



HUMAN RIGHTS IN CONSERVATION: PROGRESS SINCE DURBAN

CONSERVATION INITIATIVE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

WHITE PAPER
NOVEMBER 2014

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INTRODUCTION

This white paper discusses the progress made by members of the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights (CIHR)¹ in addressing human rights within our conservation practice during the last decade. Using the 2003 and 2014 IUCN World Parks Congresses (WPC) as bookends, it highlights the efforts, achievements, and ongoing challenges of CIHR members to shape a new approach to conservation: one that prioritizes respecting and promoting international human rights standards, in their own right, while simultaneously recognizing implementation of this commitment as essential to achieving effective, just, and sustainable conservation.

BACKGROUND

When the protected areas community and a wide range of stakeholders gathered for the V IUCN World Parks Congress in 2003 in Durban, South Africa, they came prepared to address key issues facing protected areas at that time. The Congress convened protected area managers and agencies, NGOs, governments, donors, scientists, and – importantly – indigenous peoples and community representatives from around the world, to discuss the situation and challenges of protected areas and outline the way forward. Examples of ineffective and inequitable management had come to light, and political and financial constraints in countries had limited the development of protected area networks and undermined efforts to improve management capacities. Many donor agencies had begun moving away from biodiversity conservation in favor of funding efforts to alleviate poverty. Participants at the V World Parks Congress also faced growing public opinion that conventional protected area models often wrongly excluded or marginalized indigenous, mobile, and local peoples and communities from their governance and management. Taken together, these issues challenged conservationists at the Durban Congress to create a new approach to protected area governance and management. This new approach sought, *inter alia*, to strengthen and build partnerships with local communities and indigenous peoples based on explicit recognition of and respect for their rights, in order to strengthen their role in the stewardship of their lands and resources, generate greater benefits for them, and promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural ecosystems beyond recognized protected area boundaries.

¹ The Conservation Initiative on Human Rights (CIHR) is a consortium of eight international conservation organizations that seek to improve the practice of conservation by promoting integration of human rights in conservation policy and practice. CIHR members are Birdlife International, Conservation International (CI), Fauna & Flora International (FFI), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Wetlands International (WI), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

CALL TO ACTION

The V World Parks Congress called for “a new paradigm for protected areas” defined as “a fresh and innovative approach to protected areas and their role in broader conservation and development agendas. This approach demands the maintenance and enhancement of [...] core conservation goals, equitably integrating them with the interests of affected people.” This call helped set in motion a global process that, on one hand, created a strong sense of commitment among countries under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to strengthen and expand their protected area systems. On the other hand, the process established frameworks, tools and initiatives to ensure that protected areas are respectful and supportive of the rights of all associated peoples and communities.

Of the many outcomes of the 2003 Durban Congress, three of them are especially relevant to this discussion. First, the Congress created an unusual opportunity for a far-ranging and frank conversation between indigenous peoples and local communities and conservation agencies and organizations. Community representatives described the impacts of protected areas on their lives and called for a people-centered conservation approach. By the time the Congress drew to a close, there was a broad consensus that indigenous peoples and local communities needed to be part of future decision-making processes, based on respect for their rights, to ensure mutually reinforcing park strategies and development approaches. The conservation community also committed to enhancing their engagement with local stakeholders, including reviewing their policies and practices around protecting indigenous peoples and local communities’ rights and interests.

Second, the 2003 WPC also generated the Durban Accord, a non-binding commitment meant to guide efforts over the next decade. While the Accord lauded the success of local conservation, it also acknowledged that indigenous peoples and local communities – and their contributions to conservation—generally lacked recognition and protection. The Accord and its accompanying Action Plan called for commitment and clear steps to address such oversights.

Finally, based on a Durban WPC Recommendation, Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) were created, and they were later also adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity. According to the Recommendation, ICCAs are defined as “natural and/or modified ecosystems containing significant biodiversity values and ecological services, voluntarily conserved by (sedentary and mobile) indigenous and local communities, through customary laws and other effective means.”

Community participation in the Congress, recognition that the conventional protected areas model had shortcomings in consistently addressing the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities based on international standards, and conservation organizations’ desire to improve practice, helped to define and clarify key elements of the new approach to conservation that emerged from the discussions at Durban.

PROGRESS SINCE DURBAN

The movement to address human rights issues within the conservation context has gained strength during the decade since the 2003 WPC. For example, at least 20 IUCN resolutions and policy decisions on respecting rights in conservation have been adopted in the subsequent years.

After 20 years of negotiations, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007. Though not legally binding, the declaration reflects internationally recognized legal norms and represents the minimum standard for protecting indigenous peoples' individual and collective rights. Many of the rights expressed in the instrument, such as those regarding self-determination, land rights, free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), and determining one's own development path, have clear implications for natural resource management. For conservation organizations, UNDRIP became an important standard on which to base their institutional policies and an important tool to guide action. For indigenous peoples around the world, its adoption marked a significant achievement and global testament to their human rights.

These policy advances constitute the context in which conservation organizations have undertaken important actions to integrate respect for human rights into their collective practice. Two years after UNDRIP's adoption, the eight largest international conservation organizations formed the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights (CIHR). As CIHR members, we committed to improving our own human rights practices, and to establishing and promoting best practices for the conservation community as a whole. Motivated by our common interest, the group collectively advances the positive linkages between conservation and the rights of people to secure their livelihoods, enjoy healthy and productive environments, and live with dignity. We have committed to four common principles that guide integration of human rights throughout each organization's policies and practices. These principles are:

1. Respect human rights

Respect internationally proclaimed human rights; and make sure that we do not contribute to infringements of human rights while pursuing our mission.

2. Promote human rights within conservation programs

Support and promote the protection and realization of human rights within the scope of our conservation programs.

3. Protect the vulnerable

Make special efforts to avoid harm to those who are vulnerable to infringements of their rights and to support the protection and fulfilment of their rights within the scope of our conservation programs.

4. Encourage good governance

Support the improvement of governance systems that can secure the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities in the context of our work on conservation and sustainable natural resource use, including elements such as legal, policy and institutional frameworks, and procedures for equitable participation and accountability.

Aligned around these principles, we, the CIHR member organizations, have taken clear steps to integrate respect for human rights into the fabric of our organizations, from creating overarching policies to improving practice on the ground. This white paper highlights aspects of our individual progress since the 2003 WPC in Durban.

PROGRESS SINCE DURBAN: THE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE ON HUMAN RIGHTS²

BIRDLIFE

At its World Congress (Ottawa, 2013), the BirdLife Partnership of 121 national NGOs approved a revised vision, which confirmed BirdLife’s commitment to equity, empowerment and sustainable livelihoods. The BirdLife Partnership’s vision is of “a world where nature and people live in greater harmony, more equitably and sustainably,” and its commitments include “to sustain the vital ecological systems that underpin human livelihoods, and enrich the quality of people’s lives” and to “empower people and contribute to the alleviation of poverty.”

To help achieve this vision, human rights-based approaches have been integrated across BirdLife procedures, policies, strategy and programs. For example:

- Rights-related issues are integrated into BirdLife’s global policies (e.g., on climate change) and programs (e.g. the site selection criteria under BirdLife’s Forests of Hope Programme include social and environmental safeguard standards).
- Sub-contracts issued by BirdLife include articles relating to BirdLife’s Position on Conservation and Human Rights.
- BirdLife’s due diligence procedures for working with corporations refer to a company’s track record on human rights.
- A position on conservation and gender has been approved by BirdLife’s Global Council and is currently under review by the wider BirdLife Partnership before formal adoption.

To support implementation of a rights-based approach, a cross-departmental working group on social safeguards has developed a *Framework for Social Assessment in Project Planning*. Its purpose is to support project managers to include processes which can help to enhance positive social benefits, and avoid negative social impacts. The framework is being piloted in a number of projects. BirdLife continues to advocate and support the use of participatory tools in its projects, including those that analyze power relations and gender roles in natural resource management. Local stakeholder empowerment and local governance of natural resources have received fresh attention through the development of a Local Engagement and Empowerment Programme.

BirdLife recognizes that staff of its 121 Partner NGOs may not have previous training in rights-based approaches. Raising awareness, sharing experience, documenting good practices and building capacity will therefore be important to bring about necessary changes within institutions and individuals. A primer on conservation and human rights has been published in both English and Spanish and distributed widely across the BirdLife network, and sessions on conservation and human rights are regularly included in

² This section highlights the progress achieved by each individual CIHR organization, with the exception of Wetlands International.

BirdLife regional and global meetings. Funding has also recently been secured for INTRINSIC (Integrating Rights and Social Issues in Conservation), a project to develop training materials on rights and the social aspects of conservation. This project is a partnership between Birdlife International, Fauna & Flora International, the Tropical Biology Association, and the University of Cambridge.

CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL (CI)

Since 1987, Conservation International has prioritized working with diverse partners, especially indigenous peoples and local communities, to achieve its mission. When the V IUCN World Parks Congress in Durban took place in 2003, CI was an active participant, sharing more than a decade's worth of experience collaborating with communities to conserve biodiversity and listening to concerns that had arisen along the way.

Recognizing that people need nature to thrive, in 2009 CI adopted a new mission that better links the conservation of biodiversity to human well-being. New structures and strategies accompanied this shift. The Indigenous and Traditional Peoples Program has deepened its efforts to advance indigenous governance of protected areas, community participation in climate policy decision-making, and indigenous peoples' right to FPIC. CI has also worked to ensure sustainability of community efforts. After almost 20 years of partnership with the Kayapó people, CI helped create the Kayapó Fund, the first trust fund to focus on long-term financing for conservation of the Amazon by indigenous peoples. Two indigenous representatives have been members of CI's Board of Directors, and the Indigenous Advisory Group comprised of six experts on indigenous rights guides the organization's engagement on issues affecting these communities. In 2011, CI created the Social Policy and Practice Department to address how broader social issues – in addition to indigenous issues - are accounted for in conservation.

As a founding member of the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights, CI launched its Rights-based Approach to conservation to ensure respect for human rights in all of its work in 2012. The Rights-based Approach includes a set of guiding principles, six institutional policies, multiple guidelines, case studies, and a solid body of practice. All of these elements help CI to more systematically address rights within conservation. Institutional manuals, guidelines and tools on stakeholder mapping, FPIC and gender are tangible contributions to CI's strategy on human rights thus far, and staff capacity building figures prominently.

Most recently, in 2014, CI launched its Conservation Social Science Initiative, which examines the conservation-relevant aspects of human society, including both relationships among people and between people and their environment. As part of this Initiative, CI will examine the relationships between conservation and human well-being. The Initiative is currently developing a strategy to guide CI's social science research, technical assistance, and capacity-building efforts, in order to provide insights for CI and the broader conservation and development communities.

The shift in CI's mission, and the structural and strategic changes over the years, all help to further solidify Conservation International's respect for communities, their human rights, and their key role as conservation partners.

FAUNA & FLORA INTERNATIONAL (FFI)

FFI has long recognized conservation as a social process in which paying attention to socio-economic factors is important for strategic and ethical reasons. FFI's vision is "a sustainable future for the planet, where biodiversity is effectively conserved by the people who live closest to it, supported by the global community." Its mission is "to conserve threatened species and ecosystems worldwide, choosing solutions that are sustainable, based on sound science and take into account human needs."

From 2004 FFI embarked on a four-year, donor-funded program to strengthen its own and partners' capacity to "deliver effective livelihood interventions which reduce both poverty and threats to biodiversity across its project portfolio." A Biodiversity and Human Needs (BHN) team was established to facilitate project teams' access to expertise and opportunities for capacity building and shared learning. FFI adopted the British Department for International Development's Sustainable Livelihoods Framework as a conceptual model for understanding the complexity of rural livelihoods, the importance of policies, institutions and processes, and the need to move beyond framing livelihoods in solely economic terms. The BHN team initiated an organization-wide consultation to develop a position statement. Adopted by FFI's governing council in 2008, this was essentially a do-no-harm policy.

Since 2009 there has been increasing emphasis on stakeholders' rights and responsibilities in achieving positive biodiversity and well-being outcomes. Factors contributing to this evolution include: recruitment of staff with governance as well as livelihoods expertise; trends in conservation and development discourses; new funding opportunities and requirements; participation in REDD+ international voluntary standards development; and engagement as a founding member of the CIHR. The BHN team has become Conservation, Livelihoods and Governance; FFI supports significantly more participatory governance initiatives across terrestrial and marine portfolios; and the organizational position statement now makes explicit reference to links between rights and conservation, committing FFI to "respect human rights, promote their protection and realisation within our conservation programmes, and support the governance systems that can secure those rights." FPIC is included in FFI's organizational ethics statement and human rights are investigated during corporate due diligence processes. Guidance materials to support teams to integrate rights into their work include briefing papers and participatory methods for exploring power, gender and equity as integral elements of socio-economic context analysis, monitoring and evaluation. FFI's 2013 Global Learning Event enabled peer learning on social aspects of conservation and produced documented outputs on FPIC, social impact assessment, tenure and resource use rights, equitable benefit-sharing, gender, and grievance mechanisms. An organizational review in the same year found that all 40 respondents considered it important to address gender and procedural rights in conservation practice.

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN)

Since the Durban Congress, IUCN has been actively contributing to ensure greater respect for the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities in conservation and specifically in protected areas, both in policy frameworks and on the ground. More than thirty Resolutions adopted by IUCN Congresses in 2004, 2008 and 2012 have provided direction for the work of the organization on this matter, notably by endorsing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as an overarching policy framework on indigenous peoples, and adopting a rights-based approach for the entire IUCN program. Such Resolutions have also been instrumental for disseminating concepts, principles, approaches and

recommendations about possible actions to the wider conservation community, governments and civil society alike, especially IUCN Members. Policy interventions and initiatives from IUCN and its Members have inspired, animated, and supported the progress made in international policy frameworks in the last decade, for example in the CBD.

IUCN's Global Protected Areas Programme has been steadily strengthening its focus on improving the governance of protected areas, with emphasis on issues of rights and responsibilities, accountable and inclusive decision-making, social equity, and community-based governance and management, among others. Several technical guidance publications from the Programme and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) with direct relevance to this topic, are increasingly gaining status of new global standards in protected areas policy and practice related to the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

IUCN's World Heritage Programme has considerably strengthened its approach to involving indigenous peoples and local communities in the context of its role as Advisory Body to the World Heritage Convention. The Programme started in 2012 as a collaborative effort with the other Advisory Bodies of the Convention to develop a rights-based framework for their activities, which would allow better decision-making by the convention organs and parties on matters concerning indigenous peoples and local communities. Some of the products of this work are currently being tested and implemented in new evaluations of nominations and other activities; and tangible results in terms of better inclusion of indigenous peoples and local community issues in this work, using a rights-based approach, are already emerging.

The Durban Accord "urged commitment to recognise, strengthen, protect, and support community conservation areas." Following this call, IUCN encouraged integration of this approach in the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, and developed and promoted the concept of Indigenous Peoples' and Local Community Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCAs) to capture and highlight the practices, contributions and experiences of community-based conservation outside formal protected areas.

At the regional level, IUCN works actively with indigenous peoples' organizations to encourage positive changes in protected areas governance and management. The two IUCN Regional Programmes of Latin America have specific areas of work with indigenous peoples' organizations to support recognition of their rights and governance systems in protected areas, as well as recognition of indigenous peoples' own protected area models and initiatives. In Southern Africa, working in collaboration with Members and Commissions, IUCN has implemented successful subregional policy dialogues to promote and support greater attention to indigenous and community rights and more inclusive protected areas governance. In the rest of Africa, as well as in Asia and Oceania, IUCN has been an active promoter and supporter of indigenous and community rights in protected areas through field-based interventions, capacity-building projects, support for networking, learning, and influencing policy. Bridging between indigenous and community organizations and government agencies to address situations of conflict and many other challenges is a constant approach of IUCN at the national level, with a focus on achieving greater understanding, support, and commitment from government bodies and officials through constructive engagement.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY (TNC)

Over the past ten years, The Nature Conservancy has prioritized better integrating human well-being into its conservation work, as reflected in its recently updated mission: to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. This emphasis on working for people and nature, embodied in the outcomes at Durban and the principles of the CIHR, define several key shifts in the Conservancy's programs and operations.

In 2012, The Nature Conservancy adopted a new conservation framework: "Global Challenges, Global Solutions," to better demonstrate how conservation is essential to improving people's lives. TNC programs establish priorities through this framework and put them into action through Conservation Business Planning, the Conservancy's version of the Open Standards for Conservation, which center on social, economic, and biodiversity outcomes. The Nature Conservancy is currently updating its "Conservation by Design" methodology to emphasize the interconnectedness of people and nature, including a systematic approach to integrating human well-being into project design and monitoring and evaluation, with a focus on people's empowerment.

Building on years of on-the-ground experience with local communities and indigenous partners, the Conservancy established Indigenous and Communal Conservation as a global priority program in 2010. This program provides central coordination for the Conservancy's work with indigenous peoples around the world to promote best practices, secure rights and access to land and management of natural resources, support indigenous rights and improved governance, and strengthen livelihoods.

In 2014, Conservancy-wide guidelines and principles were drafted for working with indigenous peoples in conservation, consistent with international law, affirming the Conservancy's commitment to advancing sustainable conservation, in a manner that is inclusive of indigenous peoples and promotes their well-being. In 2014 The Nature Conservancy also published Strengthening the Social Impacts of Sustainable Landscapes Programs, which provides guidance on how to develop and strengthen strategies that achieve both conservation and development goals and includes descriptions of applicable social safeguard principles, one example being free, prior and informed consent.

At the regional level, The Nature Conservancy helped launch Healthy Country Planning in Australia in 2004, adapted from the Open Standards planning methodology to be more relevant to indigenous peoples. The Conservancy has trained and supported 26 Indigenous Ranger and Traditional Owner groups in Healthy Country Planning, which has helped establish more than 23.5 million acres of Indigenous Protected Areas.

Working with indigenous organizations, the Brazilian government, the United Nations Development Program, and the Global Environment Facility, The Nature Conservancy helped develop an environmental and territorial management planning approach in indigenous territories, and is implementing demonstration projects in more than 12 million acres. In 2012, the Brazilian government officially recognized these plans through the establishment of its first ever National Policy on Territorial and Environmental Management of Indigenous Lands (PNGATI), which helps ensure sustainable resource management and protection on indigenous lands and territories.

TNC Canada has developed two draft guidance documents on applying a rights-based approach to its conservation work, with a special focus on indigenous rights. These documents shape TNC Canada's work with indigenous peoples' communities focused on indigenous youth leadership, indigenous science, indigenous governance and law building, and on-the-ground indigenous stewardship and monitoring efforts.

In northern Kenya, The Nature Conservancy, in partnership with the Northern Rangelands Trust, supports a network of 27 community conservancies and is empowering a movement of community-based conservation that is improving lives and livelihoods of local and indigenous peoples through enhanced land management, wildlife conservation and sustainable livestock practices. This network benefits more than 320,000 people across more than 7.4 million acres.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY (WCS)

The Wildlife Conservation Society is dedicated to inspiring people to protect nature and fighting to prevent its loss. At WCS, we envision a world where wildlife thrives in healthy lands and seas, valued by societies that embrace and benefit from the diversity and integrity of life on Earth. People depend on nature, not only for natural resources and services, but for inspiration and connection to a cause larger than themselves. Our mission is to save wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, conservation action, education, and inspiring people to value nature. Since our founding, in 1895, our global field work and conservation programs have expanded to include efforts in more than 60 nations and the establishment and management of more than 2 million acres of protected areas.

WCS has generally had positive relationships with local people affected by our work in our long-term conservation landscapes, and some of our field programs have been leaders in introducing a rights-based approach to doing conservation. However, our relationships tended to evolve in the context of a general desire to treat local people with respect, because it is the right thing to do, and a pragmatic recognition that this was important for the long-term success of our conservation initiatives. Thus, our approach to conservation was not informed by a consistently applied vision of human rights.

Durban brought home the importance of treating rights as a fundamental organizing concept of our work, and the creation of the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights provided a context for doing this in a way that would allow us to contribute to building a community of conservation practice around the issue of rights, sharing our experiences, and benefitting from the experiences of other conservation organizations. With the adoption of a set of principles to ensure that we comply with, and contribute to advancing, human rights standards, WCS has begun to implement a series of measures to ensure that the principles are implemented across our program. These include establishing an Internal Review Board, registered to meet U.S. federal standards, which reviews research activities to ensure compliance with standards for protecting human subjects, and conducting a review of human rights issues across our field programs, to ensure that we and our partners are complying consistently with international standards, and identify opportunities where a rights-based approach would allow us to pursue conservation objectives more effectively, or where our conservation efforts could contribute more to the efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples to win recognition of land and natural resource rights. To make sure that we are systematic about incorporating rights issues into the planning, implementation and monitoring of our programs, we are currently rolling out the USAID Natural Resource Governance Assessment Tool, and

the Basic Necessities Survey as part of our standard package of program monitoring tools. We are also concerned with improving our understanding of how changes that our programs bring about in one area of activity influence conditions in other areas. Therefore, we are also introducing a suite of five standard measures that we apply in all of our field programs, to assess changes in wildlife, habitats, sources and severity of threats, governance and local livelihoods associated with our conservation efforts; and seeking to understand how changes in one of these areas shape, and are shaped by, changes in the other areas.

WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE (WWF)

WWF's roughly 6200 staff work in over 100 countries to reduce biodiversity loss and humanity's ecological footprint. Many areas where we work are home to rural and coastal communities and indigenous peoples whose livelihoods and cultures depend heavily on the natural environment. WWF works closely with multiple stakeholders to help ensure that development is inclusive and does not undermine the natural environment underpinning human well-being. WWF has made significant progress on these issues, but challenges remain, including where rights are unclear or not formally recognized.

As a founding member of the CIHR, WWF has taken a number of steps to build institutional knowledge, internal policy, and external engagement to ensure that we proactively build human rights and social development into our conservation work:

- A set of social policies guide the integration of social dimensions in WWF's conservation work: the Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation (agreed 1996, updated 2008), the Policy on Poverty and Conservation (2009), the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights Framework (2009), and the Gender Policy (2011). Several efforts are underway to more effectively move these policies off paper into practice, including work to develop practical guidelines building on these rights-based approaches.
- Building on diverse initiatives around poverty, social equity, and indigenous peoples' rights, the Social Development for Conservation (SD4C) team was established in 2009 to build coherence, effectiveness, and support for capacity across WWF's Network. SD4C works as a 'community of practice' at national, regional and global levels on a range of issues (rights, governance, gender, civil society, empowerment, sustainable livelihoods) and in areas including program design, implementation and monitoring, issue and policy analysis, external advocacy, knowledge sharing and capacity building. In June 2014, WWF agreed to an Action Plan on Social Development (June 2014) with clear objectives and strategies toward the 2020 vision that "social development is integral to WWF's core conservation work." The Action Plan's initial two-year work plan will catalyze progress on, among others: network portfolio and program monitoring of human well-being indicators; social risk analysis and safeguards; embedding social development in conservation program planning and implementation; improving WWF communications on people and conservation; capacity building; strategic analysis; and innovative research to support platforms and informed policy decisions on conservation and development. Regular progress reports are scheduled for WWF decision makers.
- WWF works at multiple levels with different social development partners and civil society organizations to encourage transformational change by sharing expertise and building

stronger conservation and development synergies. Examples include program partnerships (CARE-WWF Alliance), environmental governance platforms with other CSOs/CBOs at local, national and sub-regional level, and policy advocacy engagement in national, regional and global CSO coalitions, for example, on the Post 2015 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.

CONCLUSION

The V World Parks Congress represents a watershed moment in how conservation organizations approach issues related to the rights of the people affected by our work. We have moved from treating each case in isolation, with little consideration of international standards or lessons learned from our own previous experience, to having rights issues occupy a central place in program planning, implementation, and outcome evaluation. While the advances in our practice are significant, challenges remain, particularly in: building strong institutional cultures that anticipate and consistently address rights issues arising in the course of our work; addressing situations in which the rights of key stakeholders are unclear or contested; and creating accountability mechanisms that serve our institutions, the people affected by our work, and the greater conservation community.

The three fundamental lessons offered by the Durban Congress and the ensuing dialogue continue to guide our work. First, supporting the rights and aspirations of people and conserving nature are twin ethical imperatives and cornerstones of a sustainable future in and of themselves, independent of our missions as conservation organizations. Simply put, we cannot advance our own objectives while impinging on people's rights. Second, understanding and addressing the intersection of human rights and conservation issues is critical to our ability to realize our long-term conservation vision. Empowering local people whose livelihoods are directly tied to the health of wildlife and ecosystems to meaningfully participate in land use decision-making creates a context that is more propitious for conservation and sustainable use of renewable resources. Third, by helping local people to improve their livelihood security and wider opportunities, as well as to realize their human dignity and potential, we contribute to building sustainable societies, which value biodiversity and healthy natural ecosystems as essential elements of their quality of life, rather than as obstacles to their aspirations.

We, as CIHR members, reaffirm our commitments to promote practices and standards in conservation that protect the rights of the people who are linked to our work. This will involve: improving the consistency of practice within our individual institutions, strengthening and growing the community of conservation practice that CIHR was established to nurture, fostering dialogue and a common agenda with indigenous peoples and local communities around the world, and establishing new partnerships and accountability processes. Through these actions, we will support more fully the pursuit of people to live with dignity in a world characterized by healthy lands and seas and respect for the diversity and integrity of life.

RESOURCES

For more information on the work of each CIHR organization, visit the following websites:

BirdLife:	www.birdlife.org/worldwide/programmes/local-empowerment
CI:	www.conservation.org/projects/pages/Policy-Center-for-Environment-and-Peace.aspx
FFI:	www.fauna-flora.org/initiative/livelihoods-and-governance/
IUCN:	www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/social_policy/
TNC:	www.nature.org/indigenous
WCS:	http://globalinitiatives.wcs.org/qualityoflife
WWF:	www.panda.org/people



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