



Statement in Support of Indigenous, Traditional and Local Peoples in Policy and Decision-making for Addressing the Global Environmental Challenges

Indigenous, traditional and local peoples who are custodians of biocultural diversity provide valuable insights and perspectives on policies and actions aimed at solving environmental issues confronting the world, now the focus of Rio+20. These insights include, among others, empirical knowledge and practices for:

- sustaining inextricably linked biological and cultural diversities;
- mitigating and adapting to climate change based on traditional knowledge systems;
- creating resilient and productive forested, agricultural and pastoral landscapes;
- supporting equitable health and food systems to achieve food security and sovereignty;
- protecting sacred natural sites, landscapes and territories, as the foundation for biocultural resilience; and
- developing biocultural community protocols as means of defending rights and strengthening responsibilities to safeguard biocultural heritage.

The knowledge and solutions of Indigenous, traditional and local peoples are embedded in their cultures, landscapes and territories, and are persistently marginalized and threatened. As a consequence, the world is losing the insights and adaptive capacities necessary for coping with global challenges.

The City of Montpellier in the region Languedoc-Roussillon, France, had the privilege to host the 13th Congress of the International Society of Ethnobiology in May 2012. At the Congress, Indigenous, traditional and local peoples presented concrete examples of adaptation, innovation and resilience in the face of global environmental change. The Congress participants urged the global leaders to recognize Indigenous rights and knowledge, as enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, at world fora such as Rio +20.

Indigenous, traditional and local peoples are custodians of unique, yet globally significant biological, cultural, and spiritual heritage and serve as sentinels for monitoring global environmental change. They are the innovators addressing the challenges facing the world, from high mountains to circumpolar regions, from coasts to tropical forests, from islands to desert margins.

I urge you to listen to, heed, and support the messages of Indigenous, traditional and local peoples, and rely on their knowledge and experience to inform policies, decisions, and actions critical for assuring a just, equitable, and resilient future.

Hélène Mandroux

Mayor of the City of Montpellier, France

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