



World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP)

With the assistance of CEESP and TILCEPA, and financial support from UNDP, IIED, IUCN and the Dana Committee, 26 mobile peoples from four continents convened for the first time in an international conservation forum during the 5th WPC in Durban, South Africa in September 2003. Participants took part in a preparatory pre-WPC workshop which led to a number of further workshops throughout the WPC. These meetings used the ideas expressed by the Dana Declaration (2002) as a point of departure for their work, and prepared the ground for analyzing mobile peoples' common concerns and priorities and working together to find solutions for them. At the end of the WPC, the mobile peoples present founded the World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP). The Alliance's vision is to establish solidarity among mobile peoples worldwide; enhance complementarity with other societies; promote just policies leading to freedom of movement and respect for their rights; maintain their livelihoods in balance with nature while making best use of their own mobility as a strategy to interact with the environment in a flexible and sustainable way.

With assistance from IUCN-CEESP, an Elder from the Kuhi sub-tribe of the Qashqai Nomadic Pastoralists of Iran attended the Congress. During the opening plenary, while representing all mobile indigenous peoples (MIPs), he delivered a very powerful and moving speech to the congress. This was the very first time mobile indigenous peoples gathered in an international forum where their voices were heard.

The main outcomes of the WPC for mobile peoples were consensus on key priority actions and the role of mobile peoples in biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and the relationship of mobile peoples to protected areas (PA) and conservation professionals. The discussions of mobile peoples at WPC resulted in inputs into the Durban Accord and Action Plan, WPC recommendations on Mobile Indigenous Peoples and the endorsement in principle of the Dana Declaration.

In February 2004 WAMIP members convene again at the 7th Conference of Parties (COP 7) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. WAMIP participated at this meeting in addition to the 19th Session of the Global Biodiversity Forum (GBF), which also took place in Kuala Lumpur prior to the COP 7. One of the topics of discussion at the GBF in Malaysia was "Mobile Peoples and Biodiversity Conservation" where WAMIP members discussed issues of landscape management and connectivity. Topics concerning mobile indigenous peoples' land, cultures, relationships with protected areas, biodiversity, and sustainable livelihoods were also debated.

In addition to WAMIP's participation at the GBF and the COP 7, WAMIP members held the Alliance's second general meeting. These meetings entailed discussing organizational issues, membership structure, and future of the Alliance. WAMIP members sought mechanisms with which to ensure implementation of effective international projects and strategies for the mobile indigenous peoples to be better-heard and respected in the conservation community. WAMIP is currently composing its bylaws, and seeking to register the Alliance as an international organization in Switzerland.

Vision of WAMIP

WAMIP sees an ideal future in which:

- Mobility is recognised and appreciated as a strategy for both sustainable livelihoods and conservation of biological diversity
- Mobile indigenous peoples (MIPs) are in full solidarity among themselves and with other indigenous peoples

- The rights of mobile indigenous peoples to natural resources (as per the relevant United Nations Draft Declaration) are fully respected

In such a world, mobile indigenous peoples will enjoy broad social recognition and respect. Enabling legal and policy environments will allow them to determine priorities and strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of their lands, territories and other resources based on their own tenure systems and customary laws. They will be free to maintain and develop their distinct identities and cultural values, and to exercise strong cultural traditions and customs, including social organisation, distinctive juridical customs, and appropriate educational approaches. In addition, they will be free to maintain and develop contacts, relations, and cooperation with other peoples across international borders and, as needed, engage in peaceful resolution of conflict with other peoples and countries.

Mission of WAMIP

The mission of WAMIP is to assist and empower mobile indigenous peoples throughout the world to maintain their mobile lifestyles in pursuit of livelihoods and cultural identity, to sustainably manage their common property resources and to obtain the full respect of their rights.

WAMIP is affiliated with CEESP and is currently hosted in CENESTA, the Centre for Sustainable Development (Iran). CENESTA will offer secretariat support to the Alliance during its transition period. For further information, please go to <http://www.iucn.org/themes/ceesp/WAMIP.htm> or contact the WAMIP Secretariat focal point, Aghaghia Rahimzadeh aghaghia@cenesta.org