

Exhibit B.19j

<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/09/iucn-to-create-new-category-of-membership-for-indigenous-peoples-organizations/>

Article published by Mike Gaworecki on 2016-09-13.

The creation of a new membership category for indigenous groups was not the only resolution approved by IUCN Members to draw strong praise from indigenous leaders.

The organization's members passed Motion 26, which calls for businesses "to respect all categories of protected areas as 'no-go' areas for environmentally damaging industrial activities" and highlights the need for respect of Indigenous peoples' right to free, prior, and informed consent.

IUCN Members also voted to approve Motion 48, which encourages governments, the private sector, and international financial institutions to avoid loss and degradation of primary forests and to "meaningfully engage and support indigenous peoples and local communities in their efforts to conserve primary forests, including intact forest landscapes."

A report released in July by Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the UN's Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, helps show why the motions to treat protected areas as "no-go zones" for industrial activity and to protect primary forests, in addition to the vote to give indigenous peoples an equal footing within IUCN, have great potential to boost conservation efforts in the future.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Members' Assembly **voted on Friday** to create a new category of membership for indigenous peoples' organizations.

IUCN membership includes 217 government agencies and more than 1,000 civil society organizations from over 160 countries, as well as 15,000-plus volunteer experts in 185 countries. The Members' Assembly is IUCN's highest decision-making body.

IUCN Director General Inger Andersen said that the decision to create a specific place for Indigenous peoples in the decision-making process of the organization, reached during the organization's World Conservation Congress in Hawaii, would not only strengthen the presence and role of Indigenous organizations in the IUCN but would also help achieve equitable and sustainable use of natural resources.

The World Conservation Congress is held every four years, bringing together conservation and government leaders to chart the future of environmental protection.

"Indigenous peoples are key stewards of the world's biodiversity,"

Andersen said in a [statement](#). "By giving them this crucial opportunity to be heard on the international stage, we have made our Union stronger, more inclusive and more democratic."

Aroha Te Pareake Mead, who chairs IUCN's Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy, noted that this was the first time in IUCN's history that a new membership category has been created, and added that it would provide an opportunity for indigenous peoples to contribute to global policy on biocultural conservation, indigenous issues, traditional knowledge, and the future direction of conservation.

"I am proud of IUCN and its members for doing the right thing and enabling Indigenous peoples to speak for themselves as full members of the Union," Mead said.

The creation of a new membership category for indigenous groups was not the only resolution approved by IUCN Members to draw strong praise from indigenous leaders. Delegates to the Congress voted on numerous [motions](#) that help guide conservation policymakers around the world.

Last Friday, for instance, the organization's members passed [Motion 26](#), which calls for businesses "to respect all categories of protected areas as 'no-go' areas for environmentally damaging industrial activities and infrastructure development, to withdraw from those activities in these areas, and not to conduct future activities in protected areas." The resolution highlights the need for respect of Indigenous peoples' right to free, prior, and informed consent, especially when it comes to activities at sacred natural sites and territories conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities.

In an [op-ed here on Mongabay](#) about her experiences at the IUCN Conservation Congress, Aura Tegría, legal advisor to the U'wa Association of Colombia, wrote about the message she delivered to IUCN members:

"Generally, little has been said about how the establishment of natural protected areas can violate or undermine our collective and territorial rights.

Therefore we took the opportunity to emphasize the importance of recognizing and respecting our rights and, in addition, our sacred territories of life.”

Patricia Gualinga, international relations coordinator for the Kichwa indigenous community of Sarayaku in the Ecuadorian Amazon, said in a statement that “For us, the indigenous peoples who promote Kawsak Sacha (Living Forest), we are hopeful following the IUCN adoption of Motion 26. This will help us continue advancing and fighting to see it implemented from our perspective as territorial guardians.”

And over the weekend, as the IUCN Conservation Congress was drawing to a close, IUCN Members also voted to approve [Motion 48](#), which encourages governments, the private sector, and international financial institutions to avoid loss and degradation of primary forests and to “meaningfully engage and support indigenous peoples and local communities in their efforts to conserve primary forests, including intact forest landscapes.” Primary forests and intact forest landscapes play a critical role in maintaining biodiversity and protecting indigenous cultures as well as the livelihoods of poor, marginalized communities.

Conservation and indigenous rights

A [report](#) released in July by Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the UN’s Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, helps show why the motions to treat protected areas as “no-go zones” for industrial activity and to protect primary forests, in addition to the vote to give indigenous peoples an equal footing within IUCN, have great potential to boost conservation efforts in the future.

According to the report, the impact that conservation initiatives such as protected areas have had on indigenous peoples has been a “constant and recurring theme” since 2001, when the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples was first established.

Protected areas nearly doubled between 1980 and 2000, from 8.7 million square kilometers (about 2.1 billion acres) to 16.1 million square kilometers (close to 4 billion acres), and there is significant overlap between areas targeted for conservation and the traditional lands of indigenous peoples because the latter often retain the highest levels of biodiversity, per the report.

“Protected areas have the potential of safeguarding the biodiversity for the benefit of all humanity; however, these have also been associated with human rights violations against indigenous peoples in many parts of the world,” Tauli-Corpuz wrote in the report.

The report lists a number of human rights violations that indigenous communities worldwide have faced as the result of conservation measures, including expropriation of land, forced displacement, denial of self-governance, lack of access to livelihoods, loss of cultural and spiritual sites, non-recognition of their own authorities, and denial of access to justice and reparation.

Traditional indigenous territories encompass about 22 percent of the world's land surface and coincide with areas that hold 80 percent of Earth's biodiversity. The report notes that, by some estimates, 50 percent of protected areas worldwide were established on lands traditionally occupied and used by indigenous peoples. This proportion is highest in the Americas, Tauli-Corpuz reports, potentially exceeding 90 percent in Central America. Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, and the United States all have high percentages of protected areas on traditional indigenous territory.

Overlap is significant in Australia and New Zealand, as well, while most of the protected areas in India, Nepal, and the Philippines also include the territories of indigenous peoples. Among African countries, Botswana, Cameroon, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, and the United Republic of Tanzania have large parts of protected areas that are located on indigenous peoples' ancestral domains.

"For over a century, conservation was carried out with the aim of vacating protected areas of all human presence, leading to cultural destruction and large-scale displacements of indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands in the name of conservation," Tauli-Corpuz writes. "Past conservation measures caused complex and multiple violations of the collective and individual human rights of indigenous peoples."

Though Tauli-Corpuz's report focused on protected areas, she was careful to note that that was "not intended to diminish the onus on the key factors causing displacement of indigenous peoples from their lands and the overall violations of their rights to lands and territories," which she identifies as being the operations of extractive industries, agribusiness expansion, and the development of mega-infrastructure projects like large hydroelectric dams.

"From the conservation perspective, the loss of the guardianship of indigenous peoples and the placing of their lands under the control of government authorities who have often lacked the capacity and political will to protect the land effectively, has left such areas exposed to destructive settlement, extractive industries, illegal logging, agribusiness expansion and large-scale infrastructure development," Tauli-Corpuz writes.

“Even where national policies and laws require strict protection for protected areas, in many countries State agencies have still authorized mining, oil and gas extraction, logging, dams and reservoirs, highways and other projects in direct conflict with conservation goals.”

The hope is that by giving indigenous organizations a seat at the IUCN table alongside governments and other key conservation decision-makers, these sorts of conflicts will become less common in the future.