

The International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IIFBES) is a caucus composed of indigenous peoples and local community participants at Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). As part of our self-organization in order to engage more effectively with the Platform, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) have established a network of ILK Centres of Distinction composed of organizations that have had a long history of engaging within the United Nations system to deliver policy recommendations, implement projects and provide assessments, such as for biodiversity indicators and community-based monitoring systems. Each Center has its own distinct activities and strengths which by working together will provide a more comprehensive set of inputs to assessments and support implementation of the decisions of the IPBES Platform. This network is a support mechanism for delivering inputs into IPBES by indigenous and local knowledge holders themselves, and can identify other relevant knowledge holders and experts in their regions and areas of expertise. The network is open-ended and will operate in a transparent manner to facilitate the participation and contribution of diverse knowledge views and evidence from all regions.

In this regard, the Network will engage the Platform in the following ways:

- By fostering two-way communication between IPLCs and the Platform;
- By supporting the efforts of IPBES to develop approaches and methods for systematically identifying and mobilizing IPLCs taking into account regional and gender balance and diverse knowledge systems
- Disseminating information and materials on IPBES by reaching out to a diversity of potential users and providers of information to increase the relevance and use of the Platform's products and deliverables by the IPLCs
- Attracting knowledge holders from indigenous peoples and local communities to contribute to the Platform's products and deliverables;
- Strengthening support for the Platform's work programme 2014-2018 through identification of IPLCs and ILK experts from different regions and knowledge domains;
- Mobilizing resources for capacity-building; and
- Mobilizing in-kind contributions from IPLCs for the implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and for the Platform's work programme 2014-2018 in general.

The following are some of the current members of the evolving network of ILK Centres of Distinction. Most of them are already operating as networks of communities and organizations that are linking from the local to global. We will continue to recruit more into the network through our existing national, regional and international connections.

1. Center for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North (CSIPN) ILK Centre

Center for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North (CSIPN), is a non-governmental organization that provides training and development indigenous peoples and their capacity building, institution strengthening, and preservation traditional knowledge and cultural heritage. Centre has a large informational network and collaborates with indigenous organizations, communities, experts and institutions.

CSIPN initiates and implements projects on the ILK issues in accordance to the priorities and wishes of regional indigenous peoples' organizations and own strategy: revival and mobilization indigenous

knowledge systems for community and ecosystem resilience, community-based monitoring, documentation and bio-cultural mapping. The priorities of the Center also are to: promoting indigenous participation at all levels, legislation and rights, land and natural resources use, environment protection and climate change, biodiversity and access to food.

2. The Tulalip Tribes ILK Centre

Tulalip Tribes is a Federally recognized American Indian Tribe in the United States. The Natural Resources Treaty Rights Office works on several United Nations treaties and bodies, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the Nagoya Protocol and IPBES to protect and promote indigenous rights. The Tribes are also involved in developing indigenous climate change policies, adaptation plans and projects, and ethical guidelines for the use of traditional knowledges in adaptation.

The Treaty Rights Office also works on a number of projects relevant to the work of IPBES. With Earth Economics and Accounting for Desirable Futures, it is developing the Multi-Scale Integrated Model of Ecosystem Services (MIMES), which is capable of integrating biophysical models (hydrology, carbon budgets, climate, ecosystem services, and biodiversity) with cultural, social and economic values and traditional knowledge to build scenarios. The Tribes also contributes to the maintenance of ICONS, a seven million record+ database on a range of issues related to the work of IPBES, including an extensive catalogue of cultural ecosystem services, biodiversity and ecological values, traditional knowledge issues, climate change impacts and adaptation and mitigation measures.

3. SOTZ'IL Centre, Guatemala

Asociación Sotz'il was created in 1990 by leaders of the Maya Kaqchikel indigenous people in Guatemala to undertake actions oriented towards the defense of the indigenous peoples collective rights, especially in issues related to natural resources, and firmly rooted on the Kaqchikel people's traditional knowledge and values. Its current scope extends to 22 Guatemalan Mayan Peoples, the Xinca and Garífuna Peoples and coordinating actions with the Mestizo people.

Some focus areas include indigenous world views, traditional knowledge and communal organization; rights of the Maya People and Maya Women; Maya development including communal tourism; communal management of lands and bio-cultural territories, forests, biodiversity and protected areas; the Kaqchikel Volcanic Chain; and climate change.

4. Fundacion para la Promocion del Conocimiento Indigena (FPCI)

FPCI is an indigenous organization of the Guna of Panama. With the participation of youth, women and other members, FPCI manages programmes and projects based on indigenous knowledge on the sustainable use and monitoring of natural resources to improve the quality of life and the enjoyment of their rights as peoples.

FPCI, works in indigenous areas at national, regional and international levels on wetlands and biodiversity, climate change, protected areas and culture, gender and natural resources, youth and the

environment, Indigenous rights, systematization and training; knowledge promotion, dissemination and diffusion; conventions and environmental initiatives and indigenous entrepreneurship guided by ancestral values.

5. MELCA Ethiopia ILK Centre

MELCA (Movement for Ecological Learning and Community Action) has a broad membership base, comprising, foresters, lawyers, ecologists, sociologists, environmentalists, youth groups and women's associations, and currently has 60 members. MELCA work around the following areas;

- Uses intergenerational learning methodologies to connect youths across Ethiopia with themselves, nature with elders leading the programme, with culture.
- Uses participatory mapping for community mobilization, environmental education and planning for natural and cultural resource management. Participatory 3-Dimensional Modeling, sketch mapping and ecological calendars are used for this purpose.
- Through agroecology program, knowledge related to seed and farming system is mobilized and used.
- Revives traditional ecological governance systems through establishing and strengthening community-based organizations. As part of community empowerment, local people are taught the right that they have in their constitution and in international agreements that the country is party to and are supported when they decided to form an association. Their cultural organization is also strengthened to the level that is wanted by the community themselves.
- Influences environmental governance and policy implementation through organizing events, improved communication and networking both locally and internationally.

6. Indigenous Information Network (IIN)

Indigenous Information Network (IIN) works to promote and protect rights and build the capacity of indigenous peoples in Kenya and East Africa. IIN works with indigenous people's community-based organizations, women and youth groups in:

- Facilitating the dissemination of information using appropriate media accessible and in format understandable to community e.g. radio
- Environmental governance programme that works on climate change and biodiversity conservation to build capacity and advance conservation, restoration and adaptation initiatives and research activities at community level to build resilience of peoples and their ecosystem,
- Capacity building to empower community members and strengthen their institutions organizations to self-organize and participate in decision making and influence policy at local, national, regional and international policy platforms as well as strengthening capacity of policy makers to better engage with community
- Advocacy initiative and partnerships that seek to influence policy processes at different levels and engender policy and programmes through providing support for indigenous peoples voices in this spaces
- Advancing community-based research that informs policy decision and empowers communities e.g research on traditional knowledge and adaptation.

7. African Biodiversity Network (ABN)

African Biodiversity Network is a regional operating across 12 African countries catalysing vibrant and resilient African communities rooted in their own bio-cultural and spiritual diversity to govern their lives and livelihoods in harmony with healthy ecosystems. ABN does this by igniting and nurturing an African network of organizations and communities of practice who work from local to global to influence and implement policies and practices that promote recognition and respect for people and nature. ABN works around capacity building on range of its methodologies developed with partners and communities in African to mobilize and revitalize the ILK. These methodologies experiential learning through connection with culture and nature, use of bio-cultural maps and calendars, community ecological dialogues, intergenerational learning, community research groups, strengthening its community-based learning centres with distinctive potential to demonstrate the ABN “best practices”. It also forms strategic partners to amplify the communities’ voice and spread the ABN practice. ABN also documents its experiences, case studies and guides for cutting edge areas. The ABN’s contribution to the conventional, industrial approach to “development” is in its approach that restores people’s connectedness with their culture and Nature to foster care for their land and natural resources for longer sustainability and resilience. ABN is highly networked from local to global to realize maximum benefits.

8. Pgaz K’ Nyau Association for Sustainable Development (PASD) Thailand

Pgaz K’ Nyau Association for Sustainable Development (PASD) is a community-based organization, watershed organization of the Pgaz K’ Nyau people (Karen) in Thailand which is closely linked with the Karen Network for Culture and Environment (KNCE), and Inter Mountain People and Culture Association in Thailand (IMPECT), and Indigenous Knowledge and Peoples in Mainland South East Asia Foundation (IKAP). The two main areas of work are:

- Community Development with a focus on the strengthening of leaders, organizations, and network towards the creation of a “Special Cultural Zone”
- Participatory Action Research on Indigenous Knowledge including a study on *Blauf* - the traditional cultural center, on *Hta* - poems and traditional songs and *Taj leplez* - story telling. Research was also carried out on how rotational farming and fallow systems link to biodiversity.

Both programs produce documentation, which is used to transfer knowledge to younger generations in the communities, schools and migrants to the cities. This information is also used to lobby and campaign for the recognition of IPs rights and livelihood in policy and legal frameworks.

9. Institute for Culture and Ecology (Kenya)

Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE) is a national non-governmental organization registered in Kenya in 2006 under the NGO coordination Act. ICE’s mandate is to promote environmental conservation and natural resource management through buttressing traditional knowledge in community-based environmental and resource management initiatives and facilitating culture - based learning that would lead to social and ecological wellbeing of the earth community.

ICE continuously accompanies communities to test eco-cultural strategies relevant for inter-generational learning, knowledge mobilization, community-based ecosystems assessment as well as affirmation of indigenous knowledge and practices relevant for ecosystems resilience. Most of the communities ICE is walking with are small holder agro-pastoralists living in both highland and low-land agro-ecological zones. These communities are now evolving into learning centres for local knowledge and cultural practices relevant for community and ecosystems resilience. ICE also partners with like-minded organizations, institutions and individuals nationally, regionally and globally in order to exchange ideas and good practices in effective implementation of innovative culture-based strategies for livelihoods improvement and ecosystems protection. ICE has been involved in IPLC processes related to IPBES and CBD, especially those related to indigenous and local knowledge (ILK).

10. Indigenous Peoples and Biodiversity Program (IPBP), Tebtebba Foundation

Tebtebba works for the respect, protection, and fulfilment of indigenous peoples rights and development. Its Indigenous Peoples and Biodiversity Program (IPBP) engages in local to global CBD processes, including activities to strengthen initiatives and capacities of indigenous peoples. The program has been involved in implementing pilot projects, carrying out research and documentation, policy advocacy, education, capacity building, and networking on the issues of traditional knowledge systems and practices, access and benefit sharing, indigenous ecosystem approaches, customary governance and sustainable use of resources, in partnership with indigenous peoples organizations and networks. A priority collaboration with Tebtebba's program on climate change, is the operationalization of the community-based monitoring and information system (CBMIS) within the framework of Indigenous Peoples sustainable self-determined development (IPSSDD).

11. Tirairaka:

Nga Tirairaka o Ngati Hine, based in Aotearoa, New Zealand, is the mandated environmental organisation for the tribe of Ngati Hine and coordinates indigenous national and Pacific networks with a focus on biodiversity management of forests, wetlands, freshwater and the marine environment. Their organisation also has capacities in sacred sites management, advocacy and policy at the local, national and global level, invasive alien species management, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

12. Indigenous Earth Wisdom Working Group on indigenous knowledge.

The Group facilitates the understanding of the cosmologies and values of indigenous peoples and their contributions to the nurturing of Mother Earth, through dialogue with knowledge holders to understand their perspectives; research and documentation of indigenous knowledge; the enhancement of participatory indigenous methodologies in knowledge generation; public information on indigenous earth wisdom and values; and workshops and training module development for trainers, educators, women and youth leaders. The group links with indigenous communities, organizations, schools and educators in the Cordillera, Philippines and globally.

13. Forest Peoples Programme (FPP)

Forest Peoples Programme is an international human rights NGO which supports the rights of forest peoples to own and control their lands and to decide their own futures, based on respect for their rights, knowledge, cultures and identities.

FPP works at the inter-linkages between local-national-regional and global policy arenas, and at the inter-faces of human rights, economy and ecology in support of indigenous and forest peoples' visions and contributions to the formulation of laws, policies and programmes. FPP has been active in supporting community-based monitoring of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) using indicators relevant for indigenous peoples, and in promoting the inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in the IPBES work programme.