



(bio) diversity vs. (bio) technology

kuala lumpur, malaysia 9 to 20 february 2004

7th meeting of the conference of the parties (cop-7) to the convention on biological diversity

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movementsplatform

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the real wisdom at the cbd: indigenous peoples cbd@movementsmedia.org



sarawak

At this CBD meeting Indigenous Peoples have been more numerous than ever before. The participation of so many beautiful and colourful people originating from many corners of the world and from every kind of environment has certainly added to the diversity of the event. Moreover, they bring with them a wisdom that none of the participating government delegations ever had, that of being able to live in harmony as part of their local biodiversity. Sadly most governments seem to be pursuing selfish interests and the extensive knowledge of Indigenous Peoples fall on deaf ears.

The story is the usual one, where the development of commerce and economic gain using whatever method, usually to the benefit of corporations takes precedence over human and ecological values. Most of the issues at the CBD have relevance to the continuing existence of Indigenous Peoples. From the sharing of genetic resources to the role of protected areas, from the concept of technology transfer to the preservation of mountain ecosystems and our oceans. Yet several of the governments present at this meeting are negotiating with aims that ultimately threaten the survival of many Indigenous Peoples. The original custodians of our planet have come here to have their voices heard, to speak of the destruction that the modern market orientated world are causing not only to them, but to all of us. As one Equatorial Guinean Indigenous person said: "the earth is in peril!" Indigenous Peoples have been telling stories throughout many of which are remarkably similar, regardless of where they come from. The question of Indigenous Peoples Rights is a common point, whereby many nation states have not done their original inhabitants justice. From Australia to Indonesia, Malaysia and the United States, are Indigenous Peoples Rights not only questioned but their lands under constant threat of exploitation. As are their rights to their own genetic resources. But ofcourse the United States is not a signatory to the convention, so for them it does not matter as usual.



malaysia



america



siberia



ecuador

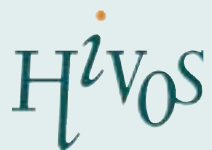


david suzuki



local community banner

While the CBD holds some promises for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, much frustration is found in the unwillingness of governments to implement Convention decisions. A call for a Conference of People rather than Parties, was mentioned. But more importantly, a call for action and less talking seemed to reflect a common feeling amongst many. The multilateral system of the CBD has brought together Indigenous Peoples from all over. As a group, they agree on nearly all things, in stark contrast to the achievements of governments. While Indigenous Peoples agree that coexistence of humans and biodiversity is vital to the future of our planet, governments squabble over the most petty and degenerating issue of all things, the survival of their profits.



This project is a collaboration between the Movements Platform, Friends of the Earth International and the Biotechnology Independent Media Centre, supported by Hivos (www.hivos.nl).