

International Training Workshop: Methods and Processes for Establishing Indigenous Biocultural Territories (IBCT) as Agrobiodiversity Conservation Areas

20-29 September 2009
The Potato Park, Pisac, Cusco, Peru
http://www.andes.org.pe/web_001/

Declaration on Agrobiodiversity Conservation and Food Sovereignty

From 20-29 September 2009 a group of farmers and scientists from Ethiopia and Peru met in the Potato Park, Pisac, in the Department of Cusco, Peru to engage in cross-cultural and horizontal learning about concepts and methods on how to design, plan, implement and manage Agrobiodiversity Conservation Areas.

Discussion topics included a range of issues related to the conservation and sustainable use of native crops and agrobiodiversity. This included the Indigenous Biocultural Territory and Agrobiodiversity Conservation Areas approach, and continued with Customary Laws and governance structures for conservation of agrobiodiversity, resilience in managing climatic changes, indigenous knowledge, access to genetic resources and intellectual property. Finally workshop participants considered possibilities for implementation of national and key international legal frameworks for agrobiodiversity conservations such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the FAO's International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

Through understanding the need to conserve agrobiodiversity and agricultural landscapes and in particular to protect and promote native crops, we the participants:

- Recognize the sacred and inherent rights of Pacha Mama (Mother Earth) to its integrity and to the diversity and richness of its expressions and adhere to the principles of reciprocity and balance upon which Pacha Mama nurtures life for all its children
- Acknowledge that indigenous peoples have a commonality of world vision, and experiences relating to the sacredness of their agroecosystems and crops
- Highlight the contributions of indigenous peoples' to the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and Emphasize the importance of resilience intrinsic to indigenous peoples' farming systems and the agroecosystems in which they both live and nurture for building adaptation and mitigation strategies to climate change
- Identify that the most effective approach to the conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity is the implementation of protected agricultural landscape models based on indigenous cultural traditions that celebrate the diversity and richness of agrobiodiversity and use traditional knowledge and practices to continue innovating and recreating diversity
- Highlight the fact that appropriate land use is intimately linked to sustainable development and "Sumaq Causay" (an indigenous view of development based on respect for and reciprocity with Pacha Mama) and to adaptation and mitigation practices. Indigenous and traditional agriculture can play an important role in the context of climate change, food security and poverty reduction. Agrobiodiversity Conservation Areas should be promoted for climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, because they encompass both poverty reduction and food sovereignty.
- Highlight the fact that Agricultural Conservation Areas that build on indigenous cultural traditions promote sustainable livelihoods, enhance conservation and use of agricultural biological diversity are critical for agriculture to be able to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. Agricultural Conservation Areas managed by the expertise of indigenous peoples and farmers, are vital places for offering native crops and their wild relatives a chance at adapting to the new climatic conditions. Furthermore they facilitate effective exchange of native seeds among farmers allowing for the evaluation of their suitability and thus continued evolution.

- Acknowledge the importance of building bridges between scientific and indigenous knowledge systems to create effective methods for food sovereignty, conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity, including the design, planning and implementation of Agrobiodiversity Conservation Areas and Participatory Plant Breeding programs that focus on adaptation to the new, harsher climatic conditions which are coming our way rapidly.
- Promote of cross-national and cross-cultural knowledge and information transfer based on pedagogical practices and educational processes which are closer to the learning models of marginal and excluded groups
- Encourage action research and south-to-south technology transfer based on the establishment of “Contact Learning Zones” to allow geographically and historically separated peoples to engage in dialogue, creating horizontal and democratic spaces of intercultural practice, inquiry, and participatory learning, replacing colonial legacies of coercion, inequality, and conflict, with sharing and solidarity, participatory knowledge discovery, cooperative management of knowledge and the fostering of interdependent horizontal networks.
- Recognize that the emergence of experiential, local indigenous examples of agrobiodiversity conservation such as the Potato Park, offers communities a demonstrative case and the opportunity for horizontal sharing of information and experiences
- Reiterate that the most effective approach to the implementation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity is the implementation of models based on the local context and culture and the application of traditional knowledge, practices and innovation systems

This exchange has reaffirmed our dedication to building strategies and technologies that promote the conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity. We can achieve this collectively by strengthening alliances, supporting exchanges, sharing our struggles, and being in solidarity with communities like our own around the world.

We are committed to working together and in our own communities towards our goals of ensuring food sovereignty and fostering locally led initiatives for the protection and promotion of agrobiodiversity and local rights, as responses to global crises and combating neo-liberal policies that threaten our ways of life.

In order to achieve conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity and important native crops and wild relatives in the face of global change we:

- Recognize the ecologically (re)productive work of women and the important contribution women make to agricultural production, despite their unequal access to land, information, and inputs. Incorporate women’s concerns and views into local, national, and international agriculture and food policy making.
- Recognize that Indigenous women are deeply affected by climate change and its impacts, including decreased access to water and soil degradation. Women are responsible for helping families meet their most basic needs and they participate in critical food and agricultural activities such as feeding the family, tilling the soil and selecting and saving seeds. Women’s specific knowledge of maintaining biodiversity, through the conservation and domestication of wild edible plant seeds and food crop breeding, is key to adapting to climate change more effectively.
- Recognize that the role of women in water collection for their communities is of the utmost importance, and that climate change will make this even more time consuming and present new challenges.
- Call for the development of local creative solidarity economies that allow farming communities to control production and processing of their resources

- Recognize that indigenous and local communities are the rightful owners of the biological, genetic and cultural resources they have nurtured, as well as their traditional knowledge and practices and innovation systems derived from centuries of stewardship of Mother Earth
- Assert that indigenous peoples and local communities have the sovereign right to define their food production and consumption systems, to safe and healthy food and to healthy communities and environments
- Call for the recognition and respect of indigenous peoples, land rights and rights to biological, genetic, and cultural resources which are inextricably bound to their traditional territories
- Urge all governments to stop all destructive agricultural policies and perverse incentives that threaten local livelihoods and traditional cultures, especially in the face of the current economic, food, and climate crises
- Urge governments to stop Free Trade Agreements and halt the implementation of those that bring poverty to indigenous peoples and small farmers through the privatization of seeds, indigenous and traditional knowledge
- Implore governments to criminalize biopiracy
- Call all national and international organizations and foundations to stop the new "green revolution" policies and practices worldwide that are being forcefully promoted, and to instead support indigenous peoples and local communities' approaches to conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources, landscapes and livelihoods
- Call upon all governments and companies to prohibit technologies of food terror such as the GURTs or "Terminator" and GMO technologies and to stop the privatization and patenting of seeds, all life forms and indigenous and traditional knowledge
- Reject the current top-down, profit driven agriculture and food strategies that promote the same technologies and practices that have created the present crises and offer alternatives in the time-tested solutions of indigenous peoples and local communities that must be valued
- Urge the acknowledgement and promotion of the importance of the repatriation of seeds and other biological and genetic materials and associated traditional knowledge, collected from indigenous and local communities, for the food sovereignty of our peoples and for tackling climate change and the restitution of the rights of Pacha Mama
- Call for urgent protection of the inherent rights of indigenous farmers to freely share and exchange seeds
- Urge the international community and donors to support the local implementation of the UNDRIP and the participation of indigenous peoples in UN forums and other international environmental and human rights conventions so that their view may be accurately and strongly represented
- Call upon all governments and global financial institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) to support small farmers' food sovereignty
- Call for an end to all neo-liberal economic policies that promote "dumping", subsidized agri-business, monocultures, and monopolization, commodification, and privatization of knowledge, seeds and ecosystem services and infringe upon the rights of indigenous peoples and small farmers, particularly in relation to access to water, land and free exchange of seeds

Attesting to the above declaration, made on the 29th of September 2009, in the community of Sacaca of the Potato Park, we sign below.