Promoting a New Conservation Ethic Based on Respect for Indigenous Rights – The Role of ENGOs

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Early approaches to conservation

- Exclusionary
- Dispossession, dislocation (colonial)
- Historical landscapes as ‘pristine wilderness’
- Conservation ‘from’ and ‘away’ from people (national parks, game reserves, wilderness areas)
- People as a threat to nature
- Rights-blind
“…activities of conservation organizations now represent the single biggest threat to the integrity of indigenous lands.”

(Declaration of the 200 delegates at meeting of the International Forum on Indigenous mapping, Vancouver, BC)

“We are enemies of conservation…You cannot accomplish conservation without us.”

(Maasai leader Martin Saning’o, 2004 WCC)

Contrast with Articles 3, 10, 19, 29, 31, 32 – UN Declaration
Towards a new ethic

Successful conservation begins and ends with people
What is TNC doing?

- 2010 CIHR board approved
- 2011 Indigenous & Communal Conservation created as a Global Priority
- 2012 Reviewing & developing TNC’s current practices, gaps in procedures, safeguards, internal awareness and understanding of Indigenous peoples, rights issues, duties, obligations
- 2012-13 Global priority planning process (dialogues with regions & IPs)
- Conservation beyond ecological outcomes (multidisciplinary social science)
• Internal education on Indigenous rights, international standards and norms, human rights based approach to conservation
• Broadening of conservation outcomes to include social outcomes (i.e. SEAS)
• Science and evaluations measures (i.e. TK)
• Trust relations, capacity building, long term investments in places AND people
• Continued participation in CIHR
TNC’s Indigenous & Communal Conservation

• 1 of 12 global priorities for TNC (institutional priority)
• WE CARES approach: **Well-being & Empowerment through Conservation Action in Rights and Environmental Sustainability**
• Mainstreaming Human rights based approach to conservation (implementing CIHR)
ICC Strategy in Brief

- Inextricable link between human rights and the right to a safe and clean environment
- Requires implementation of a normative and programmatic framework that intertwines Indigenous rights and the environment.
- Have a role – and duty – to ensure that what we do and how we do it is commensurate with best human rights practices and policy
- Alignment with Indigenous priorities, needs (including Indigenous led solutions)
• Conservation WITH people & to benefit both people AND nature
• Sustainable development & conservation (culture key)
• Leveraging conservation with global health, education, sustainable technologies, poverty alleviation, livelihoods, culture, etc., (meaningful development and partnerships)
• Main priorities of ICC guided by global priorities of Indigenous peoples
Sustainable & just conservation

- Supporting and building capacity within place-based & regional/global policy fora
- Recognition of right to participation, FPIC, self-determination, treaties/other constructive arrangements
- Commitment to highest international standards
- **Moral/ethical pillar of conservation**: due diligence, mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue, mutual equality (with recognition of power imbalance), need, remedies/redress mechanism, culture and gender based analysis, principle of inclusion, inclusive participation
Towards a new ethic

Conservation as a pathway to human and environmental security

Indigenous peoples as ‘rights-holders’ not as stakeholders

Achievements in rights, health, education, security, environment if a new ethic in conservation is implemented (partnerships)
Future work

- Development of guidelines for the role of conservation organizations in protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples vis-à-vis corporate partners
- Internal education initiatives
- Operating guidelines and principles
- Consultation with Indigenous and TNC regions and programs
Let’s talk…

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