



**MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
BRAULIO FERREIRA DE SOUZA DIAS
On the occasion of the
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
9 August 2016**

“Indigenous Peoples and their Right to Education”

We walk to the future in the footprints of our Ancestors¹

While many countries have made significant advances, indigenous peoples continue to face challenges in accessing their right to education, in particular their right to access a culturally appropriate education inclusive of their histories, world views and traditional knowledge and delivered through culturally appropriate teaching strategies, in appropriate cultural settings, and in their own languages.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) works on several themes relevant to indigenous education, most significantly traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, and customary sustainable use of biological diversity.

The CBD Secretariat also works closely with indigenous peoples' regional and local organizations to deliver culturally appropriate training through a “train-the-trainer” methodology on participation in the implementation of the Convention, as well as on substantive issues such as community based monitoring and information systems, community protocols for traditional knowledge, and the implementation of the global “Plan of Action on Customary Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity”.

In 2014, at its twelfth meeting, the CBD Conference of the Parties agreed on advancing guidelines to protect and promote traditional knowledge to assist governments in the development of legislation, or other mechanisms, including national action plans and *sui generis* systems, for the effective implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions of the Convention, thus recognizing, safeguarding and fully guaranteeing the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities over their knowledge, innovations and practices.

This includes developing guidelines to ensure that private and public institutions interested in using traditional knowledge obtain prior informed consent or approval and involvement of indigenous peoples

¹ KARI-OCA DECLARATION, Brazil, May 30, 1992



**Convention on
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and local communities, that indigenous peoples and local communities obtain a fair and equitable share of benefits arising from the use and application of their knowledge, innovations and practices. The guidelines will also assist Parties and other governments in developing national mechanisms for reporting on and preventing, the unlawful appropriation of traditional knowledge².

It is expected that the thirteenth meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties, to be held in Cancun, Mexico, from 4 –17 December, 2016, will adopt these guidelines. When effectively implemented, the guidelines can go a long way towards ensuring indigenous peoples remain in control of their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, which is a foundation for indigenous education.

Traditional knowledge is characterised by its practical nature – often locally based, dependant on biological resources, and transferred orally and inter-generationally. The intergenerational transfer occurs mainly from Elders to youth and through customary sustainable use of biodiversity. In many ways one could argue that the ‘classroom for traditional knowledge is customary sustainable use’.

In 2014, the Conference of the Parties adopted a global “Plan of Action on Customary Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity” and requested Parties to report on the implementation of the plan biennially to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation of the CBD and through the national reports.

In the lead up to 2020, in order to achieve the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets, the Secretariat is ramping up efforts to monitor implementation of guidelines and other tools, in order to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 18, which aims to ensure that traditional knowledge is respected and reflected in the implementation of the Convention.

To that end, the CBD COP has adopted four indicators to measure status and trends in traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use, which are trends of linguistic diversity and numbers of speakers of indigenous languages; trends in land-use change and land tenure in the traditional territories of indigenous and local communities; trends in the practice of traditional occupations; and trends in degree to which traditional knowledge and practices are respected through full integration, participation and safeguards in national implementation of the Strategic Plan.

The Convention continues to work with the world’s indigenous peoples to play our part in ensuring that traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use are respected, protected and encouraged so that they can continue to be the foundations for indigenous education into the future. That is not only beneficial to indigenous peoples and local communities, but is beneficial to all people.

Additional Information

The thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will take place 4 - 17 December 2016, in Cancun, Mexico. Indigenous peoples have enhanced participation mechanisms under the Convention, including a voluntary fund for the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in meetings held under the Convention. Representatives of indigenous peoples’ organizations interested in participating in the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties are invited to complete an application form at www.cbd.int/traditional/fund.shtml. Please submit the completed application along with an official letter of nomination at least three months before the meeting you are applying for to secretariat@cbd.int or in the case of COP 13 by 2 September 2016.

² Traditional knowledge accessed without prior informed consent or approval and involvement of the knowledge holders.