New Project team in place

Following the departure of Henriette Rasmussen and Chandra Roy March 2000, the Project was in an interim period until October of that year, when renewed funding from DANIDA enabled activities to begin again. A new Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), Marianne Jensen from Greenland, was appointed in October, following which, the Project also recruited two new regional co-ordinators - Minnie Degawan from the Philippines, and Johnson Oke Kaunga from Kenya. Both are well known both the national and international levels for advocating for indigenous and tribal peoples' interests and rights. This marks a move away from the entirely Geneva-based approach that was taken during the first phase. Now, the Regional Co-ordinator for Asia is based in Bangkok, and the Regional Co-ordinator for Africa is based in Dar es Salaam, while the CTA remains in Geneva. Other Project technical staff include Francesco Thomberry, also based in Geneva. In addition, the Project hired a secretary, Mongeye Tenumalai, in February 2000, and a new Danish Associate Expert is due to begin work with the Project as of the end of 2001.

Inter-Agency consultations

During the first two weeks of May, extensive planning and strategy development was undertaken in Geneva by Project staff. Particular attention has been paid to the development of strategies, activities and mechanisms whereby indigenous and tribal peoples will be able to meaningfully participate to the fullest extent possible in the Project's activities.

As an integral part of this planning and strategy development, a number of meetings were organized with various United Nations agencies, as well as other ILO projects and programmes that work with indigenous and tribal peoples. These included the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), the ILO-INDISCO Programme, and the ILO's In-focus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction. The objectives of the meetings were to facilitate information exchange on activities pertaining to indigenous and tribal peoples; and to discuss possibilities for, and development of, further collaboration and cooperation in this respect. As a consequence of these consultations, the Project is working with IPEC in the Central African Region, to develop possibilities for collaboration, and has been involved in the development of joint activities with the ILO-INDISCO Programme in a number of Project countries.

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples

Following the decision of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, in July 2000 (Resolution 2000/22) to establish a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues as a subsidiary body of the Council, the United Nations specialized agencies have been engaged in discussions regarding possibilities for technical support to the Forum, which is due to hold its first session in 2002. This inter-agency group, including the ILO, has been considering the establishment of an inter-agency support team that will prepare the groundwork for the Forum, preparing documentation, gathering information about existing activities within the United Nations system, liaising with governments, indigenous peoples and international and national organizations, and servicing the first session of the Forum.

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More Project news...

ILO Indigenous Fellowship Programme

During the coming months, the Project will be developing an indigenous fellowship programme, as it considers it important that the opportunity exists for indigenous and tribal peoples to experience first hand the workings of the ILO, not only in its supervisory activities, but also in its technical co-operation projects and programmes.

As such, an annual fellowship programme will provide three or four indigenous fellows with the opportunity of obtaining practical working experience within the ILO. Aside from briefings and training on various ILO supervisory mechanisms, instruments, and projects and programmes of relevance to indigenous and tribal peoples, the fellowship programme will also provide the fellows with the opportunity to gain practical working experience, either in the field (under the supervision of the regional co-ordinators), or at ILO headquarters in Geneva, with the Project. This will, however, depend on the fellows' own specific interests and objectives. Further details and an application form will soon be available on the ILO website. Watch

Country Profiles

In order to better identify the issues of primary importance to indigenous and tribal peoples - both in those countries in which the Project has already been operational, but also in a number of countries in which the Project envisions activities in the future - the Project has commissioned a series of desk reviews for the following countries: Cambodia, India, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and regions: North Africa, Central Africa, and Kenya/Tanzania. These provide a comprehensive overview of general cultural, social, political economic and legislative issues, and other matters relating to indigenous and tribal peoples in the countries concerned, identifying issues of primary importance, as well as gaps in available information and areas for further investigation. A number of these reviews will soon be available to the public as ILO publications.

Web pages on indigenous and tribal peoples

The ILO is currently in the process of establishing a comprehensive web page on indigenous and tribal peoples. This will encompass information on ILO standards pertaining to these peoples, and their implementation, as well as links to web pages of individual ILO projects and programmes, such as the INDISCO Programme, and the Project to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, and the ILO office in Costa Rica’s indigenous web pages.

The pages will also include online access to selected publications, including the Manual on Convention No. 169, published in November 2000, ILO submissions to the WGIIP, as well as other relevant materials. As part of this project, the Project to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples will be developing its own website, containing information on its activities and useful information and education materials.
Regional Focus: Asia

Policy Workshop to take place in Thailand

Discussions have been underway with the Tribal Research Institute (TRI) - the Government affiliated focal point for indigenous and tribal peoples issues in Thailand - concerning a national policy workshop that is due to take place later this year. The workshop will assess the current state of legislation and government policy in Thailand regarding indigenous and tribal peoples. Following the promulgation of a new Constitution in 1997, renewed interest in issues pertaining to indigenous and tribal peoples in Thailand has been evident, particularly on the part of the TRI, who approached the Project in 1999 with a proposal for co-operation. Citizenship, land issues and education, among others, are amongst the most pressing issues pertaining to indigenous and tribal peoples in Thailand. The Project recognizes that in dealing with these sensitive issues, one of the first steps to be made must be the facilitation of dialogue between the government, and the indigenous and tribal peoples.

The workshop will bring together government officials and representatives of indigenous and tribal peoples’ organizations, to lay out their needs and concerns as regards existing policies in Thailand and their implementation. It is hoped that this will be the first step towards the initiation of a process of meaningful dialogue between the indigenous and tribal peoples’ organizations here, and the policy makers and implementers.

Indigenous peoples and development in Laos

In Laos, the main partner will be the Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC) which is the government agency tasked to address ethnic minority issues. The Project will work closely with other ILO projects in the area and will try to facilitate dialogue between the different ministries and the LFNC so that ethnic minority issues will be addressed more systematically and cohesively. The Lao government has signified interest in C169 and has supported a review of all its research and policy documents. "Ethnic Minorities and Rural Development in the Lao PDR", which was commissioned by the Project during 1999, and formed part of an UNDP lead support initiative to the Lao government in respect of its National Rural Development Plan (NRDP). This study will form the basis for future work here.

The issue of indigenous and tribal peoples is a politically sensitive one in Laos. As such, the Project's initial efforts in Laos will be aimed at establishing dialogue with the government, as well as the scope and modalities of future Project assistance. In this vein, the Project has received a proposal from the LFNC for a workshop that will address issues pertaining to ethnic minorities and development. It is hoped that this workshop will take place later this year, and will include representatives from a wide range of government ministries, in order that co-ordination between them can be improved. A primary concern of the Project at this initial stage will be the inclusion of indigenous representatives in the processes being initiated.

Educational study tour for Government officials

In Cambodia, the Project has been working for three years with the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Highland Peoples Development (IMC). This is the governmental focal point for issues pertaining to indigenous and tribal peoples in Cambodia. Capacity-building assistance to the IMC has been in the form of training workshops on a number of topics that deal with various aspects of the development process, including gender, human rights, sustainable development, participatory development and issues pertaining to indigenous and tribal peoples. In addition, the Project provided policy advice to the Government of Cambodia on a Highland Peoples Development Policy that was being developed. This process aimed to ensure that the principles of Convention No. 169 were respected in this policy.
document, and that the importance of the participation of these peoples was recognized as a valuable asset to the development process as a whole.

During the last phase of the Project’s work in Cambodia, IMC members expressed a wish to visit the Philippines, in order to learn from the experiences here in addressing the issue of indigenous and tribal peoples. As the Philippines is relatively progressive within the Asian context in the recognition of the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples. Therefore, as part of the Project’s Indigenous-to-Indigenous Exchange Programme, IMC members will be invited to participate in a study tour as a precursor to further collaboration with the Project. One of the main themes of this tour will be the participation of indigenous and tribal peoples in the processes that affect them - a theme that will carry through to further collaboration with the IMC.

Expanding the Project’s work in India

In India, the Project will focus more on national policy initiatives and will work closely with indigenous organizations on a wider geographical level than has previously been undertaken. Due to the political nature of the Project’s work in India, previous activities have been limited to the state of Andhra Pradesh, where local level initiatives were undertaken during 1998-2000, including capacity-building and educational workshops aimed at the empowerment of several groups of tribal women from this region. However, the recent establishment of a Ministry of Tribal Affairs in India indicates renewed interest in issues pertaining to these peoples in India.

Although Project activities are largely in the exploratory stage here, initial meetings will serve to establish contacts with relevant indigenous and tribal peoples’ organizations, with a view to working with or facilitating a wide network of such organizations and providing them with capacity building assistance on a number of levels. In these initial stages, the Project will draw lessons from existing ILO initiatives in the country, such as IPEC, among others, in dealing with sensitive political issues.

Capacity-building to strengthen implementation of existing legislation on indigenous peoples

During the current phase of its activities, the Project will begin work in the Philippines. The Philippines is one of the only countries in Asia to have explicitly recognized the presence of indigenous peoples within the state. As such, in 1997, the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) was adopted – an important milestone in the recognition of the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples. Since then, there have been a number of practical and other problems with its implementation.

A number of issues have been brought to the attention of the Project here, although the Project’s work is largely still within the exploratory phase. The initial goal of Project activities here will therefore be to analyze the existing mechanisms for the implementation of the IPRA, as well as the effects this law has had on the indigenous peoples of the Philippines four years on. This will be achieved in part by a study, which will be followed by a consultative workshop with indigenous representatives and other relevant actors in this process. The Project also hopes to work with government agencies who have the responsibility for the implementation of this legislation, and strengthen their capacity in this respect. An equally important component of the Project’s activities here will be on capacity-building for indigenous and tribal peoples’ organizations, so that they are in a better position to participate fully in the implementation of this law.
Regional Focus: Africa

Building partnerships in South Africa

In 1999, the Project participated in a Conference on the Constitutional Accommodation of Vulnerable Indigenous Communities in South Africa. In addition, and in collaboration with the South African San Institute (SASI), and the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee (IPACC), the Project produced a study, entitled Indigenous Peoples of South Africa: Current Trends. This study assessed the current situation of indigenous peoples in South Africa, as regards, social and economic status, cultural identity, political and legal issues, amongst a number of other factors.

As a follow up to the previous activities of the Project, one of the first tasks to be undertaken in South Africa will be to disseminate the information gleaned from these activities, sharing experiences with various stakeholders in the process of the constitutional accommodation of indigenous peoples. This will include developing contacts with relevant governmental bodies, indigenous and tribal peoples' organizations, NGOs and other United Nations agencies active in the region. A further element of this will constitute the provision of capacity-building assistance to Project partners in South Africa, particularly coalitions of indigenous organizations working at the National or regional level. This will be aimed at developing, or strengthening existing networks so that the activities of these organizations can be mutually reinforcing, and can contribute to the articulation of a coherent and meaningful dialogue with policy makers and implementers. The project will also continue to give technical advice on the principles and application of Convention No. 169 on request.

Awareness raising in Tanzania

A desk review, covering the main issues pertaining to indigenous and tribal peoples in Tanzania has recently been completed by the Project. Based on the conclusions reached in this desk review, the Project will be investigating further, through consultations with stakeholders, possibilities and priorities for Project assistance here. One of the first activities following these consultations will be in the form of an information dissemination and awareness raising workshop, based on the results and conclusions reached as a consequence. It is hoped that initial awareness-raising activities will initiate a process of dialogue between the Government and indigenous and tribal peoples here. Following initial awareness-raising activities, and based on the outcome of these, further awareness raising and training on issues pertaining to indigenous and tribal peoples, in particular on the ILO's role will be implemented for relevant actors.

Co-operation with INDISCO

The ILO-INDISCO Programme is active in Tanzania, where it has been involved in a baseline study on the livelihood and employment challenges of pastoralists in Tanzania. In addition, it has been planning pilot initiatives focusing on capacity building and dialogue, as well as the development of a national framework on livelihoods and decent work among pastoralists. This initiative is being supported by the Ministry of Water and Livestock of the Government of Tanzania.

The project has linked up with INDISCO in Tanzania to facilitate the creation of Indigenous National Advisory Committee (INAC). This committee will constitute a technical advisory group, that will be consulted by all INDISCO's project partners on any initiatives concerning and targeting indigenous and tribal communities.

Project to initiate new activities in Ethiopia.

IPACC undertook a fact finding mission during April/May 2001. The Project will use this information, as well as other relevant studies and consultations, national strategy and framework for the strengthening of indigenous organisations and networks, and thus their capacity to engage in advocacy and dialogue with the government. Initiatives for regional networking will also be supported through workshops and learning visits. The project will also undertake a fact-finding mission to Ethiopia in the near future.
Indigenous information exchange

Information exchange can prove to be a valuable educational experience. Learning how others have approached similar issues of concern, and how they have dealt with problems and pitfalls along the way, often provides new perspectives on how to approach similar issues closer to home. One can learn about the best practices and methodologies of other communities, as well as exchanging ideas and information on why some, less successful experiences, may have occurred. Following a successful indigenous exchange programme, implemented by the Project in 1999, where San communities from Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, and Jumma from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh participated in a study tour to Norway and Denmark to learn from the experiences of the Saami Parliament, and the Greenland Home Rule Government.

During the current Project phase, a number of such exchanges are envisaged in both the African and Asian regions (for Asian exchanges, see regional focus on Asia). In Africa, it is hoped that a study tour will take place, in order that indigenous and tribal peoples from Kenya can learn from the experiences of other indigenous and tribal peoples elsewhere in the region. In addition, an intra-regional exchange will be organized among the indigenous and tribal peoples (“Pygmies”) of the Central African countries (in particular the Central African Republic and Cameroon), in order that they can learn from common experiences, and to facilitate networking among different groups, who are for the most part not as well organized as many other indigenous and tribal peoples, particularly in respect of the articulation of their needs and concerns, and with respect to rights advocacy.

Government initiative requests Project assistance.

Although the Project has not worked before in the Central African Republic, at the request of the Ministry of Labour, the Project will be undertaking a mission here to assess the possibilities for Project activities. The Project’s has been requested to facilitate a seminar on Convention No. 169, with particular reference to the “Pygmies”. Following this request, a desk review on the Central African region was commissioned.

Further project action in the Central African Republic will necessarily follow consultations with “Pygmy” communities, in order to ensure that their needs are adequately addressed in the future. They must also have adequate opportunities to participate fully in the ongoing processes that affect their lives.

Impact assessment in Morocco to build on Project’s previous initiatives

To date, the Project has conducted a number of seminars on the principles of Convention No. 169, and the ILO’s supervisory mechanisms in Morocco, in association with TAMAYNUT, an Amazigh organization active in rights promotion and cultural issues. The last seminar, which took place in January 2000, developed a number of recommendations as to how the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples here could be further promoted and respected. These recommendations reflected the need for further information dissemination and education on rights issues, as well as on land and gender issues. They also reflected the need for indigenous and tribal peoples’ organizations to work more closely together in their advocacy work. As a consequence of this, awareness raising will be an important component of future Project activities here. In addition, a desk review on North Africa, including Morocco, has been compiled by the Project, outlining the issues of particular concern to be addressed here.

Work within the framework of National Poverty Reduction Strategy

In Kenya, the Project will undertake initiatives to discuss the relevance of indigenous and tribal peoples issues to the National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The Project will also lend its support to a number of capacity-building initiatives aimed at effecting or increasing dialogue between indigenous and tribal peoples in Kenya and relevant official bodies within the context of the constitution building process.
What is the Project to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples?

The Project to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (the Project) began in 1996 and has recently begun a new phase of activities for the period 2000 - 2003. It is funded by Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA). The Project's overall objective is as follows:

"The Project will contribute towards the development, adoption and implementation of national and/or regional standards and policies that integrate the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, as conveyed in the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), and the needs and priorities of these peoples, taking into account the principles of consultation and participation, as espoused in Articles 6 and 7 of the aforementioned Convention."

Who does the Project work with?

In order to achieve its objective, the Project works with governments, indigenous and tribal peoples’ organizations, NGOs, UN agencies, ILO field offices and other ILO projects and programmes, as well as other relevant organizations.

How does it achieve its objectives?

The Project adopts a multi-pronged strategy in order to achieve its objectives. This consists of the following elements:

1. **Policy advice.**

   The Project provides policy advice to Governments and other relevant bodies on and policies they may have, or be developing or revising, that affect indigenous and tribal peoples. This process can help to make sure that these policies respect the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, as enshrined in ILO Convention No. 169.

2. **Capacity-building.**

   Capacity-building activities may take place with governments, or with indigenous and tribal peoples representatives and organizations. The ultimate objective of capacity-building activities is to encourage and generate dialogue, understanding and trust between governments and indigenous and tribal peoples. This may be through increasing the capacity of indigenous and tribal peoples’ organizations to participate in the processes that affect them, and articulate their needs and concerns more effectively. Or, it may be through providing capacity building for governments, through training, so that they are better acquainted with indigenous and tribal peoples issues and their practical and policy implications.

3. **Promotional and educational materials.**

   The Project produces a number of educational materials aimed not just at project partners, but at anyone who is interested in the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples and the relevance of the ILO in this respect. These include a number of thematic or area studies on the situation of indigenous and tribal peoples, particularly from a policy perspective.

   The Project also produces regular reports on its activities, including workshop reports and a newsletter. These reports are generally available to the public.

   Some of the most recent materials available are listed under the heading "Publications" on Page 8.

   **How does it fit in with other ILO activities?**

   The Project is based in the Equality and Employment Branch of the Standards and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Department of the ILO. The Equality and Employment Branch deals with the regular supervisory activities for the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, 1957 (No. 107), and the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169). As such, the Project works closely with this branch, particularly on legal questions relating to the Convention.

   The Project also works closely with the ILO-INDISCO Programme. This programme provides support to the self-reliance of indigenous and tribal peoples through co-operatives and other self-help organizations and through training programmes. As INDISCO works at the local level, the two projects are complementary to one another and work in a number of common countries.
These include work on forced and child labour, human trafficking, crisis response, migration and discrimination.

Where there are relevant ILO activities taking place in those countries where the Project is active, co-operation with other ILO projects and programmes on these issues serves to strengthen the overall impact of the Project’s activities.

Which countries does it work in?

The Project’s focus is inter-regional, focussing mainly on Africa and Asia. However, its activities are not necessarily limited to these two regions, and proposals and activities in other regions are considered on a case-by-case basis. At present, it has ongoing activities in Cambodia, India, Laos, Thailand, Cameroon, Kenya, Morocco, and South Africa.

In addition, the Project will be beginning new activities in Ethiopia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Tanzania and the Central African Republic.

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**Project publications**

**New Publications**


A simplified guide to ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples has recently been published. The Manual on Convention No. 169 aims to help indigenous and tribal persons and community workers to understand the basic principles and concepts of the convention by explaining them in a more accessible manner. It has been created with the conviction that rights can be better protected and promoted only if they are properly understood and exercised.

**Traditional Occupations of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples: Emerging Trends**

In 1953, the ILO produced a study entitled, “Indigenous Peoples: Living and Working Conditions of Aboriginal Populations in Independent Countries”. This study compiled the best data available at the time from governments and national institutions, on the living and working conditions of indigenous and tribal peoples, and the health, social and economic issues that they faced. In order to assess the changes that have taken place in the 50 years since this publication was produced, the project has compiled a new publication. This publication contains ten case studies that document changes that have taken place in the ways of life of various indigenous and tribal peoples due to factors such as industrialization, urbanization and globalization.

This publication features descriptions of the various traditional economies and occupations of indigenous and tribal peoples from different regions of the world.

It seeks to analyse how the situation of indigenous and tribal peoples has changed, and to provide an overview of the current trends in this regard as we move into the new millennium. The conceptual framework of the publication is provided by article 23 of Convention No. 169, which recognises the importance of community-based industries, subsistence economies and traditional activities such as hunting, trapping and fishing in the maintenance of culture, and in the economic self-reliance and development of indigenous and tribal peoples. Also, Based on Convention No. 169’s approach of consultation and participation, this study is researched, compiled and written by indigenous and tribal peoples themselves. The publication includes case studies from Bangladesh, Bolivia, Canada, Greenland, Kenya, Malaysia, Norway, Panama, Philippines and Thailand.
Other project publications

Indigenous Peoples of South Africa: Current Trends

This publication, produced in collaboration with the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee (IPACC), and the South African San Institute (SASI), assesses the current situation of indigenous peoples in South Africa, as regards, social and economic status, cultural identity, political and legal issues, amongst a number of other factors. It has recently been reprinted and is again available on request.

Initiatives Towards the Empowerment of Tribal Women in Northern Andhra Pradesh, India

In 1998, the Project collaborated with Laya, an NGO active in various issues pertaining to tribal women, in the implementation of a series of workshops aimed at identifying, and addressing the issues of immediate concern to a group of tribal women in the southern region of Andhra Pradesh, India. The report documents this process, which centred on the needs and wishes of the tribal women who took part.

Policy Study on Ethnic Minorities in Rural Development (Laos)

This study focuses on rural development in Laos, placing it within its social, economic, political and cultural context. It also analyses rural development and ethnic minority policies and their implementation in Laos vis-à-vis the principles set forth in ILO Convention No. 169. Particular attention is paid to ethnic minorities, and land and education issues.

Three Training Workshops on Development Management in Cambodia

This publication documents the first series of training workshops on development management, conducted as a joint collaborative exercise by the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Highland Peoples Development (IMC) of the Government of Cambodia, and the Project. The workshops addressed some of the most pertinent issues to the development process in Cambodia, and this report highlights some of these, with particular regard to indigenous and tribal peoples.

Where can I look for further information?

For comments on this newsletter, copies of Project publications, or for other information concerning the Project, please write to:

Project to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples
Equality and Employment Branch
Standards Department
International Labour Office
4 Route des Morillons
CH - 1211 Geneva 22
E-mail: jensenm@ilo.org
Or: thomber@ilo.org

For information specifically related to the Project’s activities in the African, or Asian regions, please write to:

African region

Project to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples
International Labour Organization
3rd Floor, United Nations Building (office No. 1564)
Rajamenn Avenue
Bangkok 10200
Thailand
E-mail: degawon@ilobkk.or.th
Tel: + 66 2 288 1564
Fax: + 66 2 288 1735
E-mail: kaunga@ilodar.or.tz
Tel: + 255 22 26 66 024

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