

# THE ICCA CONSORTIUM AT RIO+20: time to learn... time to think strategy...



## PARTICIPANTS' REPORT

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

13 - 22 of June 2012

## Credits

This report has been prepared by Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend with Lorena Arce, Ashish Kothari, Stan Stevens and Taghi Farvar. Pictures by Christian Chatelain, Ashish and Grazia, July 2012.

## Acknowledgments

The ICCA Consortium is very grateful to its main sponsor – the Christensen Fund – for partial support to a small group of Consortium Members, Honorary members and staff to attend the Rio+20 Summit. Support was also kindly provided by the Institute of International Education and the Equator Initiative, and by the Ecosystem Alliance of the Netherlands, which made possible the attendance of Consortium Bolivian members linked to SAVIA. They are all gratefully acknowledged! And many thanks to Ms. Carmen Miranda, Consortium Coordinator for the Amazonia, who greatly assisted the work and travel of her Bolivian colleagues while being unable to attend herself.

## Acronyms

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
ICCA	Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Territories and Areas
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
RIO+20	Alternative name for UNCSD 2012
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

## Time to learn... time to think strategy...

We were a relatively small group<sup>1</sup> from the ICCA Consortium to attend Rio+20, this last June. We organized and held our events, met colleagues, discussed issues to the point of losing our voice, attended gathering, events and protest marches, did some strategic thinking and planning and went back home... all with hardly a glance at the gathering of the State parties that embarked on the long and painful effort you all know about, generally described as worthless by most of the reports and the media. Compared to the close attention and energy we are used to place into official wording at gatherings such as CBD's COPs or IUCN World Conservation Congresses, it did feel strange indeed.

Everyone is now nodding that the [UN Rio+20 Conference Outcome](#), despite years of preparatory meetings and months of crafting in its final stages, falls short of expectations:

- The “green economy” is the main solution pushed forward to “eradicate poverty” and generate sustainable development, but very few actually agree on what it means, and even the outcome document falls short of defining it. The impression and fear is that it may only mean “**more of the same**” and no departure at all from the structural conditions that generated the avoidable problems of today.
- Coherence in social, economic and environmental governance gets lip service through a high-level forum from the UN and the Economic and Social Council, and UNEP gets a boost (does it really deserve it?) to set the global environmental agenda. But next to nothing in the document appears to expose ***the original sin in the design of Rio+20 – the artificial separation of environmental governance and economic considerations (the green economy) into parallel tracks***, as if it was not that very separation— an economy free from environmental, social, cultural and survival-related considerations— the unrecognised root cause of much of our crises.
- Statements such as “reducing inequalities”, “inclusive society” or the need to recognise the “traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities” can be found in the text of the Conference outcome (and must have cost extensive efforts to some people) but, overall, the final statement does not deal with the causes of problems and falls short of offering innovative solutions. For instance, [financial speculations](#) and [military interests](#) get hardly a mention, the business sector remains unchallenged, climate change is left for other Conferences to deal with...
- One entry point for possible constructive work is the decision to set up an “inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process” to define “sustainable development goals” that should be “action-oriented” and, in all likelihood, address the post-2015 development agenda. By that time, however, time may have run out to make many of the choices we need to make today.

Some balance to the UN statement is provided by the [Peoples Summit's declaration](#). The Peoples' Summit gathered civil society, researchers and a colourful crowd of people from all walks of life. Held far away from the official Riocentro (Rio is a huge metropolitan area, and the two poles were connected only by—

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex 4.

unbelievably— slow and polluting buses) the gathering got a slow and disorganised start, but picked up momentum as it unfolded, especially in the thematic plenary sessions that discussed social and environmental justice, human and indigenous rights, common rights, power, democracy, labour issues, and new types of production, distribution and consumption.

The overall diagnosis of the situation in the People's Summit was that corporations and finance capital have taken hostage most national and international institutions and— with them— imposed their control over the natural heritage of the planet. Their weapons are ***induced consumption and debt***, the ***politics of fear and the consequent militarisation of economies***, the ***imposition of private and state control over the commons***. Facing that, the Summit calls for local, culture-based transformative initiatives, governed from the grassroots up. It calls for an economy rooted in multiple values, including solidarity and sovereignty (especially for food, water and energy) in place of competition towards endless and senseless profits. And it calls to render concrete a host of other values, from equitable job markets to the democratisation of communication. Of particular importance for the ICCA Consortium, ***peoples' territories and natural resources and "the commons" appear as an important component in the vision of the alternative movement***— they are perceived as indispensable ground for sustainability, social and environmental justice and "living well" (*buen vivir*).

Because of all that, some of us did not feel entirely bad getting home from what some call "Rio minus 20". Civil society is diverse, vibrant, and determined to be heard. And civil society is clear about the role of common territorial and natural resources rights (ICCAs!) to build viable alternatives to the current system. Economic "solutions" in the financial and urban components of the system are less evident but ideas and experiences do exist and just need to be given a chance. In all cases, breaking the impasse of wasteful, unsustainable and unjust economies appears to rely on ***more aware and better organised citizens, active at multiple levels*** and clear about what to say "no" to, and what to say "yes" to. (In this, the Consortium is certainly doing its part!) In this vein, the meetings, events and strategic discussions held in Rio allowed the Consortium to listen to others and add its own voice. And, with the help of the heightened climate of concern around us, our small group was able to crystallise some understandings and identify some ***strategic directions*** for work to come. Here are some we would like to share with concerned colleagues (and we hope to hear their views about):

1. After years stressing "exemplary cases" of ICCAs (which could remain exemplary but isolated), the momentum seems now towards ***developing National Coalitions and Federations of /for ICCAs—*** organisations capable of taking stock of the attacks to peoples' territories and areas and reassert their determination to gain authority and responsibilities to conserve them. The [Manila declaration of March 2012](#) signed by the largest coalition of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines, the [Anja declaration](#) of May 2012, developed with the contribution of 482 traditional communities in Madagascar, the Bruger Declaration on governance of ancestral territories, biodiversity and natural resources by the Union of Indigenous Nomadic Tribes of Iran (May 2012) and the [ICCA network of Nepal](#), struggling to develop as a Federation despite its highly bureaucratic and unstable political context, are examples of emerging movements. This phenomenon is a beacon of hope for bio-cultural diversity and social and environmental justice, and a serious commitment to reach the CBD Aichi Targets for biodiversity at a time when the global situation - in policy and practice - can only be characterised as tragically

insensitive. As we finalise this report, national ICCA networks are being discussed and/or under development also in Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Latin America, etc.

2. Given the renewed attention to the collective rights of peoples and communities over territories and natural resources, it appears also worthwhile to explore an international mechanism of advocacy/ protection/ recourse for indigenous peoples and local communities whose **collective rights over land, water and natural resources (“the commons”)** are threatened or are being violated vis-à-vis the international agreements embodied in the three Rio Conventions. Some Consortium Members are exploring how this could be pursued, in collaboration with indigenous peoples and local communities in different regions, and hope to enlist for this also the advice of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. What is already clear is that the human rights jurisprudence is moving in this direction— witness the recent [positive outcome of the case of the Kichwa People of Sarayaku](#) versus the state of Ecuador. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights just determined Ecuador’s international responsibility for not having made sure that the Sarayaku people give their Free, Prior and Informed consent to explorations by a private oil company in their territory – *in violation of their communal property rights and their cultural identity* – and for having put in jeopardy their lives and safety because of the presence of high explosives in the territory. Should the Consortium stress that **security of collective rights over land, water and natural resources should be part of the Sustainable Development Goals to be developed by the UN?**
3. The Consortium needs to **beware of all overt and subtle ways of transforming nature and culture into mere commodities**, some of which rooted in plain business and power relations in society, but others related to the conservation and sustainability movements themselves—the so-called “[green grabbing](#)” phenomenon. In the latter, the appropriation of land, water and natural resources is driven by “green agendas”, from sound watershed management to biodiversity conservation, from carbon sequestration to ecotourism, from bio-fuel production to various types of ‘offsets’. Forceful appropriations of resources in rural areas are nothing new under the sun, but the many and powerful new ways of “appropriating nature” by “valuing” it and introducing it into markets as part of the green economy are still new in many parts of the world and need to be well understood. What is to be uncovered, in particular, is how new actors, from consultant economists and GIS experts to conscientious consumers and pension funds in far distant countries, do play a role (conscious or unconscious) in the penetration of the green grabbing phenomenon at the expenses of the customary rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. And it would be interesting to see whether **effective resistance to brown and green grabbing** be included as part of the **Sustainable Development Goals to be developed by the UN**.
4. On the basis of shared strategic perspectives and goals, the Consortium found useful and important to **join-in with like-minded movements and initiatives**—such as the movement for [Radical Ecological Democracy](#), which our Steering Committee decided to endorse in the preparatory phase to Rio, the [Peoples’ Sustainability Treaties](#) and [Widening Circle](#) movement, or the [Equator Initiative](#), which this year assigned an Award to one of our oldest Consortium Members for an enlightening [example of ICCA](#) (yet, the Equator Initiative still misses a specific focus on ICCAs, which we will strive to help it to develop in the years ahead). With regard to the Widening Circle, initial discussions were held about the Consortium becoming one of the Issue Circles in its [new strategic outlook](#). Ashish Kothari will be the

contact person for the Consortium. We have also discovered the [Global Eco-village Network](#), which seems to have an interesting overlap with the principles and values defended by the Consortium. It would be good to hear from Consortium Members with experience interacting/ working with them.

In summary, for the ICCA Consortium the participation in Rio+20 was worthwhile and forward looking, and allowed some Members, Honorary members and staff a rare and most appreciated time for a direct exchange of ideas and collaboration. And yet, the overall result for the planet is undoubtedly negative. Who is to blame for this failure? Should we be contented pointing at a lack of leadership? Or should we look deeper? Could it not be that, because of the globalisation of political economies and the climate of unfettered and unregulated international competition, governments are no longer even *able* to change their course of action and implement the demands of civil society?<sup>2</sup> If so, how could *that* be changed? Questions worth pondering...

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<sup>2</sup> About this, see John Bunzl <http://www.simpol.org>



## Events at Rio+20

Between 13 and 22 of June 2012, the ICCA Consortium organized and joined-in in a number of events in Rio, in collaboration with different partners. The focus was on the following **broad objectives**:

- *diffusing and discussing ICCA concepts and information into both the People's Summit and the official UN Conference process*
- *positioning of ICCA awareness, recognition and support as part of the People's Summit Agenda*
- *establishing links with other grassroots movements and learning from their experience*
- *having a planning meeting among Members and Honorary members in Latin America*

Here is a partial list of events organized or co-organised/attended:

Date	Location	Event	Nature of activity / kind of participation
<b>June 12 and 13<sup>th</sup></b> 09:00-11:00	Hostel <u>Vila Casa Nova</u> Santa Teresa	<b>ICCA Consortium Preparatory Meetings</b>	Discussion on planned events and aims for Rio among Consortium Members, Honorary members and members of the Steering Committee.
<b>June 13<sup>th</sup></b> 15:30-17:00	T2 RioCentro	<b>People's Sustainability Treaties <u>Inaugural Side Event</u></b>	Consortium member presented Treaty on Radical Ecological Democracy. Speaker: Ashish Kothari. (Follow the link to see organizing partners and other speakers)
<b>June 14<sup>th</sup></b> 11:00-17:00	HSBC Arena Community Aldeia room	<b>Special day on ICCAs at the gathering of the <u>Equator Initiative</u></b>	Consortium members coordinated full day with case study presentations by EI awardees (including Salatou Sambou), facilitated group work and overview presentations by Grazia BF and Colleen Corregan (Follow the link to see a full description of the ICCA day). Lorena Arce and Christian Chatelain facilitated the integration of ICCA issues and concerns all throughout the week-long gathering of the Equator Initiatives awardees.
<b>June 15<sup>th</sup></b> 9:00-11:00	Peoples Summit Tenda 18, Galdino dos Santos, Aterro do Flamengo	<b><u>ICCAs and their relevance for food sovereignty</u></b>	Consortium members organised the event, which got transformed into a useful but unexpected "internal meeting" because of the poor organization of the Peoples Summit venue. Because of this, we could discuss in some depth issues related to opposing the road through TIPNIS in Bolivia (Follow the link for a description of the event as it intended)

Date	Location	Event	Nature of activity / kind of participation
June 16 <sup>th</sup> 16:30-18:30	Peoples Summit Tenda 24, Mercedes Sosa, Aterro do Flamengo	<a href="#"><u>ICCAs— a movement for social and environmental justice in defence of the commons</u></a>	Consortium members organised and offered presentations. (Follow the link to see a full description of the event) See Annex 1. for the report presented to Plenary N°2 of the Peoples Summit.
June 16 <sup>th</sup>	Peoples Summit Aterro do Flamengo	<b>People's Sustainability Treaties dialogue at People's Summit</b>	Consortium Steering Committee member Ashish Kothari presented on a Treaty on Radical Ecological Democracy (See Annex 3.)
June 18 <sup>th</sup> 17:30-19:00	Official UN Rio+20 Side Event at Riocentro, Room T4	<a href="#"><u>ICCAs— a force against destructive development and for the “buen vivir”</u></a>	Presentations on case studies and overviews on ICCAs by followed by a panel of commentators. Participants included Consortium Members and Honorary members from Argentina, Bolivia, Iran, Senegal, Panama, Paraguay, India, Switzerland and Chile. Event co-organised with GEF SGP, GFC, IUCN CEESP and Equator Initiative. <u>Speakers Panel 1:</u> Jorge Nahuel, Taghi Farvar, Efraín García, Salatou Sambou. <u>Speakers Panel 2:</u> Jose Aylwin, Ashish Kothari, Simone Lovera, Onel Masardule, Delphin Ganapin. <u>Chair:</u> Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend
June 19 <sup>th</sup>	Riocentro	<b>Towards a global citizens' movement, dialogue at People's Summit</b>	Consortium members actively participated.
June 19 <sup>th</sup>	Riocentro	<a href="#"><u>The Widening Circle Dialogue</u></a>	Consortium Steering Committee member Ashish Kothari participated, discussed Consortium as possible Issue Circle
June 19 <sup>th</sup> 11:15-14:45	Rio Pavilion	<b>Natural Capital Solutions IUCN WCPA</b>	Consortium President Taghi Farvar offered a presentation on ICCAs. Other Consortium members participated actively.
June 20 <sup>th</sup> afternoon	Centre of Rio de Janeiro	<a href="#"><u>Global Action Day</u></a>	Consortium members participated in the main rally.
June 20 <sup>th</sup> 20:00	Vivo Rio Aterro do Flamengo	<a href="#"><u>Equator Initiative Award Ceremony</u></a>	Consortium Member APCRM (Senegal) was awarded the Equator Price 2012. The price was accepted by APCRM representative Salatou Sambou. Consortium members participated.



Date	Location	Event	Nature of activity / kind of participation
<b>June 21<sup>st</sup></b> 13:15-17:45	Rio Pavilion	<b>Why the 3 Rio Conventions are critical to achieving poverty eradication</b>	Consortium President Taghi Farvar was one of the only two indigenous representatives at this high level event. He co-authored and delivered a set of questions and specific requests (See Annex 2.). Consortium members participated actively.
<b>June 21<sup>st</sup></b> 16.30-18.30	Peoples Summit T1A Aimbire Aterro do Flamengo	<b>Radical Ecological Democracy as alternative to globalised development</b>	Consortium Steering Committee member Ashish Kothari organised the event and offered presentation/ facilitation. Other members attended and participated.
<b>June 22<sup>nd</sup></b> morning	Hostel Vila Casa Nova, Santa Teresa	<b>Planning session for Consortium's work in Latin America</b>	Discussion of current situation and next steps for the Consortium in Latin America among Consortium Members, Honorary members and members of the Steering Committee.

## Accomplishments?

It may be too early to have a comprehensive sense of what the Consortium actually managed to accomplish at Rio +20. In terms of global impact, we basically added our bodies and ideas to the civil society movement present in Rio, participating in numerous events organized by indigenous peoples, women groups and conservation NGOs. We held some interesting events, our home-made banner stood-out somehow in events and the protest rally and the Consortium became marginally better known among activists and delegates. We are certainly far, however, from having any large visibility or impact on ICCA awareness. We distributed some of our publications and promoted our web site, but felt the need for tools as basic as a leaflet describing the Consortium, at the moment not yet available. We found both enriching and demanding to have to work in three or four languages, as we did. It required time and dedication to both translate and communicate, but also to adjust to different ways of perceiving the world. Some of our Coordinators – working on a very semi-volunteer basis—felt the pressure of being far from families and other work for a relatively large amount of time. We were able to gauge a number of ideas, movements and initiatives of relevance for ICCAs and to establish contacts useful towards new partnerships and an expanded membership of the Consortium. We had a meeting with a representative of our main donor (Jeff Campbell of TCF) and gave a number of interviews...

Initiatives that were initially discussed in Rio and are currently being followed-up are wide ranging— from capacity building of indigenous peoples about the impact of oil and gas exploitation within ICCAs in Bolivia to plans to develop an academic publication on ICCAs with a major University in the USA, from exchange visits between Consortium Members in Argentina and Chile to a side event on national Federations and Coalition of/for ICCAs planned for CBD COP 11 (India, October 2012) and the determination to work towards a national network of ICCAs in the Congo Democratic Republic... What we had not anticipated, in fact, is that the discussions held in Rio would help us to clarify some elements of our overall strategic work, as noted in the summary note of this report. This may prove an important outcome in itself.

# Annexes

## Annex 1. Report from Consortium self-organized events to the Peoples Summit Plenary

Indigenous peoples and local communities have amply demonstrated that they can provide for their own livelihoods and conserve biological diversity. They have done so through history and they are still doing it today, under rapidly changing and often severely threatening conditions. To ground this phenomenon in concrete realities and allow dialogue and alliances across cultures, some use the term “ICCAs” to describe the territories and areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities. Notably, “conserved” means not only preserved, but also used sustainably, and/or restored, as appropriate.

The territories and areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities (ICCAs)

- demonstrate that local governance and management are effective: they conserve biodiversity and provide for fulfilling livelihoods even as they accept the limits embedded in nature
- provide a powerful alternative to environmental destruction, cultural loss and the commercialization of life, nature and cultural identity
- express collective engagement and rights, rooted in traditional knowledge and mutual solidarity
- embody identity, culture and the locally-defined “buen vivir”

But ICCAs have been severely impacted and/or are under threat, in violent and overt as well as in subtle and insidious ways.

Main causes:

- expropriation and neglect of the collective, customary rights of IPs and LCs
- imposition of “development” and acculturation processes by the state and the private sector

In so many ways, we see that ICCAs are “in crisis” and the forces impacting upon them are huge... but should they be abandoned? The ICCA Consortium exists to say no to this and that supportive relationships between people and nature can still exist in many ecosystems and cultures.

We would like plenary no. 2 to include in its statement of demands:

- self-determination by indigenous peoples and local communities in all matters referring to their own living environment (territories, areas and natural resources)
- legal and socio-political options for collective rights to territories, water and natural resources better valued and supported in all countries
- better visibility and support to the biodiversity conservation and livelihood capacities and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities
- effective processes and mechanisms to fend off the threats that affect the territories, areas, resources, identity and culture of indigenous peoples and local communities

## Annex 2. Report to High-level Panel discussion celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the three Rio Conventions “How can the UN system better integrate environment within the development framework?”

***Report delivered by By Anne Nuorgam, Saami Council and Taghi Farvar, Council of UNINOMAD (Union of Indigenous Nomadic Tribes of Iran) Council of WAMIP (World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples) and President, ICCA Consortium***

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Indigenous peoples and traditional communities are the “original conservationists”—witnessed by a myriad of conservation territories and areas of indigenous peoples and traditional communities that are the jewels of bio-cultural diversity on earth. While modern government protected areas are barely over a century old, indigenous peoples and traditional communities have excelled in this art for thousands of years. Indeed if there is any viable or near-pristine nature still left in the world, much of it is there because indigenous peoples and traditional communities have known how to preserve it, use it sustainably and restore it, when necessary, through their customary laws and regulations. But the territories of indigenous peoples and traditional communities— including those of the nomadic and transhumant peoples— are also under most severe jeopardy because of climate change and related land and resource degradation processes. Today many governments, private corporations and international agencies bring in their own plans for usually inappropriate development, conservation or even climate change adaptation in the territories of indigenous peoples and traditional communities. The Rio Conventions and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) state their respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices and recognise—albeit sometimes very inadequately— the contributions made by indigenous peoples and local communities to conservation of biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation and the fight against land degradation. But this is usually very far from happening in practice.

In view of all this, would you please let us know what mechanisms you consider to be effectively in place and working well to ensure the following?

- Ensuring the meaningful engagement and active participation of indigenous peoples in processes that contribute to decision making, planning and implementation of policies and programmes for sustainable development and proper management of the environment.
- Ensuring that the UN Statistics Division appropriately include data on the status of Indigenous Peoples, including linguistic diversity, land use change and land tenure of Indigenous and local communities and traditional occupations (For example, CBD requested UNESCO, FAO and ILO to assist in generating this information. In what stages are these processes to develop indicators?)
- Ensuring the respect of the rights of indigenous peoples in policy development, including—in particular— their Free, Prior and Informed Consent processes. (For example will UNEP or World Bank policies on Indigenous Peoples include Free, Prior and Informed Consent? Will FAO really adopt its voluntary guidelines on the governance of tenure of lands, forests and fisheries?)

- Ensuring that the governance of land, water and natural resources— including genetic resources— by indigenous peoples and traditional communities— the “original conservationists” — is respected and restored, as appropriate.
- Ensuring that indigenous peoples’ and local community land, water and natural resources are protected from the incursions and destructive practices of extractive industries, large-scale power projects, and other processes of commercialised development, including plantations, biofuels, and other forms of commodification of nature. In particular, would you be ready to work towards setting up an international mechanism of advocacy/ protection/ recourse for indigenous peoples and local communities whose collective rights over land, water and natural resources are threatened or are being violated vis-à-vis the international agreements embodied in the three main Rio Conventions?

We Indigenous Peoples thank the UN agencies for their partnership and recognition that Indigenous peoples have a vital role in conservation of biodiversity, sustainable development, climate change mitigation and adaptation and the prevention of land degradation. We encourage the agencies to ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to make this a reality rather than simple pronouncements. Thanks you.

### Annex 3. Peoples’ Sustainability Treaty on Radical Ecological Democracy

#### 1. PREAMBLE

Humanity is on a collision course with the Earth: this conclusion is overwhelmingly clear from the spate of recent studies on biodiversity loss, climate change, ocean depletion and other aspects, but also from the experiences and observations of people around the planet as they see their life-support systems crumble. This ecological crisis is compounded by, and linked to, the daily crisis of economic survival of over half of humanity, living in destitution, hunger, and deprivation.

We note that the prevalent model of development has not only failed to lift this section of humanity above unacceptable levels of poverty, but has also greatly increased the inequities between the wealthy and the poor, and led directly to the ecological unsustainability we see around us. *It is fundamentally flawed in that it is predatory of both nature and people, ecologically unsustainable, and socio-economically inequitable.* Its current *avatar* of economic globalisation, imposed on so-called ‘developing’ countries and often welcomed by their own economic and social elite, has only further exacerbated the above effects.

We also note that in most parts of the world the governance of natural resources, and of society’s affairs in general, is highly centralized and top-down. Even in what are today called democratic countries, the forms of democracy are not deep or radical enough to enable all citizens to take part in crucial decision-making affecting their lives. Such lack of, or inadequate, democracy also prevails in international governance institutions.

Twenty years back (1992), in Rio de Janeiro, we had the first Earth Summit (UNCED, the UN Conference on Environment and Development), from which the Rio Declaration, the UN Framework Convention on Climate (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Forest Principles and Agenda 21 all emerged. The Precautionary Principle was established. The UN Commission on

*Sustainable Development (CSD) was “to ensure effective follow-up of Rio Earth Summit (UNCED)”*. At that point we also had the UN Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC), which was developing an international code of conduct for corporations. Rio’s vision for ‘sustainable development’ was reiterated and taken further with the universally agreed Millennium Development Goals in 2000; and further reinforced by the pledges made in the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. Yet, as is admitted in the draft declaration for the Rio+20 conference and in a number of other United Nations documents, we have failed to achieve these goals. Clearly the strategies adopted in this period, *given that they remain within the context of a fundamentally flawed pathway to development*, have not worked.

Meanwhile, the power of corporations has grown manifold. In 1993 the UNCTC was closed down and instead the notion of corporate social responsibility began to be promoted. In 2012, we have proposals for a Convention on Corporate Social Responsibility and Accountability, which is interpreted by some of its supporters as a Convention on Corporate Sustainability Reporting. No longer are governments talking about an international instrument that controls the activities of corporations, rather than merely voluntary initiatives controlled by the corporations themselves.

At Rio+20, nations will be discussing a new framework for addressing these issues, broadly termed the ‘green economy’. Yet it is clear to us that this new framework, while containing some positive elements, again fails to sufficiently challenge and alter the prevalent pathway of development. There is in any case no agreement on exactly what this green economy means: at one extreme it is another name for the new bioeconomy, where fossil fuels are to be replaced with biomass as a source of fuel, plastics, etc, and at the other, people believe it should mean agroecological farming. A term as vague as this confuses and divides people and is no basis for a framework to unite them. Moreover, it does not address the basic problems in today’s centralised models of governance at national and global levels, including the fact that indigenous peoples, local communities, and ordinary ‘citizens’ in general continue to be left out of crucial decision-making processes.

It is in this context that we propose a radically different vision of human well-being, one that is in tune with nature and respects other species, promotes socio-economic equity amongst all people, enhances the cultural, material, economic, social, and political opportunities of all, and empowers each person and community to take part in decision-making affecting their lives. We call this ‘Radical Ecological Democracy’, and present below its broad principles.

## **2. PRINCIPLES**

Radical Ecological Democracy is predicated on the following key principles:

### **Principle 1: Ecological integrity**

The functional integrity of the ecological processes (especially the global freshwater cycle), ecosystems, and biological diversity that is the basis of all life on earth.

### **Principle 2: Equity**

Equitable access of all human beings, in current and future generations, to the conditions needed for human well-being (socio-cultural, economic, political, ecological), without endangering any other person’s access.

**Principle 3: Right to meaningful participation**

The right of each citizen and community to meaningfully participate in crucial decisions affecting her/his/its life, and to the conditions that provide the ability for such participation, as part of a radical, participatory democracy.

**Principle 4: Responsibility**

The responsibility of each citizen and community to ensure meaningful decision-making that is based on the twin principles of ecological sustainability and socio-economic equity.

**Principle 5: Diversity**

The integrity of the diversity of environments and ecologies, species and genes (wild and domesticated), cultures, ways of living, knowledge systems, values, livelihoods, and polities (including those of indigenous peoples and local communities), in so far as they are in consonance with the principles of sustainability and equity.

**Principle 6: Collective commons and solidarity**

Collective and co-operative thinking and working founded on the socio-cultural, economic, and ecological commons, respecting both common custodianship and individual freedoms and innovations within such collectivities, with inter-personal and inter-community solidarity as a fulcrum.

**Principle 7: Rights of nature**

The right of nature and all species (wild and domesticated) to survive and thrive in the conditions in which they have evolved, and respect for the 'community of life' as a whole.

**Principle 8: Resilience and adaptability**

The ability of communities and humanity as a whole, to respond, adapt and sustain the resilience needed to maintain ecological sustainability and equity in the face of external and internal forces of change, including through respecting the conditions enabling the resilience of nature.

**Principle 9: Subsidiarity and ecoregionalism**

Local rural and urban communities (small enough for all members to take part in decision-making) as the fundamental unit of governance, linked with each other at bioregional and ecoregional levels into landscape, regional, national and international institutions that are answerable to these basic units.

**3. COMMITMENTS**

We urge **Governments** to:

- Critically assess (with full and meaningful public participation) the impacts of currently prevalent policies and strategies of 'development', especially from the point of view of whether they are (a) ecologically sustainable, (b) leading to reduction in inequities and promotion of equity amongst various communities and people, and (c) helping to rapidly and sufficiently move people out of conditions of poverty and deprivation; and present these assessments to the public.
- Critically assess (with full and meaningful public participation) also the various market and finance-based or technology-heavy strategies currently being promoted as solutions, including those proposed under climate change negotiations and many aspects of the so-called 'green economy'.



- Promote, based on the above assessments, fundamental changes in development policies and strategies, towards alternative ways of genuine human well-being which are ecologically sustainable and socio-economically equitable; this should include discarding outmoded indicators of development such as GDP and economic growth rates, and their replacement by indicators of well-being that reflect qualitative and quantitative aspects of human happiness, welfare, and security.
- Ensure legal and other forms of recognition of indigenous peoples and local communities, including their territorial and tenurial rights, and their collective self-governance and care of territories, lands, waters, and resources, such as through Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Areas and Territories (ICCAs), Biocultural Territories, Caring for Country, and other such practices.
- Promote the understanding and respect of diverse cultures, ways of living, knowledge systems, values, ecologies, and politics, discarding policies and programmes that impose uniformity in any of these aspects.
- Ensure effective decentralisation of political and economic governance, empowering local rural and urban communities to manage their affairs, and facilitating larger linkages amongst them at sub-national and national levels.
- Ensure full public access to information on environment, development, and other aspects of human well-being, as a fundamental right.
- Effectively play the critical role of the state in empowering and meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged sections of society, including those facing exploitation and deprivation based on gender, class, caste, ethnicity, age, or other aspects.
- Facilitate the exploration of sustainable and equitable paths of well-being by indigenous peoples, local communities, state institutions, and other elements of civil society, in a range of sectors including the following (in all cases, promoting strategies that are decentralised and community-based):
  - Food sovereignty and security, including access to adequate and nutritional food
  - Sustainable agriculture, animal husbandry, and fisheries
  - Dignified and adequate shelter
  - Water security
  - Energy security
  - Biodiversity conservation
  - Protection of ecological processes (including freshwater cycles)
  - Restoration of degraded ecosystems and ecological processes
  - Decent and secure livelihoods
  - Rural and urban sustainability
  - Local self-reliance, with links between communities at regional scales built on and strengthening such localization
  - Fair and equitable economic relations including trade and markets
  - Sustainable production and consumption patterns
  - Deep, radical democratic forms of decision-making and governance
  - Cultural integrity and identity
  - Meaningful, appropriate education and health systems
  - People-centred, participatory technologies
- Encourage and celebrate communities that are already engaged in the above.
- Strictly and actively regulate the activities of the corporate sector, not leaving it to 'voluntary' commitments or corporate social responsibility measures, but *ensuring* it too promotes and stays within the limits of ecological sustainability and socio-economic equity.
- Actively discourage and regulate over-consumption of resources and spaces by certain sections of society.

- Continue its role in supporting and promoting education, research and development in the fields relevant for sustainability and equity, ensuring in this the synergy of the best in 'tradition' and 'modernity'.
- Promote, within all its policies and programmes, an ethical relationship with nature and the earth, which respects their right to survive and flourish.
- Ensure that all its policies, programmes, and agencies are oriented towards the above actions.

We propose that **Civil Society Organizations**:

- Independently assess the fundamental problems with the current models of development and governance, and make their assessments publicly accessible, for use in advocacy and providing guidance to governments.
- Independently also assess the shortcomings of the various finance/market-based and technology-heavy solutions being offered for the ecological crisis.
- Advocate, lobby with, and guide relevant government (and other) agencies the need to radically change these models, including through and with mass people's movements.
- Learn from and promote alternative ways of achieving human well-being that are sustainable and equitable, and create new ones, including in the sectors mentioned above; in particular, rediscover and promote the power and role of 'peoples' and 'local communities', that are self-defined social units, which are related to the local environment that they collectively govern and manage in trust for their future generations.
- Advocate for rights to territories and areas as the most crucial bases for livelihoods and cultures of indigenous peoples and local communities.
- Participate in and facilitate the struggles of the oppressed (and in particular indigenous peoples and local communities, and of women) to gain basic human, environmental, and socio-economic rights, including territorial rights and the right to take part in decisions affecting their lives.
- Vigorously defend the diversity of cultures, ways of living, knowledge systems, values, ecological systems and processes (including species and genes), and politics, resisting the imposition of uniformity.
- Promote the commons and collective processes in a range of areas, including economic, social, intellectual, ecological and cultural.
- Adopt, and promote the adoption of, patterns of consumption and production that are compatible with sustainability and equity.
- Promote a sense of (and actions related to) responsibility towards fellow human beings and towards nature.

## **SIGNATORIES**

We, civil society organizations pledge to work towards the establishment of a Radical Ecological Democracy at the sites and countries we work in, and collectively at the global level.

Proposed by Kalpavriksh (India) and Poloc (Chile)

ANPED – Northern Alliance for Sustainability (<http://www.anped.org/>)

Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives

Asociación para la Conservación, Investigación de la Biodiversidad y el Desarrollo Sustentable –

SAVIA (Bolivia) (<http://www.saviabolivia.org/>)

Cenesta (Iran) (<http://www.cenesta.org/>)

CODDEFFAGOLF (Honduras) (<http://www.coddeffagolf.org/>)  
 Cooperativa Autogestionaria para la Solidaridad Social R.L (Costa Rica) (<http://www.coopesolidar.org>)  
 Ecological Society of the Philippines (the Philippines) (<http://esp.org.ph/>)  
 Ecologistas en Acción (Spain) (<http://www.ecologistasenaccion.org/>)  
 EcoNexus (United Kingdom) (<http://www.econexus.info/>)  
 Foundation for Ecological Security (India) (<http://fes.org.in/>)  
 Global Forest Coalition (<http://globalforestcoalition.org/>)  
 ICCA Consortium (<http://www.iccaforum.org/>)  
 Japan Civil Network for the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity (<http://www.jcnundb.org/>)  
 Kalpavriksh (India) (<http://www.kalpavriksh.org/>)  
 Natural Justice (Lawyers for Communities and the Environment)  
 Oasis Earth (USA) (<http://oasis-earth.com/>)  
 ONG Poloc (Chile) (<http://www.poloc.org/>)  
 Tao Foundation (Taiwan)

David Barkin, Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco (Mexico)  
 Stella Joy, Active Remedy Ltd. ([www.activeremedy.org.uk](http://www.activeremedy.org.uk))

## **ACTION PLAN**

(to be discussed and filled in by Treaty Circle and participants at Rio)

To move towards the above Principles and Commitments, we commit to undertake the following actions.

### **Short Term (2012-2015)**

- Action #1: Disseminate the final document of the Treaty on Radical Ecological Democracy to relevant networks of indigenous peoples, local community, and civil society; and explore synergies with other similar concepts, through these networks.
- Action #2: Carry further and publicly disseminate critiques of dominant models of development and globalisation, and of 'false solutions' to the ecological and socio-economic crises we face (including the so-called 'green economy').
- Action #3: Examine the report of the High Level Panel on Global Sustainability, set up by the UN Secretary-General, for possibly contradictions and synergies with the concept of Radical Ecological Democracy; put forth a critique and, if necessary, possible linkages to further action.
- Action #4: Further develop the Treaty document, in appropriate forums of discussion at national, regional, and global levels.
- Action #5: Exchange and promote learning from experiences of alternatives in a range of sectors such as those listed above, from various countries.
- Action#6: Examine possibilities of influencing relevant international forums, including the Council for Sustainable Development, and institutions set up at Rio+20, to adopt the principles and strategies of Radical Ecological Democracy.

### **Medium Term (2016-2025)**

- Action #1: Organise regional and global events to discuss, refine, and take further the concept and practice of Radical Ecological Democracy.
- Action #2: Advocate the adoption of the principles and strategies of Radical Ecological Democracy in relevant international forums and treaties, including resolutions in the UN General Assembly.

- Action #3: Advocate the adoption of the principles and strategies of Radical Ecological Democracy in the work of multilateral and bilateral aid and development agencies, and international financial institutions.
- Action #4: Build momentum for adoption of Radical Ecological Democracy as the key framework for declarations, resolutions, and action plans to be decided on at Rio+30 (presuming there will be a UN Conference on this occasion, in/around 2022).

#### Long Term (post 2026)

- Action #1
- Action #2
- Action #3: Celebrate visible successes in the movement towards Radical Ecological Democracy!

## Annex 4. List of main Consortium participants

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## Annex 5. Useful links

[No future without justice: excellent report of the Civil Society Reflection Group prepared in view of Rio +20 –highly recommended!](#)

Indigenous Peoples' Rio + 20 Final Declaration [English](#), [Spanish](#).

[Women's Major Group Rio + 20 Final Declaration](#)

Peoples' Sustainability Manifesto: For Action Beyond Rio+20 [English](#).