International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity

Item 4- Participatory Mechanisms for Indigenous and Local Communities in the Work of the Convention

Seventh meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j) and related provisions (WG8j-7)
Montreal, Canada, October 31, 2011

Co Chairs, Ladies and Gentlemen I am making this statement on behalf of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB). We would like to begin by thanking the traditional people of this land and the Canadian government for facilitating Visas for those of us who are here today, and the Executive Secretary and Parties for supporting our participation in this meeting.

The Voluntary Fund

The Voluntary Fund is the main mechanism that has facilitated the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the Work of the Convention and therefore we express our sincere thanks to the donors that have contributed to the Voluntary Fund and urge them to continue and increase their kind contribution despite the economic crisis facing the world today. In this meeting today we had hoped that there could be more participation but due to the late contribution, and the increase in the need for more participation, this has not been possible. It is our recommendation to the Parties and donors to honour their pledge and increase their contribution. An additional mechanism for facilitating our participation in meetings under the CBD has been through direct funding to the IIFB to ensure our full and effective participation and to coordinate and support our activities. Therefore, we thank the donors that have given us financial assistance to this effect and welcome additional support.

Co Chairs, since 2008, we see the improvement on statistics in the participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, specifically to the number of applications submitted to the Voluntary Fund and the selection of participants to attend various meetings of the Convention. Currently, this Convention is the only one that recognizes the critical role by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention which feed in to the objectives of sustainable development.

Co-chairs, we therefore strongly support Draft recommendations 7 and 8 of the document UNEP/CBD/WG8J/7/9 that specifically refer to the Voluntary Fund.

• **Draft Recommendation 7**- Notes with appreciation the ongoing efforts by the Secretariat to promote the Voluntary Fund for Facilitating the Participation of Indigenous and Local Communities in the Convention Process (VB Trust Fund), and requests the Executive Secretary to continue his efforts and to report on results, along with the relevant statistics concerning the participation of indigenous and local communities, including through information provided through the national reports at the next meeting of the Working Group.

• **Draft Recommendation 8**- Invites Parties, Governments, donors and relevant funding institutions and mechanisms to contribute generously to the Voluntary Fund for the Participation of indigenous and local community representatives in the Convention process (VB Trust Fund).
Capacity Building

The work of the Convention has made progress in supporting Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to work closely with different Parties in the implementation of the decisions made throughout the process. In COP 10 in Nagoya, “the Conference of the Parties adopted several decisions relevant to the effective participation and capacity-building of indigenous and local communities in the work of the Convention. Paragraphs 1 and 2 of decision X/40, some of the recognized works in the decisions are:

- Partnership with the Government of Spain and the Indigenous Women’s Biodiversity Network of the Latin American and Caribbean region (LAC IWBN)¹,
- Workshops in support of enhanced implementation, through web-based technologies, of the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development.
- Various Regional and sub-regional capacity-building workshops and exchange of experiences on issues relevant to Article 8(j), Article 10(c) and Article 15, to assist indigenous and local communities in their effective participation in the work of the Convention.
- Different partners, such as the GEF, UN agencies, Treaty Bodies, Regional Initiatives like the ABS African initiatives, among others have joined the Secretariat to further implement the decisions regarding capacity building. The success of these initiatives have been seen through the increase of invitation and participation of Indigenous and local communities.

Co Chairs, the IIIFB appreciates the work done and it is well documented in the report in front of us today. We would like however to share the following recommendation which we think will further advance the participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local communities in our different regions in the work of the convention. We should go beyond the international process and make sure that the participation at the national and local level is increased. If our true intention is to meet the Aichi Biodiversity targets and ensure that the strategic plan with the multi year plan of work of the Convention is achieved, we must go beyond.

Recommendations-

Communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA)

The IIIFB strongly supports recommendation 4 found in UNEP/CBD/WG8J/7/9 with the addition of the words full and effective to be consistent with wording used in the Convention.

- Draft Recommendation 4, Requests the Secretariat to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous and local community representatives in the development of a CEPA strategy for the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020, and continue to develop diverse CEPA activities and products, including with the contributions of indigenous and local communities, to inform indigenous and local communities about the work of the Convention and also raising awareness of the general public about the role of indigenous and local communities, their traditional knowledge and customary use, in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

¹ Report on participatory mechanisms and capacity-building initiatives: note by the Executive Secretary-(UNEP/CBD/WG8J/7/9) and Report of the capacity-building workshops and other initiatives in the period 2010-2011 (UNEP/CBD/WG8J/7/INF/3)
Despite the fact that many Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities globally, do not have the access to internet facilities, electronic mechanisms, such as the Article 8(j) homepage, the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal and the Indigenous Portal, should continue to be further developed. These efforts are complementary to those organizations and communities who have access and who later ensure that information is shared broadly. There is a need for linkages to various Indigenous Peoples electronic efforts that have been developed and request the Executive Secretary to identify donors in this area and work closely with IIFB for the successful efforts of reaching out. Therefore, we strongly support draft recommendation 6 and additionally support draft recommendation 5 found in UNEP/CBD/WG8J/7/9 with the addition of words that support an ongoing partnership with the indigenous portal.

- **Draft Recommendation 5.** Notes with appreciation the ongoing work concerning electronic mechanisms, as the Article 8(j) homepage and the Traditional Knowledge Information Portal, related initiatives including partnerships with the www.indigenousportal.com by the Secretariat and requests the Executive Secretary to **have an ongoing partnership with the indigenous portal and to** continue to report on the advancement of this work at the next meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions.

- **Draft Recommendation 6.** Requests the Executive Secretary to continue to develop both electronic and traditional and diverse means of communication, education and public awareness materials, and to ensure such materials are well publicized through high-profile events in collaboration with Parties, international organizations, indigenous and local communities, and other stakeholders,

A new recommendation that we propose is to-

- **Invites Parties, Governments, donors, civil society, the private sector, and relevant funding institutions and mechanisms, to provide the needed resources to Indigenous Peoples and to partner with them in the development and implementation of “indigenous-to-indigenous” training projects, including ‘women, elders-and-youth” initiatives that are that are rooted in our languages, cultures and traditional knowledge that are fundamental in validating and affirming indigenous self-esteem and identity.**

As we continue to develop culturally appropriate CEPA tools, there is need to ensure that these tools reach out and use channels that are easily accessible to all and especially Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the remote areas of our continents. Therefore, we recommend the following new recommendation-

- **Requests Governments to facilitate the use of National and Community radios and ensure the provision of an enabling environment for access and use of these facilities by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.**

Thank you Co-chairs and we will submit these recommendations to the Secretariat.