to the development of ecological and cultural capital alongside the development of economic consumption levels. Continually pursuing increases in economic consumption will inevitably conflict with the conservation of valuable ecological and cultural resources, unless these values are built into measures of economic progress.

2. A green economy should strive to make the most out of the potential of its human resources.

Enhancement of human and social capital resources, including the provision of productive employment opportunities for all, should be priorities in developing a green economy.

3. Policy research and policy formulation should utilize holistic systems thinking. Treat problems in a larger context as connected parts of a whole. Search for symbiotic relationships among different problems.

4. Green economic production must be connected to the already large and growing green products markets. The market of customers looking for products that promote health and sustainability is estimated to be 50 million people and 227 billion dollars in the U.S. alone. It is even larger in Europe. There is strong growth potential in these areas, as well as Asia and other areas.

5. Business should focus on minimizing the use of resources to meet needs rather than maximizing consumption. There are many models and mechanisms that can foster the creation of a business culture that aims to minimize resource use.

6. Strive to become a model of green development. Conscious striving on the part of all stakeholders to become a model of successful green development has been a key to the development experience of Curitiba, Brazil over the past 30 years.

### **General actions**

1. Develop research centers focusing on various aspects of green development. Important focuses for research include the development of technologies, market institutions and policy mechanisms to improve the utilization of ecological and cultural resources at the same time as contributing to economic development.

2. Develop policies and policy mechanisms to promote the beneficial and sustainable utilization of resources. While technologies to promote energy efficiency have been developed, associated mechanisms to encourage their adoption need to be implemented. Other sectors that also should be considered include water resource management, waste treatment, agricultural inputs, building materials and design and transportation.

3. Develop mechanisms to ensure that communities benefit from the utilization of resources. A balance should be sought in the allocation of benefits between large enterprises and communities and their local economies.

4. Create policies and related mechanisms to protect Intellectual Property Rights, including the resource rights of local communities.

### **Markets and local communities**

Global and regional markets can have both positive and negative impacts on biodiversity and local cultures. The potential for income generation for local

community members is of course one potential positive impact. However, the commoditization of locally available products (including intangible products such as culture) does not ensure that local communities will benefit in an equitable and sustainable manner. Issues to consider in this regard include:

- **Benefit-sharing:** Strengthening local participation in biodiversity and tourism management, particularly through development of mechanisms to better involve local communities in benefit-sharing, is one necessary pre-condition for the sustainable utilization of biodiversity and cultural resources.
- **Access to markets:** The need to take positive action to ensure that local communities have access to markets, for example by providing information on prices, purchasers, technologies and creating institutional arrangements that shorten trade links.
- **Sustainable harvesting:** Price volatility can have rapid impacts on producers' behavior, resulting for example in the rapid over-collection of NTFPs and other products. Knowledge and mechanisms to ensure the sustainable harvesting of NTFPs may include price regulations, creation of marketing organizations and the introduction of appropriate harvesting techniques and technologies.
- **Supporting creation of markets for sustainable products:** Increase the understanding of both local people and potential consumers about the sustainable use of natural resources through public education efforts aimed at producers and consumers. This would be essential in order to create outside markets that can sustain local cultures and biological resources.

## **Working group 6: Eco-Tourism And Cultural Tourism**

### **Principles**

- All tourism planning activities should actively include all relevant stakeholders, including governments, businesses, NGOs, and local communities, in order to promote better mutual understanding and cooperation.
- Eco-tourism should be community-based, meaning that planning, development and management of activities should incorporate the active participation of local communities.
- Communities should be encouraged to share in the benefits of tourism. Mechanisms to reduce leakage to outside tourism operators should be established.
- Cultural heritage, indigenous knowledge, biodiversity should be protected and sustained.
- Inter-cultural dialogue should be encouraged between tourists and communities.
- Mechanisms for tourists and tourism operators to support biodiversity conservation and cultural protection should be established.

### **Actions**

## 1. Regional Tourism Master Plans

a) Research for Master Plans should include discussions with local communities about the positive and negative impacts of tourism and a collaborative analysis with these communities on their collective interest in developing tourism in their area. Establish linkages with NGOs, local governments, research institutes and universities.

b) Master Plans should include mandates for biodiversity and cultural protection.

c) Master Plans should plan for a diversity of tourism experiences, such as sustainable mass tourism, cultural tourism and eco-tourism opportunities.

## 2. Site Management Plans

a) Site Management Plans should include three primary components:

- i. Natural Resources Management Plan
- ii. Cultural Resources Management Plan
- iii. Tourism Management Plan

b) Natural and Cultural Resources Management Plans should begin with an analysis of the site's natural and cultural resources and then propose recommendations for the effective management of these resources, such as designation of recreational zones, multiple-use zones, and wilderness areas.

c) Tourism Management Plans should include an analysis of the tourist carrying capacity of the site and recommend mechanisms for minimizing tourist impacts.

d) Collection of entrance fees/donations should be encouraged.

## 3. Certification of local operators and guides

a) Certification programs should require hiring and training of local people and training in environmental and cultural sensitivity.

b) Certification programs should also require tourism operators to make direct contributions to biodiversity conservation and cultural protection.

c) Design of certification programs should include the active participation of all stakeholders, especially local communities, and should aim to establish an independent certification process that encourages biodiversity conservation and cultural protection.

#### 4. Establishment and support of local NGOs

- a) Local NGOs can assist in educating local communities about the potential impacts of tourism and in actively participating in the tourism planning process.
- b) Local NGOs can also assist in training local people in tourism services.

#### 5. Training and education

- a) Training in tourism management, nature interpretation, and other tourism services should be provided to local communities to increase their capacity to manage and operate tourism activities.
- b) Environmental and cultural education opportunities should be provided for all relevant tourism stakeholders, including tourists, communities, governments, and businesses.

#### 6. Tourism Codes of Conduct

- a) Tourist Codes of Conduct should be developed by local communities that provide guidelines to tourists on culturally and environmentally appropriate behaviors and activities.

b) These Codes of Conduct should also help promote meaningful intercultural communication, and contribute to the discouragement of negative impacts of tourism, such as begging and littering.

### **Working Group 7: Intercultural dialogue and participatory processes**

#### **Introduction**

1. While being linked in with external institutions and processes, most traditional and rural communities have organized themselves through local social, political and spiritual institutions based on indigenous knowledge, practices and innovations. These institutions and their leaders play important roles in the management of ecological and cultural resources, but these institutions and leaders are not always easily observed by outsiders. Indigenous knowledge, practices and innovations are closely related to spiritual concepts, beings and practices. Research and development agencies, on the other hand, are often based on the segmentation of specialized approaches to specific technical domains or disciplines, often resulting in inappropriate policies and practices. Efforts that take local knowledge, resources and values seriously should therefore understand, respect and address natural, social and spiritual dimensions. Understanding of indigenous cosmovisions can only be achieved through engagement in inter-cultural dialogue processes.

2. Therefore, we affirm the need for inter-cultural dialogue in efforts to enhance biodiversity and equitable well-being. Inter-cultural dialogue refers to dialogue between rural-urban, inter-ethnic, intergenerational and between different sectors of society. Intercultural dialogue also refers to communication

between cultures, nature and the spiritual world. Each culture has its own knowledge system and method of communication.

Through inter-cultural dialogue, different groups - and socially and culturally marginalized groups in particular - should be allowed to play key roles in making decisions about biological and cultural resources, in order to ensure the improvement of the well-being of local inhabitants as understood in their own terms. Biodiversity conservation in turn is a key to enhanced well-being. The preservation and intergenerational transfer of culture and indigenous knowledge, practices and innovations is a precondition for inter-cultural dialogue.

### **Principles and Actions**

Ethical principles for action:

1. Awareness of our own biases, deriving from the cultures of government, science and development of which we are part, is a precondition for dialogue and learning with other cultures.
2. A commitment to building sincere human relationships with people of other groups and cultures.
3. Taking responsibility for our own roles, actions and the outcomes that result from cooperation with communities.

Strategic actions:

1. Establish legal frameworks that require and create space for popular participation.
2. Train inter-cultural facilitators to support the dialogue between villagers and outsiders.
3. Exposure programs for policy makers, officials, NGO staff and villagers to the daily life of communities, in order to allow them to reflect their own experiences back into the policy making process.
4. Reorient government and development agency training programs to support the enhancement of biological and cultural diversity.
5. Implement a rights-based approach to bio- and cultural diversity enhancement, in keeping with the legal and political framework of each country.
6. Inter-community visits and on-site exchanges.
7. Support programs that include both cultural self-education and intercultural dialogue with outsiders, combining traditional and modern education methods.
8. Support enhancement of the capacity of indigenous communities to test, adapt and innovate on external knowledge in ways that complement local indigenous knowledge, practices and innovations.

Principles for inter-cultural dialogue processes:

1. Inter-cultural dialogue processes require two-way communication, not just one-way learning of indigenous knowledge by outsiders.
2. Meaningful inter-cultural dialogue must be based on mutual trust and respect.
3. Inter-cultural dialogue processes require a long-term commitment to interactions that nurture mutual understanding.
4. Community members should control the dialogue process.
5. Community capacity enhancement and organization are essential for sustaining long-term endogenous development and the enhancement of biological and cultural diversity.
6. Make sure mutual expectations are realistic and clearly understood.
7. Involve traditional political and spiritual leaders.

#### Methods for inter-cultural dialogue:

1. Inter-cultural dialogue requires participatory approaches.
  2. The achievement of meaningful dialogue is more important than the application of participatory methods.
  3. The diversity within communities should be taken into account.
  4. Use a variety of appropriate (verbal and non-verbal) communication methods, including traditional and modern methods.
  5. Agree upon key areas on which to focus communication.
  6. Ensure that tools are appropriate in terms of:
    - Costs to local people
    - Local capacity to maintain information management systems
    - Relevance and effectiveness
- Comprehensibility across cultures

### **Working group 8: Indigenous Resource Rights**

#### **Principles**

Cultural and biological diversity depend upon respect for the integrity of indigenous cultures and the rights of indigenous and traditional peoples to maintain control over their cultural institutions, lands and territories, language and knowledge systems. To do this requires recognition of the:

- Holistic nature of indigenous and local cultures.
- Complexity of indigenous cultures, including internal, gender, and inter-generational differences and specializations.
- Local capacity for learning and change, including the right to endogenous development, education, and natural resource management.
- Context specific aspects of society that link knowledge and biodiversity with cultural landscapes.

– Policy and legislation requirements, including development of adequate legal systems to protect traditional resources, while enhancing the ability of local communities to maximize the use of their own cultural and biological resources.

**Specific recommendations in connection with WTO/CBD are:**

1. Establishment of a time-frame for the creation of sui generis system(s), with reference to Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights or more suitable legal frameworks for the protection of the knowledge, innovations, and practices of indigenous and local communities.
2. Establishment of means to enhance local control over traditional resources, including mechanisms to ensure adequate benefit-sharing from the wider use and application of indigenous and local knowledge, innovations, and practices.
3. Limit access to indigenous knowledge systems until appropriate and adequate sui generis systems are developed by governments and appropriate international agencies, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, World Trade Organization, UNESCO, and World Intellectual Property Organization.
4. Establish political guidelines and laws that legitimize, encourage, and require local communities' involvement in natural resource management and other programs, plans and policies that affect local communities and their cultures, knowledge systems, languages and societies.

**Strategy**

Means to achieve the goal of recognition of indigenous and traditional people's Resource Rights must include:

- Strengthening of partnerships between local government and local peoples
- Establishment of wider networks and linkages among indigenous peoples, NGOs, universities, local governments for broader based ecosystem management
- Development of institutions to enhance learning processes for improved exchange of IK and practices
- Capacity building for local government, and NGOs to improve communication and collaboration with local communities, as well as to work in partnership to develop effective mechanisms to protect traditional resource rights
- Establishment of institutions and legal mechanisms to ensure that decision making involves strong community presentation and contextual action
- Use of education and awareness-raising to increase public understanding of the importance of traditional knowledge in effective conservation of biological and cultural diversity

**Research, Documentation and Analysis**

There is a need for more extensive research and documentation of indigenous knowledge in relation to natural resource management activities, projects and policies. This requires linking research to decision-making and actions. Priorities for research and documentation include:

- Assessment of changes in indigenous knowledge, innovations and practices
- Importance of effective participatory social and environmental assessment
- The development of criteria and indicators for monitoring and evaluating social and environmental change that is based upon local knowledge and perceptions.
- Establishment of policies, legislation, and ethical guidelines to ensure that local and indigenous communities can protect their traditional resources (including land and territory, as well as knowledge and genetic resources), while benefiting equitably from the wider use and application of their knowledge, innovations, and practices.

**Specific topic: Vernacular Geo-Architecture, Vernacular geo-architecture, cultures and biodiversity**

## **Introduction**

Vernacular geo-architecture consists of a wide range of architectural heritages whose value has been gradually recognized all over the globe and which contributes greatly to the world's bio-resources and bio-cultural diversity. Vernacular geo-architecture can be defined as the cultural and technological heritage of ancestral and traditional building processes whose common feature is the use of geo-materials - renewable and ecologically non-detrimental resources such as earth, wood and/or bamboo building materials. The interrelationship between biodiversity and cultural diversity has been demonstrated in many parts of the world. The buildings that make up this heritage bear witness to a living popular heritage. This is a patrimony not only of know-how but also a heritage of the sophisticated and subtle architectural design of space, all of which are reflections of the cultures that have engendered them. Geo-architectural cultures are in close symbiosis with nature and the ways of life that give rise to them and which they contribute to perpetuate. It is therefore necessary to defend the plurality and diversity of these geo-architectural cultures, at both the local and international levels.

## **Actions**

### **1. Raising awareness**

The diversity and wealth of vernacular architecture has been threatened by the unprecedented acceleration of urbanization processes in the last century. In many parts of the world, including in indigenous territories, this fabulous dwelling heritage may deteriorate within a few years. Academic, social and

political action are urgently needed to raise awareness at the local, regional, national and international levels.

## 2. Protection through development

In order to protect vernacular geo-architecture heritage, it is important to promote a 'conservation-development' approach to ensure the continuity of the building and conservation know-how, at the same time as improving inhabitants' living conditions.

## 3. Work and experiment in model sites

Model sites should be selected by common consent with the inhabitants, in which to experiment with new holistic ways of geo-architectural heritage 'conservation-development'.

## 4. Advocacy, extension and implementation

Co-operation from local to international levels is essential to support vernacular geo-architecture 'conservation-development' programs. Advocacy and extension are necessary to implement effective regulations and constructive projects.

## 5. Living popular heritage for new modernity

In many parts of the world, the geo-architectural legacy from the past is continued as a living practice that is continually regenerated and built. So vernacular geo-architectural heritage ought to be regarded as a dynamic and very contemporary 'living heritage' that reflects the multi-cultural character of ethnic diversity, and not as a mere remnant of the past.

## 6. Endogenous processes

A key to conserving and transmitting geo-architectural heritage is to give priority to the role of the dwellers and inhabitants who are directly concerned with this patrimony, either because they continue to develop it or because they ensure its maintenance, occupy or live in its proximity. This new understanding emphasizes first of all the need for a process of socio-cultural valorization and transmission. This implies the need for a socio-technical approach that can ensure the survival of local knowledge systems, their continuity and development. This can be described as 'endogenous conservation-development'.

## 7. Sites conservatories

As a form of effective action, we propose the in-situ creation of geo-architecture 'site conservatories'. In contrast to purely conservative approaches, these 'site conservatories' evoke the idea of 'music conservatories.' They are conceived of as privileged places meant as much for art and capitalization of traditional knowledge, as for daily practice, improvement and creativity. The 'site conservatories' should be shaped as special places meant

not only for conservation, transmission and training, but also for innovation and development.

#### 8. Tourism and protection of traditional architecture

The rapid development of new domestic and international tourism activities such as eco-tourism which promote ecological and multi-cultural values, is an important factor in the preservation of vernacular geo-architecture in symbiosis with nature and the environment. Run on equity principles, the incomes generated by these new forms of tourism must also contribute to the conservation-development of human settlements, and the improvement of local living conditions, in particular the dwellings and facilities. It is important to establish ethical codes of conduct for the tourism stakeholders, including tourists and authorities, to guarantee absolute respect for local traditions, cultural identity and home privacy, especially in the case of mass tourism.

#### 9. Curriculum design for inter-cultural and multi-cultural learning

The wealth and diversity of vernacular geo-architecture is a significant teaching aid for curriculum design for inter-cultural and multi-cultural learning. It is necessary to develop a new reading of traditional habitats that better reflect their real value within current contexts.

#### 10. Cross-visits

We must promote the active role of vernacular geo-architecture heritage in maintaining indigenous knowledge and practices, and also in supporting and promoting inter-cultural exchanges and immersion travels, especially between ethnic groups, minority peoples and communities from rural and urban worlds.

#### 11. Designing culturally and ecologically articulated architecture

Vernacular geo-architecture, because of its close relationship with biological and cultural diversity represents an inestimable legacy for the design of culturally and ecologically based architecture. The need for these architectural approaches today is great owing to their roles in saving energy and non-renewable resources, and in reducing direct and indirect pollution.

#### Regional strategies

The CUBIC Participants recognized that political, social, economic and cultural conditions vary greatly from region to region. Therefore, specific strategy

recommendations were developed for the following regions: Andes South Asia  
Africa  
Australia South-East Asia Yunnan Action Andes

### Position of the Andean Group

The group of Central Andean participants share completely and subscribe to the principles and actions proposed in The Yunnan Initiative. We commit to disseminate the results and conclusions of the CUBIC Congress. During the ten days of the CUBIC Congress, we have been able to share our knowledge and experiences through the community visits and the different events held in Kunming. These experiences confirm our belief that it is possible to realize inter-cultural dialogue in order to strengthen the cultural and biological diversity on earth. Nevertheless, we feel it is necessary to point out the particularities of certain approaches of the Andean countries. In particular, for Andean peoples, the relationship of human beings with nature and deities is considered as a whole, and as a relationship between living beings. In the Andes everything has life, and a mutual and reciprocal respect and love exists between all beings. (See also the section above on agro-biodiversity.)

Therefore, regarding the nurturing of cultural and biological diversity, the Andean group will seek to realize several actions that depart from The Yunnan Initiative, which should strengthen efforts at the local, regional and national levels.

### Action Proposals

– South-South exchange of experiences (between Chinese, Andeans, Mayas, Hindus, Africans and Australians) as part of a process of mutual and reciprocal learning. – Strengthening and broadening of training and research programs for pre- and post-grade studies on the revival of indigenous and peasant knowledge and about biodiversity with an inter-cultural dialogue perspective.

– Diffusion and systematization of Andean wisdom and technologies. We have prepared a publication of a data base developed by various peasant communities and institutions from Peru and Bolivia.

Promotion of a food culture based on little used native Andean crops through participatory courses and workshops with community leaders and school teachers, both women and men, in urban and rural conditions, with cultural and local specific messages, as a way to enhance the contribution of these crops to food security.

### Specific Activities

Dissemination of The Yunnan Initiative through different communication media:

- Journal Hoja a Hoja of the Latin American Agroecology Movement (MAELA)
- Journal Biodiversidad (Grain and Amigos de la Tierra)

- Journal Forests, Trees and People (FAO-FTTP)
- Boletín de Agroecología y Saber Campesino (AGRUCO).
- COMPAS Newsletter (special edition).

#### Process of Analysis and Reflection:

- Workshop of MAELA on biodiversity and ‘in situ’ conservation
- Latin American workshop of COMPAS in Cochabama, Bolivia, about biodiversity and transgenics.
- Permanent reflection in the program of academic study on peasant agriculture in Peru and Bolivia as part of the Masters program on Agro-ecology, Culture and Sustainable Development in the Andes (3rd version in Bolivia).

## South Asia

### Introduction

South Asia including Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region stretches from Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh to part of Myanmar and Southwest China. It is home to many tribal or indigenous cultural people and fauna and flora. Their environments and livelihoods are threatened by an increasing population and socioeconomic marginalization.

### Actions

Participants from the South Asian and Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region would like to promote the maintenance of the biological and cultural diversity in the region through the following actions:

1. Assess the potentials of indigenous knowledge, innovations and practices for sustainable community development.
2. Develop strategies for livelihood and food security in fragile mountain environments based on indigenous knowledge, innovations and practices, and local materials.
3. Conserve agro-biodiversity, genetic resources and sustaining practices in the local agro-ecosystems of mountain environments.
4. Establish benefits sharing mechanisms and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) arrangement for indigenous communities.
5. Develop participatory approaches to work with indigenous peoples for the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources.
6. Enhance farmers’ capacity for small-scale enterprise development through adding value to local biodiversity.
7. Improve access to information on the marketing of mountain products for marginal social groups through farmer’s networking and exchange visits.

## **Africa**

### **Introduction**

Lack of appreciation of the indigenous knowledge, culture and cosmovisions of the African peoples and of the role of traditional institutions is a major threat to cultural and biological diversity in Africa and to the quality of African natural resources. This lack of appreciation must be addressed in order for development efforts and the local management of natural resources to be sustainable in Africa.

### **Relationship to other African and global initiatives**

The Yunnan Initiative strengthens the African initiatives to Enhance Indigenous Agricultural Knowledge in Africa (ENIACA) and embraces the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCB) in its recognition of the role of indigenous knowledge and traditional institutions and in respecting their cultural and spiritual values as a means to achieve sustainable endogenous development.

### **Action**

Governments, scientific institutions, NGO's and CBO's, traditional institutions and communities are called upon to take the necessary initiatives to enhance indigenous African knowledge and culture and thus to protect the biodiversity and natural resources.

These initiatives can include the following:

1. Local, national, regional and Pan-African workshops to appreciate and assess the situation of indigenous knowledge, culture and traditional institutions and their relationship with the erosion of biodiversity and natural resources and to formulate focused action plans.
2. Advocate for policy reforms for Africa by respective governments to recognize traditional institutions, their cultures, rights, values, norms and cosmovisions and the roles of these in natural resource management.
3. Demonstrate and enhance the applicability of indigenous knowledge and cosmovisions in the management of biodiversity and natural resources.
4. Undertake participatory research to document African indigenous knowledge, culture and cosmovisions with a view to integrating the findings into educational systems and all other development initiatives.
5. Raise and mobilize financial, material and human resources locally, nationally and internationally in order to realize these goals.
6. Develop and promote innovative systems by which indigenous knowledge and cultures and traditional institutions can contribute to sustainable development in the local communities.

## **Australia**

## Regional Report

Both indigenous and non indigenous people from Australia have participated in CUBIC 2000 and we have been invited to describe how we see the Australian situation in relation to biological and cultural diversity. In particular, three issues are discussed below, which have been common themes at the Congress. At the outset we wish to acknowledge and pay our respects to the indigenous owners of the places where the Congress has been meeting. We also thank the Chinese government leaders, indigenous and local community members, fellow CUBIC 2000 delegates, and the organizers and support staff, who together have made this Congress a stimulating and productive experience, and we thanks our sponsors for enabling us to attend.

Indigenous delegates from Australia consider that although the political institutions and geography of their traditional country and Yunnan differ, issues for local people are very much the same. These include how to direct their own development in ways that support cultural survival, including traditional knowledge, customs, language, art and traditional systems of land management that aim to protect biodiversity and provide for improvements in peoples' livelihood. As indigenous peoples who have been colonized and who have never ceded their sovereignty, indigenous nations of Australia struggle to achieve their human rights as individuals and as peoples.

Australia is the only 'developed' country represented in the regional reports being presented here. Australia's developed country status has been achieved at the cost of its indigenous peoples. This has also happened in other developed countries, such as the USA. Health, life expectancy, education and income indicators of Australian indigenous peoples are amongst the worst in the world. Australia's human rights record is currently the subject of review and criticism by the United Nations Committee on Racial Discrimination (CERD) as a result of Australian government action to extinguish indigenous peoples' common law property rights. Australia's pro-development and free market stance in relation to natural resources continues to threaten indigenous cultural landscapes, for example through industrial uranium mining. Recently the World Heritage

Committee was asked to consider listing one of our World Heritage Listed Areas as 'in danger' because of potential threats to both the ecological and cultural landscapes. Indigenous human rights issues are the subject of on-going legal action and negotiations between indigenous and dominant cultures and institutions. Cultural diversity is important to Australia's national identity. Indigenous cultural diversity has a key place in this because it represents original and ongoing relationships between people and Australia's biodiversity. There is a large and growing 'grass roots' movement in Australia, which supports reconciliation between non-indigenous and indigenous peoples and is opposed to those government actions that have impacted adversely on the realization of indigenous human rights. Like all other countries, Australia needs to develop new approaches to culture and biodiversity conservation. Notwithstanding the urgent and critical problems Australia faces because of the

poverty and marginalization of its indigenous peoples and denial of their human rights, Australian delegates to CUBIC 2000 agree that there are some good developments emerging in parts of Australia. These have developed because indigenous people have lobbied governments strongly, raised international awareness of their situation, and acted strategically, using legal action to promote recognition of their rights. Each advancement for indigenous peoples human rights in Australia has come from legal challenges at the highest judicial level, including the Mabo No. 2 case of 1992 (native title), the Croker Island case (sea rights), and the Yanner case (common law traditional hunting and gathering rights).

### Promoting market benefits

Indigenous products and services related to culture and biodiversity have an important and growing role in the Australian economy, particularly in tourism and the arts. Innovations, policies and laws which establish and promote a market advantage for these are critical. Australian approaches to these issues do not yet recognize or provide effective protection for indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights.

However, some positive actions in regional parts of Australia or nationally include:

- authenticity certification for indigenous services and products
- marketing cooperatives
- community owned and managed art, craft and cultural education centers
- training and certification of tourist operators, including the question of how indigenous peoples and their traditional lands are represented and presented to tourists
- national strategies for maintenance of languages and for development of indigenous tourism and arts
- government support for development of indigenous tourism and craft enterprises and for training of indigenous people in these industries
- indigenous control of tourist access to indigenous owned land, commercial photography and filming, and research and publication, through permit systems operated by indigenous land-owning organizations
- laws and management systems directed at protection of places, features and landscapes of significance to indigenous peoples.

### Rethinking the role of science

Colonial and scientific approaches to natural resource use have typically developed without reference to indigenous peoples and their local knowledge systems. This is an important underlying factor in the environmental crises that Australia currently faces. Dialogues between biological scientists and indigenous peoples are critical to processes of building a common language for

addressing issues of cultures and biodiversity. However the most devastating impacts on cultures and biodiversity arise from decisions taken by politicians and their economic and other policy advisers. Dynamic engagement of people from many disciplines and backgrounds in culture and biodiversity issues is necessary if these impacts are to be reversed or moderated. Amongst 'western' learning systems, the humanities should not be excluded from this. For example, in the traditions of 'western' thought and philosophy provides the ethical basis for human action. Recently in Australia, dialogues between philosophers and indigenous spiritual leaders have been building respectful relationships, while the discipline of history has been critical to transforming public understandings of the impacts of colonization. 'Two way learning' between scientists and indigenous peoples has begun to develop in Australia and synergies are starting to emerge - that is, new knowledge systems that are more effective in addressing contemporary environmental problems than either science or indigenous knowledge alone. Australian experience is that 'two way learning' processes revitalize indigenous cultures and knowledge systems, encourage intergenerational learning in indigenous communities and strengthen indigenous community institutions.

'Two way learning' involves experts from a range of disciplines working as facilitators in indigenous communities, often employed or contracted by those communities and directing participatory research on issues of importance to those communities. Ethical standards and agreements about the research process and about publication/dissemination of results are necessary to ensure that these processes are conducted appropriately, including protection of indigenous cultural and intellectual property. Various universities, research grant agencies, indigenous organizations and policy advisory bodies have developed standards for equitable, collaborative research processes.

To be effective workers in this new paradigm, scientists need to be skilled facilitators and community developers. Changes to curricula in universities are introducing these skills and are also promoting learning about indigenous cultures from indigenous people. Involvement of indigenous people in presenting in scientific forums is further promoting recognition of the need for scientists to have these skills. It is also imperative for indigenous peoples, as they again retain control of their lands, to have access to expert and technical advice that informs and enhances their traditional land management practices.

### Innovative and dynamic interactions

Australia provides many examples of innovative and fruitful interactions between indigenous peoples and the people and institutions of dominant cultures, although the outcomes from most of these examples remain localized. The return of some lands to indigenous peoples and the recent, though compromised, legal recognition of native title (indigenous customary law for land and natural resources) are critical bases for the effectiveness of all other interactions. These other interactions include:

- Negotiation of agreements for co-management of land and for multiple uses of land.
- Development by indigenous landowners of new institutions, which integrate indigenous and scientific approaches to contemporary land and resource management.
- Collaborative biological surveys conducted by scientists and indigenous people and development of collaborative approaches to key human interactions with ecological processes, such as fire management.
- Collaborative development of management frameworks for protected areas that are based on indigenous spiritual and cultural relationships to land and natural resources.
- Indigenous landowners' actions in formally designating areas of their land as protected areas and managing these to IUCN standards.
- Development by indigenous groups of conservation plans for species which they hunt.
- Collaborative research programs that work to break down the barriers between scientific research and traditional knowledge systems (e.g.: CRC Rainforest, Cairns).

## **Conclusion**

These specific actions to develop new approaches to culture and biodiversity issues will not be effective in addressing on going conflicts between indigenous customary law and non-indigenous systems of property rights and resource use unless they are based on enduring recognition of indigenous human rights as individuals and as peoples. Australian delegates have appreciated the opportunity to learn from Yunnan's experiences of issues related to cultures and biodiversity. We welcome people from other countries to visit Australia to learn of our experiences with these issues and are sure that Australian government and non-government organizations would also welcome and support this learning process, as they have supported our participation in this Congress.

## **South-East Asia**

### **Introduction**

SE-Asia, including the mountainous regions of SW-China, possesses an outstanding cultural and natural diversity. More than 100 different ethnic minorities are located in this region, mostly inhabiting the marginal mountain areas. At the same time this region exhibits extremely high variation in climates, plants and animals, giving it a global significance as a center of domestication of crops and genetic diversity.

### **Actions:**

We propose the following actions to support the formation of alliances for the benefit of cultures and nature:

Networking:

- Establish a consultation process between the main actors in each country and in the region, to improve the exchange of experiences and ideas through a practical networking activity.
- Support indigenous people to network (formally and informally), and support farmer-to-farmer or innovator-to-innovator programs at national and regional levels.
- Strengthen regional exchange networks by improving the use of Internet tools (e.g. SUAN, ARTN, CBIK, REPSI, MMSEA, SAMUTE)

Local initiatives:

- Establish contacts and support programs (R&D) to local indigenous initiatives for the improvement of watershed management, land use, biodiversity and livelihood enhancement.

1. Thematic focuses: Develop specific areas of research and development activities in alliance with indigenous communities and scientists, such as:

- reinforcement of indigenous knowledge related to land use, agrobiodiversity and agroforestry in mountain watersheds

- indigenous innovations and alternatives to shifting cultivation
- interaction of indigenous local knowledge with markets, policy and “science”
- indigenous ethnobotanists, cooperation with indigenous innovators, for local sustainable uses of biological resources and conservation of cultural and biological diversity
- design and implementation of bilingual education approaches for community based resource management and conservation
- recognition of herbal medicine and revival of traditional healing systems.

2. Capacity building:

- Support capacity building of indigenous people, development workers and academic researchers through non-formal and formal opportunities based on an innovative adult education approaches
- Establish an “alternative” scientific knowledge institution for the region
- Set up a regional exchange program among countries in the region (involving Kunming, Chiang Mai, Hanoi, etc.) to offer degree courses in 'unconventional' science or different kinds of knowledge systems (alternative degrees for local scholars).

3. Advocacy: Develop an advocacy program to sensitize politicians, donor agencies and local authorities about the importance of the linkages between cultural and natural diversity:

- Broaden exchange within the ASEAN Region to create a supporting environment that overlaps with enabling policies
- Raise ASEAN's consideration of relevant issues concerning culture and biodiversity with a focus on local participation and empowerment
- Recognize the regional problem of trans-boundary exploitation (e.g. logging, medicinal plant trade, etc.)

4. Dissemination:

- Provide and support the provision of a variety of material (manuals, books, discussion papers, multimedia, dictionaries, school books, campaigns) based on the experiences in the field, recognizing the importance of 'local voices'
- Organize seed fairs and innovator exchange workshops in the field to promote the dissemination of sustainable land use practices, alternative health programs, genetic material and diversified crops and plants for subsistence, processing and marketing

5. Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish a practical means of regular exchange and coordination between support groups and local initiatives to continuously improve efforts to support indigenous cultures and biodiversity.

#### Yunnan Action

1. We fully recognize that the Yunnan Provincial Government has contributed significantly to cultural and biodiversity conservation. We wholeheartedly approve of the government's resolve to establish Yunnan as a Green Economy Province and a Great Ethnic Culture Province.

2. We call for further cooperation to promote cultural and biodiversity conservation in different sectors and regions. We recommend that institutions such as the Yunnan Eco-Cultural Forum (YECF) be institutionalized to facilitate such cooperation. Members of the YECF should include representatives from Yunnan governments at all levels, international organizations, various academic disciplines, communities, and NGOs.

3. We are aware of the fragility of the natural environment and ethnic culture in Yunnan. We strongly suggest that cultural and biodiversity conservation be taken into consideration in the course of economic development, poverty alleviation, infrastructure development programs and other projects. Mechanisms should be devised to monitor the cultural and environmental impacts caused by large scale projects and policies.

4. We fully support the sustainable development strategies launched by Yunnan Provincial Government. We appeal to the public including entrepreneurs and consumers to join the government's efforts in environmental protection and cultural preservation. We strongly suggest the relevant governmental

departments establish appropriate certification agencies to regulate companies, trade marks and products.

5. We fully realize that there are intricate and close links between biodiversity and cultural diversity in Yunnan; therefore, we advocate in situ biodiversity conservation within peoples' indigenous cultural and ecological systems. We suggest integrating traditional medical systems into health care systems for indigenous peoples so as to achieve sustainable utilization of medicinal plants. We highly appreciate Yunnan bio-resources germplasm conservation projects sponsored by the Chinese Government, and we call on the public to support bio-resources germplasm research, conservation and development in Yunnan. Indigenous peoples should be given priority in benefiting from commercial development.

6. We suggest establishing a permanent training and research institute to train multi-disciplinary personnel to engage in cultural and biodiversity conservation. Relevant disciplines include ethnobotany, ecology, anthropology, linguistics, geology, regional planning and economics. Meanwhile, courses and textbooks in different languages should be developed to transmit indigenous knowledge and traditional culture.

7. We plead to continue to undertake participatory research, planning, monitoring and management in cultural and biodiversity conservation. We hope international agencies and governments at all levels will help local governments and communities enhance capacities and create innovative mechanisms. We recommend mechanisms to ensure the participation of indigenous peoples in decision-making, planning and management.

8. We suggest building public awareness and popularization of cultural and biodiversity conservation and call on the whole society to recognize and respect the value of cultural and biological diversity in Yunnan including involvement of schoolteachers and parents in the dialogue about culture and biodiversity issues. It is recommended that improvements to the list of rare and endangered protected wildlife and plant species be made.

9. We call for strengthening studies on economic policies and legislation regarding cultural and biological diversity conservation in order to improve the legal system. Within this legal framework, establish a mechanism to compensate for the impact of externalities on the environment in order to achieve the equitable sharing of the benefits and costs of ecological and cultural conservation. We call on all circles of society to give more consideration to the subsistence and development needs of the inhabitants of areas of significant biological and cultural diversity and to search for alternative means of sustainable production.

10. We call for the international society and Yunnan Province to strengthen cooperation and exchange in the domain of cultural and biological diversity conservation. Recognizing the cultural and natural links between Yunnan Province and the countries of South and Southeast Asia, we strongly call for strengthening regional cooperation in cultural and biological diversity conservation.

## **THE YUNNAN INITIATIVE – CUBIC ORGANIZATION CUBIC ORGANIZATION**

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- Bio-resources Innovation Development Office of the Yunnan Provincial Government
- Kunming Institute of Botany, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (KIB)
- The Bio-resources Germplasm Conservation & Development Foundation of Yunnan

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#### **Notes to readers**

Cultures and Biodiversity Congress (CUBIC) took place at Kunming, Xishuangbanna, Deqing PR China. 20 - 30 July 2000.

For more information go to:

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