



WPC Recommendation 27

Mobile Indigenous Peoples and Conservation

Mobile Indigenous Peoples (i.e. nomads, pastoralists, shifting agriculturalists and hunting-gatherers) are a subset of traditional and Indigenous Peoples whose livelihoods depend on extensive common property¹ use of natural resources and whose mobility is both a management strategy for sustainable land use and conservation and a distinctive source of cultural identity.

In many cases protected areas have alienated Mobile Indigenous Peoples from lands and resources traditionally used by them, with the consequent loss of livelihoods and erosion of cultures. Their rights are erroneously or sometimes deliberately ignored, and participation is usually only granted to local sedentary people living around the protected areas. Their practices create and sustain important linkages in the landscape. Policies of sedentarisation disable Mobile Indigenous Peoples of cultural identity, capacity to manage land properly and lead to poverty.

There is scientific evidence that mobile use of natural resources has been in harmony with nature, and in many cases promotes environmental integrity and conservation of both wild and domestic biodiversity. Mutually reinforcing partnerships between Mobile Indigenous Peoples and conservationists are essential for the long-term success of conservation initiatives.

Therefore, PARTICIPANTS in the Communities and Equity Cross-cutting Theme in the Stream on Governance at the Vth World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa (8-17 September 2003):

1. ENDORSED the principles of the Dana Declaration, and referring to the Dana Declaration, and to the Mobile Indigenous Peoples' workshops in WPC;
2. ACKNOWLEDGE the overall recommendations concerning Co-management of Protected Areas (Recommendation 5.25) and Community Conserved Areas (Recommendation 5.26) as being relevant to Mobile Indigenous Peoples;
3. RECOMMEND that governments, NGOs, local communities, civil society, international organizations and inter-governmental bodies give due recognition to Mobile Indigenous Peoples' rights and special capacities and needs and thereby:
 - a. ENSURE that Mobile Indigenous Peoples have secure and full

¹ Common property systems have well-established community rules for use/ownership. They are not the same as open access and include such land use types as seasonal grazing, community conserved areas, etc.

rights to co-manage and self-manage their lands, that they can derive equitable benefits from the use of natural resources, including eco-tourism, and that their customary law is respected and recognised in national law;

- b. RECOGNISE collective and customary rights of mobile communities and respect the integrity of the Mobile Indigenous Peoples' resource management systems;
- c. RECOGNISE Mobile Indigenous Peoples' community conserved areas as a protected area governance type, and build upon their traditional and evolving institutions and customary norms;
- d. PROMOTE policies to facilitate cross-border mobility and trade in transboundary protected areas by Mobile Indigenous Peoples who have traditionally lived in and used those areas;
- e. ADOPT and promote adaptive management approaches that recognise the dependence of Mobile Indigenous Peoples on common property resources and build on their mobility and different lifestyles, livelihoods, resource rights and tenure, customary laws, and dynamic scales of land use;
- f. ADAPT protected area and community conserved area management to the special needs of mobile communities, including their use rights, resource management practices, seasonal and temporal rights, corridors for movement, and targeting mobile use to achieve conservation objectives;
- g. RESPECT, promote and integrate the use of traditional knowledge, institutions and customary laws and resource management practices of Mobile Indigenous Peoples alongside mainstream science on a complementary basis. Develop common conservation objectives. Ensure that development of protected areas and related interventions are evaluated on the basis of local knowledge and are implemented through Mobile Indigenous Peoples' institutions;
- h. RECOGNISE and guarantee the rights of Mobile Indigenous Peoples to the restitution of their lands, territories and resources, conserved and traditionally occupied and used sustainably by them, that have been incorporated within protected areas without their free, prior and informed consent; mobility should be restored where appropriate; and
- i. PROMOTE cross-cultural dialogue and conflict resolution within and between mobile and sedentary people around and in protected areas; and

4. URGE Governments to approve the UN Draft Declaration on the

Rights of Indigenous Peoples as adopted in 1994 by the now UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, and ratify and effectively implement ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, where the relevant people so wish.

Stream: Indigenous/Local Communities, Equity, and Protected Areas

Stream Lead: Ashish Kothari