

TANZANIA

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RECENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE REDD PROCESS

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Hadza women on their way to digging up edible tubers near Sengere hunting camp. Photo: Biorn Maybury-Lewis.



The Indigenous Peoples of Tanzania have recently started engaging in the REDD programme development in the country. This follows from a realization that Tanzania has embarked on developing a national REDD strategy with funding from the Government of Norway without involving indigenous peoples. It was also understood that there is already a task force in place that is charged with coordinating UN-REDD activities in Tanzania, in which indigenous peoples are not represented, contrary to the Operational Guidance issued by the UN-REDD Policy Board.¹

Tanzania, like many other African countries, does not recognize the existence of indigenous peoples.² Lack of recognition has resulted in a lack of constitutional, legislative, or even administrative measures to ensure that indigenous peoples enjoy rights on an equal footing to other communities. This is despite the fact that Tanzania voted in favour of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) which was passed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007. Tanzania is also a signatory to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights which established the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights.

Lack of government recognition notwithstanding, four groups have been organizing themselves around the concept of indigenous peoples by taking part in various regional and international meetings. The four groups are the Maasai and Barabaig pastoralists and the Hadzabe and Akiye hunter-

-gatherers. Their organization is concerned with matters relating to climate change generally and REDD in particular. In relation to REDD, a representative of Indigenous peoples of Tanzania has been elected to represent Indigenous peoples of Africa in the Policy Board of the UN-REDD.³

The National Indigenous Peoples' Coordinating Committee on REDD

The Operational Guidance issued by the UN-REDD Policy Board stipulates that in order to be endorsed by the UN-REDD technical secretariat for approval by the UN-REDD programme Policy board, draft National Joint Programmes (NJPs) must submit minutes of a "validation meeting" of national stakeholders, including indigenous peoples' representative(s). The indigenous peoples of Tanzania have not been consulted at any time until the said draft National Joint Programme was approved. The National Joint Programme is a project document on the basis of which funds are approved by the UN-REDD policy board for a particular UN-REDD pilot country.

In response to the above, representatives of indigenous peoples organizations in Tanzania formed the National Indigenous Peoples' Coordinating Committee on REDD (NIPCC-REDD)⁵ in March 2009. This committee was charged with, among other things, keeping an eye on how the REDD programme is being designed and implemented in Tanzania with a focus on Indigenous peoples' livelihoods and traditional practices.

On the 27th of June 2007, the Coordinating Committee in collaboration with Community Research and Development Services (CORDS), organized a strategic meeting of stakeholders to discuss the likely impact of REDD on indigenous peoples' livelihoods in Tanzania.⁶ The objectives of the meeting were three fold: Firstly, to discuss and share information on REDD with indigenous peoples' representatives and show how likely it is to affect indigenous peoples' livelihoods in Tanzania.

The second objective was to discuss and agree on a joint strategy on how to effectively engage in dialogue with the Government of Tanzania as well as donors. Thirdly, to learn from the experience of indigenous peoples of the Democratic Republic of Congo's effective engagement in the REDD processes in their country. Participants were drawn from indigenous people's representatives in Tanzania. The four ethnic groups that identify themselves as indigenous peoples in Tanzania were all represented.

During the meeting, it was observed that if indigenous peoples do not meaningfully engage in the REDD process there will be a perpetuation of the negative stereotype that pastoralists/indigenous peoples destroy the environment. Another threat is the possible enactment of laws, policies, plans and strategies that continue to negatively affect indigenous people's rights to land, natural resources, livelihoods and culture.

Participants endorsed the five members of the Indigenous Peoples Coordinating Committee on REDD (IPCC-REDD) and mandated the committee to act as a bridge between Indigenous Peoples on one hand and the Government of Tanzania and donors on



Maasai women selling jewellery in northern Tanzania, near the Kenyan frontier. Photo: Biorn Maybury-Lewis.



Left: Encounter of Hadza villagers from neighbouring hunting camps. Sengere, Yaeda Valley, Tanzania. Right: Hadza matriarch, Búke, of Sengere hunting camp, Yaeda Valley, Tanzania, pauses while pulling up edible tubers with her digging stick. Photos: Biorn Maybury-Lewis

the other. Two additional members were recommended William Olenasha and Shirley Baldwin. Olenasha is an advocate of the high court of Tanzania currently working with Joint Oxfam Livelihood Taskforce (JOLIT) as a Land and Pastoralism specialist. Baldwin is the National Pastoralist Policy Liaison Officer based in Dar-Es-Salaam.

It was recommended that the National REDD strategy should not be designed in a manner that excludes indigenous peoples from being beneficiaries of REDD, for example on the pretext that most of their lands are already under some sort of legal protection (such as a conservation area). The Coordinating Committee was urged to lobby for the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' representatives in the national REDD task force and other climate change related committees.

It was made clear that if they engage meaningfully, indigenous peoples in Tanzania can ensure that the REDD programme is designed and implemented in a manner that respects their rights pursuant to international human rights instruments such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

In an encouraging turn of events, a representative of Indigenous Peoples was in July 2009 invited to a meeting that aimed at finalizing the National Joint Programme. Other participants came from the Vice President's Office, the Ministry of Tourism and Natural Resources (Forestry and Bee-keeping Division), Government of Norway, UNDP and UNEP. □

Notes

- 1 The Operational Guidance provides that indigenous peoples shall be represented on national steering committees or equivalent bodies.
- 2 Personal communication with Hon. Mathias Chikawe, Minister for justice and Constitutional affairs in May 2007 during the 43rd Ordinary session of The African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights held in Manzani, Swaziland. During the session in question, Tanzania presented its Periodic Report.
- 3 This is Mr. Elifuraha Isaya Laltaika, Legal Officer of Community Research and Development Services (CORDS). The election took place in Anchorage, Alaska (USA), during the Indigenous Peoples Global Summit on Climate Change in April 2009.
- 4 The organizations are Pastoralist Indigenous Non Governmental Organizations (PINGOS) Forum; Community Reserch and Development Services (CORDS); Ujamaa Community Resource Trust (UCRT) and Tanzania Ascociation of Pastoralists and Hunter Gatherers' Organizations (TAPHGO).
- 5 The committee comprises of the following five members: Edward Porokwa (Chairperson); Elifuraha Laltaika (secretary); Edward Parmelo (member); Andrew Msami (member) and Jackson Muro (member).
- 6 The International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) sponsored the meeting.

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