

# The GEF NGO NETWORK e-NEWSLETTER



## "FROM THE GROUND UP"

An Electronic Newsletter for the GEF NGO Network

**Fourth Edition**

**July 2006**

### Welcome!

Welcome to the Second Edition of our e-Newsletter! Our aim is to keep everyone abreast of the GEF NGO Network and its activities.

For this, our Second Edition, we have taken the opportunity to further inform you of the GEF NGO Network - our function, our responsibility, who we are, what we represent and where we are from. In this edition, we have focused on another region - **Americas**.

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# MEMBER PROFILES

## Americas

### CARIBBEAN

The countries that fall within the Caribbean region are as follows : Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Dominica, Haiti, Virgin Islands, Dominican Republic, St Lucia, Grenada, Suriname, Belize, Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Cuba, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts & Nevis and St Vincent & the Grenadines.

### Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA)

The CCA exists to enhance the quality of life for present and future generations of the Caribbean by facilitating the development and implementation of policies, programmes and practices, which contribute to the sustainable management of the region's natural and cultural resources.

We do this through a membership that covers the wider Caribbean amongst non-governmental organisations, within government structures and by individuals interested in voicing civil society's concern for the state of the environment in the Caribbean region.

Over the years, CCA has initiated, co-sponsored, endorsed and funded a variety of regional conservation programmes, ranging from an endangered species research and conservation effort directed at the preservation of the Caribbean green turtle, the development of a vibrant outreach programme in Environmental Education and the formulation of a regional environmental education and communications strategy, to the compilation of environmental profiles for five countries within the Eastern Caribbean.

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## MESOAMERICA

**Countries that fall within the Mesoamerica region are as follows : El Salvador, Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico and Nicaragua.**

### Merolec A.C.

Detail of this organisation will be available in our next edition.

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## SOUTH AMERICA

**Countries that fall within the South America region are as follows : Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia, Venezuela and Paraguay.**

### Corporacion Pais Solidario (CPS)

Corporación País Solidario "CPS" is a Colombian NGO that was created in 2004 by interested members from the Instituto Biodiversidad and the Consultant Firm M&B. Instituto Biodiversidad members brought to CPS more than eight years of experience on biodiversity and natural resources sustainable management, while M&B five years of experience on community development practices. CPS is a nonprofit research and consulting organization concerned with issues related to: ecosystems conservation; integrated water resources and land management; sustainable development; community organization; renewable forms of energy; Know-how transfer; environmental education; communications and outreach for the protection and sustainable use of tropical ecosystems.

CPS recognizes the crucial role of community level articulated strategies to: asses public opinion on integrated water and natural resources management; augment public awareness and engagement on ecosystems sustainable use; promote environmental education; develop policy dialogue with the government and other civil society stakeholders to integrate messages on health and habitat into campaigns for conserving biodiversity, protecting the environment, fighting against poverty and enhancing healthy settings for all the living species.

Also, the important need to build partnerships with National and International NGO's, Research and Consulting Institutions, Community Based Groups (CBO's), Civil Society, Governmental Agencies and the Private Sector, to strengthen the outreach capacity of groups and institutions on integrated water resources and land management and lay the groundwork to encourage public support to the community involvement and participation in sustainable development projects, as the best means to improve the economic and social well being of the most deprived population.

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## **NORTH AMERICA (to be elected)**

**Countries that fall within the North America region are as follows :  
United States and Canada**

### **Indigenous Peoples Network**

### **International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of Tropical Forests**

#### **The Alliance :**

The International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests is a worldwide network of organizations representing indigenous and tribal peoples living in tropical forest regions (Africa, the Asia-Pacific and the Americas). The Alliance was founded in 1992 during an indigenous conference in Malaysia, where the Charter of the Alliance was adopted, and has been fighting continuously for the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples ever since.

#### **The objectives of the Alliance are to:**

- promote full recognition of the rights and territories of indigenous and tribal peoples;
- promote the development of indigenous and tribal peoples and their participation in decision and policy making;
- establish effective networks between indigenous peoples at regional and international levels;
- exchange information and experiences to empower Alliance members to advocate for the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples,
- enabling them to impact upon processes falling within the complex UN system, and the policies and decision-making of developmental agencies and multi-lateral development banks;
- promote worldwide solidarity between indigenous and tribal peoples.

#### **Structure :**

The Alliance has a flexible structure of nine autonomous regions coordinated and supported by a Technical Secretariat. The membership of the Alliance, made up of indigenous and tribal peoples organisations in regional networks, is the highest policy-making body in the network. Policy is formulated through the Alliance's International Conferences, which have been held every two to three years since the establishment of the Alliance in 1992. The most recent was in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2002.

Between these assemblies, the Alliance is coordinated by an International Coordinating Committee (ICC), which meets at least twice a year to monitor the work of the Alliance. The

Committee is constituted of 9 Regional Coordinators. Supported by a regional secretariat and the International Technical Secretariat, each Regional Coordinator represents one of the nine regions falling within the Alliance's remit. These regions are:

**Central America:** Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Belize, Guatemala and Mexico

**South America:** Paraguay, Argentina, Ecuador, Peru, Brasil, French Guyana, Bolivia, Guyana, Surinam, Venezuela and Colombia

**Central Africa:** Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Burundi, Central African Republic, Gabon, Cameroon, etc.

**West Africa:** Nigeria, Togo, Benin Republic, Niger, Gambia, Senegal, Liberia and Sierra Leone

**East Africa:** Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Southern Sudan

**South Asia:** Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan

**South-East Asia:** Thailand, Burma, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam

**Bahasa:** Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines

**Pacific:** Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and New Caledonia

Regional Coordinating Committees (RCC), constituted by national coordinators in the region, coordinate the work in each of these regions under the leadership of the Regional Coordinators (RC).

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## CASE STUDIES

### [Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use in Mbaracayu \(Paraguay\)](#)

National/Mbaracayú Forest Nature Reserve-Canindeyu State-Paraguay

The aim of this project was to conserve globally significant biodiversity in the highly threatened Interior Atlantic Forest of Paraguay by supporting the effective protection and consolidation of the Mbaracayu Natural Reserve and promoting conservation, sustainable use and land-use planning in the Upper Jejuí River Watershed (CARJ in Spanish).

Initially, the FMB implemented projects directed towards indigenous and campesino communities in agriculture, livestock and forestry. Unfortunately, during the first months of the implementation process it was observed that the beneficiaries were not provided with direct incentives to sustain actions in the long-term. Thus, through a series of participatory workshops a new model for sustainable agriculture was designed. This approach installed a sustainable agriculture model with a long-term view of building organizational capacity and requiring the producer to return elements, first subsidized by the project. By establishing a graduation system with clear expectations, productivity increased and beneficiaries were provided with incentives to eventually become self-reliant.

The non-existent participation of the State in the area, through the diverse institutions in charge of health, education, among others, made it imperative for the project to find alternative ways to complement its development efforts through strategic alliances with universities and the scientific community. This strategy helped fill in the gaps for basic provision of services and built on the comparative advantage of each sector.

The project's holistic approach is the key to sustainability as has been proved. Some of the actions contained in this approach are: the consolidation of farmworking groups as a result of their agricultural activities, and the connections established with the private sector for the commercialization of their products. By assuring markets with fair prices, this fostered the continuation of their activities with a sustainable development approach. Additionally, the project has established a mechanism for diverse stakeholders such as women's groups, local authorities, small producers, indigenous groups, NGOs and large land-owners to collaborate in the form of a Management Committee. This entity establishes a participatory structure where environmental problems can be solved, and the members are responsible for finding

alternative sources of funding to continue actions directed towards the conservation of the MFBR. Also by empowering young leaders of the community who will be the future policy makers of the area, the project guarantees that sustainable development is maintained in the agenda.

The project was effective in reaching a large number of marginalized communities living in the area of influence of the reserve through diverse mechanisms of poverty alleviation initiatives with a strong rural development/environmental education component. As stated previously 550 families received direct technical assistance, with an average of 8 members per family. This was complemented by involving indigenous community members into the staff of the FMB and strengthening the productive committees in the area to create a sense of ownership and leadership. Additionally, the FMB provided the space for small marginalized producers to interact with the key opinion leaders, local authorities, and large property owners in the first ever Management Committee for the MFBR. Another direct example of reaching out to the most vulnerable was the formation and capacity building of 15 women in production and commercialization of medicinal plants such as "burrito", and other new sources of income which have been culturally and economically successful. All these activities have contributed to the sustainable use of the natural resources, which in turn guarantee their livelihood and avoided the migration of families into other areas of the country.

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## **Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use in Kalahari (Southern Africa)**

### **An Overview of the San Hoodia ABS Agreement**

Orientation - Some Demography : 100 to 120,000 San with click languages in Southern Africa. WIMSA, SASI and SASC: San organisations which supported the San through ABS negotiations.

The Hoodia is a dessert succulent plant that acts as a thirst and hunger suppressant due to P57. It is used by San hunters and gatherers. There is no commercial product available yet based on P57 patent of CSIR.

CSIR started work on the patent in 1964. The patent went through in 1996. WIMSA learned about the patent through the newspaper in 1997. In 1998, ABS negotiations start. The ABS agreement was signed by SASC in 2002.

The ABS Agreement : CSIR/Royalties (2 payments so far)/Milestone (pending)/Hoodia Growers Association (RSA)/Royalties from proceeds on Hoodia sales

## Some dynamics :

- The battle between the various indigenous peoples' groups and other local community groups.
- The negotiations among the San themselves.
- The reluctance of the parastatal and the corporate world to enter in to ABS.
- The immense interest suddenly generated by; research institutes, media, governments, the corporate, local communities and individuals.
- Challenging to prioritise and balance the immense interest.

## Lessons learnt on ABS from the San :

- Equitable Partnerships are crucial for meaningful and effective ABS agreements.
- ABS agreements are reactionary in form. This Puts TK holders in a difficult negotiating position.
- Benefit sharing discussions locally tend to be resolved through compromise by the locals.
- Value addition to TK can pose biodiversity challenges due to high demand of the biodiversity resource.
- NGO support is important.
- ABS agreement negotiations may be complex and lengthy.
- Domestic legislation on CBD enhances ABS efficiency. User countries need domestic legislation to regulate trade on bio-products. eg Hoodia sales in Europe and USA.
- Spectrum of stakeholders can be large.
- International ABS Regime and Harmonization necessary.
- Capacity building is inevitable for Indigenous Peoples' and Local Peoples to negotiate as equal partners.

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## **CONTACT THE GEF NGO NETWORK e-Newsletter**

We value your comments, suggestions and contributions. You can communicate with us at either: [info@zeroregional.com](mailto:info@zeroregional.com) or [dorothy@zeroregional.com](mailto:dorothy@zeroregional.com).

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