

CEESP-TSL Progress Report for autumn 2009-autumn 2010

TSL has had a busy period in the year past since the autumn of 2009. Some of the highlights of the work have been as follows.

1. Visit of cooperation with Billital Maroobe (West Africa)

TSL co-chair Taghi Farvar visited the territories of West African nomadic pastoralists of the Sahel in Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali for three weeks in mid-autumn 2009 to initiate and improve communication among indigenous nomadic tribes and tribal associations of the world. There are some 250 million nomadic pastoralists in the world, most of them indigenous, whose main livelihood system is herding of domesticated or semi-domesticated animals ranging from reindeer to camelids (dromedaries, Bactrian camels, alpacas and llamas), equids (horses, donkeys and mules), bovines (yaks and cattle), and ovines (sheep and goats). Billital Maroobe, a member of WAMIP (World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples) and associate member of TSL was the host. The visit was supported by WISP (World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism)—a project operated by IUCN out of Nairobi. Billital Maroobe is an association of pastoralist organisations in West Africa with an effective network of members in 7 countries. It works with very large indigenous pastoralist groupings such as the Tuareq and Fulani as well as with many smaller ones. One of the results was decisions to seek funding for joint work to improve the rights and livelihoods of indigenous nomadic peoples together with other regions and WAMIP. A project concept has been developed jointly with Billital Maroobe (Niger and Bourkina based), CENESTA (Iran, host institution to TSL), SCOPE (Pakistan), Marag (India) and others for submission to various support organisations.

2. Support to recognition of ICCAs and livelihoods (Colombian Amazon)

A team consisting of TSL members including Colombian conservationists and health workers visited Vaupe region in the Colombian Amazon to support the recognition of one



Migratory cultivation of tropical forests (swidden agriculture) where it takes many years to return to the original plot is a conservation based farming system practised by indigenous peoples. These indigenous territories are excellent examples of ICCAs

of the most remarkable examples of community conservation by indigenous peoples of the Amazon region. Colombia is one of the foremost countries in recognising the rights of indigenous peoples over their territories. Some 40% of the surface of the country is under indigenous management using their own customary systems. Using extensive rotational agricultural (swidden) systems, they move from plot to plot each year, with the result that each plot has the opportunity to return to natural forest by the time they return to the same plot many years later. The local indigenous peoples have profound knowledge of the biological diversity of the forest, both plants and animals, and use a large number of species for health. This territory is considered a very well conserved ICCA.

3. National Training Workshop on CBNRM (Afghanistan)

At the request of the Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock a national workshop on Community Based Natural Resource Management was organised by TSL and CENESTA in January of 2010 in Kabul. Some 60 participants representing various stakeholders (local communities including villagers and nomadic tribal peoples, civil



society organisations, international agencies and NGOs and government departments) interacted with TSL's co-Chair Taghi Farvar who was the chief facilitator, Samira Farahani, TSL Programme Officer, Abbas Didari, CENESTA expert on natural resource management, and Reza Salehi, an Iranian nomadic pastoralist, over 5 days to learn participatory resource management techniques. After a panel of international agencies describing their experiences in Afghanistan on CBNRM, participants went through the present predicament of natural resource management in Afghanistan together with a timeline of the history of changes that have taken place over the recent political history of the country. A visioning exercise helped them define a long-term desirable future situation, followed by tracing a road map (strategy) for how to get to the desirable future vision from the current problem-infested predicament. Against the backdrop of this road map a 5 year work plan was devised. The exercise was designed to help the Afghan stakeholders to arrive at a national strategy and action programme in CBNRM. The work is continuing with a more substantive level of input for support of Afghan efforts in this direction.

4. Exchange workshop on CBNRM and desertification (Azerbaijan)

5. Democratising Food and Agricultural Research for ecological sustainability and social equity

In partnership with IIED, the regions of South Asia, West Africa, West Asia and Andean highlands in South America have engaged in bringing back control of research on food and agriculture to the farmers, fishing folks, pastoralists and other indigenous and local producers. Examples include participatory plant breeding in West Asia, safeguarding and improving endemic livestock in Iran, returning to the indigenous crops and their heritage knowledge in Bolivia and Peru, return to local varieties of millet in India, learning to avoid GMO cotton and other



crops in southeast Asia and West Africa—all based on local research and investigation by indigenous peoples and local communities, often including innovative techniques such as evolutionary plant breeding and peasant citizen juries.

6. Side events at CBD SBSTTA (Nairobi, Kenya)

With a small grant from CEESP, three side events were organised during the technical preparatory session of CBD in Nairobi in May. The topics included ICCAs (strengthening what works), Governance issues in protected areas, and climate change and agro-biodiversity. These were co-sponsored by CEESP's TGER, TILCEPA and TSL and other institutions including ICCA Consortium, WAMIP, CENESTA and Bioversity International. Participation of both governmental and civil society was active and a strategy meeting was held for the future of the ICCA Consortium including the decision to establish and register it as soon as possible (see below).



Supporters of the ICCA Consortium resolved to legalise it in Switzerland.

7. Participation in EMRIP (UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) and establishment of the ICCA Consortium (Geneva, Switzerland)

TSL participated in the EMRIP and also used the occasion to hold discussion group sessions on ICCAs. With a number of the members of the ICCA Consortium, all of them indigenous peoples organisations and those serving them, including IPACC (Africa), PACOS (Malaysia), WAMIP (global) and CENESTA (West Asia), the Consortium was established in conformity with the laws of Switzerland. CEESP, including TSL, is a partner network of experts with the ICCA Consortium. CEESP members Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend, Stan Stevens, Jannie Lasimbang and Taghi Farvar were elected Coordinator, Treasurer, Auditor, and President, respectively.

8. Indigenous nomadic pastoralists prepare their community biodiversity registers (CBRs) and protocols (CBPs) for their protection

Twelve independent pastoralist tribal confederacies and independent tribes of Iran held a workshop in July to discuss the forthcoming CBD regime for access and benefit sharing (ABS), which is a part of Article 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Concerned with increasing bio-piracy of their indigenous knowledge of plant and animal diversity, they decided to investigate their biodiversity heritage (both wild and domesticated plants and animals) through the preparation of CBRs and their registration in all available platforms. Their plan includes surveying, collecting, labelling, photographing and identifying all of the “wild” plant species in their ancestral territories. In much of the country, each territorial area contains hundreds of species of plants, most of them endemic, with hundreds of still unknown species to western science. At the same time, community elders from these tribes — both female and male— know nearly all of the species, can identify them by local names, and have a deep knowledge of their properties for food, feed, medicine and industry (including as dyes and gums). They will carry out the surveys over a two year period four times a year, during the main seasons of summering grounds, autumn migration, wintering grounds and spring migration. A



second workshop in September brought them together with the help of TSL host CENESTA where they shared their experiences in their first collection exercise, registered the collections in a computer, and got technical support from a CENESTA botanist in the systematisation of their work and identification of the “scientific” names of the plant species they had collected. A report of their work was presented in a Nagoya CBD side event in late October by one of the indigenous ethno-botanists and a CENESTA facilitator/interpreter.

Their future plans include establishment of the Community Biodiversity Registers, establishment of tribal and regional research herbariums where the collected materials will be kept for tribal research purposes, taking of decisions on the protocols for access and benefit sharing, collaboration in elaborating a national community biodiversity protocol, advocacy to include the said protocol as a basis for a national ABS regime, and collaboration with national and international entities in the registration and protection of the rights over this biodiversity heritage.

IIED project on democratising food and agricultural research, the GEF/UNDP Small Grants Programme and CENESTA have supported this work, and Natural Justice, a South Africa based civil society organisation of lawyers will assist in the international legal issues.

9. Major Workshop and side events at CBD COP-10 (Nagoya, Japan)



CEESP side events at CBD COP-10 were substantive and well attended.

A CEESP side event on terrestrial ICCAs at CBD COP-10, Nagoya.

TSL and other CEESP members and associates participated in co-organising two side



Participants in the ICCA Consortium General Assembly in Nagoya.

events, a major three-day workshop, and participated in a number of other side events in Nagoya during the second half of October. The major theme was ICCAs, including marine and terrestrial, and a major meeting of the CEESP-affiliated ICCA Consortium was held during the middle weekend. Separate reports of the Nagoya events have been



submitted by CEESP regional Vice-Chair Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend. The Nagoya activities were made possible by grants from the GEF/UNDP Small Grants Programme, The Christensen Fund, and CEESP. TSL members also participated in the daily meetings of the IIFB—International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity during CBD COP-10.

As a result of these activities, the concept of ICCAs and the role of indigenous peoples and local communities (called ILCs in the CBD jargon) in the conservation of nature and natural resources, including the need to protect the rights of IPs and ensure their effective participation in the governance of protected areas, was given a prominent place in the documents and decisions emerging from Nagoya, including the special situation of nomadic/mobile peoples in the conservation of nature.



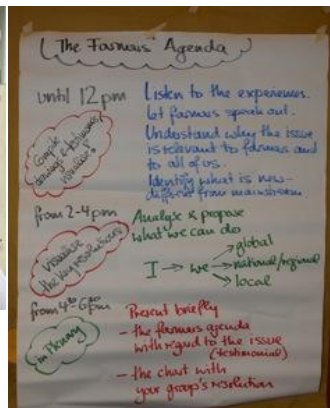
The magic flute of a Shahsevan herder enchanted many participants in Nagoya.

10. Peasants' exchange (Penang, Malaysia)

Peasant farmers, indigenous pastoralists and civil society organisations working with them in South Asia, West Africa, West Asia and Andean highlands in South America met among themselves followed by intensive workshops with social movement representatives such as Via Campesina, WAMIP, Consumer unions and Pesticide Action Network in Penang, Malaysia in the last week of November 2010 to exchange



experiences. The result was



strengthening both the field

based projects described in Item 5, above and the social movements in question by providing horizontal and vertical interactions.

11. Preparatory meeting of East African Woman Pastoralists for the World Gathering (Nairobi, Kenya)

A preparatory workshop was organised in Nairobi by TSL co-chair Lucy Mullenkei for the East African woman pastoralists slated to participate in the World Gathering of Woman Pastoralists. The result was capacity building to participate more effectively in the Gathering, and a series of recommendations that helped the East African indigenous women influence the Declaration from the Gathering (see below).



12. World Gathering of Woman Pastoralists (Mera, Gujarat, India)

Following the Segovia World Gathering of Nomadic and Transhumant Pastoralists in 2007, a special world gathering was organised in Mera, Gujarat, India by Marag, an Ahmedabad based civil society organisation dedicated to promoting the rights of indigenous nomadic and transhumant pastoralists in India. The Gathering was financially supported by IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development, Rome) and co-organised by WAMIP, WISP, ILC and the League for Pastoralist Peoples. Around 200 participants considered issues of highest concern for woman pastoralists from around the world, and ended the Gathering with a Declaration that takes off from and supplements the Segovia Declaration. TSL co-chair Taghi Farvar was a member of the organising committee and facilitated the selection and participation of indigenous woman pastoralists from West Asia, Central Asia and other regions of the world.

13. Dialogue and Sustainable Development in the Oil and Gas Sector (Persian Gulf, Iran)



Assalouyeh was a traditional area in the Persian Gulf consisting of a number of coastal villages



whose livelihoods were based on fishing and farming. Today, however, these settlements and the marine and coastal regions are undergoing massive transformation as they are located on one of the major oil and gas exploitation regions of the world. Although some environmental,



social and health impact assessment studies have been undertaken, ultra rapid industrialisation has outpaced them. A project with the



collaboration of TSL host institution CENESTA, the University of Tehran's Institute for Petroleum Engineering and the Living Earth Foundation, financed by the EU has started in 2010 called "Dialogue and Development in Iran" with the purpose of bringing the main stakeholders together, including local communities of fishing-folks, farmers, industrial workers, government agencies, the Free Economic Zone authorities, and independent experts to build capacity in understanding and solving problems of an environmental, social and technical nature. TSL is supporting this effort through advice and help in the organisation of facilitated workshops, studies and methodologies/ approaches such as collaborative management and multi-stakeholder governance.

14. Desertification prevention (Iran and UNCCD)

DryNet, an international network of 14 civil society organisations in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America was formed four years ago with the support of a grant from the European Union to help advance the aims of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and its consequent National Action Plans (NAPs) to Combat Desertification, and to promote synergy with other multilateral environmental agreements. CEESP's TSL participated in supporting this effort through its host institution CENESTA and helped in capacity building for public and civil society stakeholders in Iran, Afghanistan and Azerbaijan. The EU funds ran out in early 2010 but the partners managed to secure continuation for another three years 2011-2013 through a Swiss and a Norwegian grants.



15. Establishment of National Union of Indigenous Nomadic Tribes (Iran)

TSL supported with technical advice and sharing of information the IIED-supported project on Local Food Systems, Agro-biodiversity and Livelihoods which concentrated on indigenous nomadic pastoralists in Iran through helping them to revitalise their

customary institutions for the management of natural resources and their conservation. These revitalised customary institutions (councils of elders) decided to incorporate themselves as legal entities on behalf of their respective tribes with their statutes being based on customary law and traditional structures. During 2010 about a dozen tribal confederacies and independent tribes came together and decided to form the national union of indigenous nomadic tribes in order to be able to influence public policy and better defend the rights of mobile indigenous peoples in Iran and beyond. The Union, which is a federation dedicated to the defence of rights and livelihoods for nomadic indigenous peoples, is expected to be registered in 2011. Two of the first activities of the Union, even during its formative period, have been (a) co-organising the Community Biodiversity Registers and ABS Protocols mentioned above, and (b) proposing



successfully an alternative model of Territory-Based Range Management Programme for nomadic pastoralists—who are currently using well over a third of all rangelands in the country. The latter is in contradistinction with the conventional ranching schemes that the government had been promoting in the country. This scheme and another one based on de-stocking the rangelands have

effectively been stopped as a result of advocacy work of the now organised indigenous nomadic tribes and CENESTA, with the technical support and advice of TSL. The latter scheme was based on technocratic notions of outdated scientific models of carrying capacity that now need to give way to the new approaches of non-equilibrium ecosystems (NEE), something that Iranian nomadic organisations and civil society actors intend to help academic and government institutions catch up with.

16. African Workshop on Land Grabbing (Arusha, Tanzania)

This workshop on what has turned into one of the greatest threats in Africa on the rights of indigenous peoples, most of them mobile, was planned for 2010 but was postponed at the request of partner groups of indigenous peoples in Tanzania as they had to pay their highest priority attention to the urgent defence of their ancestral territories and livelihoods in the field, where many were being forcibly evicted and their dwelling burned down. It is hoped to take this up again in 2011 with support from CEESP and other entities.



(FOR YOU!!)