Large-scale Landscapes: Governance, Rights and Conservation of African World Heritage Sites
LARGE-SCALE LANDSCAPES: GOVERNANCE, RIGHTS AND CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN WORLD HERITAGE SITES

The Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC) is the African regional network of indigenous peoples' organisations. The network consists of self-identified indigenous peoples in Africa, mostly hunter-gatherer and pastoralists peoples. There are over 140 organisations in 23 countries. IPACC is a member of the IUCN as well as active in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

IPACC is a regular participant in the UNESCO World Heritage Committee meetings and has NGO Observer status with both UNESCO and the UN Economic and Social Council.

IPACC is working with member organisations to improve the process of World Heritage Site nomination, inscription and post-inscription management and governance. Our focus is on human rights, sustainability, livelihoods, poverty eradication, skills development and the unique contribution which indigenous peoples as rights-holders and knowledge holders can contribute to World Heritage.

This workshop includes case studies from the Aïr & Ténéré Reserve (Niger), the Trinational de la Sangha (CAR / Cameroon / Congo Republic) and Okavango Delta (Botswana). IPACC has been engaging with indigenous peoples in all three sites to develop a rights-based approach to conservation with greater attention to human rights, cultural diversity, livelihoods and good governance.

We have provided three summaries of the World Heritage Site case studies as well as our most recent workshop report from Okavango Delta in Botswana.
The Aïr and Ténéré National Natural Reserve (RNNAT) is situated in the region of Agadez, in northern Niger. It is one of the largest protected areas in Africa, covering around 77 360 km². The site falls within the heartland of the Sultanate of Aïr, an indigenous traditional authority and territory that is home to nomadic and semi-nomadic Tuareg pastoralists.

The RNNAT protected area is divided between the rocky and mountainous Aïr in the West and the vast sand sea of the Ténéré in the East. It includes the Addax Sanctuary, which constitutes only one-sixth of the total area. It is the last bastion of Saharo-Sahelian fauna in Niger with a number of species on the verge of extinction. The Reserve boasts an outstanding variety of landscapes, plant species and wild animals.

The Reserve comprises two main zones with different flora and landscapes: the volcanic mountain massifs of Aïr rising up to 2000m in altitude and the vast sand plains of the Ténéré desert. In the heart of a desert environment, the oases of the Aïr display startling pockets of Sahelian plant life with Sudanese and Saharo-Mediterranean elements. It also hosts a specific mammalian fauna of Sahelo-Saharan antelopes, such as the addax, and the ostrich which have the status of threatened species on the red list of IUCN. The oases are important stopping off points for migratory birds.

In 1991, the Aïr and Ténéré National Natural Reserve was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site on the basis of natural criteria (vii) (ix) and (x), following its inscription as a natural National Reserve in 1988 in Carthage, Tunisia. However, the property was placed on the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger in 1992 due to political instability and dissension among the populations, mainly the increase in military conflicts and the hostage-taking of six reserve staff in February of that year. Removal from this list was considered in 1999, but as of 2011, its position remains unchanged.

Following the 38th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Doha (38 COM 7A.45), members decided to call for another reactive mission by IUCN, hosted by the Republic of Niger, on the state of conservation of RNNAT World Heritage Site, which took place in February 2015. The mission concluded that the characteristics of criterion (vii) still appear well maintained throughout and have not undergone any major changes. In regards to criterion (ix) the mission noted that the exploitation of timber and non-timber forest products seems to persist.

Regarding criterion (x), because of the political and military conflict that has affected the property from 1992, the addax and red neck ostrich are now nearly extinct in the RNNAT. Moreover, the current state of conservation of other species of Sahelo Saharan Africa (Dama Gazelle, Dorcas gazelle, Barbary sheep) who had contributed to the inclusion of the RNNAT on the World Heritage List, is of concern as there lacks data on the viability of some antelope groups observed during the last inventory of the mammalian fauna in 2014.
THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE AÎR AND TÉNÉRÉ NATIONAL NATURAL RESERVE

The territory is mainly inhabited by the Tuareg indigenous peoples. Tuareg presence in the central Sahara may date back as far as six millennia. Today other ethnic groups co-exist in the region, with an increasing population diversity due to various economic activities, including mining. Aïr and Ténéré is a landscape that is scarred by the conflicts of colonial occupation and a turbulent transition to independent and democratic rule of post-colonialism. It is a landscape disturbed by uranium mining, far from metropolitan life, a land of camel herders, artisans, holy men, ancient mosques and the complex clan and caste system of one of Africa’s most iconic populations – the blue-clad Tuareg nomads.

From the mid-1890s the French colonial forces attempted to take control of the Aïr territory. There were bursts of organised military opposition by Tuareg forces including a substantial armed resistance in 1916-17. The French managed to establish control over the Sahara but without winning over the cooperation or goodwill of the nomadic peoples.

From 1990 onwards, the region has been the scene of serious civil conflicts. The territory erupted into two major armed conflicts: 1992-1995 and then 2007-2009. From 1990, Tuaregs living in the Sahara Desert of northern Niger sought a greater share of the income from uranium mining and full integration into society, politics, and the military.

Soon after the inscription of the Reserve as a World Heritage Site, in November of 1991, the second Tuareg rebellion exploded, followed by a long period of political unrest and armed rebellions. The property was placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 1992 due to its political instability, which was noted to have negatively impacted the conservation of the reserve by the IUCN reactive mission. The Aïr and Ténéré served as a base of resistance and the site of military intervention and violence. In the midst of the human conflict, endangered wildlife found itself caught up in the armed turmoil.

The current situation in Niger has significantly stabilized, with administrative decentralization and participation of Tuareg and other pastoralists in the administration of Agadez Region and also in the government and the National Assembly. The election of President Mahamadou Issoufou in 2011 and the appointment HE. Brigi Rafini as the first Tuareg Prime Minister of the Republic of Niger, have greatly stabilised the country and brought all communities into the national political economy.
The context and the involvement of indigenous and local communities in land use and governance is a central theme related both to the issue of political stability and the effectiveness of conservation. The political and military instability in northern Niger has undermined conservation efforts of the RNNAT. At the same time, conservation values and measures are rooted in local culture. There is a strong commitment from indigenous and local populations; their leadership and traditional and administrative structures support the conservation objectives.

The Tuareg people consider the conservation of the Aïr and Ténéré Reserve to be a duty inherently associated with their identity and heritage. The self-determination of the Tuareg people may be intimately tied to the landscape of the Aïr and Ténéré; it is also tied to the success of the multilateral system to accompany its members in promoting peaceful co-existence and problem solving during times of crisis.

Anthropological research suggests that the Tuareg of the Aïr adapted and reconfigured their traditional systems of governance to promote conservation and to merge with the overhaul of the political system, which presented opportunities for an emerging decentralization (Bourgeot 2007). The new system emerged as the unités géographiques d’aménagement et de cogestion (UGA) – community based conservation monitoring units in each of the desert valleys inside the reserve. During the cycles of armed conflict these governance mechanisms remained significant to the community.

The biodiversity loss of the RNNAT has had great impact on the region’s indigenous communities. Now, hunting and exploitation of wood products are forbidden in the Reserve and access to the Addax Sanctuary is also strictly forbidden. Poaching and illegal grazing are the main threats that endanger the property. The biodiversity loss also poses a threat to the Tuareg culture and is thought to be the result of the recent political and military crises that caused erosion of the flora and fauna.

The indigenous Tuareg culture has not rejected professional conservation as alien to its values and ways; the reverse has happened with traditional authorities, religious leaders and people on the ground seeing conservation as a cultural priority and an expression of self-determination. All authorities have freely expressed their sincere commitment to support conservation efforts, including His Highness the Sultan of Air which has expressed its commitment to engage personally to sensitize communities about the need to preserve this property.

The Timia, Tabellot, Iferouane and Gougaram areas are the main actors in the management of the RNNAT. The challenge currently being experienced in the Reserve and its surrounds is how to find an adequate relationship between indigenous mechanisms of stewardship and the responsibilities of state agencies, including the Ministry of the Environment and other ministries dealing with mining and policing. The Reserve’s management systems are relatively clear. The emphasis now will need to be on good governance that effectively fuses indigenous systems of governance and decision-making
with the roles and functions of the state. This needs to include a gender-sensitive approach, as many of the Reserve’s residents are women herders, while also considering issues of re-establishing the UGA mechanisms for local governance of valleys by indigenous stewards. World Heritage conservation may require some rethinking of how the world cooperates to promote peace, hold different actors accountable, and ensures that highly vulnerable species are not subjected to unnecessary violence during human conflicts. The Niger case is a reminder that good governance of sites is always built on a healthy integration of indigenous and local values and landscape management systems in coordination with the state’s own capacity, duties and resources.
IPACC’S INTERVENTIONS TO LINK TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS TO THE MODERN SITE

IPACC’s Director of Secretariat, Dr. Nigel Crawhall, was part of the leading team of the IUCN reactive mission, which took place in Niger in February 2015. IPACC has continually engaged with its eighteen Nigerian indigenous member organisations and the Tuareg peoples of the RNNAT territory.

REFERENCES


OKAVANGO DELTA BOTSWANA

BACKGROUND

Botswana’s Okavango Delta became the 1 000th site inscribed on the World Heritage List during the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee at the Qatar National Convention Centre. The Committee, which met in Doha in June 2014 inscribed the Okavango Delta as a Natural Heritage Site.

Though the event was seen as an achievement for conservation, it also recognised the San’s indigenous status as rights-holders, conservation actors and knowledge holders in Botswana.

Okavango Delta is a case study of a ‘new generation’ World Heritage site. The site has been inscribed for Outstanding Universal Values (OUV) of its natural characteristics; its biodiversity and ecosystem characteristics. At the same time, the official state dossier takes note of the presence of indigenous peoples and local communities within the site and the technical correspondence recognises the cultural heritage of the ||Anikhwe San on the islands in the core zone and more generally the cultural heritage of the Khwedam-speaking peoples of the Okavango Delta.

The natural OUV assessment is enhanced by the national recognition of the cultural context, cultural values and human cultural diversity within the site – each of which contribute to the long term sustainability of this outstanding site.

For millennia, the Okavango Delta has played a major role in the nurturing of both human cultural diversity and knowledge systems, as well as the unique biological diversity and inland waterway ecosystem. According to Barnard (1992), this northern boundary of the Khoe-speaking hunter-gatherers is both an ancient site of human occupation and a territory with centuries of contact between San aboriginal peoples and later in-migrating agro-pastoral-fishing Bantu-speaking peoples from the north.

The Okavango Delta is a vast inland wetland system with permanent marshlands and seasonally flooded plains when the summer rains in Angola drain onto the plains of Botswana. The inscribed site is approximately 600 000 ha with the overall flood territory being over 1,2 million ha. Flooding is a key element in its unusual biodiversity, ecosystem and cultural development. The rains fall in the highlands in Angola, flushing down into the waterways which flow inland and away from the sea. These flood waters pour into the Kalahari Basin causing seasonal transformations that nourish intense birdlife, large mammal populations and flora. The waters peak between June and August during the region’s parched winter, attracting one of Africa’s greatest concentrations of wildlife1. It is an exceptional example of the interaction between climatic, hydrological and biological processes.

The Okavango Delta is home to iconic species of mammals, including over 120 000 elephants, cheetah, white rhinoceros, black rhinoceros, African wild dog, hyenas, lions and rare water birds.

The Okavango Delta was inscribed as a Ramsar wetland in 1997. The site was long overdue for World Heritage inscription, and this was eventually achieved through the patronage

1 World Heritage List reaches 1000 sites with inscription of Okavango Delta in Botswana." UNESCO press 22. 06.2014.
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE OKAVANGO DELTA

In recent times, five major ethnic groups live in the Okavango Delta: the Bugakhwe, Dzeriku, Hambukushu, Wayeyi and ||Anikhwe. Each group speaks its own language and expresses its own cultural identity. There are as many as twelve ethnic groups spread out across the District of Ngamiland; all of whom are impacted by the inscriptions of Okavango Delta and Tsodilo Hills.

Two indigenous peoples who have occupied the territory for millennia. The Bugakhwe and ||Anikhwe also referred to as San, Basarwa, or Bushmen - are the indigenous peoples of southern Africa. Traditionally the San were nomadic hunter gatherers and lived in small groups. The ||Anikhwe are distinguished for being hunter-gatherer-fishing people. The other three ethnic groups: Dzeriku, Hambukushu and Wayeyi most probably migrated into the Okavango Delta far later than the two San ethnic groups and are Bantu peoples according to their linguistic traditions.

The Wayeyi seem to have been in the delta, practicing artisanal fishing at least by the 18th century.

They speak Central Bantu languages, which is a sign that they likely migrated from central Africa during the expansion of agro-pastoralism and metallurgy.

The Ngamiland District is ruled by a Paramount Chief, Kgosi Kgosikgolo Tawana Moremi, first-born son of Letsholathebe. The current Paramount chief is descended from an important line of BaTawana chiefs who migrated from eastern Botswana and took control of Ngamiland, specifically settling in what would later become the Moremi Game Reserve in the eastern Delta. Kgosi Kgosi Tawana was the original Paramount Chief of the BaTawana (1795 -1820), part of the BaNgwato people from eastern Botswana. Tawana established the Setswana speaking chieftaincy’s presence in Ngamiland. Kgosi Kgosi Moremi I was his son and Paramount Chief of the BaTawana (1820-1828). It was Moremi I who established control over the San territories of the Okavango Delta and Ngamiland.

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2 Spelling of San ethnonyms and languages have changed over the last century. Khoe and Khwe are alternate spellings of the same word, meaning ‘human’.
Khoe is the general term used for the Central Khoe-San language family. Bugakhwe and ||Anikhwe are specific ethnic groups both using Khoe languages.
3 The term ‘Bantu’ has pejorative connotations in South Africa. Here it is purely to identify a branch of the Niger-Congo languages.
TRADITIONAL LAND USE AND GOVERNANCE

The San peoples of the Okavango Delta have occupied this territory for millennia. The San system of traditional territorial governance, tenure and sustaining of the biological diversity of the Delta is a valuable resource in considering how the Delta can be governed and conserved under the new World Heritage designation.

The San practices, mapped out by the San organisations as physical, ecosystemic and cultural spaces provide us with a framework for understanding large scale territorial governance and management.

The ||Anikhwe (‘River Bushmen’) speak a dialect of Khwedam and live along the Panhandle of the Okavango Delta. The ||Anikhwe have a sub-dialect known as Gumayi (‘Islanders’). Historically the Gumayi owned the islands and thus, buried their dead in the Islands whereas the ||Anikhwe would bury their dead on the mainland outside the river banks. However, both ||Anikhwe dialect speaking communities occupied the riverine parts of the Delta where they foraged their food and medicines from the animals, fish, berries and tubers that inhabited the delta.

The larger Bugakhwe speech community were seasonal visitors to the Delta, following game movement to- and -from the Delta during their hunting. They hunted big game, collected honey, berries and medicine from the vast forests that overlapped as their traditional territories. They made greater use of the drylands around the Delta while using the rich biodiversity of the Delta as a seasonal support.

The dialect distribution of Buga and ||Ani are important in understanding the different physical environment they occupied and in turn their distinct management and governance responses to different ecosystem and niche usage patterns. ||Anikhwe spatial distribution is primarily associated with fishing, collecting reeds, access to the islands and the seasonal burn of the old grasses to replenish the biodiversity and keep fire risks under control. Bugakhwe spatial organisation covered the vast forest and dryland areas to the north.

Traditional land use and resource governance has been mapped by Khwe researchers. They demonstrate highly precise family-based territorial tenure systems. The anchor for the system were the sip wells – underground water supplies – supported by a distribution of land types to facilitate hunting and seasonal migrations. The mapping shows that each dune in the desert region could be associated with a specific family.

Before their interaction with the Bantu-speaking peoples in Southern Africa, water determined the way of life of former hunter-gather societies of Bugakhwe and ||Anikhwe. The source of water attracted much wildlife and nourished the natural landscape to create highly diverse fauna and flora. Toponymy helped specify governance and shared resources within the broader community. Water sources were named, marked and managed by a few hundred related people, usually with close family blood lines. They named their settlements and hunting camps according to the water sources, with special attention to the physical characteristics of the water source.

Natural water management was located in the holistic cultural-natural knowledge system of the Khwe. The waters were respected through norms that were cultural and spiritual.
Water was managed to guarantee sustainable and equitable use between people, between species and across generations.

The neighbouring hunting and gathering grounds near the key water source would systematically assimilate the name of the water source. These territories become a critical natural asset that would be inherited down generational lines. It serves as a bio-network in which Khwe interpreted their life. Traditional norms on harvesting, burning and hunting played a significant role of activities that focused on sustainable use and benefit to the natural environment.

Dauk’ám (the controlled burning at an area of land) was pivotal to harmonious understanding of the broader landscape and how each Khwe spatial territory related to the others in the system. This understanding included all the natural components of the environment, including plants and animals species. Animal and plants ecology, seasons and weather conditions influenced grassland burning decisions. Nevertheless, the dry hot summer season was never a good time for burning, as it would result in high and extreme fires that would not only destroy the soil, plants and important insects like bees, but would also kill animals like nesting birds, tortoise and reptiles during that time of the year.

The Khwe would selectively burn their areas of land when the time was deemed right, with detailed and holistic understanding of the ongoing natural processes. Among the Khwe, burning of the veldt was regarded a healing process that did not only stimulate diversity of fauna and flora, but also stimulated natural beauty that relieved animals from stress due to abundance of fresh pastures and open special area for their new born to play and run.

The ||Anikhwe spatial use was relatively restricted compared to the Bugakhwe. ||Anikhwe used to live upriver and regularly hunted and gather at river-run forest and reed beds for animals, fish and plants whereas the Bugakhwe would established seasonal camps along the river which were in most cases next to animal corridors. Bugakhwe would relocated to the Okavango Delta (||xom or dom) during very dry periods or drought. They maintained their controlled burning of the veldt to control encroachment of bushes and other unwanted species and also improve plants restoration.
The Khwe and ||Anikwe landscape and cultural systems are inseparable. As with different mapping projects undertaken by African indigenous peoples, each landscape reveals itself to be rule-governed, with both rights and responsibilities oriented to the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems services (IPACC 2009). Whereas this is of historical interest, it also has implications for the future governance of this unique landscape.

One of the challenges in contemporary conservation is to ensure that traditional systems of social control that protect biodiversity, and social cohesion that conservation targets are part of the social and economic system. For conservation to be effective in the long term, it relies heavily on the values of the local community. The local community in turn has to live with the challenges of dangerous wildlife encounters and the influx of foreign tourists. The Khwe and ||Anikwe people have defined their future as intimately tied to the conservation of the Delta. They are also holders of highly detailed knowledge of the landscape, dryland and wetland hydrology, flora and fauna. The challenge will be whether this marriage of contemporary tenure systems can be informed by socio-ecological principles?

All the peoples of the Okavango Delta face various challenges which impact on their well-being and on the sustainability of their cultures. The gradual integration of the Okavango Delta into the national economic, social and political institutions of Botswana has not been balanced with representation of their unique languages and cultures. The San are not represented in the national chieftaincy system and this constrains their ability to influence policy and decision-making. Local languages are not used in schools, and local traditional knowledge and skills appear to be degrading.

The shift from a traditional economy to a cash market economy changed the necessary skills that children require for their future. Traditional knowledge has become less important as activities such as hunting and fishing become less appealing in a market economy. The traditional economy provided young people and adults with abundant skills, training and livelihoods. But in the transition to a national market economy, the San peoples of the Okavango Delta have found themselves facing poverty, various forms of discrimination, and high unemployment rates.

The inscription of Okavango Delta on the World Heritage List creates a new opportunity for San and other local communities to apply their knowledge of biodiversity conservation and heritage, both natural and cultural, in developing a sustainable future. The traditional knowledge and practices of the people of Okavango Delta could be resources in developing an integrated, multi-sectoral approach to tourism development, other livelihoods and conservation.
REFERENCES


The Sangha Trinational - Trinational de la Sangha (TNS) was registered under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention in 2012. Its nomination is based on the fact that it is an example of the ecological and biological processes in evolution and ecosystem development as it contains the most significant natural habitats and is important for the conservation of biological diversity. The site is the home territory of various indigenous hunter-gatherers including the Baaka or Bayaka people, known to the West as “Pygmies”.

TNS has a large number of outstanding universal values as its high biodiversity and regional floristic representativeness, intact communities of plants and animals, and ecological processes and evolution of complex and fully functional. This combination represents a strong and relevant arguments that support its nomination as a World Heritage Site.

The Forest of the Sangha Trinational (TNS) is a trans-boundary conservation complex in the North West of the Congo Basin, where the Central African Republic, Republic of Congo and Cameroon meet. TNS is the convergence of three contiguous national parks, combining a total of 746,309 hectares of the area defined by law. TNS is the combination of Lobéké National Park in Cameroon, Dzanga-Ndoki National Park (including Dzanga-Sangha Special Forest Reserve) in the Central African Republic and the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park in Congo. One of 1,787,950 hectares buffer zone has been set up to protect the entire landscape and its inhabitants. TNS and its buffer zone are to the edge of a vast forest belt, where the human footprint has been very small, hence the coast of Gabon to the west. The climate of the TNS landscape is a transitional climate between the Congo-equatorial and sub-equatorial climate zones.

Unlike other protected forests, this region is not a remaining fragment of a destroyed forest, but consists of a large primary forest landscape with conditions favorable to good conservation mainly because of the extensive buffer zone. This is why the TNS represents an exceptional situation which should provide an example to other natural conservation projects. The human footprint shows that the TNS landscape is one of the least degraded forests throughout Central Africa. An estimated 70% of TNS is essentially intact and 30% at a very advanced stage of reconstruction.

This conservation of vegetation and habitats is particularly reassuring that, for now, the activities of clearing for agricultural purposes only take place far from the parks, given the difficulties of accessibility and the very low pressure for agricultural land in the buffer zone.
BaAka (also Aka, Bayaka, Yaka) are the main group of hunter gatherers in this part of the Congo Basin. The territory also crosses into Babenjelle (Bambenzele) territory and Baka territory in Congo Republic and Cameroon respectively.

The indigenous peoples have a synergistic relationship with the territory, which has helped maintain the ecosystem of the region for millennia. Their status in relation to the original protected areas has been ambiguous, with some of the Bayaka living within the Dzanga-Sangha-Ndoki National Park in CAR.

International conservation organisations and European forest-rights NGOs have worked towards and increased status of rights for indigenous peoples within and around protected areas. This relationship has been controversial, often inconsistent and subject to much debate. All of the indigenous peoples in the Congo Basin express their concern that jobs within protected areas tend to go to educated and qualified Bantu staff; whereas the knowledge holders and indigenous peoples of the region are usually unable to access such formal employment, even if they assist with tracking and transect related work.

There is a growing will by conservation agencies to facilitate participation of indigenous peoples in the management of the protected areas. In 2015, WWF CAR initiated a human rights training project in cooperation with OrigiNations, the Maison des Enfants et Femmes Pygmées, PIDP-Kivu and IPACC specifically oriented to Bayaka at Bayanga.

The Bayaka, like other indigenous people in the Congo Basin are rich in traditional knowledge of biodiversity. They are trying to establish themselves as part of the governance system for the new landscape while still trying to learn the basics of indigenous peoples’ rights as defined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the ILO Convention 169 which CAR has ratified.

Bayaka and other indigenous peoples in the territory could play an important role in biodiversity conservation based on their traditional knowledge and practices. Land tenure in some cases remains insecure without guarantees regarding participation or Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPID) in programs related to governance, management and exploitation of natural resources.

The indigenous peoples are vulnerable to many human rights violations such as exclusion from education, land insecurity, exclusion from the traditional leadership system, discrimination, rape of women and girls, sexual abuse by land owners, very low levels of access to health services and other forms of insecurity and abuse. Central African Republic has been in the grips of a civil war and the capacity of the national government to assist with training, education and strengthening the WH site governance has been limited. The Bayaka are dependent on support from NGOs at this stage.

The sustained threat to the indigenous peoples of human rights violations and exclusion has a negative effect on social cohesion
and self-confidence. Traditions are seen as folkloric rather than being knowledge-based or culturally important to the long term sustainability of the forest. In indigenous cultures of this region, the people believe that the forest is a living, thinking entity, capable of expressing itself and to which humans must act respectfully.

There are pressures on the new generation to leave the forest in search of other opportunities, which is often associated with failure of transmission to young people of their cultures and traditional knowledge. Urbanisation for indigenous peoples has often led to new problems, poverty and social disintegration.

The colonial system reinforced inequality of land and power between Bantu farmers and indigenous peoples of the tropical forest territories. Nature conservation offers a new path for indigenous peoples where their culture and knowledge can be valued and livelihood and skills opportunities can help keep the community together while addressing issues of poverty and marginalisation.

The Republic of Congo was the first African country to adopt a national legislative that protect the rights of indigenous peoples in alignment with the indigenous peoples of Rights (2007) United Nations. The Central African Republic is the only African country to sign the Convention 169 of the ILO which is the main binding international convention on the rights of indigenous peoples. By ratifying the convention, the Central African Republic is committed to give full effect to its provisions, in particular by developing a coordinated and systematic action to protect the rights of indigenous peoples of the Central African Republic.

Cameroon makes reference in its constitution to "indigenous" and has interacted with the World Bank and other multilateral agencies to recognise indigenous Pygmy and Mbororo pastoralists. It provides that “the State guarantees the protection of minorities and preserves the rights of indigenous peoples in accordance with the law.”
IPACC & PIDP INVOLVEMENT

OrigiNation, in cooperation with MEFP and WWF CAR has organised for training of Bayaka in CAR by one of IPACC’s member organisations – the Programme d’Intégration et Développement des Pygmées (PIDP). PIPD is based in Goma, DR Congo and has been active in human rights and environmental advocacy for over a decade.

PIDP has generously offered to provide workshops at village level on the basics of indigenous peoples’ human rights as agreed by the United Nations. IPACC provides assistance to all members on request to understand the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and the norms and standards set out by the IUCN.

The aim for TNS is that indigenous peoples, conservationists, government departments, traditional authorities and other local communities understand the importance of human rights, sustainable development and long-term skills development as an integral part of the overall conservation agenda. Wildlife conservation and the empowerment of local custodians and stewards of nature should be well integrated and expressed through a robust and reliable governance system.
IPACC is the regional network of indigenous peoples’ organisations in Africa. We have over 145 indigenous peoples’ community organisations as members in 22 African countries. Indigenous Peoples’ Organisations may join the network by submitting their constitution, agreeing to the code of conduct and filling in a membership forum. IPACC member organisations elect an 18 member Executive Committee which represents the six distinct cultural-geographic regions of the continent.

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