UNDP and Indigenous Peoples: A Policy of Engagement

UNDP is mandated to address the development needs of the world’s poorest and most vulnerable, through the five key practice areas of Democratic Governance; Poverty Reduction; HIV/AIDS; Crisis Prevention and Recovery; and Energy and Environment.

In 2001 UNDP adopted a Policy of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples. The Policy is in direct response to the disproportionately vulnerable situations facing many indigenous peoples, and the need for constructive dialogue with indigenous peoples when devising development activities affecting them.

This Policy of Engagement provides the framework to guide UNDP’s work in the area of indigenous issues. It is built on the recognition that indigenous peoples must be engaged in, and in ownership of, activities concerning their rights and development.

UNDP’s engagement with indigenous peoples has received a fresh impetus with the historic adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on 13 September 2007 - by an overwhelming majority of UN member-states, including from Asia and the Pacific.

The Regional Initiative on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and Development (UNDP RIPP)

RIPP was established in September 2004 within the framework of UNDP’s Policy of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples (2001). RIPP has gained recognition as a unique initiative within the UN system.

RIPP provides advice and support on strengthening national policy and programming frameworks. The Initiative offers a neutral space to bring together governments, UNDP COs, agencies and indigenous peoples’ organizations/CSOs to discuss and agree frameworks for cooperation.

The Regional Initiative will continue its work within the framework of UNDP’s regional cooperation framework for Asia-Pacific for 2008-2011. During the new phase, RIPP will strive to address indigenous issues at the regional level to ensure better integration in national development processes and outcomes – with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples providing guiding principles for its work, together with UNDP’s policy of engagement.

The Regional initiative on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and Development is part of the regional programming of UNDP through the Regional Centre in Bangkok. The RCB provides advice and technical support to the UNDP country offices within the region, covering some 25 countries in Asia-Pacific.
News Update

Asia’s Indigenous Peoples Fair

The first Asia’s Indigenous Peoples’ Regional Fair was held in Chiang Mai on 26 & 27 July 2008, organized by Asia Indigenous Peoples’ Pact and partners including UNDP-RIPP. It brought indigenous organizations and communities, UN agencies, NGOs, donors and governments to celebrate the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a symbol of the unity and diversity of indigenous peoples in Asia.

Indigenous Peoples from all over Asia celebrated their rich cultures, traditions, and wealth through exhibitions, weaving, dances and music, as well as food.

Interactive Regional Dialogue on the “UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Mechanisms on the Promotion and Protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and their relevance in South-East Asia”

On 28 and 29 January 2009, UNDP-RIPP and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, (Regional Office for South-East Asia) held the 1st Interactive Regional Dialogue on the “UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Mechanisms on the Promotion and Protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and their relevance in South-East Asia”, in Bangkok.

UN Experts participating in the Dialogue included Ms. Vicky Tauli Corpuz, Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; Prof. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, former UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of fundamental freedoms and human rights of indigenous peoples; Mr. John Bernhard Henriksen, Chairperson-Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Ms. Virginia Dandan, member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The first day was attended by UN Resident Coordinators/Representatives from Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia and Thailand, the UNDP Country Director Philippines and from the RC’s Office, Cambodia. Representatives from UN regional offices also participated. The interactive dialogue provided an opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities faced at the country level in incorporating indigenous peoples into national policy and development programmes, with the experts identifying practical suggestions on how to address this in a pragmatic and practical manner. A number of interesting entry points were identified, in the context of Article 42 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which places responsibility on Governments and the UN system - including at the country level - to implement the Declaration. These are, among others, according adequate attention to indigenous peoples in the ongoing work on social inclusion, poverty reduction and MDGs tracking; the preparations for the Universal Periodic Review and the contributions to the work of the various treaty bodies as well as the provision of support to national efforts for the disaggregation of data.

The second day was composed of two separate sessions: (a) the morning session was devoted to an exchange between the experts with regional civil society organizations to discuss ways to strengthen their work on indigenous peoples and the linkages with the expert bodies in this regard; and (b) the experts gave an overview of their work in relation to the specific rights and issues of indigenous women to the Technical Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, co-Chaired by UNESCAP and UNIFEM, of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, and exchanged views on the challenges faced by indigenous women in the region, and possible areas for cooperation with the Technical Working Group.

Guest of Honour Mr. Mongkon Banwelaippikul, Director of the Office of Social Development and Human Security of Chiang Mai Province receiving a souvenir from a participant at the opening ceremony
Natural resource management and access to and control over land and resources are critical concerns shared by indigenous peoples throughout Asia and around the world. Through local, regional and national consultations, RIPP and its partners are evaluating the relationship between government policies and indigenous practices on natural resource management.

**Bridging the Gap: Policies and Practices on Indigenous Peoples’ Natural Resource Management in Asia**

In 2005 - 2006, UNDP RIPP conducted analytical studies on natural resources systems and their interface with national laws and policies in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Malaysia and Thailand. Consultations carried out with indigenous communities, governments, NGOs and academics enriched and informed the studies and enabled the inclusion of a wide range of perspectives. A regional synthesis paper draws on the country assessments to identify gaps in policy and practice, and compiles key recommendations for further work on this issue. The final report, *Bridging the Gap*, was launched at the Regional Dialogue on Indigenous Peoples and Natural Resource Management (November 2007).

**Regional Dialogue**

From 10-14 November 2007, UNDP’s Regional Initiative on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and Development (RIPP) brought together 120 practitioners and policy makers from 13 countries in Asia (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam) including government representatives; indigenous leaders, elders and youth; researchers and community workers; and UNDP country offices. The aim was to share challenges and opportunities implicit in lands, natural resource management and cultural sustainability. The Chairperson of UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues delivered the keynote address at the opening session.

The Regional Dialogue, the 1st on this issue, looked at natural resource management through the lens of climate change and adaptation by indigenous peoples to development, globalization and environmental degradation. It was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in partnership with the Asia Indigenous Peoples’ Pact (AIPP), the International Alliance for Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests (IAITPTF), the Inter-Mountain Peoples’ Association for Education and Culture in Thailand (IMPECT), and the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), with support from The Christensen Fund.

As a follow up, a study tour was carried out between the government agencies and indigenous peoples from the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh to the rice terraces in Banaue, the Philippines at the invitation of the Governor of Ifugao. The two communities have remained in touch, in particular on the issue of how to better deal with the challenges of climate change, with UNDP-RIPP supporting community discussions on this issue.
Community Dialogues

The Regional Dialogue forms part of a broader, inter-linked multi-dimensional strategy and includes an ongoing series of Community Dialogues and a Global Dialogue, complemented by pilot projects on sustainable bioculturalism and adaptation to climate change.

The Community Dialogue in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia (Oct - Nov 2007) drew out the issue of unpredictable seasonal patterns that have caused serious damage to agriculture and livelihoods through severe flooding in the wet season and water shortages during the dry months. The extreme fluctuations in climate, marked since 1999, have impacted human development negatively, and contributed to higher levels of poverty amongst indigenous communities.

In Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh the Community Dialogue (Nov 2007) focused on the traditional system of jhum cultivation, and how it is being impacted, not only in terms of intensity and crop diversity, but also in fallow management. A majority of the indigenous peoples in the CHT depend upon jhum for rice production and for meeting their subsistence needs. For them, jhum is more than a farming method; it is a source of knowledge and struggle for protecting culture and identity. They have many practices, taboos, beliefs, and folklores passed down from generation to generation through oral traditions. However, this knowledge is little inventoried and documented. By drawing on indigenous knowledge and technologies, they maintain biodiversity in the CHT region.

Two more Community Dialogues were organized in the year 2008 - in Sabah, Malaysia and in Ifugao, Cordillera Region, the Philippines. Partner organizations were PACOS Trust in Sabah, Malaysia; and Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) in coordination with its provincial chapter the Ifugao Resources and Development Center (IRDC) in the Philippines.

In Sabah, two activities were carried out: a community dialogue and video documentation on the good practices of the indigenous system. The community dialogue drew out issues, challenges and opportunities in preserving the traditional knowledge system, its relation to climate change and how the community has managed to retain their culture, identity and indigenous knowledge. The dialogue was attended by community elders, women, youth and government representatives. Most of the indigenous communities in Sabah have their own customs or Adat to preserve the water resource and the living organisms inside it. Among the most common resource management system is the Tagal system. The system maintains a harmony between users and their natural environment; or gompi guno, meaning ‘to use and look after’. The concept behind this system is collective ownership and responsibility, sustainable use of resources and maintaining balance of life. A Tagal is normally governed by the village headman and endorsed by the indigenous chief.

In Ifugao, the Community Dialogue focused on particular ecosystem for each community to allow more in depth study on selected NRMs. The Community Dialogues were conducted from March to May 2008 in eight communities in four municipalities in Ifugao: (1) Mayoyao: Chaya on earthworm pest management; (2) Hingyon: Mompolia on the Holok pest management practice; (3) Hungduan: Abatan, Poblacion, Bangbang, Hapao on water, forest and watershed management (4) Tinoc: Danggo, Tucucan on uma or swidden farming.
Innovative Projects on Indigenous Peoples’ Adaptation to Climate Change

Partnerships between indigenous communities and governments, UN agencies, scholars, artists and advocates to develop better linkages and understanding of the regional dimensions of land, natural resources, and climate change are a key objective for RIPP. With support from The Christensen Fund, RIPP supports projects that are innovative and inspirational, and linked to bio-culturalism and community empowerment.

The innovative projects will identify practical examples of adaptation to climate change to serve as evidence-based tools to enrich and inform the global debate. They provide an opportunity for indigenous communities in Asia to explore and create strategies that protect bio-cultural diversity – in full partnership with UNDP.

In partnership with indigenous peoples, UNDP RIPP is implementing eight projects in Bangladesh, China, Lao PDR, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines and Thailand, selected from a large number of proposals, through a competitive process.

The following innovative projects will showcase best practices from Asia of how indigenous communities manage natural resources to maintain their bio-cultural diversity and adapt to climate change without losing their culture and identity:

1. **Taungya, Bangladesh** believes socio-economic activities must be initiated and carried out by the communities themselves, with their prior and informed consent, to bring progress and benefits. The project aims to identify a concrete coping strategy to combat the global climate change that is cost effective, eco-friendly, reliable, and adaptable. It is linked to viable livelihoods that use and manage available natural resources in a sustainable manner.

2. **The Center for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge (CBIK), China** project seeks to generate innovative ways of nurturing intercultural dialogue among people of varying cultures, languages, and knowledge systems in Southwest China. It aims to enhance understanding of multi-stakeholders on biodiversity resources, traditional livelihoods and indigenous knowledge systems and increase the livelihood diversity and security of local ethnic nationalities in the context of climate change.

3. **The Naga Women’s Union, Manipur (NWUM), India** believes that technological and economical growth has to be people-centred, and participation in the processes of development is the key to a more sustainable model. The project will raise awareness on environmental issues among the Naga community, and reinvigorate indigenous peoples’ survival systems by harnessing both modern and traditional methods in dealing with environmental issues.

4. **Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN), Indonesia** believes in increasing the economic value of bamboo through innovative practices. A Torajan tradition that forbade the use of discarded ceremonial bamboos is being reviewed through a consultation process (Kombongan) to see how it can be a source of income for the indigenous communities, especially the women. The project aims to rehabilitate and conserve the bamboo forest in Toraya’s indigenous territory through community-based management; establish bamboo briquette and souvenir production as an alternative livelihood for the indigenous peoples, and strengthen women’s economic empowerment.

5. **The Community Knowledge Support Association (CKSA), Lao PDR** prioritizes access to secure and sustainable livelihood and cultural heritage as necessary tools for ecological and sustainable development. The goal of the project is to support the conservation of the ethnic and cultural diversity of upland communities in Borikhamxay province. The pilot will document traditional seed and plant preservation in the country’s poorest community and their response to climate change; identify good practices of ecological and sustainable development, and strengthen traditional knowledge systems of seed preservation.

6. **The Association of Nepal Kirat Kulung Language and Cultural Development (ANKKLCD), Nepal** works on socio-economic development and linguistic and cultural development of the Kulung community, a forest dependent community. The pilot focuses on Allo, the Himalayan Giant Nettle (Girardinia Diversifoli) as a source of income, especially for the Kulung women; however it is being depleted through forest degradation. The main goal of the project is to contribute towards the survival of indigenous peoples by increasing the capacity of the indigenous people in Allo cultivation and production, and supporting marketing networks for economic empowerment.

7. **The Montañosa Research and Development Center, Inc (MRDC), Philippines** has 30 years of experience in development work with the marginalized indigenous communities in the Cordillera. The project aims to strengthen indigenous natural resource management systems; increase household income through the development of sustainable resource-based enterprises such as honey production under the indigenous Lapat system; and provide a space for skills development in cooperative enterprises.

8. **The International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests Foundation (IAITPTF), Thailand** believes that indigenous peoples’ livelihoods depend on the sustainable use of natural resources. The project aims to demonstrate the linkage between indigenous women, income generation projects and climate change adaptation and mitigation. It will support indigenous women traditional knowledge and skills preservation by building capacity in the innovative production, design and marketing of their products as well as preserving relevant trees and plants required in the production process. The project will also strengthen networking and strategic partnerships of indigenous women.
Development Policies and Frameworks

Human Rights Based Approach to Development (HRBA) and Indigenous Peoples

In response to the development challenges facing indigenous peoples in Asia-Pacific, RIPP continues efforts to strengthen the application of the Human Rights Based Approach to Development (HRBA) by building greater awareness of the principles of the HRBA and its value as an advocacy and implementation tool to strengthen indigenous peoples' rights and development.

As part of an ongoing initiative on Indigenous Peoples and the HRBA: Engaging in Dialogue, RIPP organized two sub-regional trainings in 2007: (1) in Nepal, in partnership with the National Human Rights Commission and UNDP Nepal from 25 September to 4 October 2007; and (2) in the Philippines, together with UNDP Philippines and the Cordillera Indigenous Peoples’ Legal Centre (DINTEG) from 26-30 October 2007. In 2008, with support from Global Human Rights Strengthening Programme (GHRSP), RIPP continued this initiative and conducted a sub-regional training in Thailand from 4th - 9th November 2008.

The training workshop provided participants with skills training in international law, with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples providing the conceptual framework to guide the application of the HRBA from the perspective of indigenous peoples. The aim is to enable indigenous peoples to actively promote their rights and advocate for culturally appropriate development that is in accordance to their needs and priorities. RIPP will continue to build and expand on this by developing a manual and toolkit on Human Rights Based Approach to Development and Indigenous Peoples. Our work is guided by a task force of indigenous experts.

Participants were drawn from a range of backgrounds and professions including development workers, community organizers, lawyers, traditional leaders, women’s groups and journalists. Evaluations described the training as informative and empowering, useful, targeted and inspiring. Participants committed to implementing the HRBA concept in their respective spheres of action and influence. They strongly urged UNDP to continue these trainings, and to also provide this opportunity at community level in order to allow more grassroots level participation, and help bring the concept closer to the issues on the ground.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a conceptual framework complemented by the UNDG Guidelines on Mainstreaming Indigenous Peoples’ Issues at the Country Level are an integral part of this initiative.

Analytical Study

A complementary activity has been to undertake assessments of the impact of the development policies and programmes on indigenous peoples. Conceptualized during a planning workshop in October 2005, in close partnership with the ADB and IPOs, a series of analytical studies to identify the gaps and opportunities of the major financial institutions were completed in 2006: Engaging in Dialogue: The Human Rights Based Approach to Development and Indigenous Peoples (DINTEG-RIPP). This was followed by a series of analytical studies on existing projects funded partly or fully by the Asian Development Bank. The case studies, carried out in five countries: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, and Philippines, review the use and enforcement of the ADB’s safeguard policies, and establish recommendations for further action and follow up. The studies informed ongoing ADB safeguard review process with consultations undertaken in November 2007 and 2008, and are part of UNDP/RIPP’s cooperation with the ADB.
Communication for Empowerment and Access to Justice

Communication for Empowerment of Asia’s Indigenous Peoples

RIPP, in partnership with UNDP’s Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme and the Asia Regional Governance Programme, organized a workshop at the e-Bario Knowledge Fair in Sarawak, Malaysia from 6–8 December 2007. Bringing together representatives of indigenous ICT–media practitioners and academics/researchers from 14 countries across Asia-Pacific, Canada and Australia, the workshop facilitated the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

A key success of the workshop was agreement on a Regional Action Plan to develop an e-inclusion project for Asia’s indigenous peoples which was presented during a panel discussion at the Third Global Knowledge Conference in Kuala Lumpur on 12 December 2007.

In the 28 – 30th July 2008 a workshop on ‘Communication for Empowerment of Asia’s Indigenous Peoples’ in Chiang Mai Thailand was held to raise awareness among Indigenous Peoples on communication for empowerment.

The participants agreed on a methodological approach to the project for Communication for Empowerment of Asia’s Indigenous Peoples that combines tools for assessing the national level conditions regarding the existing context and environment for media and communication for empowerment, with community level appraisals of the needs and opportunities for empowerment with information and communication. The project will proceed with such assessments and appraisals in Indonesia, Malaysia (Borneo) and Lao PDR, and Bangladesh, Nepal and India.

Access to Justice for Indigenous Peoples

UNDP-RIPP has conducted a series of analytical case studies into this issue to assess the gaps and challenges towards more inclusive governance. Analyses from Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Philippines and Thailand form part of a regional series on Inclusive Governance for Disadvantaged Groups, undertaken in cooperation with the UNDP Asia Regional Governance Programme and UNDP Asia Pacific Gender Mainstreaming Programme.

The RIPP’s reports were commissioned from experts and practitioners with theoretical and practical experience on the issue, with a view to identifying solutions and ways forward and drawing out the regional dimensions of the issue. The case studies were conducted in a participatory and empowering process and highlight the root causes for legal marginalization of indigenous peoples with land emerging as a critical issue.

UNDP plans to use these substantive reports to advocate for change to better accommodate indigenous peoples’ rights in national law and policy programmes and processes. This will be done at the country level and at the regional level. In addition, access to justice specific activities will be planned through consultations with UNDP country offices, governments, law and policy makers, and indigenous peoples’ organizations for country specific activities in Bangladesh, Cambodia and elsewhere in the region.
Indigenous Women in Decision-Making

In cooperation with the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact Foundation (AIPP) and local partners, UNDP RIPP is conducting trainings for Indigenous Women on Decision-Making.

The main emphasis of the IWDM trainings is to address the power dynamics that characterize the daily lives and relationships of indigenous women in their communities. Given the generally low status occupied in most societies by women in general and indigenous women in particular – with their triple burden of being indigenous, women and poor - training to enable indigenous women to be better informed on their rights strengthens their capacity to demand and enjoy the same. This is also an excellent building block towards empowerment and capacity development.

The main activities under this initiative include trainings of trainers (TOTs), community based trainings, and the development of a manual which is shaped and adapted to the trainings. The manual on Indigenous Women and Decision Making has been published in 2007.

The trainings provide indigenous women with knowledge about national and international laws relevant to their lives. The trainings also serve as a venue for participants to share experiences and concerns with each other. For example, in the Philippines participants expressed concerns about the negative impacts of development on indigenous women; they also noted that building capacity and confidence hinges on access to information. Within this environment women are able to effectively network with one another and build relationships to support each other in decision-making.

The Indigenous Women in Decision-Making initiative has been identified as a ‘good practice’ by the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Indigenous Women, and is included in a compilation which was launched during the sixth session of the UN Permanent Forum on May 2007. During the period of 2005—2007, six trainings were conducted in Bangladesh, Burma, India, Malaysia, Nepal and Philippines.

**Trainings for Indigenous Women Leaders on Decision-Making (2008):**

The training in Indonesia was held on the 24th - 28th August 2008 in Gunung Batu Nausus, Fatukoto Village/Molo, Timur Tengah, Selatan, Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT). The local hosts and co-organizers for the trainings are AIPP’s members and its network; the Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN). The training was attended by sixty one (61) from various indigenous groups where 23 out of 61 were male participants from the Molo community and was facilitated by two (2) local trainers.

Through a gender analysis work, the participants - both indigenous women and men - identified their involvement in various issues as decision makers, the roles of indigenous peoples at family, village, community and state levels. The participation of men from Molo communities in the training helped them to understand the various issues regarding gender and women’s decision making rights and violence against women and will provide strong support for Molo indigenous women in implementing the gender principles within their families and communities.

The training in Lao PDR was held on the 27th - 31st October 2008 in Vientiane and the local hosts and co-organizers are AIPP’s members and its network; the Gender Development Group (GDG) and Community Knowledge Support Association (CKSA). Thirteen (13) participants from Katang, Khmu, Hmong and Lao Loum indigenous communities attended training and four (4) female trainers facilitated the sessions.

The sharing sessions provided a space for stories of women to be told; domestic concerns; decision-making within the community and in the broader society; access to inheritance; and the effect of international and national laws to the recognition of indigenous women’s rights. Indigenous women from Laos who have less opportunity for trainings were able to gather and obtained the opportunity to share and learn about not only the importance of women’s participation in decision making but also various issues faced by indigenous women in Laos.

**Future Plans:**

There are a number of requests for follow on trainings in other communities, and AIPP-RIPP are discussing future plans. Building on the knowledge gained during the first three years, work in this area will continue with expansion into other critical areas such as violence and conflict prevention.

For more information please visit our website: http://regionalcentrebangkok.undp.or.th/practices/governance/ripp/gltp.html
Law and Policy Framework

Introduction

Law and policy frameworks are key structural requirements for the realization of fundamental freedoms and basic rights of indigenous peoples. RIPP has established partnerships with governments, civil society and UNDP country offices to work on these frameworks.

The Regional Initiative works within governance systems to promote the rights and expand the development choices of indigenous peoples. In this context, law and policy frameworks are an essential part of effective and sustained change. RIPP's efforts aim at securing greater inclusion and participation of indigenous peoples in democratic governance processes, through policy initiatives and their translation into law and policy frameworks.

Law and Policy Initiative Cambodia

In response to a request for technical assistance from the Royal Government of Cambodia, RIPP has been working closely with UNDP Cambodia to contribute towards the adoption of a policy on indigenous peoples’ development. This has included policy and programming support to the Ethnic Minority Department of the Ministry of Rural Development – the governmental unit responsible for indigenous peoples - to strengthen policy dialogue between government agencies, civil society, and indigenous peoples at the grassroots and national levels, including in ten provinces. The policy is currently in the final stages of review prior to its adoption.

Law and Policy Initiative in Indonesia

In Indonesia, RIPP support, in close cooperation with UNDP Indonesia, has focused on a review of national laws and policies relevant to indigenous peoples. Our involvement served as a catalyst to bring together the Indonesian government and a national alliance of indigenous peoples (AMAN) to conduct the review, including through provincial and district-level consultations to identify gaps and provide recommendations for further action. This will inform the ongoing legal and policy reform process in the country, and our efforts in this regard continue.

Results informed a December 2007 policy workshop on the Accommodation of Indigenous Peoples’ Rights in the Constitution, organized by UNDP and the ILO, in cooperation with the Indonesian Government - the Constitutional Court and the National Commission on Human Rights.

RIPP is currently following up on the issue of national policy reform regarding indigenous peoples in Indonesia, Cambodia and elsewhere in the region; bringing together UNDP Country offices, governments and indigenous peoples organizations. This will build on and expand on work done so far. In addition, RIPP plans to conduct a regional mapping of the law and policy processes relevant to indigenous peoples.

Regional Human Rights Mechanism (ASEAN)

The Indigenous Peoples’ Strategy Planning Workshop on the Establishment of ASEAN Human Rights Body organised by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) Foundation was held on 29 – 30th October 2008, Bangkok Thailand. This Workshop is intended to bring together the IPs organizations, leaders, experts, from the ASEAN countries to develop advocacy strategies and to engage in the ASEAN process, especially in the establishment of the Human Rights Body. The workshop is intended to formulate strategies and activities for lobby and advocacy aimed at the ASEAN States in relation to promoting indigenous peoples rights and human rights. It also aims to discuss and come up with a collective Resolution for submission to the ASEAN in relation to the establishment of the ASEAN Human Rights Body. Finally, the Workshop is also expected to agree on a working mechanism for cooperation and coordination on the implementation of the strategies and activities related to the ASEAN.
Introduction

The UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Leadership Course for Young Leaders in Governance is part of an ongoing initiative of the Regional Centre in Bangkok. It was developed in recognition of the crucial role of youth in shaping our future, and the need to provide our young leaders with the technical and substantive know how to serve as excellent leaders in their field.

RIPP’s focus at the trainings is to provide the indigenous perspective at the trainings: (a) at the substantive level by ensuring indigenous peoples rights are mainstreamed in the curriculum and (b) including young indigenous leaders in the training.

The Inception Course (2005):
UNDP RCB held the first regional course for Young Leaders in Governance from 28 November to 2 December, 2005 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The training was attended by 76 participants from 20 Asian countries representing different sectors including government, parliaments, NGOs and indigenous peoples.

The training curriculum is designed around technical modules developed and tested by LEAD International such as systems thinking for transformational change; conflict resolution and negotiation; cross-cultural communication for leadership; team building and networking; and leadership styles and tools. These are complemented by substantive/thematic modules developed by UNDP on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and Development; Capacity Assessment; Anti-Corruption and Gender.

Young Leaders in Governance Courses

Since 2006, four sub-regional leadership courses were conducted in Bangkok, Thailand (2006), in Colombo, Sri Lanka (2006), in Vientiane, Lao PDR (2007) and in Bangkok (2008). In addition, two trainings were conducted by alumnae of the 1st Regional Training in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh and in the Philippines. Upon completing these courses, young indigenous leaders form a pool of trainers and resource people for work on indigenous issues in the future. They are the core members of the RIPP young leaders’ network. In total, the AYLG has produced a network of 131 leadership fellows.

Module Adaptation & Training of Trainers

Building on the success of the previous years, in June 2007, an Adaptation Writeshop was held in Manila, Philippines, to review and strengthen AYLG course modules, with new thematic modules on indigenous peoples and gender, anti-corruption, and capacity development developed to supplement the existing course structure. In 2008, a Training of Trainers prior was conducted in Bangkok, Thailand.

Malaysia Institute of Integrity

In December 2008, the proposed integrity project titled “Jelajah Integriti" or "Integrity Exploration" was launched. A state-level, indigenous-focus programme was organized, which included an Indigenous People’s forum, a Corporate Social Responsibility project with 200 indigenous students and several fun activities around the theme of Sustainable Nature, Indigenous Integrity.

AYLG Innovative Country Projects

The interest and vision of the Leadership Fellows prompted UNDP RCB to design a more formal mechanism for supporting national level innovations for leadership development. Through a competitive process, with maximum funding of $15,000 per pilot five innovative national pilot projects led by Leadership Fellows themselves were selected for Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

The roll-out of national/sub-national leadership project was extremely important to apply and perpetuate the lessons and skills learned from the leadership courses and provide an opportunity to potentially engage other young leaders to participate in leadership development activities. By funding these five innovative national leadership pilot projects AYLG was able to increase its outreach to a greater proportion of local young leaders.

Innovative leadership pilots also offered the unique opportunity for customization of leadership course content to local contexts and inclusion of new Asian examples for leadership skills. The projects in Bangladesh, India and Philippines targeted young indigenous leaders.
UNDP RIPP at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (20 April - 2 May 2008)

On 22nd April 2008, during the 7th session of the Permanent Forum, UNDP RIPP organized an inter-active Global Dialogue: Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples’ Bio-cultural Diversity. Indigenous representatives and Governments, UN Permanent Forum members, UN Agencies and others exchanged ideas and views on how indigenous peoples have responded to the multi-faceted challenges of climate change and development.

Mr. Phrang Roy, of The Cristensen Fund introduced the concept of the Community Dialogues - to provide a space to discuss challenges and responses to climate change and to identify innovative practices that protect indigenous culture and identity. Mr. Deodat Maharaj, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, UNDP opened the dialogue by stressing UNDP’s continuing engagement with indigenous peoples, and its flagship programme on indigenous peoples’ rights and development, RIPP. The Dialogues are implemented with the support of The Christensen Fund.

Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chairperson of the UNPFII delivered the keynote speech stressing the need for greater recognition of indigenous peoples and their contribution to bio-diversity at policy and decision-making processes. Indigenous peoples have much to share, and are the main stewards of the environment; their bio-cultural practices and natural resource management techniques are important in this era of climate change.

Indigenous leaders from five eco-systems presented the discussions, findings and best practices of their communities in retaining their cultural landscapes while at the same time tackling the multi-dimensional and often inter-woven challenges of globalization, development and environmental degradation which are often the leading causes for climate change:

Mr. Kamardi of AMAN, Indonesia described the impact wrought by the changing climate on the environment of the indigenous peoples in Lombok, Indonesia. He highlighted mitigation and adaptation measures the community is taking such as tree planting, crop diversification, promoting organic farming etc. He also mentioned the impact development can bring, if not according to indigenous values and traditions.

This was reaffirmed by Mr. Mani Swapan Dewan of TAUNGYA, Bangladesh who drew attention to the urgent need to revitalize the cultural identity, and protect the bio-diversity of indigenous peoples in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Mr. Dewan stressed the multi-dimensional aspects of environment, development and climate change and that they are inter-related and have follow on causal impacts. He recommended support for the implementation of the CHT Peace Accord 1997, sustainable development, and the preservation and promotion of indigenous culture, practices and traditions (many of which are under threat).

Mr. Matthew Tauli of CPA, Philippines highlighted various traditional knowledge and practices of the indigenous peoples in the Cordilleras that have been instrumental in preserving the landscapes and bio-diversity, for example, the rice terraces of Ifugao.

Ms. Mary Guin of PACOS, Malaysia presented a documentary showing the revitalization of TAGAL – an indigenous system of sustainable fisheries and watershed management that has been successful in adapting to the challenges of the changing environment and climate.

Tokiwaio Blah from Meghalaya, India advocated that indigenous peoples’ shifting cultivation, contrary to some widely held beliefs, is sustainable and an important element in preserving indigenous peoples’ bio-cultural landscapes. He described how indigenous practices and innovations are adapted to accommodate climate change and yet retain their distinct cultural identity.

This was followed by an interactive dialogue with comments, queries and stories. Mr. Phrang Roy, who chaired the session, stressed the importance of highlighting indigenous peoples’ good practices and successes in responding to the various challenges of climate change. Ms. Joan Carling of the Asia Indigenous Peoples’ Caucus and Mr. Suikhar of Asia Indigenous Peoples’ Pact gave the closing remarks. The dialogue was organized in close cooperation with The Christensen Fund, the Asia Indigenous Peoples’ Caucus and the Asia Indigenous Peoples’ Pact.
Publications

Bridging the Gap: Policies and Practices on Indigenous Peoples’ Natural Resource Management in Asia
Analysis of natural resources systems and their interface with national laws and policies in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Malaysia and Thailand. A regional synthesis paper draws on the country assessments to identify gaps in policy and practice, and compiles key recommendations for further work on this issue.

Access to Justice of Indigenous Peoples in Asia:
A series of analytical case studies into this issue commissioned by experts to assess the gaps and challenges towards more inclusive governance. Analyses from Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Philippines and Thailand form part of a regional series on Inclusive Governance for Disadvantaged Groups, undertaken in cooperation with the UNDP Asia Regional Governance Programme and UNDP Asia Pacific Gender Mainstreaming Programme.

Legal Recognition of Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia
The Report focuses on reviewing national laws and policies relevant to Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia. The review includes provincial and district-level consultations to identify gaps and provide recommendations for further action.

Summary of UNDP RIPP’s Achievements
This publication highlights some of RIPP’s projects and programmes. It also provides information regarding our partnerships and plans for the future.

RIPP’s Brochure
RIPP’s programme brochure offers a snapshot of our work to organizations and individuals who are interested in finding out more about us. It provides a brief overview of our approach, strategies and objectives.

Indigenous Women and Decision Making
This training manual provides easy to use modules on how to orient and conduct trainings on decision-making. It also includes practical guidance on exploring and understanding the challenges currently faced by indigenous women. The manual is designed to provide an insight into relevant national legislation and international laws regarding their rights. The Indigenous Women and Decision-Making manual has been adapted and translated into Bengali, Burmese, Malaysian and Thai with further translations planned for wider use. It was developed in participation with the Asia Indigenous Peoples’ Pact and local indigenous organizations.

Indigenous Peoples and The Human Rights Based Approach to Development: Engaging in Dialogue
This is a compilation of analytical studies on policies of international financial institutions. It is the first step in a dialogue process that seeks to identify modalities for constructive engagement with indigenous peoples. This is a joint publication of DINTEG, the Cordillera Indigenous Peoples’ Legal Centre & UNDP/RIPP.

Inter-Agency Best Practice: Case Study on Leadership Training for Indigenous Women
This case study is part of the Best Practices publication of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Indigenous Women (IGTFIW) with contributions from UNDP, ILO, UNICEF and others). It focuses on the experiences of indigenous women during the process of trainings conducted in local communities in Sabah, Malaysia and the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh. It documents the key issues inherent in strengthening the decision-making capacity of indigenous women in two countries, and also provides them with the space to network and discuss common issues, and build bridges across countries and communities.

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