



*April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 – Polytechnic University of Valencia*

## WORKSHOP 9: COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES. INDIGENOUS MANAGEMENT. COMMON GOODS.

Translated from French by DBG, Translators Without Borders (TWB)

### EVALUATION

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Research and direct witnessing by participants allow realization of the extent to which the situation of native/indigenous<sup>1</sup> peoples and rural communities in general (peasant, forest dwelling, pastoral and fishing) is dramatic everywhere on the planet. 2.5 billion people, members of so called indigenous/native peoples and rural populations in general, live on lands that they share and use in common. However, only a fifth of these lands are registered as community territories by national governments. In the great majority of cases, rural inhabitants do not receive effective State protection of their community rights to the lands that they have nevertheless inhabited for centuries. Therefore, it is very difficult for them to preserve the latter or their natural resources from the encroachments of land and resource grabbing. The lack of collective land tenure security gives the State, which often considers the lands as belonging to it, free rein to concede these spaces to foreign or national companies.

All of the testimonies reported by community representatives present in this workshop confirm the endangerment of entire peoples in the four corners of the planet: Afars of Ethiopia, Mapuches of Chile, Peuls of Niger, Forest People (“Pygmies”) of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, traditional fishermen of Senegal, forest communities of Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Mexico and Cambodia, Amazighs of Morocco, Qoms of Argentina, Mayas Quechis of Guatemala, Malagasy peasant communities, etc. In Niger, the government does not recognize the economic importance of pastoralism and hands over pasture lands to members of the national or local “elites” (entrepreneurs, politicians, etc.), or to foreign companies to the detriment of the many pastoral populations (mostly Peuls) whose rights to access lands as defined within the national framework are rarely respected. In Ethiopia, the semi-nomadic herder Afars are victims of the grabbing of their best pasture lands to the profit of large agro-exporting companies that are given nearly free access by the Ethiopian State. As often happens, land grabbing is accompanied by takeover of other natural resources. In the case of the Afar region, the construction of dams on the Awash river for irrigation of sugar cane plantations and floriculture by these companies deprives the Afars and their cattle of water access. With neither water nor pastures, the livestock is decimated and the Afar population, impoverished, is on the verge of famine. In Cambodia, the State attributes 99-year concessions to private companies on lands of numerous local communities whose rights it does not recognize; in most cases, these companies develop crops meant for export (manioc and sugar cane, notably), destructive for the local environment: water and soil pollution, deforestation to expand the land lots, etc.

Serious repression is inflicted on the native/indigenous and rural populations who try to oppose the grabbing of their resources. Many documented cases of harassment, imprisonment and assassinations have been reported by the participants.

Land grabbing jeopardizes the diversity of human life forms. The existence of many peoples is inseparable from their bond with the natural environment, the latter constituting the substrate of their life and culture, being their main food source, their “pharmacy” and basis for mythologies, the foundations of their original relationship with the world. Land grabbing and destruction eradicate cultures based on a view of Humans as being an integral part of nature, expressed by a member of the community as follows: “We are not the owners of nature, but we are nature herself”. Many analyses show that native/indigenous peoples and rural communities are able to guarantee a sustainable management of natural resources, given the importance

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<sup>1</sup> The participants pointed out that the terms “original peoples”, “indigenous peoples” or “native peoples” may have different political connotations in different countries, and that one must therefore, be vigilant about the terms used. The term “indigenous” for example, is very little used in Africa, in contrast to its use in Latin America.

accorded to them as common goods on all levels: economic, ecologic, social, symbolic, spiritual and cultural. Their contribution in preserving natural resources, common to all humanity, must be fully recognized. That means first, that they be fully engaged in decisions on the uses of their territories, in respect of fundamental human rights.

## **PROPOSITIONS**

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To prevent the disappearance of indigenous and rural peoples, it is indispensable that they obtain a preponderant voice in the process of political decisions that affect them and their territories. In the interest of the well-being of humanity, their right to exist and to make their own decisions about their present and future must be recognized and respected at the different levels (local, national and international).

To obtain full political and legal recognition of their existence as communities and of their collective territorial powers, the participants called for building strong alliances between peoples by setting up national and global networks.

To strengthen peoples' capacities to mobilize their means of organization and community decision-making and to ensure that they are respected, these alliances must:

- promote exchanges between communities,
- strengthen actions to denounce cases of grabbing as well as of the repression and criminalization imposed on the peoples who are fighting for the defense of their lives and nature, and to claim their respect and protection,
- promote the peoples' access to appropriate tools, techniques and training in line with their needs to assert and claim respect for their ways of collective functioning for the benefit of humanity. Such access must allow them particularly to grasp the use of cartographic tools to support demands for land protection, and analytical tools to strengthen demonstrations of their economic, ecologic, social and cultural virtues,
- work towards a universal awareness of the dimension of "common goods of humanity" of the earth, seeds, forests and water, to establish common rules of usage and access, and to empower the local community methods that preserve them,
- create a global fund for the support of their struggles for land and territory.

These alliances must contribute to the progress of law and policy frameworks:

- achieve ratification by governments of Convention 169 of the World Labor Organization relating to the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples and the establishment of legal instruments that are truly binding for governments and companies so as to guarantee its effective application,
- ensure the setting up of an independent international body that will act to guarantee the rights of future generations,
- ensure that a preponderant weight is given to the will of communities concerning their present and future (especially about projects for use of the natural resources of their territory). This requires the democratic representation of indigenous/native peoples and rural communities within supra-community decision-making bodies (local and national),
- ensure recognition of the multiple possible means of securing land tenure beyond that of exclusive individual property.

A strong alliance in support of the interests of indigenous and native peoples and rural communities in general must make itself heard particularly during two upcoming international forums: The 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Parties to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (November 7-18, 2016, Marrakech, Morocco) and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (December 4-17 2016, Cancun, Mexico).

## **INTERVENTIONS**

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*The following list is not exhaustive. We apologize to any speakers at this workshop and participants who do not see their names, and request that you contact us at the following address to allow us to prepare a new version of this summary with the complete list: [secretariat@landaccessforum.org](mailto:secretariat@landaccessforum.org)*

### Introductory interventions:

ABARCHI, Harouna, Head of the Pastoralism Department at the Association for the Revival of Pastoralism in Niger (AREN), Niger  
DIAZ, Felix, Qarashe (Chief) of the Potae Napocna Navogoh community pertaining to the Qom people, and representative of QOPIWINI, common organization of Qom, Pilagá, Wichí and Nivaclé peoples, Argentina  
GONGORA, Luis, The Guatemalan National Alliance of Forest Community Organizations, Maya Biosphere and Association of Forest Communities of Petén (ACOFOP), Guatemala  
MAMALO, Abdoul Karim, Former Permanent Secretary of the Rural Code of Niger  
MBENGUE, Moussa, Secretary General of the Association for the Development of Traditional Fishing in West Africa (ADEPA), Senegal  
OEUR, Il, Executive Director, Analyzing Development Issues Center (ADIC), Cambodia  
SAMPHORS, Doung, Deputy Executive Director, Star Kampuchea, Cambodia  
YAYO ABA'AMI, Sanava, pastoralist, Ramidus Afardacarsitoh Egla (organization of the Afar breeders), Ethiopia

### Interventions from participants:

BINYUKI NYOTA, Espérance, Coordinator of the Union for Emancipation of Indigenous Women (UEFA), Democratic Republic of the Congo  
CABALLERO, José Serapio, Flores Nuevas Cooperative, Federation of Agroforestry Producers of Honduras (FEPROAH), Honduras  
CABALLERO, Santos, Chair of the Coordinating Council of Peasant Organizations of Honduras (COCOCH), Honduras  
DOGIRAMA, Edilberto, Chair of the Embera Wounaan General Congress, Panama  
ESQUINAS, José Alcazar, former FAO officer, Spain  
FRU NGANG, Francis, Secretary General of the African Institute for Economic and Social Development, Ivory Coast  
MACZ, Maria Josefa, Deputy National Coordinator of the Peasant Unity Committee of Guatemala (CUC), Guatemala  
MERLET, Michel, Director of the Association to Improve the Governance of Land, Water and Natural Resources (AGTER), France  
NAÏT SID, Kamira, Chair of the Amazigh World Congress, World Mountain People Association, Algeria  
PRAK, Neth, Spokesperson of the Bunong Indigenous People Association (BIPA), Cambodia  
SANCHEZ, Gustavo, Chair of the Mexican Network of Peasant Forestry Organizations (Red MOCAF), Mexico  
SANCHEZ, Ruben, Lawyer, Citizen Observatory, Chili,  
TAYLOR, Michael, Director of International Land Coalition, Botswana  
TZI, Ernesto, Association for Well-being in Action (APROBA-SANK), Guatemala  
YAYO BARULI, Alo, pastoralist, Ramidus Afardacarsitoh Egla (organization of the Afar breeders), Ethiopia

### Moderator:

RAKOTONDRAINIBE Mamy, Chair of the Collective for the Defense of Malagasy Land – TANY, France

### Reporter:

LAZOS Elena, Professor, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM)