

Role of Indigenous Peoples in Climate Change

Authors : Neelam Kadyan, Pratima Ranga, Yogender

Abstract : Indigenous people are the One who are affected by the climate change the most, although there have contributed little to its causes. This is largely a result of their historic dependence on local biological diversity, ecosystem services and cultural landscapes as a source of their sustenance and well-being. Comprising only four percent of the world's population they utilize 22 percent of the world's land surface. Despite their high exposure-sensitivity indigenous peoples and local communities are actively responding to changing climatic conditions and have demonstrated their resourcefulness and resilience in the face of climate change. Traditional Indigenous territories encompass up to 22 percent of the world's land surface and they coincide with areas that hold 80 percent of the planet's biodiversity. Also, the greatest diversity of indigenous groups coincides with the world's largest tropical forest wilderness areas in the Americas (including Amazon), Africa, and Asia, and 11 percent of world forest lands are legally owned by Indigenous Peoples and communities. This convergence of biodiversity-significant areas and indigenous territories presents an enormous opportunity to expand efforts to conserve biodiversity beyond parks, which tend to benefit from most of the funding for biodiversity conservation. Tapping on Ancestral Knowledge Indigenous Peoples are carriers of ancestral knowledge and wisdom about this biodiversity. Their effective participation in biodiversity conservation programs as experts in protecting and managing biodiversity and natural resources would result in more comprehensive and cost effective conservation and management of biodiversity worldwide. Addressing the Climate Change Agenda Indigenous Peoples has played a key role in climate change mitigation and adaptation. The territories of indigenous groups who have been given the rights to their lands have been better conserved than the adjacent lands (i.e., Brazil, Colombia, Nicaragua, etc.). Preserving large extensions of forests would not only support the climate change objectives, but it would respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and conserve biodiversity as well. A climate change agenda fully involving Indigenous Peoples has many more benefits than if only government and/or the private sector are involved. Indigenous peoples are some of the most vulnerable groups to the negative effects of climate change. Also, they are a source of knowledge to the many solutions that will be needed to avoid or ameliorate those effects. For example, ancestral territories often provide excellent examples of a landscape design that can resist the negatives effects of climate change. Over the millennia, Indigenous Peoples have developed adaptation models to climate change. They have also developed genetic varieties of medicinal and useful plants and animal breeds with a wider natural range of resistance to climatic and ecological variability.

Keywords : ancestral knowledge, cost effective conservation, management, indigenous peoples, climate change

Conference Title : ICRET 2015 : International Conference on Renewable Energy Technology

Conference Location : Zurich, Switzerland

Conference Dates : July 29-30, 2015