

# **Indigenous Ecotourism**

## **Sustainable Development and Management**

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## DEDICATION

To my father – Mervin Vernon Zeppel  
(13 July 1922–26 September 2005)

and for S.T.M.  
(for your Cree and Ojibway heart)

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# Indigenous Ecotourism

Sustainable Development and Management

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# About the Author

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Heather Zeppel is Senior Lecturer in Tourism in the Tourism Program, School of Business at James Cook University Cairns in Queensland, Australia. She has an Associate Diploma (Wildlife and Park Management), BSc, Graduate Certificate of Education, Graduate Diploma (Museum Curatorship) and PhD (Tourism/Material Culture).

Heather lectures on Tourism Issues in Developing Countries, Tourism and the Environment, Tourism Analysis, Australian Ecotourism and Wildlife Tourism Management and Regional Tourism Planning and Foundations of Conference and Event Management.

Her research interests include Indigenous tourism, cultural interpretation, ecotourism, wildlife tourism and sustainable tourism development. Heather's research articles and notes on Indigenous tourism have been published in the *Journal of Travel Research*, *Pacific Tourism Review*, *Tourism, Culture & Communication* and *Tourism Management*. She has also written ten book chapters on cultural tourism or Aboriginal tourism and other research reports on *Aboriginal Tourism in Australia* (Zeppel, 1999) and *Indigenous Wildlife Tourism in Australia* (Muloin, Zeppel and Higginbottom, 2001). Her current research examines Aboriginal tourism issues in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area of Queensland.

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# Preface

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This book had its genesis in the author's previous employment (1981–1984) as a park ranger at Uluru-Katjatjuta National Park in the Northern Territory of Australia. This involved working with Anangu Aboriginal people on cultural interpretation and land management issues. Uluru (Ayers Rock) is a major tourism icon and culturally significant area, handed back to Anangu Aboriginal people in 1985.

Starting at Uluru, this interest in conservation and Indigenous cultures continued through to a doctoral study of Iban longhouse tourism in Sarawak, Borneo (1991–1994) and postdoctoral research on Indigenous cultural tourism in Australia, New Zealand and Canada (1996–2000). The initial academic studies of Indigenous tourism in the mid-1990s have now emerged into a major theme or focus at recent tourism or ecotourism conferences in Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada, Africa and Asia.

This cross-disciplinary research on Indigenous tourism involves tourism, business, geography, anthropology and other areas, along with varied Indigenous groups.

This specific book emerged from an invitation by Professor David Weaver, editor of the CABI Ecotourism Series, to develop a book proposal that focused on Indigenous ecotourism. The subsequent acceptance of this book proposal by CABI indicates a broadening of the academic coverage of ecotourism from certification, policy and management to local communities and Indigenous peoples.

The commissioning editors at CABI, Rebecca Stubbs and Claire Parfitt, helped bring this book to fruition. The author thanks the three reviewers of the original CABI book proposal for their insightful comments and specific suggestions on further topics and issues to cover in a book of this type. In particular, Professor David Weaver provided useful editorial comments throughout the writing of this book. These prompted more in-depth examination of conservation and tourism issues and their impact on Indigenous peoples. Dr Sue Muloin also critically reviewed the first and last chapters of this book. Jenny Thorp and Sue Saunders provided further editorial corrections. The research and writing of this book was assisted by study leave during August 2004 to January 2005. The author thanks the School of Business, James Cook University for this time granted as leave.

The issues pertaining to Indigenous peoples, cultures, land rights, resource use and tourism continue to receive attention from academic researchers, government agencies, NGOs and the private sector.

Recent media coverage of some Indigenous issues that affect tourism include Maori claims to the foreshore, beaches and coastal waters of New Zealand in 2004, and Aboriginal groups in

Northern Australia lobbying for limited trophy hunting of saltwater crocodiles on Aboriginal lands in 2005. Both of these Indigenous claims to lands and use of natural resources are still pending final outcomes, although the Australian government continued to ban the commercial sport hunting of native wildlife.

At the international level, Indigenous groups are pressing for full legal recognition of their claims to traditional territories, biological diversity, cultural resources and traditional knowledge. This book on Indigenous ecotourism links biodiversity conservation and Indigenous rights with global growth in tourism.

The UN Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples was declared from 1995 to 2004. The research and writing of this book during 2004/05 provided an effective overview of key developments in conservation and ecotourism as they affected Indigenous peoples during this previous decade. Hence, this book provides a summation and appraisal of what has been achieved with Indigenous groups involved in conservation and ecotourism projects on their traditional territories and tribal lands. It also suggests key topics that need further research and critical investigation in this emerging area of Indigenous ecotourism. While the author is non-Indigenous, every effort was made to incorporate Indigenous perspectives on ecotourism as reported in the published literature and case studies. Any errors made in the presentation and interpretation of these case studies about Indigenous ecotourism are inadvertent. The author welcomes feedback or further information about the topics in this book.

Heather Zeppel  
Cairns, North Queensland  
Australia  
22 November 2005

# 1

## The Context of Indigenous Ecotourism

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### Introduction

This book is concerned with Indigenous-owned and operated ecotourism ventures that benefit Indigenous communities and conserve the natural and cultural environment. Ecotourism enterprises controlled by Indigenous people include cultural ecotours, ecolodges, hunting and fishing tours, cultural villages and other nature-oriented tourist facilities or services. Indigenous involvement in ecotourism is examined through global case studies of Indigenous operators and providers of ecotourism products. Indigenous ecotourism is defined as 'nature-based attractions or tours owned by Indigenous people, and also Indigenous interpretation of the natural and cultural environment including wildlife' (Zeppel, 2003: 56). The case studies of Indigenous ecotourism ventures in the Pacific Islands, Latin America, Africa and South East Asia illustrate how Indigenous groups are conserving natural areas and educating visitors while developing and controlling ecotourism on Indigenous lands and territories. These case studies, therefore, challenge the common perception of 'minimal involvement in ecotourism by indigenous people in many countries' (Page and Dowling, 2002: 279). Indigenous ecotourism provides an alternative to extractive land uses such as hunting, farming, logging or mining, and it involves Indigenous people in managing tourism,

culture and their own environment. Ecotourism supplements a subsistence lifestyle and aids the transition to a cash economy for many tribal groups. How various Indigenous communities develop and operate tribal ecotourism ventures is a key focus of much recent research in this area.

Worldwide, Indigenous peoples are becoming more involved in the tourism industry, and particularly with ecotourism (Sykes, 1995; Butler and Hinch, 1996; Price, 1996; Mercer, 1998; Ryan, 2000; Mann, 2002; Smith, 2003; Christ, 2004; Hinch, 2004; Ryan and Aicken, 2005; Johnston, 2006; Notzke, 2006). Tourism enterprises controlled by Indigenous people include nature-based tours, cultural attractions and other tourist facilities or services in tribal homelands or protected areas. These Indigenous tourism ventures are largely a response to the spread of tourism into remote and marginal areas, including national parks, nature reserves and tribal territories that are traditional living areas for many Indigenous groups. Indigenous cultures and lands are frequently the main attraction for ecotours visiting wild and scenic natural regions such as the Amazon, Borneo, Yunnan, East Africa and Oceania. Indeed, 'Indigenous homelands rich in biodiversity are the prime target of most ecotourism' (Johnston, 2000: 90). Ecosystems such as tropical rainforests, coral reefs, mountains, savannah and deserts in developing countries are a drawback for

ecotourism, and many of these ecoregions are still inhabited by marginalized Indigenous groups (Weaver, 1998; WWF, 2000). Tourist encounters with these exotic tribal peoples during safaris, mountain trekking and village tours are growing areas of new tourism (Smith, 2003).

The spread of ecotourism into remote areas often coincides with regions that are still the traditional homelands for surviving groups of Indigenous peoples. Tourist experiences with Indigenous peoples now include trekking with Maasai guides in East Africa (Berger, 1996), visiting Indian villages in the rainforest of Ecuador (Wesche, 1996; Drumm, 1998), meeting Inuit people in the Arctic (Smith, 1996a), staying at Iban longhouses in Borneo (Zeppel, 1997) and Aboriginal cultural tours in northern Australia (Burchett, 1992). Small island states or countries with rainforest, reefs and Indigenous groups, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, are also a growing focus for ecotourism ventures (SPREP, 2002; Harrison, 2003). Environmental, cultural and spiritual aspects of Indigenous heritage and traditions are featured in ecotourism, community-based tourism and alternative tourism. New ecotourism enterprises managed by Indigenous groups are featured in travel guides and websites for community tourism and alternative travel (Franke, 1995; Mann, 2000, 2002; Tourism Concern, 2002). Native lands and reserves in developed countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA are also a growing focus for Indigenous tourism (Lew, 1996; Ryan and Aicken, 2005). For example, the USA has 52 million acres of Indian reservation land, often near national parks, with many tribal governments involved in tourism ventures on these lands (Gerberich, 2005). In these colonized countries, Indigenous ecotourism ventures are also found in protected areas that are co-managed with native people having traditional claims over this land. In North America, many Indigenous groups are investing money from land claim settlements, mining or fishing royalties and gaming revenue from tribal casinos in tourism ventures (Ryan, 1997; Lew and van Otten, 1998). In developing countries, some Indigenous groups with communal or legal land titles now derive income from forest or

wildlife resource use rights and from renting or leasing land to tourism operators.

Globally, there is greater public awareness of both environmental impacts and Indigenous peoples. Ecotourism recognizes the special cultural links between Indigenous peoples and natural areas. A growing tourist demand for Indigenous cultural experiences also coincides with the Indigenous need for new economic ventures deriving income from sustainable use of land and natural resources. This global trend is reflected in increasing contact with Indigenous communities living in remote areas and also the opening up of Indigenous homelands for ecotourism (Honey, 1999; Christ, 2004). These Indigenous territories are usually in peripheral areas, away from mainstream development, where Indigenous land practices have maintained biodiversity in 'wilderness' regions and otherwise endangered ecosystems (Hinch, 2004). While Indigenous communities are vulnerable to increased accessibility and contact with outsiders, ecotourism is seen as one way to maintain ecosystems and provide an economic alternative to logging or mining. Indigenous ecotourism involves native people negotiating access to tribal land, resources and knowledge for tourists and tour operators.

With greater legal recognition and control over homeland areas, culture and resources, Indigenous groups in many areas are determining appropriate types of ecotourism development in traditional lands and protected areas. As well as being an exotic tourist attraction, Indigenous peoples are also increasingly the owners, managers, joint venture partners or staff of ecotourism ventures, cultural sites and other tourist facilities. Therefore, the roles of Indigenous people in ecotourism now include landowners, tribal governments or councils, traditional owners, land managers, park rangers, tourism operators and guides. This global expansion of tourism into remote natural areas and Indigenous lands, often in developing countries, has seen increasing concern for sustainable tourism development, particularly with Indigenous groups (Price, 1996; Honey, 1999; McIntosh, 1999; McLaren, 1999; Robinson, 1999; Smith, 2001; Duffy, 2002; Johnston, 2003a, b; Mowforth and Munt,

2003; Sofield, 2003; Gerberich, 2005). For Indigenous peoples, 'land rights are an absolute prerequisite for sustainable tourism' (Johnston, 2000: 92). Legal rights over tribal lands and resources allow Indigenous groups to benefit from ecotourism, through community-owned enterprises, joint ventures and other partnerships.

This book considers the environmental, cultural and economic impacts of Indigenous ecotourism ventures in tribal areas of developing countries. Case studies describe and analyse the approaches adopted by different Indigenous communities in developing and operating ecotourism ventures. These case studies of Indigenous ecotourism ventures are drawn from the Pacific region, South and Central America, South East Asia and Africa. Tropical rainforest areas in the Asia-Pacific region, Latin America and Africa are a main focus for these community-based Indigenous ecotourism projects (Wesche and Drumm, 1999; Mann, 2002; SPREP, 2002; *Tourism in Focus*, 2002a). The savannah and desert regions of Africa along with the Andes Mountains of South America are another key focus. North Asia (i.e. Mongolia) and south Asia (i.e. India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) are not included in this book. In developing countries, ecotourism ventures for Indigenous peoples are mainly implemented with the help of non-government agencies (NGOs) involved in conservation or community development projects. For many Indigenous peoples, controlled ecotourism is seen as a way of achieving cultural, environmental and economic sustainability for the community (Sofield, 1993; Butler and Hinch, 1996; Zeppel, 1998a; Notzke, 2006). Opening up Indigenous homelands to ecotourism, however, involves a balance between use of natural resources, meeting tourist needs and maintaining cultural integrity.

## Indigenous Peoples and Tourism

### Indigenous peoples

Indigenous peoples are generally regarded as tribal or native groups still living in their homeland areas: 'Indigenous people are the

existing descendants of the original people inhabiting a particular region or country' (BSR, 2003). They are considered to be original or First Peoples with unique cultural beliefs and practices closely linked to local ecosystems and use of natural resources (Furze *et al.*, 1996; Price, 1996). According to Russell (2000: 93), Indigenous people are those who 'are generally minority groups in their territories, have developed a unique culture which may include social and legal systems, and whose ancestral connections to a region are pre-colonial'.

The United Nations (UN, 2004) defines Indigenous communities, peoples and nations as those having 'a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories', are distinct from other settler groups and want to 'preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity'. This historical continuity is based on occupation of ancestral lands, common ancestry, cultural practices and language. Indigenous peoples are also economically and culturally marginalized and often live in extreme poverty (UNDP, 2004).

The International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples defined Indigenous groups as:

peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions (ILO, 1991, Article 1 cited in Ryan, 2000: 422).

Indigenous peoples are thus the original inhabitants of a region with a special attachment to their lands or territories; have a sense of shared ancestry and self determination; have their own distinct cultures, languages, spirituality and knowledge; their own cultural, political and social institutions based on customary law and collective community living; and have their lands and institutions dominated by other majority groups and modern states (Kipuri, nd). Many Indigenous groups are geographically isolated,

economically disadvantaged and socially and politically marginalized. Indigenous peoples make up one third of the world's 900 million extremely poor rural peoples (IFAD, nd). They have often experienced ethnocide, racism and forced removal by other settlers (Maybury-Lewis, 2002). These Indigenous groups are tribal or semi-nomadic pastoralists, hunter-gatherers or shifting cultivators. They mainly have a subsistence economy and rely on natural resources for food and cash.

Different terms used to describe Indigenous groups include ethnic minorities (China, Vietnam, Philippines); tribes (Africa, Americas); hilltribes (Thailand); scheduled tribes or *adivasis* (India); Native American, Indian or Amerindian (North and South America); *Indigenas* (Latin America); Aboriginal (Australia, Canada, Taiwan) and First Nations (Canada). These Indigenous peoples may either be the majority group (e.g. Papua New Guinea, Bolivia) or, more commonly, they are a minority group, particularly in colonized countries such as North America, Australia and New Zealand. Colonized Indigenous groups whose lands are now part of other modern nation states are also called 'fourth world' peoples. Worldwide, there are an estimated 400 million Indigenous peoples (Weaver, 2001). These 5000 tribal or Indigenous groups represent about 5% of the world population. There are 150 million Indigenous people in China and India and some 30 million Indigenous people in the Americas (Healey, 1993). India has 67.76 million *adivasis* recognized as scheduled tribes, living on 20% of the land area, mainly in forests, hills or mountain areas (Bhengra *et al.*, 2002).

Most Indigenous peoples are still found in developing countries, mainly in the southern hemisphere. For example, some 50 million Indigenous people from about 1000 tribes live in tropical rainforests in the equatorial belt of Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Amazon (Martin, 2001). Small, traditional tribes in isolated tropical or desert regions are often seen as endangered cultures, threatened by resource extraction, tourism and cultural change (Raffaele, 2003). New migrants, logging, mining and dams have displaced many tribal groups from their homelands. Organizations such as Cultural Survival (US), Survival

International (UK) and Minority Rights Group International campaign for the rights of Indigenous peoples affected by dispossession and development projects on their lands (Janet, 2002). Tribal groups still living a traditional subsistence lifestyle are found in over 60 countries and number 150 million people (Survival International, 1995). However, other Indigenous peoples also now follow a mainstream lifestyle and no longer live in tribal societies based solely on a subsistence economy.

Most Indigenous people are identified by the name of their 'tribe', clan, group, band or nation (Waitt, 1999). Individually, an Indigenous person is one self-identified as Indigenous who is recognized and accepted by an Indigenous group or community as a member. This definition of an Indigenous person as self-identified is followed in Australia, regardless of the mix or proportion of ethnic backgrounds, whereas in Canada there must be proof of native lineage with a minimum of 6% Indigenous ancestry. In New Zealand, people can be entered on the Maori list without knowing their tribe or *iwi*, while in the USA Native Americans need to show direct descent from at least one Indian great-grandparent listed on a tribal or voting list from the early 1900s (Ryan, 1997). In Taiwan, the government requires that Indigenous people still speak their own native language and funds Indigenous language classes. Taiwan has about 400,000 Indigenous people from 12 officially registered tribes (Coolidge, 2004; Yang, 2005). In contrast to these official government designations about Indigenous descent, 'First peoples have a strong sense of their own identity as unique peoples, with their own lands, languages, and cultures. They claim the right to define what is meant by indigenous, and to be recognized as such by others' (Burger, 1990: 16–17). In Africa, recognized Indigenous groups include the nomadic pastoralists of West Africa (e.g. Fulani, Tuareg) and East Africa (e.g. Maasai), the hunter-gather San or Bushmen in southern Africa and the rainforest Pygmies in central Africa. These groups are politically and economically marginalized, and experience discrimination from the dominant Bantu agricultural groups. A coordinating committee for Indigenous

peoples of Africa was formed in 1998 to seek official recognition for Indigenous groups and advocate for their rights (IPACC, 2004). Other African politicians claim that all black Africans are Indigenous to Africa and Indigenous peoples are not always recognized as such by African states (Sharpe, 1998; Kipuri, nd). Hence, other traditional and tribal groups in Africa are also covered in this book.

### Indigenous peoples and human rights

The terms 'tribal' and 'Indigenous' are both used at the United Nations (UN). However, more people and communities with strong ties to ancestral land now identify themselves as 'Indigenous' where they are marginalized or oppressed. Tribal groups increasingly use the terms 'Indigenous' and 'Indigenous peoples' due to growing national and international recognition of the existence and territorial claims of native groups. Hence, the politics of 'Indigeneity' involves reworking or repositioning the identity of Indigenous people and groups in relation to economic, political or social power (Barcham, 2000; Maaka and Fleras, 2000; Hendry, 2005). The category or status of being Indigenous is then linked to legally asserting cultural, political and economic claims, such as the ownership and use of land, river and sea areas, hunting and fishing rights, cultural or intellectual copyright of Indigenous knowledge and royalties from land use including tourism. Key issues for all Indigenous groups include human rights, use of land and resources (e.g. plants, wildlife, minerals and water), and intellectual and cultural property rights (e.g. traditional ecological knowledge, cultural copyright). The political and legal recognition of Indigenous status (i.e. people and territories) 'entails claim to certain rights over the use, management and flow of benefits from resource-based industries' (Howitt *et al.*, 1996: 3). Increasingly, Indigenous customary claims have been recognized as legal rights in national and international laws and conventions. These include both individual human rights and the collective property claims of Indigenous groups to land and resources (Wilmer, 1993; McLaren, 1998; Pera and McLaren, 1999; Smith, 1999;

Macdonald, 2002; IFAD, 2003; Johnston, 2003). According to Honey (2003), the range of Indigenous rights include fundamental, cultural, Indigenous knowledge and intellectual property, land, protected areas, economic, labour, local communities and a right to sustainable development of ancestral lands.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 (1989) is the only international law recognizing the rights of tribal and Indigenous peoples to their cultures, languages and ancestral territories (Osava, 2005; Roy, nd). The ILO has sponsored a website listing of community tourism projects in Latin America, including Indigenous ecotourism ventures (Redturs, nd). World Bank-funded investment projects now require the informed participation of Indigenous peoples for preparation of an Indigenous Peoples Development Plan (Survival International, 2004). The World Bank's policy for Indigenous peoples recognizes their special cultural, social and environmental ties to land. It also supports legal recognition of traditional or customary land tenure through legal land titles or by rights of custodianship and use (World Bank, 1991). This policy of legal land titles was enforced for a forestry loan to Nicaragua. However, an internal operations evaluation found only 29 of 89 World Bank projects affecting Indigenous peoples had any elements of this Plan (Selverston-Scher, 2003). Business for Social Responsibility has also published a document 'Rights of Indigenous Peoples' for companies doing business in the traditional territories of Indigenous groups (BSR, 2003).

Globally, Indigenous issues are represented by key international organizations. For example, the UN set up a Working Group on Indigenous Populations in 1982, yet only established a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2000. The Forum is an advisory body to the UN Economic and Social Council addressing Indigenous issues related to culture, the environment, economic and social development, education, health and human rights. Recent activities of this Forum include an international workshop on Indigenous knowledge and a declaration on conserving biological and cultural diversity at sacred natural sites and cultural landscapes (UN, 2005). In 2003, a Global Fund for Indigenous Peoples

was established by the World Bank to support this Forum and provide grants to Indigenous organizations (*Cultural Survival Voices*, 2004). A UN *Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, based on human rights and communal property rights, was devised in 1989/90; however, it has still not been formally adopted by the UN or by other organizations. UNESCO's 2001 *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* highlights protecting Indigenous cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and use of natural resources. The UN Commission on Sustainable Development has an Indigenous Peoples' Caucus that prepared an issues paper about Indigenous peoples for the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa (UN Commission on Sustainable Development, 2002). A World Social Forum for NGOs, held since 2001, also included Indigenous peoples for the first time in 2005 with 400 people from around 100 Indigenous ethnic groups attending (Osava, 2005).

In addition, the UN Decade of the World's Indigenous People was declared from 1995 to 2004 with the UN International Year for the World's Indigenous People held in 1993 (UNESCO, 2004). There is even a UN International Day of the World's Indigenous People held each year on 9 August! These UN initiatives focus on achieving social, cultural and political recognition for Indigenous peoples. Gaining this recognition was an ongoing process; hence a second UN Decade of the World's Indigenous People was declared from 2005 to 2014. Funding for major Indigenous development projects on biodiversity conservation or ecotourism is also directed through UN bodies (e.g. UNEP, UNDP) to national governments, aid groups, environment NGOs and Indigenous peoples' organizations. Increasing amounts of funding from international banks and development agencies are being directed towards ecotourism and the sustainable development of Indigenous communities (Halfpenny, 1999; Griffiths, 2004; EBFP, 2005). In 2002, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) invested over US\$7 billion in 320 tourism-related projects with 21 development agencies (Selverston-Scher, 2003). Indigenous groups also represent their territorial claims and cultural interests by

establishing their own organizations. For example, the Coordinating Body for Indigenous Organisations of the Amazon Basin (COICA) represents tribal organizations from nine Amazon countries and 2.8 million Amazon Indian people (Osava, 2005). Globally, over 1000 Indigenous organizations advocate for land and resources (Hitchcock, 1994).

### **Indigenous peoples and biodiversity**

Indigenous land practices and cultural knowledge have ensured the conservation of global biodiversity. The UN Commission on Sustainable Development highlighted the key role of Indigenous peoples in the conservation of natural areas and species on their lands:

Indigenous peoples comprise five per cent of the world's population but embody 80% of the world's cultural diversity. They are estimated to occupy 20% of the world's land surface but nurture 80% of the world's biodiversity on ancestral lands and territories. Rainforests of the Amazon, Central Africa, Asia and Melanesia is home to over half of the total global spectrum of indigenous peoples and at the same time contain some of the highest species biodiversity in the world (UN Commission on Sustainable Development, 2002: 2–3).

The Indigenous Peoples' Biodiversity Network was established in 1997 in Peru and has hosted workshops on Indigenous tourism and biodiversity conservation in Peru, Malaysia, Spain and Panama. Its position is that Indigenous peoples are the 'creators and conservers of biodiversity', with remaining forest areas or global 200 ecoregions with the highest biodiversity linked with surviving Indigenous groups in Asia, Africa, the Americas and Oceania (Nature Conservancy, 1996; Oviedo *et al.*, 2000; Weber *et al.*, 2000; WWF, 2000). The International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests, formed in 1992, and the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) formed in 1990 also represent Indigenous views on conservation, parks and resource development. The UN Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992 recognized the environmental stewardship and traditional dependence of many Indigenous communities on biological resources (Prance,