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**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE NETHERLANDS FOREIGN POLICY AND
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

On 29 March 1993, the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr P.H. Kooijmans, and the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation, Mr J.P. Pronk, sent a memorandum to the Netherlands Parliament, to inform it about the Netherlands Government policy with respect to the issue of indigenous peoples in the context of foreign policy and development cooperation. In the memorandum, the Ministers also respond to the reports on the subject of their respective advisory committees. The document presented here is the official English version of this memorandum.

I. INTRODUCTION

Not by accident, on 10 December 1992, Human Rights Day, the Secretary-General of the United Nations inaugurated 1993 as the International Year for the World's Indigenous People, with the motto: "Indigenous people, a new partnership". In his speech he stated that indigenous peoples comprised over three hundred million individuals across the globe, individuals who were frequently the poorest of the poor, having scant if any access to essential facilities. Intrusion into their age-old isolation had led to the loss of land and the undermining of their culture.

It was fortunate, Mr Boutros Ghali went on, that the governments of countries in which indigenous peoples lived were increasingly aware of this injustice, and that in a number of countries negotiations were under way concerning the return of land. The representation of indigenous peoples in relevant international fora had also increased. By dedicating 1993 to this theme, according to Mr Boutros Ghali, the UN is committing itself to a more specific focus on the situation and needs of indigenous peoples. Emphasis is to be placed on practical undertakings in the form of projects which will benefit these populations. Their participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of these projects should play a crucial role.

On 18 June 1991, having in mind the impending designation of 1993 as the International Year for the World's Indigenous People, the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs requested his Advisory Committee on Human Rights and Foreign Policy (ACM) to draw up an advisory report on the specific rights of indigenous peoples and members of these population groups. On 12 November 1992, in the same context, the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation requested the National Advisory Council on Development

Cooperation (NAR) to submit in the short term a brief report on the problems of indigenous peoples within the framework of development cooperation.¹

This memorandum will look at the conclusions and recommendations of the said reports, hereinafter referred to as the ACM and NAR reports. Where relevant, reference will also be made to other texts, such as Agenda 21 (Chapter 26). Discussion of the conclusions and recommendations of the said reports will for the sake of clarity be divided into themes: a. Indigenous peoples and human rights (Chapter III); b. Identity and cultural rights (Chapter IV); c. Representation and participation (Chapter V); d. Indigenous peoples and development cooperation (Chapter VI). These chapters will be preceded by a brief chapter defining relevant terms and looking in particular at the African context (Chapter II). Chapter VII will contain an analysis of the way in which the theme is currently dealt with within development cooperation, including programmes set up by the Netherlands so-called co-financing organisations.

The fact that 1993 provides a special focus on indigenous peoples was not the sole rationale for this memorandum. One reason is the great need for protection of this large and vulnerable section of the world's population. Such protection should comprise guarantees for sustainable means of survival. Among the characteristics of international justice should be the power to protect vulnerable peoples against encroachment upon their means of survival, and against decimation or annihilation, the frequent lot of such populations up to now. A further important reason for focusing on indigenous peoples is the individual and original contribution which they make to cultural and social diversity throughout the world, thus providing a welcome counterbalance to the trend of increasing uniformity.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Definition of terms

In the course of the debate on this issue, indigenous groups have been referred to as indigenous populations, peoples, and people. In the designation of 1993 as the year of "indigenous people" the latter term is used. The ACM and NAR reports alternately speak about indigenous peoples and indigenous people. Since indigenous peoples is a term preferred by the groups in question, it will be used in this memorandum, sometimes supplemented by the term indigenous communities. The relevant literature also contains terms such as Indians, *indigenas* and aboriginals, which all refer to specific categories of indigenous peoples.

The typology adopted by UN Rapporteur José Martínez Cobo, which is used in both the ACM and NAR reports, refers to "indigenous communities, peoples and nations". Martínez Cobo defines them as follows:

"Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems."

¹ These two reports were appended to the memorandum sent to Parliament in the form of annexes.

Martinez Cobo's circumscription contains both subjective and objective elements. The objective elements are: a. material and spiritual ties with at least part of a population's ancestral territory; b. distinct identity and culture, and traditional social and judicial systems which a people seeks to preserve; c. a subordinate position in modern, post-colonial society and within the national state, often leading to denial of indigenous peoples' identity and discrimination against them. A more detailed analysis of these points is given in the ACM and NAR reports. Chapter III of the former report discusses the problem of definition at some length. Pages 2 to 4 of the NAR report examine the nature of the processes of marginalisation which have contributed to the vulnerability of many indigenous peoples.² Chapter II of the ACM report outlines the problem and discusses the factors which perpetuate the marginalisation of indigenous peoples.

In various countries indigenous peoples are also referred to as tribal peoples, i.e. are defined with the emphasis on their way of life, because they are clans or tribes organised in small local communities, subsisting from hunting, gathering or animal husbandry. In India indigenous peoples are collectively referred to as *Adivasi*, meaning "oldest inhabitants". In Indian policy documents the term "scheduled tribes" is used.

A subjective element in Martínez Cobo's circumscription of indigenous peoples is that of self-identification and the desire of such peoples actively to preserve their own identity. The example of the Masai (Tanzania, Kenya) illustrates the importance of this subjective approach. Although the Masai are certainly not among the poorest sections of the population in those areas where they still possess large herds of cattle, they themselves seek to be designated an indigenous people, and to this end they have approached the UN Centre for Human Rights in Geneva. The Masai claim that their pastures are being systematically encroached upon, thus undermining not only their means of subsistence but also the basis of their pastoral culture.

The case of the Masai raises two problems concerning the application of the above definition, namely the questions of nomadic herdsmen and of the general applicability of this definition to Africa. In the case of nomadic herdsmen it would in the first instance seem inappropriate to speak of "historic links with and rights to the land on which they live" (NAR report, page 2). At issue in the case of these peoples is not only the land in which they live, but also the pasture they require for their herds, and the territorial area within which they migrate. Reference can be made in this context to the chapter on "Recognising and strengthening the role of indigenous people and their communities" in Agenda 21, a source not explicitly cited by the advisory reports. The definition of "lands" in this chapter extends to "the environment of the areas which the people concerned traditionally occupy".³ A policy which forces nomadic peoples to settle within a restricted territory in fact violates their rights to land in the wider sense. An example here would be the way in which the Turkana became the victim of the Kenyan government's settlement policy. The nomadic Turkana traditionally keep large herds of cattle, and are unable to adjust their skills, customs and values to cope with the problems associated with a settled way of living. As a result of enforced settlement these people have become entirely dependent on state support, and cannot return to their former way of life. Their marginalised position derives from a confrontation with the Kenyan state - a clash which threatens the survival of their culture.⁴

² Throughout this document page references refer to the original Dutch texts of the NAR and ACM reports.

³ Agenda 21, Chapter 26, p. 16.

⁴ See also Vice Versa, December 1992.

The ethnic map of Africa provides a colourful picture of countless large and small groups and peoples. In many cases the borders of the post-colonial states run right through their traditional lands. Within individual states various ethnic groups often form political alliances or compete for domination. The term indigenous peoples would not be appropriate in such cases. When using this concept in an African context the focus is on peoples who have been marginalised, whose identity is not acknowledged, and of whom no account is taken in national policy. In the most extreme cases these groups are systematically repressed, and their culture is annihilated. The Nuba, who live in the mountains of South Kordofan in the Sudan, provide a disheartening example of such repression. The Sudanese government pursues a policy of isolating Nuba villages from the outside world and from essential facilities, and of separating men from women. "The people will be dispersed. Thus, the culture and society of the Nuba will become obliterated".⁵

The conclusion of this brief analysis of the concept "indigenous peoples" is that the definition drawn up by Martinez Cobo comprises all the essential elements for the identification of this category, but that in its practical application differing weight can be attached to the various elements, with self-definition as an important feature. The Netherlands Government proposes to adopt Martinez Cobo's definition, as this is seen to be in the interest of protective measures. However, it would note that its application does not invariably produce a satisfactory result.

An illustrative overview of indigenous peoples

In order to illustrate the concepts which have been defined above, an overview of indigenous peoples is given below. This listing - which is unavoidably not exhaustive - is confined to Africa, Asia and Latin America, as it is there that the focus of Dutch development cooperation activities lies. However, the issue of indigenous peoples is by no means confined to developing countries. There is general awareness of the position of the Indians and the Eskimos in the United States and Canada. Over the last two decades Australia and New Zealand have stepped up efforts to restore the dignity of the Aborigines and the Maori, and to enable them to preserve their way of life. Japan, too, has its indigenous peoples, notably the Ainu. In Western and Central Europe indigenous peoples are generally considered to be confined to the Lapps or Saami and the Greenland Eskimos, though some would claim that gypsies should also be classified under this category. Eastern Europe, particularly the Russian federation, is home to a wider variety of indigenous peoples, notably the Yakut and the Uighur of Eastern Siberia, and the Bashkir and the Tatar of Western Siberia. Experience has shown that even developed countries such as Canada and New Zealand encounter numerous obstacles in drafting a sound policy on the indigenous peoples living within their territories, despite a genuine wish to deal fairly with them.

Africa

North Africa is home to several Berber tribes, whose members constitute greater or lesser proportions of the populations of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. These groups have their own language, culture (literature and music) and traditions. So far efforts by Berber leaders and political groups to establish their right both to their own identity and full participation in national politics and society have met with varying success.

In Ethiopia there are many ethnic groups, each with their own language and culture. Some can be classified as indigenous peoples. These include the Oromo, the largest ethnic group, which has suffered the most from Amharic rule (despite being an ethnic minority,

⁵ See "Sudan: Eradicating the Nuba", Africa Watch of 9 September 1992, and also Africa Watch of 10 December 1991: "Sudan: Destroying Ethnic Identity, The Secret War Against the Nuba".

the Amharic people have been in power in Ethiopia almost continuously for the last century). Smaller groups, such as the Anuak, Barta and Komo have been driven from their lands. Others, such as the Danakil, have suffered less. The Falasha, Ethiopian Jews, have been oppressed for centuries, not because of their indigenous status, but primarily because of their religion. The Afar and the Issa in Djibouti are ethnic minorities, but are not persecuted as such. The Afar, who originated in Ethiopia, are discriminated against, but this falls outside the scope of the problems facing indigenous peoples.

Various African nations have experienced bloody conflicts as the result of tribal and ethnic differences, especially where these are paired with great social inequality or the uneven distribution of power, as in Mauritania or Burundi. However, this again falls outside the scope of the issue of indigenous peoples in the sense of peoples who have become so marginalised in the course of history that their very physical and cultural existence is threatened. This would exclude, for instance, the nomadic inhabitants of the Sahel, such as the Tuareg and the Fulani, who have managed to preserve themselves and their culture, or a people such as the Hadendoa of East Sudan. It must be said, though, that adverse conditions, such as a protracted drought, can seriously threaten the precarious ecological balance on which nomadic peoples depend for their existence.

Southern Sudan, Kenya and Tanzania are home to various tribes which could be categorised as indigenous peoples, such as the Dinka, the Nuer, the Azande, the Turkana and the Shilluk. The case of the Turkana shows that in certain situations these African peoples can be socially marginalised and lose their cultural identity. As long as they are able to pursue their traditional way of life in relative isolation and have access to adequate means of subsistence there are no grounds for devoting special attention to these groups, since protection is a basic element in policies towards indigenous peoples and these particular groups are under such circumstances not necessarily in need of protection. Problems arise when indigenous peoples are made to submit to another culture and the power which this culture represents.

Various African peoples clearly qualify as indigenous: the Pygmies in the rainforests of the Central African Republic and Cameroon, the Tua in Rwanda, the San or Masarwa (Bushmen) of the Kalahari desert (Botswana, Namibia), and the various smaller peoples in Namibia (Herera, Nama) and Zimbabwe (Tonga, Venda, Shangaan), although strictly speaking the latter do not originate from that area.

Asia

The 66 million strong Adivasi in India (a collective term comprising over 200 different indigenous peoples) constitute some seven per cent of the population of India. They live in various regions, notably in the mountainous parts of Central India, as well as in the south (Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu), and in seven small states in the extreme northeast of India, of which Assam and Nagaland are the best known. Indigenous communities representing various tribal groups in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat gained news coverage through their opposition to the Sardar Sarovar Project. The controversial report by Bradford Morse states that 117,575 tribal people will be directly affected by the project.⁶

The indigenous inhabitants of the Andaman islands comprise four separate peoples, each with their own language and culture, who live from hunting and gathering. They are classified as "scheduled tribes" in Indian government policy.

⁶ Sardar Sarovar: Report of the Independent Review, p.62. Ottawa 1992.

The ethnic map of southern Asia is so diverse that it would be impossible to give a complete survey. Various peoples have sought to draw international attention to their plight as an indigenous people, such as the Chakmas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh. The Koochi, a pastoral people living in Afghanistan, are being increasingly forced to give up their nomadic existence. The Pathans, inhabitants of the mountainous region on the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan, have been able to preserve their culture in those areas in which the tribes are autonomous. Others have been integrated into the national societies of both countries. The Vedda are the oldest inhabitants of Sri Lanka. They are hunters and gatherers and constitute an extremely vulnerable group, having dwindled in number to perhaps no more than a few thousand. Accordingly, they are one of the peoples whose rights are being championed by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples.

East Asia counts among its population numerous different peoples, some of which are indigenous, marginalised and the victim of colonisation. Many of these are tribal groups living in mountainous regions, of whom little is known. Conversely, the Champa of Tibet are far from an obscure people, having enjoyed centuries of geographic and cultural autonomy in the inhospitable Himalayas, before finally being subjected to Chinese rule.

A large number of peoples, some numerous, others less so, whose existence and way of life are under varying degrees of pressure, live in South-East Asia, in the hills and mountains of Thailand, Burma and Laos. The indigenous peoples of Thailand enjoy reasonable legal protection, thanks in part to the personal concern of the King of Thailand. The situation of indigenous peoples in Burma, on the other hand, gives cause for concern. The precarious position of the Karen people, for instance, is well known. In Vietnam various peoples live in the forests of the central plateaus. They are officially designated as minorities, and little is known of their position. The *orang asli* (original people) of Malaysia live in the rainforests of the peninsula. Their culture is under pressure as a result of the national promotion of Islam. They are also finding it increasingly difficult to maintain their traditional way of life as hunters and gatherers due to the erosion of their natural environment through logging, etc. There are no alternative means of subsistence. The same applies to the indigenous peoples of Luzon and Mindanao in the Philippines, and of Taiwan.

Similar problems exist within the enormous ethnic diversity of the Indonesian archipelago, notably affecting the forest peoples of Kalimantan (Dayak peoples), Sumatra and Nias. The policy of the Indonesian government is geared to integrating the *suku-suku terasing*, or isolated tribes, into Indonesian society. Understandably, this can cause problems. The languages and cultures of the Papuan population of the province of Irian Jaya not only differ markedly from those of the population of other parts of Indonesia, but are in themselves divergent. There are numerous Papua peoples, each with its own language and way of life. The extent to which the cultural identity of various peoples is threatened differs greatly from one people to another. The isolation of many of these peoples has only just been penetrated.

The Papuan peoples of Papua New Guinea are not defined as indigenous peoples because they do not conform to the third element of the definition, i.e. belonging to the "non-dominant sectors of society". However, the peoples of Bougainville, an island administered by Papua New Guinea, who differ ethnically and linguistically from the Papuan peoples, may rightly be classified as indigenous peoples.

With regard to Indonesia and the Philippines a study on indigenous peoples and the loss of their ancestral land concludes: "Both in Indonesia and in the Philippines, the loss of land is mainly the result of two major political decisions. On the one hand, to make land available for non-indigenous peoples, landless lowlanders in the Philippines and transmigrants in Indonesia; on the other, by imposing export-oriented economic

development models, by providing logging and mining concessions or by opening the land for multinational-controlled agri-business projects in the Philippines, by developing nucleus estate schemes (NES) in Indonesia".⁷

Latin America

It is perhaps in this region that the problems facing indigenous peoples are most apparent.

"The minorities question in South and Central America is dominated by the case of the Amerindians," [...] "The Spanish, Portuguese, British, French and Dutch colonization of the area destroyed the indigenous empires, and reduced the people to powerlessness through conquest, annihilation, enslavement, assimilation, evangelization, and social and political domination. The States of Latin America do not reflect native power, but the power of the colonizers and immigrants from Europe".⁸

Estimates of the number of indigenous peoples in Latin America vary. That they are numerous is beyond question, almost all representing a different linguistic group. Although many small peoples live in the rainforests bordering the Amazon, subsisting from hunting, gathering and cassava cultivation, the majority of Latin America's indigenous peoples live from subsistence farming on the high plains of the Andes mountains. The Aymara, Mapuche and Quechua are among the more numerous peoples, having local communities in various countries. Those peoples who live from hunting and gathering are smaller in number and until recently lived in isolation in tribal communities. Their traditional way of life is now being slowly but surely torn apart by logging companies, gold prospectors and government interference. This process can only be reversed by restoring the peoples' rights to their land, and by ensuring that these rights are actually recognised in practice. The indigenous peoples of Latin America occupy almost without exception a poor and marginalised position in the countries in which they live, even in Bolivia and Guatemala, where the Quechua and the Maya respectively form the largest population group. Even in Mexico, where the *indigenas* are relatively better off compared to that of South America, they still form the lowest social strata.

III. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Of the two reports referred to above, the ACM report devotes most attention to the issue of human rights, an issue so crucial to indigenous peoples. Four main themes can be distinguished in the conclusions and recommendations. The first theme concerns recommendations geared to improved use of existing mechanisms to protect the rights of individuals who are members of indigenous peoples. The second is the right of self-determination. The third relates to the question of individual and collective rights. The last concerns new initiatives, such as the creation of new bodies; a higher profile for indigenous peoples in existing channels and reports, and the ratification by the Netherlands of the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (no. 169).

The Government considers legal protection or the protection of human rights as one of the most important priorities in its policy on indigenous peoples, together with reinforcing the identity of these peoples and increasing their participation and representation within national and international frameworks. In safeguarding human

⁷ "Indigenous People and Ancestral Lands: Two Case Studies Compared". Pro Mundi Vita: Dossiers. No. 2. 1987.

⁸ P. 40, World Directory of Minorities. Minority Rights Group. London: Longman.

rights the Government sees the elimination of all forms of discrimination against members of indigenous peoples as its main objective, since discrimination is one of the major threats to the dignity and civil and political rights of members of indigenous peoples in societies dominated by others.

Use of existing mechanisms for legal protection

The authors of this memorandum would endorse the ACM's view (ACM-VII.7) that efforts must continually be made to determine whether the problems facing indigenous peoples can be tackled through existing legislation and jurisprudence. Note has been taken in this context of the recommendation that an attempt should be made to avoid trying to make too fine a distinction between indigenous peoples and minorities in general. It is indeed the case that certain mechanisms designed to protect minorities can equally well be applied to indigenous peoples (ACM-VII.6).

The issue of legal protection centres on access to domestic remedies. The Government is prepared to encourage and support improvements in national judicial procedures in its cooperation with countries in which indigenous peoples live. However, improving and making more accessible legal protection procedures is not an easy task, and it would be unrealistic to expect short-term results.

The ACM concludes quite rightly that the international scope for using existing procedures in respect both of the individual right of petition and the state complaint mechanisms is beset by legal and practical obstacles (ACM-VII.22, 21). Nevertheless, in certain cases the Committee feels that use of the petition mechanism provided by the First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights could benefit not only individuals but also the indigenous communities of which they are members (ACM-VII.22). The Netherlands Government is in favour of extending the scope for collective use of petition mechanisms.

The ACM is also right in concluding that the use of state complaint mechanisms is a less realistic option than the individual right of petition (ACM-VII.21). The state complaint mechanism is a legal instrument which has not yet been used within the framework of UN convention mechanisms. Much use has on the other hand been made of supervision mechanisms developed within UN decision-making bodies, such as country resolutions and the appointment of special rapporteurs. This method has for instance been used to highlight the plight of indigenous peoples in Guatemala within the UN. The Netherlands and the other EC Member States play an active role in such procedures. Nor has use yet been made of CSCE mechanisms in cases involving indigenous peoples, despite the fact that such a possibility exists in the light of the contents of paragraph 29 of the Final Document of the Follow-up Conference at Helsinki (July 1992).

The Government notes the points raised by the ACM concerning the possible use of the Genocide Convention as a protection mechanism (ACM report, p. 12). However, the scope for protection offered by this Convention is limited. Article II of the Convention defines genocide as "... acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group". Intent is a crucial factor, and in practice the difficulty of proving intent constitutes a major obstacle when applying the Convention in this way. The ACM also rightly notes the lack of an international mechanism to monitor compliance with the Convention (ACM-VII.11). Its suggestion that an international criminal tribunal be established to try crimes against indigenous peoples should however be brought up in a more general framework. In this context the Netherlands supports the work of the International Law Commission.

The Netherlands will continue to focus on improving the effectiveness of UN treaty mechanisms, both within the framework of the World Conference on Human Rights and in other contexts. Efforts will be made to ensure that existing committees use optimal

methods to monitor compliance with the conventions, including the protection of minorities.

With regard to ACM-VII.20 it should be noted that, in anticipation of the ACM report, a request had been made by the Dutch delegation at the 47th UN General Assembly for "general comments" on indigenous peoples and minorities. It transpired that the Human Rights Committee had been working on this latter issue since as far back as July 1991, but that texts are not yet available. In the debate in Committee III the Netherlands has also proposed investigation of the possibility of joint committee authorship of comments, with each committee contributing its own specialist angle. The chairman of the ICCPR Committee did not see this as a workable option in the light of each committee's need to be independent.

The fact that existing mechanisms for the legal protection of indigenous peoples are not used to the full is however primarily attributable to the vulnerable position of the peoples concerned. Optimal use of existing mechanisms tends to be practically infeasible for indigenous peoples suffering from marginalisation and oppression. In the most extreme cases, denial of their human dignity and the near total lack of legal protection are two sides of the same coin.

The right of self-determination

The Netherlands Government's basic principles in respect of the issue of self-determination, for both minorities and indigenous peoples, continue to be the interests of individual members of the community concerned, the preservation or development of identities and societies, (ACM report, page 20) and international justice. External self-determination for 5000 indigenous peoples would seem to be in the interests neither of the individual members of such peoples nor of the international legal order. The Netherlands Government is in favour of interpreting Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICCPR), referred to in ACM-VII.10, to mean that the right of internal self-determination is recognised in the sense that it must be possible to hold national governments accountable. Article 27 of the ICCPR offers a certain amount of scope for distinctive identity within a state (ACM-VII.20).

The right of self-determination does not imply a right of secession, as the ACM rightly notes. Nor would it be desirable to seek to achieve recognition under international law of such a right. Secession should only be a last resort. Whatever the rights and wrongs of historical developments, when dealing with issues of self-determination one of the main considerations should be where possible to respect the status quo. In this context states should on the one hand be required to take effective measures to protect the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples, while on the other minorities and indigenous peoples should be expected to show willingness to participate in negotiations and joint efforts to seek solutions. Examples of such dialogue - with the attendant trial and error - can be seen in practice. The Colombian government, for instance, has now restored 10% of the state's territory to the indigenous population. In Greenland, a dialogue between the Danish government and Siumut, an indigenous political movement, led to the development of a political structure within which the indigenous population enjoys a large measure of autonomy.⁹ In Namibia, effective cooperation has been established between the regional government of Eastern Bushmanland and the Nyae Nyae Farmers Cooperative (NNFC), a Bushman organisation. Within the framework of regional

⁹ Jens Dahl: "Groenland: de politieke structuur van zelfbestuur". Noord-Zuid Cahier, vol. 17, no. 4, December 1992.

development activities Bushmen are accorded full control of their own land and resources, and they preserve their own language and culture.¹⁰

Individual and collective rights

At the heart of many debates on the rights - particularly territorial and cultural rights - of indigenous peoples lies the problem of the relationship between individual and collective rights. A collective right, to say, land or culture cannot always easily be transposed into individual rights. In the case of the Aboriginals referred to below, the rights to ancestral land were expressively awarded on a collective rather than an individual basis. The ACM report devotes a chapter to this general issue (Chapter IV). It is important to promote consideration of this issue, and the government accordingly applauds the ACM's proposal to draw up a report on this subject at some future stage (ACM report pp. 16, 17, ACM-VII.8).

There are various sides to the issue. On the one hand there are indications that "peoples' rights" are increasingly being incorporated in declarations and conventions. The "African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights" or Banjul Charter, for instance, which was adopted by the OAU in 1981, contains a number of collective rights to which all peoples are entitled, such as the right to self-determination, to assistance in liberation struggles (political, economic or cultural), to their own resources, to economic, social and cultural development, to peace and security and to a general satisfactory environment. It is significant that the Charter is based on the African philosophy of law, according to an introductory paper published in Dakar in 1979. Indigenous peoples themselves also often express a desire for recognition of collective rights.

On the other hand, the Netherlands Government, made wary by the terrible lessons to be drawn from past ideologies which placed the group above the individual, is reluctant to see collective rights accorded greater status. However, clarification of the scope for collective action in the interests of invoking or strengthening individual legal claims does fit in with the government's policy of improving individual petition mechanisms where possible.

In the light of further consideration of this subject, more detailed analysis will at some stage have to be made of the distinction between on the one hand rights of an entirely collective nature, such as the right of self-determination, and on the other individual rights which can be collectively exercised or enjoyed.

With regard to the protection of individual and/or collective rights, overriding importance must be attached to those rights which are important or essential to subsistence, continuity, sustainability and cultural identity, i.e. rights relating to land, hunting, property, etc. A recent development in Australia should be noted in this context. A court case on land rights which had been filed by an Aboriginal tribe elder ten years previously ended in a judgment by the High Court of Australia which will have the effect of restoring the greater part of the Aborigines' ancestral lands. The court rejected the doctrine of "terra nullius", a legal fiction according to which the original European colonial settlers took over an uninhabited country and thus took possession of it without negotiating agreements with the population. It recognised indigenous rights to land with which Aborigines have a demonstrable affinity and which is not subject to formal or modern property rights.

¹⁰ See Vice Versa, December 1992.

Ratification of ILO 169 and other initiatives

Both the ACM and the NAR reports query the motives cited thus far by the Netherlands Government for failing to ratify the ILO Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. The ACM report refers to the universal nature of human rights and the shared responsibility of all states to respect such rights (ACM-VII.15). The NAR report also notes that, contrary to what is claimed, the Netherlands does in fact have a direct involvement in the interests of indigenous peoples (NAR report, page 5).

In the light of the ACM and NAR recommendations, talks have begun with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the first competent authority for matters relating to ILO, to establish whether ratification would be advisable, and, if so, when it should take place. Account will be taken of the following points: the importance of the principle of universality of rights (which the Netherlands would most strongly endorse); the degree of support for the convention among representatives of indigenous peoples; the fact that so few states have to date ratified the convention (four according to recent figures); and the Dutch practice of in principle ratifying only conventions which directly affect the Netherlands. Account will also be taken of certain objections voiced by experts concerning the substance of the convention. Criticism centres on the convention's failure to impose sufficient restrictions on the enforced relocation of indigenous peoples (Article 16), insufficient clarity on the scope for self-determination (Articles 6 and 7) and a tendency to imply that national law should take absolute precedence over indigenous customary law (Articles 8 and 9), whereas such precedence should be accorded, to the maximum extent possible, only to internationally recognised human rights standards. Despite these objections both the undersigned in theory favour ratification at an appropriate time.

Many of the recommendations in the ACM report concern the tightening up or broadening of existing procedures to safeguard the rights and interests of indigenous peoples, or specific inclusion of indigenous peoples as a category to which provisions and procedures can apply (ACM-VII.18, 23, 24). The specific suggestions of this kind in the various recommendations will be individually assessed and where possible adopted.

The ACM report refers to the scope for the use by indigenous peoples of the various petition mechanisms within the ILO system (ACM-VII.25). However, the onus will be on indigenous peoples to develop their own initiatives here - a sometimes risky process, as the ACM rightly notes. Some governments feel threatened even by the organisation of repressed groups. Where possible the Netherlands Government will attempt to support indigenous individuals and organisations in their legitimate struggle for equality before the law, though it recognises that in practice it is well-nigh impossible for third parties - however well-intentioned - to guarantee adequate legal protection for individuals and organisations in situations in which human rights are accorded little value anyway and retaliation is a possibility.

IV. SEPARATE IDENTITY AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

"The most pressing problem affecting us as indigenous peoples is the loss of our dignity", Marcos Terena, Brazilian indigenous representative, in an interview at the Ministry, 25 January 1993.

The international debate on indigenous peoples now recognises the crucial importance for indigenous peoples of the right to maintain and develop their own identity and culture. In many countries, however, indigenous peoples suffer daily from discrimination which threatens their dignity and identity. They meet with contempt, and a failure to recognise the value of their culture and their traditional knowledge. The central role which affinity with land plays in indigenous peoples' identity and way of life is not infrequently

dismissed and sacrificed to other interests - and yet acknowledgement of this fact should be an integral part of recognition of the right to a separate identity and culture.

In addition to the need to give precedence to the values and culture - including affinity with land - of indigenous communities in the context of development cooperation activities which directly affect such communities, it will be necessary to take measures to strengthen the culture and identity of indigenous peoples through education and support for specific cultural activities to be identified by the indigenous peoples themselves. Some scope is provided for initiatives of the latter type under the Cultural Programme set up by the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS).

Education, particularly primary education, does much to shape individuals, and thus significantly affects their future lives. Many indigenous children have no choice but to be educated according to a system which takes no account of their particular culture and background. This can be confusing and alienating, and such schooling does not train as it should for full future participation in society. It is in the very places where education should provide a bridge between indigenous knowledge and culture on the one hand and more universal knowledge systems and national cultures on the other that the existing divide is actually widened. The Government would therefore wholeheartedly endorse the sentiments expressed on this subject in the ACM report (ACM-VII.16). The NAR report, too, looks at the problems of children brought up between two cultures and the interpretive role which educational establishments should play in this respect (page 8). The educational policy pursued in the context of Dutch development cooperation devotes attention to the educational problems experienced by children from cultural minorities, not only in connection with the language of instruction, but also as regards differences in cultural concepts and underlying values.¹¹ An example of this would be the support given by the Netherlands in Guatemala to measures to adapt the curriculum for primary schools in line with indigenous languages and cultures.

Both the ACM (VII.16) and NAR (pages 8-9) reports consider the question of the restitution of cultural artefacts to indigenous peoples. This issue has already been raised in UN resolutions, in draft conventions and within the framework of UNESCO. The International Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation, a UNESCO agency, has been working in this area since it was set up in 1979. A request for restitution can also be made in a bilateral context. A transaction of this kind requires careful preparation, with account being taken of the interests of all the parties involved and the importance of conserving cultural objects. In the context of the said Cultural Programme certain important ceremonial materials known as *tejidos* were restored to the Indian population of Coroma in Bolivia.

The issue of restitution is frequently on the agenda of organisations such as the International Council for Museums (ICOM). The latter body also provides a forum for talks on the registration of the world's cultural heritage, and on improving the worldwide accessibility of collections and important items through the exchange of information, standardisation of description and the loan of collection items for exhibitions. The question of restitution would primarily centre on items of major symbolic significance. The debate is one which greatly concerns indigenous peoples, and their representation in a forum of this type should accordingly be encouraged. However, the representatives of indigenous peoples, and of developing countries in general, usually lack the resources, experience and policy back-up to make their voice heard in the international debate. In the light of this, courses on collection management and the mounting of exhibitions

¹¹ Page 34, policy document Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en onderwijs in de jaren negentig.

designed for the staff of museums in developing countries have already been set up under the DGIS Cultural Programme. The course for the staff of a Bedouin museum in North Sinai, Egypt, funded by this programme, is an example of the way in which indigenous peoples can receive assistance in their efforts to preserve and make accessible their cultural heritage.

The specific suggestions listed on pages 8 and 9 of the NAR report for the preservation of significant indigenous cultural heritage in all its aspects, such as nature lore, language, oral literature, manuscripts and artefacts will certainly be taken into account in policy making and implementation. Activities of the type proposed by the NAR are already incorporated in the DGIS Cultural Programme, though the Programme as such is not specifically or exclusively geared to indigenous peoples.

In conclusion it should be noted that recognition of the separate identity and cultural rights of indigenous peoples presupposes a greater awareness and a change of attitude on the part of dominant cultures. In the dialogue with indigenous peoples, members of dominant cultures must be prepared to be open towards other cultures and, where necessary, to question their own values and adjust their priorities.

V. REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION

It should be noted that when Martínez Cobo refers to social institutions and legal systems in his typology of indigenous peoples, he is speaking of cultures and societies which are highly decentralised, and whose laws are uncodified. This significantly affects the question of the representation of indigenous peoples in modern national states or in an international context. Representation at such levels of the interests of groups organised in local communities and enjoying only local leadership must inevitably present a problem. Even where some form of central leadership exists, the question of the legitimacy of representation remains. Representation and participation are issues which the Government feels deserve attention.

The first point of focus should be participation within the national state. Agenda 21, too, stresses the importance of strengthening the participation of indigenous peoples in legislation, policy and implementation of programmes relating to development cooperation and other administrative measures which concern them. The question which then arises is: who should participate, and on whose behalf?

The ACM report looks at the issue of representation. Who is a legitimate representative? The straightforward imposition of a "democratic model" of election on indigenous communities does not necessarily accord with the views of indigenous peoples concerning legitimate leadership. However, considerable interests can be at stake in talks with indigenous peoples, and in such cases the question both of the legitimacy and the adequacy of representation is crucial. The authors of this memorandum, like those of the NAR report, would endorse the solution proposed in the ACM report to this dilemma: "A minimum requirement might be that the position of a representative should not be controversial, or should not be contested by the people in question. In case of reasonable doubt it should also be possible to require a representative to make plausible his claim to represent an indigenous people" (ACM report, page 24). Unfortunately this solution is not foolproof, as the ACM report rightly goes on to state, in view of the fact that it is sometimes practically impossible to sound out an indigenous people without going through those selfsame representatives. On this issue politicians will have to learn from the experience gained by specialist organisations (e.g. NGOs, IGOs).

Given the complexity of the issue, the government will for the time being adopt the approach suggested by the ACM. This would not rule out assessment on an ad hoc basis. An example would be the correspondence which took place in 1980 between the Human

Rights Committee and the tribal elders of the Miqmaq Tribal Society (Canada) concerning the mandate of their *soi-disant* representative. A certain degree of standardisation of the criteria to be met by representatives should perhaps be a future aim (see ACM VII.12), but it would be unrealistic to hope for hard and unequivocal criteria for the time being.

The question of representation also has an international dimension. Logistically speaking, it would be unworkable for representatives of all the 5000 or so indigenous peoples to attend the meetings of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples - leaving aside the fact that their largely decentralised organisational structures might mean that a single people might deputise a number of representatives. The increase in the number of representatives is creating a need for more umbrella organisations, which again raises the whole question of representativeness, albeit at another level.

Both the ACM and NAR reports pronounce on the need to increase the accessibility of national and international legal procedures and other relevant fora for indigenous peoples (ACM-VII.9, 12, 17, 26 and NAR, pp.5-7). Proposals include the provision of translating and interpreting facilities, direct financial support to enable indigenous delegates to travel to relevant conferences, seminars and other events, and the provision of training (e.g. legal training) aimed at members of indigenous population groups. Following on from this last point is the NAR's proposal to establish a scholarship quota for members of indigenous population groups (NAR report, p.7). In practice, however, this proposal meets with difficulties. The international education establishments in the Netherlands have been assigned responsibility for implementing the Netherlands Fellowships Programme. However, they are obliged, when awarding scholarships, to take account of the policy of the Minister for Development Cooperation, which is geared *inter alia* to redressing the disadvantaged situation of certain population groups in developing countries.

The UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples, in which founding the Netherlands had an initiating role, and the Special Fund for the Year of the World's Indigenous People are largely geared to facilitating the representation of indigenous peoples at fora and events of relevance to them. In view of the importance of this work the Netherlands Government will comply with the ACM's request (ACM-VII.26) that it continue contributing to the Voluntary Fund and also contribute to the UN fund set up to finance activities during the Year.

VI. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Environment and way of life

"We only want development which does not threaten our planet", Marcos Terena, Brazilian indigenous representative, in an interview at the Ministry, 25 January 1993.

"In view of the interrelationship between the natural environment and its sustainable development and the cultural, social, economic and physical well-being of indigenous people, national and international efforts to implement environmentally sound and sustainable development should recognize, accommodate, promote and strengthen the role of indigenous people and their communities".¹²

Both reports acknowledge the important and special relationship which indigenous peoples have with their ancestral lands. The ACM report "considers it essential that the specific nature of these rights and of the relationship between indigenous peoples and

¹² Agenda 21, Chapter 26, p. 26.

their land or water be recognised" (ACM-VII.13). The NAR report states: "The significance of 'land' to indigenous peoples is frequently completely different from the meaning we attach to it. Land has not only economic significance, but also a social and spiritual importance. The way in which some indigenous peoples venerate the land means that it cannot be regarded or treated as the commodity it is largely regarded as by the majority of the world community" (NAR report, p. 9). The respect that indigenous peoples feel for the earth means that in general they are careful not to disturb the ecological balance of their natural environment.

Serious disruption of this balance can nearly always be attributed to external processes and intervention initiated by the dominant society which cannot be controlled or reversed by indigenous peoples. The resultant situation tends to be irreversible, with disastrous effects for the culture and the environment of the indigenous populations involved.

The "natural" link which is often made between indigenous peoples and sustainable development can result in indigenous peoples being used to carry out environmental projects which are not directly in their own interests, as the NAR rightly observes (NAR report, p. 10). Environmental measures can also go so far that "indigenous people are hit disproportionately hard" (ACM-VII.14). This should be remedied by involving indigenous peoples in decision-making on measures and activities which affect the area in which they live (ACM-VII.13), and by integrating their views on development in an operational concept of sustainable development which is acceptable to all parties. An interesting example of specific attention for indigenous communities in an environmental agreement is the allocation of a separate quota for "aboriginal subsistence whaling" in the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (1946).

The increase in interest in indigenous peoples' knowledge of their own natural environment is a positive development. "Indigenous knowledge" can make a significant contribution to the sustainability of agriculture and the preservation of biodiversity. However, such interest also has a negative side, as the NAR report points out. Agribusiness and the pharmaceutical industry are already annexing such information for their own purposes, and this trend looks set to continue. This constitutes alienation of commercially valuable intellectual heritage. Indeed, scientists and scientific bodies are themselves not above exploiting indigenous peoples' lack of awareness of the value of their knowledge of the natural world. The NAR report discusses this question at length and puts forward constructive recommendations (NAR report, pp.10-11).

Increasing international attention is being paid, notably since UNCED, to the protection of the intellectual property of indigenous peoples in line with the preservation of biodiversity and with developments in biotechnology. The indigenous peoples themselves have stated: "Since we highly value our traditional technologies and believe that our biotechnologies can make important contributions to humanity, including 'developed' countries, we demand guaranteed rights to our intellectual property, and control over the development and manipulation of this knowledge".¹³ The Netherlands supports the work of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, which is looking into this problem.

Development cooperation

"Our greatest fear is of being developed without first being consulted", Marcos Terena, Brazilian indigenous representative, 25 January 1993.

There are two main points at issue here. The first issue is the need of indigenous peoples for development activities or, to put it another way, "who formulates the request for

¹³ Charter of the Indigenous-Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forest, point 44.

aid?" The second issue concerns taking account of and protecting the interests of indigenous peoples in development projects.

"Current policy on development cooperation views culture as a basis for sustainable development".¹⁴ This principle also extends to indigenous peoples, embracing as it does participatory and culturally-oriented approaches. In concrete terms, development activities must be welcomed by the indigenous community for which they are intended, they must dovetail with the needs formulated by that community, they must be compatible in substance and structure with the community culture, and the community or its representatives must be allowed to participate in the decision-making on activities and their implementation and evaluation. If care is taken to adhere to these guidelines - which also form the basis of the recommendations made by the ACM and the NAR - then the fears expressed by Marcos Terena (see above) should be groundless.

In actual fact adherence to the guidelines is beset by a number of obstacles, and there are very real grounds for concern. The first obstacle is that often little is known of the indigenous communities in areas in which development organisations operate. The NAR rightly underlines the importance of freeing resources and time to increase knowledge of indigenous peoples (NAR report, page 13). The ACM, too, states that aid programmes must be set up solely on the basis of "detailed knowledge of the indigenous peoples concerned" (ACM-VII.29). The Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) has now taken steps to foster the collection and transfer of knowledge on this subject.

A second group of obstacles consists of the problems referred to in the chapter on representation and participation. There is much to be said for the view expressed by the ACM that indigenous peoples often "first need assistance to become organised to a greater extent and to acquire the funds to enable them to undertake initiatives of their own" (ACM-VII.28). It is true that a greater degree of organisation is often the first step needed if indigenous peoples are to become fully involved in activities designed to further their own development. The NAR makes a number of suggestions on this point, under the heading of "institutional support", which will be examined to see if they are practicable. It should be noted in this connection that the decentralised organisational structure so characteristic of indigenous peoples is not always amenable to organisational forms imposed from outside. There are no straightforward solutions to this problem, although the recommendation made by both the NAR and the ACM (ACM-VII, 26 and 30) that higher priority and structural support should be given to this issue in international and multilateral frameworks may provide an answer.

That the interests of indigenous peoples can be damaged by development activities is apparent in particular from large-scale infrastructural projects, many of which deprive indigenous peoples of all or some of their land, encroach upon their traditional means of subsistence or force them to move elsewhere. While it is not always possible to spare them, a proper balance should be struck between the conflicting interests, and the indigenous peoples should have the right of appeal. In addition, every effort should be made to minimise the damage and to provide prompt, adequate compensation. World Bank directives on this point refer to the far-reaching impact on the means of subsistence, cultural identity and social structure of communities which fall victim to unavoidable involuntary resettlement. The directive goes on to discuss all manner of measures that should be taken right from the start to minimise the damage and to

¹⁴ Policy document A World of Difference, page 205.

compensate the communities in question.¹⁵ However, indigenous peoples usually lack the organisational capacity, knowledge of the law and political clout to compel such measures to be taken. Responsibility in this area clearly lies with the donor agency.

In any event, the interests at stake in large-scale infrastructural projects involve more than simply indigenous communities and the government, while indigenous communities frequently do not form a homogenous group as regards the decisions to be taken (see also the NAR report, p. 3). The complexity of the debate on the Narmada (Sardar Sarovar) project in India, the largest irrigation project in Asia, is a case in point. A number of the indigenous tribal communities, to whom the woodland threatened by the project is of great material and cultural significance, oppose enforced resettlement, with the support of environmental activists. However, many farmers in the region are becoming increasingly convinced of the potential blessings of the project, namely higher agricultural yields, and they have the Indian government on their side.

Smaller development projects can also damage indigenous peoples if their interests are not identified and taken into account at an early stage. Indigenous peoples are often placed at a disadvantage, even *vis-à-vis* their own government, by the weakness of their legal position, their lack of organisation, their inadequate access to government and judicial authorities and the media, with the result that they often lose out to the interests of the dominant party.

Social and economic change is occurring in many forms. Most indigenous communities no longer live in self-sufficient isolation; rather they are faced with the market economy and structures of power and ownership that are new to them. The various sections of indigenous communities (men, women, young people, the elderly) are often affected in different ways and to an unequal extent. Young people may suffer an identity crisis, since neither the community from which they come nor the wider society to which they migrate but where they cannot maintain themselves offers prospects for the future. Women are comparatively hard hit if the means of subsistence and the environment of the indigenous community are undermined, for they are responsible for feeding the family and for the care of young children. As the men leave, more and more women have to face these problems alone. Indigenous women who leave their community, for example to earn money in a town, are highly vulnerable and are often abused. Accordingly, the government has taken careful note of the observations in both reports on the position of indigenous women, with the comment that the scope for aid to such women should be examined specifically from the point of view of their own situation.

Information is of crucial importance to promoting the rights and interests of indigenous peoples. The NAR report rightly devotes a good deal of attention to this question (p. 6). The Development Cooperation Information Department will develop activities this year in an effort to foster understanding of the cultures and situations of indigenous peoples. In consultation with the Netherlands co-financing organisations (MFOs) and certain non-governmental organisations concerned with improving the lot of indigenous peoples, a plan is being developed to draw public attention in the Netherlands to the problems of indigenous peoples. This will include a series of events to be held in the autumn of 1993.

¹⁵ The World Bank Operational Manual. Operational Directive 4.30: Involuntary Resettlement. Washington, June 1990.

VII. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AS CURRENTLY AFFECTED BY DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PROGRAMMES OF THE NETHERLANDS

Current development cooperation policy involves numerous activities which benefit indigenous peoples. An internal survey showed that indigenous peoples are actually major target groups of the Netherlands bilateral development cooperation programmes in Latin America and, to a lesser extent, in Asia. Indigenous and tribal communities in Latin America and Asia are also target groups of programmes aimed at alleviating poverty, the central objective of Netherlands development cooperation policy. The majority of projects in India are targeted at the outcastes and tribal peoples, the two groups representing the lowest social strata. The general question of whether this approach adequately addresses the specific cultural problems of India's tribal communities is a difficult one to answer. Much depends on the sensitivity and knowledge of those implementing the projects in the field. Development cooperation policy will endeavour to foster these two qualities in the future.

A similar question may be raised with regard to poverty alleviation projects in Latin America. To date, the problems of the indigenous communities in that continent have largely been seen in a socio-economic context, an approach which is legitimate enough in itself, though too restricted. In recent years, however, the focus has widened to embrace cultural identity and cultural rights, one example being the project which is in preparation for a cultural and educational centre in La Paz for the benefit of the indigenous population of the region (primarily the Aymara and Quechua Indians). One of the main objectives of this centre will be to enhance the cultural identity of the indigenous peoples concerned.

An internal survey proved the importance of the Small Embassy Projects Programme as a means of responding to the specific needs and wishes of indigenous peoples in a rapid, targeted way. Diplomatic missions in countries where indigenous peoples' problems are on the agenda are made aware of the scope for using this programme, to make better use of it for the benefit of indigenous peoples.

The Development Cooperation Special Programme on the Environment and the Cultural Programme also afford scope to enhance the position of indigenous peoples within the framework of development cooperation. Some examples have already been mentioned above.

The Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) has been debating this issue for some time. It is hoped that this debate will give rise to a policy memorandum to be issued this year, containing recommendations on the ways in which the SNV, at local (project), national and international level, can help to improve the position of indigenous peoples. The debate centres on the question of the causes and consequences of discrimination against indigenous peoples. A number of country programmes have formulated specific objectives with regard to indigenous peoples. Within the Honduras programme, for example, it has been decided to adopt an approach for two out of the three target regions which will focus directly on indigenous communities as target groups and partners, and in which the priorities for action will be determined in direct consultation with grassroots indigenous organisations.

Talks with the co-financing organisations (MFOs) have brought to light their intention to involve representatives of indigenous peoples more closely with development activities which concern them. If this is put into practice, it could greatly help the MFOs to respond to the wishes and needs of indigenous communities. The policies of all the MFOs emphasise the importance of raising consciousness and improving organisation among indigenous peoples. The MFOs are also concerned with the problem that the areas occupied by indigenous peoples often do not fall within the borders of any one state. In

1992, Columbus year, the MFOs appropriately focused on improving the lot of the Indians of Central and South America.

One of the MFOs, CEBEMO, has been discussing policy on indigenous peoples for some years now. They are a focus of policy because of their subjection to a different, dominant, social, political and cultural structure, which not only marginalises them in socioeconomic terms but threatens the continued existence of their distinctive group identity. The aim of CEBEMO's activities is to reduce socio-economic disadvantage and increase the resilience of indigenous peoples.

