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LANGSCAPE
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Terralingua's newsletter
September 1998

News and Views from TERRALINGUA: Partnerships for Linguistic and Biological Diversity

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** Comments and suggestions are welcome and actively solicited. Please send all communications regarding this newsletter to the Editor. **

==>> ==>> DUE TO the Annual reports needing to be published in this issue, we had to keep several items for the December issue, so as not to make the newsletter longer than it already is. Thank-you for your understanding. <<== <<==

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ANNUAL PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS — September 1998

Dear Terralingua Members,

It has been a year since my first report on Terralingua activities, and I come to you again with an account of what we have done during the past year and an appeal for you to renew your support for what we seek to accomplish in the future. Terralingua has been working extremely hard, and our efforts have begun to pay off in terms of widespread attention to our perspectives on linguistic diversity, linguistic human rights, and the relationships between linguistic, cultural, and biological diversity. Our expertise begins to be sought at multiple levels, from the local to the international, as I will explain in the two reports below. In other words, we begin to be actually able to make a difference on the matters of our, and your, concern.

On the other hand, we cannot sustain this effort without your help. As you know, we are a purely volunteer organization. We have been stretching ourselves to the limit working overtime on a regular basis, trying to take advantage of every opportunity for free use of resources, and making miracles with a budget that can only be described as minuscule, deriving as it does exclusively from paying memberships set as low as US \$10/year at the basic level. We do continue to have a steady, if small stream of new memberships. However, we are not seeing an equally steady flow of renewals. Although we extended all initial memberships through the end of 1997 and launched a membership renewal campaign earlier this year, the number of renewals for 1998 has so far been very limited, and our funds are dwindling to very low levels (as the Treasurer's Report below shows) — so low that, without additional support, we will soon become unable to perform even the most basic functions involved in our work, such as sending mail to members and interested others who are not on the Internet. We currently have one grant proposal under consideration, and will be making others in the months to come. But whether or not these come through, we need steady financial support from those of our members who can afford to give it — and thus show their support to our cause!

contents in the next Langscape and also soon on the web.) We have reason to believe that the book will have a significant impact in scholarly and policy circles alike. Also significant has been the publication of Dave Harmon's paper "The status of the world's languages as reported in Ethnologue" in the long-delayed 1995 issue 14 of *Southwestern Journal of Linguistics*. His companion paper "Losing species, losing languages: Connections between biological and linguistic diversity" will appear in the next issue of *Southwest Journal of Linguistics*. Both papers were presented by Dave at the Symposium "Language Loss and Public Policy" held in Albuquerque in 1995, where the co-founders of *Terralingua* met. Our research work has also yielded contacts and collaborations, or prospects for collaboration, with a number of major U.S. and international institutions, amongst which are:

Smithsonian Institution;
 Field Museum of Natural History;
 Canadian Museum of Nature;
 Conservation and Development Forum;
 International Botanical Congress;
 International Society of Ethnobiology;
 International Union for the Conservation of Nature (I.U.C.N.);
 World Wide Fund for Nature (W.W.F.);
 U.N. World Intellectual Property Organization (W.I.P.O.);
 Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the U.N. Centre for Human Rights;
 U.N.E.S.C.O. (Languages Division; Culture Sector; Ecological Sciences Division);
 European Commission.

Among planned activities: a workshop "Supporting cultural and environmental diversity through indigenous language development and protection of linguistic human rights" (International Congress of Ethnobiology, Aotearoa/New Zealand, November 1998); a symposium "Language, knowledge and understandings of the environment: lessons for environmental policy and education" (Field Museum, Chicago, April 1999); and a symposium "Ethnobotany and biocultural diversity conservation" (International Botanical Congress, St. Louis, August 1999). (Other activities are described in the next report.)

ADVOCACY. Over the past year, *Terralingua* responded to numerous appeals in support of linguistic communities whose linguistic and cultural rights were being violated, and of grassroots organizations whose language maintenance and revitalization activities were in jeopardy. Notable amongst these, because we received responses suggesting that our intervention played a significant role, was our letter in support of the Welsh National Language Centre (Nant Gwrtheyrn), that was being threatened with closure, putting an end to Welsh language courses. The Centre ultimately underwent some restructuring, but the teaching of Welsh continues. Most significantly at the international level, *Terralingua* was invited to present a submission on linguistic human rights in education (text found on our Web site) to the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (W.G.I.P.) of the U.N. Centre for Human Rights, in view of our participation in the 16th. Annual Session of W.G.I.P., held in Geneva in July 1998, whose principal theme was "Indigenous Peoples: education and Language". *Terralingua* was also invited to participate in the Roundtable on Intellectual Property and Indigenous Peoples organized by the Global Intellectual Property Issues Division of the World Intellectual Property Organization (W.I.P.O.), also held in Geneva in July 1998, to explore matters of intellectual property as they relate to the protection of indigenous languages and traditional knowledge. Still in July 1998, *Terralingua* carried out advocacy in favor of the integrated protection of linguistic, cultural and biological diversity at the Forum "Biodiversity: treasures in the World's Forests", organized by the Alfred Toepfer Academy for Nature Conservation in Schneverdingen, Germany, and closely related to the processes concerned with the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. (More on these three events in the following report.)

Plans for the future abound, from upgrading *Langscape* to expansion of our Web site and particularly of the language maintenance/revitalization database, to realization of videos, tutorials, community workshops, Internet classes, to further *Terralingua* publications, to continued participation in international processes related to linguistic human rights and the protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of indigenous peoples and minorities. For this, once again, we need your generous financial support!

Terralingua Balance Sheet as of 31 July 1998

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ASSETS

Current Assets: Checking Account = \$751.56  
Total Assets = \$751.56

## LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Liabilities = \$0.00  
Equity: Retained Earnings = \$597.34  
Equity: Net Income = (\$154.22)  
Total Equity = \$751.56

Total Liabilities and Equity = \$751.56

**NOTE: \*\* Our dues income dropped from \$1,270 in 1997 to \$440 in 1998.**

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## ANNUAL REPORT ON TERRALINGUA ACTIVITIES — July - August 1998

by Luisa Maffi, President

In July and August of 1998, I had the unique opportunity to foster Terralingua (TL.) concerns through participation in a number of international meetings, as well as through contacts with a number of international organizations, in Europe. All of these activities also afforded me a most significant learning experience. I wish to share with TL. members both the results and the insights from these events.

Before getting into that, though, I wish to thank two persons who were so instrumental in facilitating some of these activities, that I can only say I would not have made it without them. One is Helga Lomosits, of the France-based N.G.O. Indigena, who guided me to negotiate the U.N.E.S.C.O. maze in Paris. The other one is my own niece Antonella Maffi, who did the same for me with the U.N. in Geneva (plus lots of other things, as you would expect of a niece!). They both deserve TL.'s recognition for making it possible for a neophyte to learn to swim (rather than sink) in U.N. waters as quickly as I did.

My first stop in Europe was in Germany, where I was an invited participant in the Forum "Biodiversity: treasures in the World's Forests" (Schneverdingen, Germany, 3—7 July 1998; part of the "Forests In Focus" Hannover Expo 2000 process). TL. Advisory Panel member Darrell Posey was in charge of a workshop (Workshop III) at the Forum, titled "Interrelationship of cultural and biological diversity", and within that workshop I was asked to talk about the relationships between linguistic and biological diversity. I had an opportunity to mention TL. and distribute TL. materials, eliciting great interest in our work. Darrell introduced the workshop, talking about the cultural and spiritual values of biodiversity for indigenous peoples; Jan Slikkerveer presented an overview of traditional ecological knowledge systems; and indigenous representatives Joji Cariño (Philippines), Miguel Hilario (Peru) and Kittisak Ruttanakrajangri (Thailand) presented their views on indigenous peoples' concerns on cultural and biological diversity. Other workshops at the Forum, as well as the plenary sessions, were strongly science-technology-economics-oriented, and did not include indigenous participation. However, at the end of the Forum each workshop group was asked to submit its report and recommendations, to be synthesized in the final Forum statement, and some of our workshop's recommendations did make their way into the final statement, such as: "Protecting forests and biodiversity requires protecting the cultural and linguistic diversity of indigenous peoples [my emphasis]." (See Annex I [Part 4 of newsletter] for the text of the report on Workshop III.)

Although Workshop III participants were not in agreement with several other recommendations in the final statement, it is significant that both this document, containing such clear reference to the protection of

linguistic diversity, and our workshop's full recommendations were handed over to the Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (S.B.S.T.T.A.) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (C.B.D.), who was among Forum participants. What is significant about this is that, as observers of international processes have noted, some of the most promising windows of opportunity for the protection of indigenous peoples' land, resource, and cultural rights (including traditional knowledge) have opened in the context of the protection of biodiversity since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and in particular through the process of implementation of the C.B.D., which spells out the obligation for Contracting Parties (States adopting the Convention) to "respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity", as well as to comply with the principles of prior informed consent by and equitable sharing of benefits with indigenous peoples (Art. 8j). While the process has been slow and complex, it has seen increasing input from indigenous peoples themselves and produced growing international attention to the need for appropriate ways to protect indigenous peoples' and local communities' "knowledge, innovations and practices". Our workshop's input at this level, including the mention of the interrelationships between linguistic, cultural and biological diversity, was well received at the Forum, and as far as I could tell, also by the Chair of S.B.S.T.T.A., a key advising organism to the C.B.D. It will be crucial to monitor the developments, but I believe this may be promising vis-à-vis future inclusion in this process of the need to protect indigenous and local languages (also confirmed by other events reported on below).

From Germany I went to Denmark for a visit with TL. Vice-President Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and her husband (and TL. member) Robert Phillipson, with whom I discussed matters of linguistic human rights and future prospects for TL. From there I went to Paris for a first set of meetings at the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (U.N.E.S.C.O.; reported on below) and a brief trip to Brussels, where I visited the European Commission, and particularly its Divisions XII (Research) and VIII (Development Co-operation). I wanted to learn more about European Union policies vis-à-vis indigenous peoples, in light of an interesting E.U. working document on support for indigenous peoples in development co-operation, which I had received at the Schneverdingen Forum.

The second meeting in which I took part, again as an invited participant, was the Roundtable on Intellectual Property and Indigenous Peoples (Geneva, Switzerland, 23—24 July, 1998) organized by the World Intellectual Property Organization (W.I.P.O.), a specialized U.N. agency that is in charge of setting international norms and standards for intellectual property rights (I.P.R.) and is the custodian of the main existing legal instruments for I.P.R. protection (such as international copyright and patent conventions, treaties, etc.). W.I.P.O., and particularly its newly founded Global Intellectual Property Issues Division, organized the Roundtable in response to the invitation of other international organizations (including the Subcommittee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, and the Conference of the Parties to the C.B.D.), for it to take up an active role in matters concerning the intellectual property rights of indigenous peoples, as potential "new beneficiaries" of the intellectual property system. The workshop was set up so as to immediately precede the 16th. Annual Session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (W.G.I.P.) of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights in Geneva (see below), to allow many of the indigenous representatives coming to Geneva for the W.G.I.P. session to participate in the Roundtable as well. The main goal was for W.I.P.O. to present to indigenous peoples the features of the existing I.P.R. system, and to hear indigenous peoples' voices on their needs concerning the protection of their traditional heritage. Representatives of other international organizations (among which the C.B.D. Secretariat, W.G.I.P., and U.N.E.S.C.O.) as well as N.G.O.s (including TL.) were also invited to attend and provide input.

The Roundtable allowed me to witness the first ever meeting of indigenous peoples with the world's foremost I.P.R. institution, W.I.P.O. It also allowed me to compare the framework of current I.P.R. instruments with the one emerging from indigenous peoples' statements about their needs for the protection of their traditional heritage, and to think of possible avenues for evolution of the I.P.R. system, in particular as concerns the protection of indigenous knowledge, oral traditions, and languages. Indeed, my interest, in line with TL. concerns, was in the possibility for inclusion of indigenous languages as a part of the traditional heritage in need of international legal protection. W.I.P.O. officials were already aware, and showed themselves very appreciative, of TL.'s work and perspectives -- which I found additionally encouraging, in light of my previous experience at the Forum in Germany, vis-à-vis advancing the cause of the protection of indigenous

languages at the international level. Furthermore, the importance of indigenous and local languages was stressed also by many of the indigenous participants who gave their statements at the Roundtable, and mentioned extensively by one of the invited speakers, Dr. Mongane Wally Serote, Chair of South Africa's Parliamentary Committee on Arts, Culture, Languages, Science and Technology.

While this first Roundtable had a "fact-finding" nature and was not result-oriented, it was only one of a series of initiatives (missions, pilot projects, studies) on indigenous knowledge and its protection that W.I.P.O. is undertaking in the 1998-1999 biennium to acquire expertise in the field that may lead to appropriate evolution of the I.P.R. system. They showed themselves very open to new issues, including the role of language. As an outcome of this first meeting, it is likely that the Roundtable will be made an annual event, and it is possible that a working group on indigenous intellectual property rights may be formed (to parallel W.G.I.P. at the United Nations, and the recently approved working group in charge of advising the Parties to the C.B.D. on the measures necessary to protect indigenous peoples' knowledge, innovations and practices). Again, it will be essential to follow these processes closely. As a consequence of my participation in this Roundtable, I have been writing a paper on the protection of indigenous knowledge, oral traditions, and languages that I will submit to W.I.P.O. In due time, this paper will be posted on the TL. web site. Meanwhile, the papers from the Roundtable can be found at: <http://www.wipo.int/eng/meetings/1998/indip/index.htm>.

The following week (27 — 31 July, 1998) I took part in the 16th. Annual Session of W.G.I.P. W.G.I.P., which has been in existence since 1982, chaired by Dr. Erica-Irene Daes, has been for the past two decades the one and only open forum for indigenous peoples at the United Nations. It reports to the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the Commission on Human Rights. W.G.I.P. has been hearing from the world's indigenous peoples on any and all aspects of their condition as concerns human rights; conducting studies on some of the most relevant aspects (from the protection of indigenous heritage, to indigenous peoples' relationship to land, to treaties and other agreements between States and indigenous peoples, etc.); and working on the establishment of a sui generis human rights regime for indigenous peoples, which culminated in the elaboration of the Draft U.N. Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which is now under examination by a special working group of the Commission on Human Rights. It is hoped that the Declaration will be approved by the U.N. General Assembly before the end of the U.N. Decade of Indigenous Peoples (1995 — 2004). Once a year, W.G.I.P. holds a week-long session with the participation of hundreds of indigenous representatives, as well as other international organizations, N.G.O.s, and representatives of observer governments. Indigenous peoples can speak on each and every item on the agenda for the plenary session, which meets twice a day (morning and afternoon). They also have an opportunity to meet among themselves prior to and during the Annual Session, and if they wish can organize informal lunch break or evening meetings in specially allocated rooms at the Palais des Nations where W.G.I.P. meets. Informal meetings can be organized by anybody else attending the session (TL. did so too, as I will explain). Furthermore, the plenary remains in session daily until all scheduled agenda items are exhausted (this, as I learned, resulting in the fullest schedule imaginable, with essentially no time even for meals and other necessities!). The last day the plenary ended at midnight.

Agenda items vary from year to year, but two features are constant. One consists in ample time allocated to hearing reports by indigenous peoples on development pertaining to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples. The other is the choice each year of a "principal theme" on which indigenous and other participants' statements are especially invited. Prior to the Annual Session, interested parties also have an opportunity to submit information on the theme to W.G.I.P. This information then becomes part of official U.N. documents and is published in all six official U.N. languages (English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and Russian). This year's theme was "Indigenous Peoples: education and language", which was obviously of special TL. interest. As you will remember, TL. sent a submission on linguistic human rights in education (published in *Langscape* #8 and posted on the Web). This submission is now included in U.N. document E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1998/2. TL. also requested space for one of the informal meetings to talk about "Indigenous peoples and language: integrated perspectives on linguistic, cultural and biological diversity", and registered to make a short statement (5 minutes per speaker) on the same topics during the plenary session devoted to the principal theme.

It would be utterly impossible here to exhaustively summarize all of the proceedings, describe the side events (those I could participate in, since most are concurrent), and report on my countless personal meetings with indigenous and other participants. (Almost 1,000 people were in attendance — among whom TL Advisory Panel member Pekka Aikio — and I may have interacted with half of them!). I will focus on some of the main points. First of all, the TL informal meeting took place the very first day, and (judging from the number of copies of TL materials that were picked up) must have drawn at least 80 people. Most participants were indigenous, but representatives of international organizations and N.G.O.s were also present. I introduced TL, its goals and perspectives, the work we have done so far and that we wish to do in the future; then I focused on the content of the TL submission on linguistic human rights in education and expanded on that. I had been allotted only one hour for this event, but there was so much interest in what I had to say, that I had to spend a whole other hour in the hall talking to all the people who still wanted to discuss things with me. Most rewarding was to hear expressions of great appreciation for our work by indigenous persons. It would seem that what we do definitely resonates with them. I was, in fact, able to get my own sense of such a convergence of perspectives and goals by participating in all other informal events that had to do with indigenous languages (Tamazigh [Berber] cultural and linguistic revival; indigenous education in Australia; indigenous language revitalization in New Zealand; and indigenous education in Canada), and from listening to the scores of indigenous statements at the plenary.

Among the latter statements, there were a few reports of progress in the state of indigenous rights around the world, but alas the majority of indigenous representatives could only report about continuing violations of or serious threats to their cultural, linguistic, land and resource rights, with the governments of the countries in which they live not supporting, or discouraging, or even forbidding the use of their languages (even in indigenous-run educational initiatives!) and the practice of their traditions, denying their communal land titles and despoiling their lands, and with national and transnational corporations appropriating their resources without their prior informed consent, and without any benefit sharing (let alone equitable benefit sharing). All indigenous representatives affirmed the principle of self-determination for their peoples and urged the U.N. to promptly approve the Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. While the Declaration per se will not be binding, like all international standards, it will represent a legally and morally strong model for the national legislations of the U.N. member States who will approve it, and for indigenous peoples' appeals to the respect of their rights. Notably, an Australian Aboriginal representative reported that, as a part of the right-wing backlash currently going on in Australia with the rise of the "One Nation" party, this party has lashed out at the Draft Declaration as a threat to national unity, claiming that it supports indigenous "separatism". Such statements may become more and more common around the world proportionally to the advancement of indigenous rights. It will be very important to monitor them closely and respond to them whenever possible, since they spread dangerous misinformation about the meaning of "self-determination" most commonly accepted by indigenous peoples themselves, i.e., as the right to control their lands and resources, protect and develop their languages, cultures and other aspects of their heritage, and determine for themselves the direction of their own development. Separation is not part of their mentioned objectives.

Particularly heartening for me, given my long personal association with Mayan people in Chiapas, Mexico, was to hear from indigenous representatives from Mexico that the human rights situation of indigenous peoples in Chiapas and other southern Mexican States following the 1994 indigenous uprising has come to the attention of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (former Ireland President Mary Robinson), and that there is a possibility that U.N.H.C.H.R. may establish offices in those states. I later learned that this human rights situation in Mexico made its way into the agenda of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which issued a resolution urging the Mexican government to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict. The Subcommittee's resolution will in turn put the situation on the agenda of the Commission on Human Rights at its next meeting (I believe, in March 1999).

Interesting vis-à-vis the issues I discussed previously in relation to the Forum and the W.I.P.O. Roundtable were the interventions by Ambassador Arthur Campea of the C.B.D. Secretariat and by Mr. Richard Owens, Director of W.I.P.O.'s Global Intellectual Property Issues Division, both of which confirmed my impression that the importance of protecting indigenous languages as the carriers of indigenous knowledge and innovation has a chance of being recognized also by international bodies concerned with the preservation of biological diversity and the protection of intellectual property.

The principal theme “Indigenous peoples: education and language” was introduced by the Principal Director of U.N.E.S.C.O.’s Culture Sector, Dr. Hernán Crespo-Toral, who was officially representing U.N.E.S.C.O. at the W.G.I.P. session. Within the context of the Decade of Indigenous Peoples, these two U.N. bodies are beginning to establish greater collaboration on indigenous issues, with which so far U.N.E.S.C.O. has dealt only marginally, although issues related to language and cultural heritage fall specifically under its mandate (more on this later). As Dr. Crespo-Toral indicated, it is possible that U.N.E.S.C.O. may host the next W.G.I.P. Annual Session in Paris in 1999, to coincide with a U.N.E.S.C.O.-sponsored International Conference on Indigenous Peoples’ Cultural Rights. My own 5-minute statement was scheduled shortly after Dr. Crespo-Toral’s introduction (see text in Annex II). It must have been on the mark, because immediately after I finished speaking a small crowd assembled around me asking for copies of the statement and wanting to know more about TL. On indigenous languages and education, the overall consensus that emerged from indigenous statements was first of all a request for freedom to organize their own educational efforts, including language maintenance and revitalization efforts, according to their own cultural traditions and methods for teaching and learning (both at the informal and the formal levels), and for national and international support of these efforts; secondly, right to have equal access to their own countries’ formal educational systems, and particularly higher education; thirdly, and cross-cutting the previous two, right to mother-tongue education at all levels, while at the same time acquiring adequate command of majority languages.

Among the many other matters discussed in the plenary, one stood out in particular: Special Rapporteur Prof. Miguel Alfonso Martínez’s final report on his “Study on treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements between States and indigenous populations”, which he presented in a yet unedited version, and whose results will therefore be officially discussed at next year’s session, after indigenous peoples and interested others will have had an opportunity to read and comment on it. Martínez thus confined himself to an initial presentation of its content — stating right away that he anticipated some of it would be controversial. The overall goal of the study was to review, historically and synchronically, the situation of indigenous peoples vis-à-vis the States in which they live and with whom they have treaties, agreements or informal arrangements (or nothing at all), and to propose recommendations in this connection. As a part of this study, however, Martínez came to conclude that a distinction should be made between Asia and Africa, on the one hand, and the rest of the world on the other, as concerns the applicability of the concept of “indigenous”. According to him, it is not possible to speak of “indigenous peoples” in Asia and Africa, but only of “minorities”; he brought in support of this conclusion the observation that many Africans and Asians themselves have difficulty with the notion of “indigenous”.

This, of course, was factually contradicted by the very presence on the spot of dozens and dozens of representatives of Asian and African populations who wanted to have a presence at the W.G.I.P. session precisely because they consider themselves indigenous. Furthermore, and even more seriously, this conclusion goes counter what has long been the practice of W.G.I.P. and other international organisms that have been working on indigenous peoples’ rights (such as the International Labor Organization with its Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples): that indigenesness is first and foremost a matter of self-definition, and that it resides in a special relationship to the land, rather than in who was colonized by whom. It was thus rather striking to hear this position expressed, that would reopen the debate about indigenous vs. minority status and who gets to define this status. It was also immediately apparent what the consequences would be of such a reopening of the debate, when representatives of some of the observer governments of Asia hastened to point out that indeed there are no indigenous peoples in their countries — “everybody is indigenous and there are only national minorities”.

On the other hand, it was immediately apparent also that there was outrage for this expressed position among indigenous representatives, many of whom (especially from Asia and Africa) spoke on this item to dissociate themselves from this position. It fell to a diminutive young woman representing native Okinawans to flatly let Dr. Martínez know that defining who is indigenous is beyond his purview. Even more striking was noticing that a study that reaches these conclusions does not include any case studies from either Asia or Africa, which was also objected to. At any rate, Martínez’s position appears to encounter opposition within W.G.I.P. itself. Another W.G.I.P. member, Judge El-Hadji Guissé (from Senegal) strongly critiqued this position as concerns Africa, based on the criterion of special relationship to the land, and also noted that some populations who do not have their ancestral lands anymore claim their identity based on language. I

have not yet had the time to read the study carefully, but I believe it deserves attention and possibly official comment to W.G.I.P. It will also be interesting to read it in conjunction with another study, that of Dr. Daes on indigenous peoples' relationship to land. The latter was scheduled to be discussed at this session of W.G.I.P., but due to an insufficient number of comments being received prior to the session, it was rescheduled for discussion next year. I'll be happy to share these materials and ideas on these topics. It is also worth noting that indigenous peoples and land was proposed as a possible "principal theme" for next year, although intellectual property rights was also proposed, as well as the continuation of language and education.

One final matter of importance was the continuing debate on the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous peoples within the U.N. system, stemming from a recommendation made by the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993. There was discussion centering on an apparently widespread perception that it was unclear in the original Vienna formulation exactly what the mandate of this forum would be and what form and level of participation indigenous peoples themselves, governments, and N.G.O.s would have in it. There was also concern that this forum might be considered alternative to W.G.I.P., and therefore that there might be attempts to terminate W.G.I.P. — which indigenous representatives clearly did not want to see happen — or that alternatively, W.G.I.P. might be "taken hostage" into discouraging the forum in order to avoid its own termination. One suggestion that seemed to have some support was that this forum might take on juridical functions, as part of the establishment of international mechanisms for judging or advising on violations of indigenous peoples' rights, and be able to enforce its rulings, impose sanctions, etc., and that therefore it should not have to respond to governments (although it should be formed by both indigenous peoples and governments). It was stressed that this new organism should be complementary, not alternative to W.G.I.P., and that the two should work in close concert. An ad hoc working group was formed to consider this permanent forum proposal in February 1999.

Debate on this issue thus continues. It also seems to be enmeshed with issues concerning (lack of) funding for U.N. agencies and initiatives dealing with indigenous peoples, due in part to dwindling support of member States and to the restructuring of the U.N., as well as to the tendency of member States to earmark their contributions for specific uses — support for activities related to indigenous issues tending not to be one such use. W.G.I.P. itself is in a funding crisis, and funding for the rest of the Decade of Indigenous Peoples (based on member States' voluntary contributions) also seems to be dwindling. This was, of course, a depressing note toward the end of the session. Nevertheless, two important initiatives undertaken by W.G.I.P. will continue: 1) the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, a member-State-funded grant program that covers travel and per diem for indigenous representatives to attend W.G.I.P. sessions or the meetings of the ad hoc working group on the Draft Declaration (only 48 out of maybe 800 indigenous participants could be funded this year, though); 2) the Indigenous Fellowship Programme, funded through the Voluntary Fund for the Decade of Indigenous Peoples, which brings each year a small group of indigenous interns to W.G.I.P. for six months, to learn the ropes of the U.N. system as concerns indigenous rights. I have the relevant materials on both initiatives, and they will soon be posted on our web site as well as made available in hard copy to interested indigenous persons who may wish to apply.

Overall it was a fascinating, if exhausting, experience. It is clear that, over the years, W.G.I.P. has been a most significant forum for indigenous peoples. Indigenous organizations have managed to build tremendous social, political, economic and logistic support networks in Geneva (including, at the session itself, the extraordinary services of an N.G.O., DoCip, that is devoted to providing documentation, photocopying, computing, faxing, translation and interpreting facilities to indigenous representatives and supporting N.G.O.s — yours truly benefitted too!). Several indigenous groups have managed to build rather strong lobbies by now (and have obtained consultative status with the U.N.), and are heard addressing each and every issue on the agenda. Negotiating the U.N. is a daunting task (as I myself learned), which is now facilitated by all these structures, so some representatives are concerned about starting over with U.N.E.S.C.O., should W.G.I.P. hold its session in Paris next year. On the other hand, mid-way into the Decade of Indigenous Peoples, it is apparent that discourse about indigenous issues needs to move on in (at least) two directions: one is dialogue with member States, upon which it falls to make and implement binding national laws reflecting international human rights standards; the other is synergy among different U.N. bodies concerned with these issues, such as W.G.I.P., I.L.O., U.N.E.S.C.O., W.I.P.O. and the C.B.D. Secretariat. I do not know that we are getting generally close to the former yet, although there are some

significant examples of such dialogue (e.g. in Bolivia) — and I cannot claim to have my pulse on the situation of that dialogue around the word anyway. On the other hand, as I already indicated, from what I was able to witness it seems that there are notable signs of mutual openings between U.N. agencies. It remains to be seen how far that process will go.

Activities in Geneva also included a meeting with Jeff McNeely, Co-ordinator of the Biodiversity Policy Programme at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (I.U.C.N.) and TL. Advisory Panel member, who proposed collaboration on matters of biodiversity-linguistic diversity relationships for an article in a forthcoming Encyclopedia of Biodiversity; a meeting with Gonzalo Oviedo, Head of the People and Conservation Unit at the World Wide Fund for Nature (W.W.F.), who proposed collaboration on a cross-mapping of biodiversity and ethnolinguistic diversity in the context of W.W.F.'s "Global 200" project (200+ high-priority areas for nature conservation); and a meeting with Diego Gradis, Executive President of Traditions for Tomorrow, an N.G.O. specializing in partnerships with Central and South American Indian communities seeking to preserve and foster their cultural heritage (some of their projects include language revival, and we may have a good deal to learn from Traditions' experiences in this field).

Finally, before and after Geneva I had meetings at U.N.E.S.C.O. in Paris. My main objectives there were to make contact with the Division of Languages, newly established within the Education Sector; to try and meet with the persons in charge of the U.N.E.S.C.O. grants for the study of endangered languages; to acquaint myself with the Culture Sector's initiatives concerning cultural diversity; and to find out about the activities of the Indigenous Peoples' "Focal Point". I also had some meetings at the Division of Ecological Sciences of the Science Sector, in particular with Malcom Hadley, editor of the U.N.E.S.C.O. journal *Nature and Resources* that will publish my paper "Language: A resource for nature" in which TL. is mentioned. This Division does quite a bit of bioculturally-oriented work, including the protection of sacred sites and application of indigenous knowledge to community development (the latter through the People and Plants Initiative in which TL. Board member Gary Martin is involved).

In the Division of Languages, I met with Director Joseph Poth and Program Specialist Anna Maria Majlőf. Within the Education Sector, language issues have traditionally been dealt with in the context of language pedagogy and language policy. The new division has inherited this focus, while stressing the need to elaborate new policies that will promote multilingual and multicultural education and respect for linguistic diversity and language rights, through various initiatives such as the Linguapax Program (to foster a culture of peace through linguistic diversity and plurilingualism) and the forthcoming Report on the World's Languages (to appear in 2001 and to be revised periodically after that, providing information on the status of the world's languages, analyzing language-related problems and conflicts, and promoting awareness about the importance of linguistic diversity). The Report will be drafted on the basis of a world-wide survey conducted by U.N.E.S.C.O. Extea, a U.N.E.S.C.O.-affiliated N.G.O. based in the Basque Country in Spain. (I have materials on this survey, also to be posted on the web and paper-distributed for those interested). While linguistic diversity and language endangerment are explicitly mentioned among the Division's areas of concern, indigenous and minority languages as such are not, at least as yet, but they are clearly implicated in both concepts. Much interest was expressed in TL.'s perspectives, and we were invited to prepare a short article on TL. for the Linguapax Newsletter (see Annex III), consider further collaboration with the Division, and undertake the procedure for official TL. affiliation with U.N.E.S.C.O. (consultative status, on which we will soon get to work). I also learned that, while there will be no follow-up on the Draft Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights (an N.G.O. initiative), which was handed over to U.N.E.S.C.O. in 1996 but considered unfavorably by member States, the Division anticipates that the elaboration of new international standards for the protection of linguistic rights will be part of their activities.

Because the status of the world's languages is one of the Division's main foci, I was interested to find out how this new work connects with that done so far by U.N.E.S.C.O. on endangered languages. I learned that prior work (the Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing, the Red Books on Endangered Languages) was done mainly through the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (which, as some of you already know, also administers the U.N.E.S.C.O. grants for the study of endangered languages). The Council (better known by its French acronym C.I.P.S.H.) is not a branch of U.N.E.S.C.O., but an N.G.O. that has been affiliated with U.N.E.S.C.O. since 1948, (i.e., almost from the inception of U.N.E.S.C.O. itself). It is a coalition of international and national learned societies and national academies,



## ANNEX I

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 BIODIVERSITY: TREASURES IN THE WORLD'S FORESTS
 A FORUM IN THE "FORESTS IN FOCUS" EXPO 2000 PROCESS
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Schneeverdingen, Germany, 3-7 July 1998

## WORKSHOP III

## INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURAL AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

1 - Historically, indigenous and traditional peoples have been seen only as inhabitants of the forest and objects of study like "natural species". However, since the Convention on Biological Diversity (C.B.D.) was signed in Rio in 1992, "knowledge innovations and practices" of "indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles" (Art. 8-j), customary practice (Art. 10-c), and traditional technologies (Art. 18-4) have been guaranteed by over 177 signatory countries. Increasingly, international organisations (including U.N.E.S.C.O., F.A.O., U.N.E.P., I.L.O., W.T.O., U.N.D.P., I.U.C.N., etc.) are recognising the central importance of local communities and their traditional ecological knowledge — expressed in their languages and cultures — in the conservation of forests and biodiversity.

This includes the recognition of:

- the active participation of communities in all phases of biodiversity conservation and forest management;
- destruction of forest resources provokes loss of knowledge and cultures, ignoring the fundamental importance of the spiritual connection with the land and nature;
- sacred sites as centres of important forest and biological diversity, and that many presumed "natural ecosystems" have been moulded by human intervention as anthropogenic or cultural landscapes (as recognised by the U.N.E.S.C.O. World Heritage Convention);
- biodiversity as being holistic and inseparable from the human family and society, and therefore can never be reduced merely to components or molecules;
- the need for consent and benefit-sharing agreements including full disclosure, prior informed consent and equity;
- indigenous and traditional peoples' alliances and the need to support their own efforts and activities, and especially their self-determination;
- specialised knowledge of women, elders, children and knowledge specialists, often expressed through the collective knowledge of gender and age groups, lineages, clans and local associations;
- the central importance of land, territorial and tenural rights, given that many state policies alienate community lands and resources;
- the identification of who precisely are "indigenous peoples" should principally be left with the peoples and communities themselves to decide, as guaranteed by the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, I.L.O., and the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- nation state sovereignty cannot override basic indigenous and human rights.

2 - There is an "inextricable link" between linguistic, cultural and biological diversity. Indigenous and local peoples see language, culture, nature and land as intimately related parts of the same whole. Language is the main carrier of culture and main instrument for creating, transmitting and developing knowledge, including knowledge about the environment, the forests and biodiversity;

- The loss of linguistic diversity is estimated to be even greater and faster than the loss of biodiversity (possibly up to 90% of the 5 —7000 existing languages becoming extinct before the end of the next century). This loss of languages leads to loss of knowledge, including ecological knowledge, with grave consequences for humans and the earth.

- Therefore, indigenous and local peoples are engaging in a struggle to maintain or revitalise their languages and cultures at the same time that they struggle to preserve or recover their lands and resources.

3 - In view of these international activities and processes, the "ecodiversity-geodiversity-biodiversity" model (expressed in the opening session of this conference) must include cultural and language diversity of different peoples, and their knowledge systems. Unfortunately, the prevailing scientific/economic paradigm has been used to separate indigenous peoples from their land bases and natural and intellectual resources by ignoring their cultural and spiritual values. This dominant, top-down approach has fuelled biopiracy and other forms of exploitation and destruction of bio-cultural diversity.

4 - Traditional Ecological Knowledge (T.E.K.) encodes the relationship of human beings with their natural and spiritual environment. It is holistic and encapsulates intellectual, cultural, spiritual, behavioural and material elements transferred over generations, including:

- perceptions, beliefs, cosmologies,
  - attitudes, opinions,
  - practices, experiences, skills, technologies,
  - traditions, innovations,
  - artefacts, tools, and other material objects,
  - trees, seeds, plants, crops, animals,
  - local institutions, such as womens' groups, tenure systems, healers associations,
  - procedures, processes and local authority structures,
- T.E.K. should not be seen in opposition to "Scientific Ecological Knowledge". Rather, common ground, complementarity, collaboration and synergism should be sought to better tackle the conservation of forests and biodiversity. Both are part of the same human endeavour to create order out of disorder;
- The T.E.K. approach specifically focuses on the philosophies and cosmovisions on which indigenous peoples base their management and conservation perceptions and practices, but it also develops specific research methodologies to extrapolate "subjective" factors at the individual level to "objective" variables at the system level;
- T.E.K. is relevant for bio-cultural diversity conservation & management of forest resources, as it:
- provides new opportunities for collaborative research & development
  - provides alternatives for sustainable use
  - provides indigenous environmental assessment
  - provides alternative conservation methods & practices
  - contributes to the development of alternative philosophies of nature and the environment
  - contributes to the policy planning & implementation process at various levels.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1 - Protecting forests and biodiversity requires protecting the cultural and linguistic diversity of the indigenous peoples, traditional societies, and local communities living in forests and other biodiversity-rich environments — including their cultural and spiritual values.



## ANNEX II

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TERRALINGUA: Partnerships for Linguistic and Biological Diversity

STATEMENT on item 5 "Indigenous Peoples: Education and Language" of the agenda of the XVI session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, July 27 — 31, 1998.

"Thank you very much, Madam Chair, for allowing me to offer the following comments on item 5 of the agenda of the current session of the Working Group, and greetings to all indigenous and non-indigenous participants in this session. I represent Terralingua, an international N.G.O. devoted to supporting linguistic diversity and the connections between linguistic, cultural and biological diversity. I should like to let everybody know that we submitted to the Working Group information on linguistic human rights in education that is included in document E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1998/2, now available for those interested. I will not repeat this information in detail here. I should also like to inform interested parties that right after the end of today's session at 6 p.m., a Terralingua workshop will be held in which issues relevant to the principal theme "Indigenous Peoples: education and language" will be discussed. Information on the workshop is posted outside.

Terralingua believes that there is an inextricable link between language, culture and land for Indigenous Peoples; therefore, we support their linguistic and cultural human rights along with land and resource rights, according to the principle of self-determination. Indigenous languages are carriers of most of the world's linguistic diversity and of a wealth of knowledge, beliefs and practices continuously developed over hundreds or even thousands of years. However, Indigenous Peoples' languages as well as their cultures and lands have faced and continue to face severe threats due to the external forces of colonialism, imperialism, and now economic globalization. In most cases, linguistic assimilation has been a key tool for disempowerment of Indigenous Peoples and for their cultural and economic assimilation into so-called "nation-states", alienating Indigenous Peoples from their cultures and lands, and depriving them of their own identities, distinctiveness and self-definition. This also increases the risk for humanity to converge onto the same "cultural blind spots", that is, maladaptive solutions to human problems that are detrimental to human survival and a peaceful and sustainable existence.

Linguistic genocide, as defined in Art. 3.1. of the 1948 U.N. International Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, is still perpetrated, directly or indirectly, in many parts of the world. Just yesterday we heard about a particularly poignant example concerning the Mon people of Burma. Many international instruments (including the U.N. Charter, the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) prohibit linguistic discrimination, yet beyond the non-binding preambles they do not specify duty-holders and their obligations in this connection. International instruments are urgently needed that will accomplish this. The Draft Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has a good coverage of linguistic human rights, including in education (particularly Articles 14, 15, 16 and 17), and is the best existing framework for the integrated protection of linguistic, cultural, land and resource rights for Indigenous Peoples. We strongly urge the special working group of the Commission on Human Rights to work rapidly toward the approval of the Declaration.

We are also aware that an N.G.O.-initiated Draft Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights was handed over to U.N.E.S.C.O. in 1996, as the first attempt at a comprehensive universal code of linguistic human rights, both individual and collective. However, this Draft was not considered favorably by most U.N.E.S.C.O. member states, and there has been no follow-up. Given the current collaboration between the U.N. Commission on Human Rights and U.N.E.S.C.O., we strongly urge these two international bodies to work jointly on a revision of this Draft Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights or a new such Declaration that will have a good chance of approval by member states, while still ensuring adequate coverage of linguistic human rights, including in education, for Indigenous Peoples. We also urge these two bodies to work on this in close consultation with Indigenous Peoples themselves, as has long been the commendable practice of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

the very foundations for their equal and peaceful dialogue with other groups. Therefore, we work to foster appreciation and support for linguistic and cultural diversity and respect for linguistic rights worldwide.

We also recognize that, for indigenous and other local peoples who still live in close contact with, and vital dependence on, the local ecosystems, their languages and the cultural knowledge they carry additionally provide what has been described as an “inextricable link”, both material and spiritual, with the land and its biodiversity, traditionally promoting respect for and sustainable use of natural resources. Terralingua’s work has shown remarkable overlaps between the world’s areas of biological megadiversity and areas of highest linguistic diversity, suggesting that the cultural and biological manifestations of the diversity of life on Earth are mutually supportive. However, this balanced, perhaps co-evolved relationship of humans with the environment is disrupted and ultimately breaks down when assimilation of indigenous and other local peoples by majority languages and cultures occurs, inducing language shift and loss of traditional means of subsistence and ways of life, and often producing conflict. Indigenous and local peoples lose a central element of their linguistic and cultural integrity and of their very livelihood, and the world loses the many lessons it could draw from the solutions these peoples have devised for living mindfully and sustainably on Earth. Thus, Terralingua also works to promote the integrated protection and continuity of all forms of diversity: linguistic, cultural and biological.

Aware of the establishment of the Division of Languages at U.N.E.S.C.O., and of the very many goals we share with it, Terralingua recently made contact with the Division. We salute this new development within U.N.E.S.C.O. and look forward to collaborating to, and providing input into, the Division’s activities and initiatives in favor of linguistic diversity and world peace.

For additional information about Terralingua, write to:
Terralingua: Partnerships for Linguistic and Biological Diversity
P.O. Box 122
Hancock, MI. 49930-0122. U.S.A.
Email: gws@mail.portup.com

or visit our web site:
<http://cougar.ucdavis.edu/nas/terralin/home.html>

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CORRESPONDENCE FROM MEMBERS

From: Dr. Eleanor Frankle Hecht
Scientific Linguistic Investigator, I.N.A.H., Mexico.

I have encountered other reasons for [language endangerment and maintenance] from those that are usually presented, especially with regard to Mayan. A number of years ago I was in Cozumel, Q.R., Mexico, for 6 days. Even in such a brief time in field work, I learned of the dire situation that existed there. Grandparents were so downhearted that they wanted to leave Cozumel, since their children and grandchildren did not want to acknowledge their Mayan origin, but only insisted that they were Mexicans. The reason for this attitude was the simple fact that they didn’t want to be discriminated against, and believed that as Mexicans their loyalty would not be questioned. Well, I succeeded in talking with a small number of these younger people, and was able to convince them of the wonderful heritage they have as Mayans, and should not hesitate to recognize that, as Mexicans as well. There had been any number of difficulties, since many of the older generations had no knowledge of Spanish and could not communicate with younger folk. A number of them began to accept my point of view and even stated that they regretted their previous attitude. That is only one type of endangerment which came from the native speakers themselves.

Dra. Eleanor Frankle Hecht
Direkccion de Linguistica
Paseo de la Reforma y Gandhi
México, D.F., SP 11560.

3) the undeniable historical validity of Ngarrindjeri sovereignty over their land and the absence of a treaty or deed with the colony;

4) that the track record of appallingly low standards in intercultural diplomacy cannot be allowed to persist unchecked;

5) that any negative or sceptical descriptions of the Ngarrindjeri be held accountable in the context of their one hundred and sixty year old political struggle for cultural survival;

6) that each of the following activities are reproachable in the eyes of the international supporters of the Ngarrindjeri:

- 1) physical destruction of sacred sites;
- 2) disrespectful media reports;
- 3) ill-conceived Royal Commissions;
- 4) hostile parliamentary acts

Terralingua is attempting to alert responsible people around the world to the interconnectedness of cultural and biological diversity. If biological diversity is important for a sustainable global ecology, then different ways-of-life expressed through language and culture, have an equally important part to play in contributing dynamically to that essential variety in life's formation processes.

No attempt should be made to proceed to build a bridge to Hindmarsh Island in South Australia owing to the sensitivity of this Ngarrindjeri heritage area and the intercultural conflict this proposed development has generated. Future development schemes must necessarily engage Ngarrindjeri traditions more astutely and thereby avoid these kinds of impasses.

We trust you appreciate the seriousness of the matter at hand, and await your considered, but prompt reply.

Sincerely,

Terralingua Board

ADDRESSED TO:

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Politicians:

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The Hon. Dean Craig Brown, Minister for Human Services, c/o Parliament House, Adelaide 5000, South Australia.

Premier John Wayne Olsen, also Minister for Multicultural Affairs, c/o Parliament House, Adelaide 5000, South Australia.

The Hon. Michael David Rann, Leader of the Opposition, c/o Parliament House, Adelaide 5000, South Australia.

The Hon. Sandra Myrtho Kanck, Representative for the Democrats in the Legislative Council on Matters of Aboriginal affairs, c/o Parliament House, Adelaide 5000, South Australia.

Media:

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The Editor, Advertiser Newspapers Ltd., 121 King William St.,

Adelaide 5000, South Australia.  
(major negative commentary during the Royal Commission;  
generated much of the scandal which led to the R.C.)

Mr. Christopher Pearson, Editor of the Adelaide Review  
The Adelaide Review Pty. Ltd.  
1 Dequetteville Terrace, Kent Town 5067  
South Australia.  
(newspaper — regular publisher of derogatory articles)

Companies involved with the bridge construction contract:

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Mr. David O'Sullivan, Managing Director, Built Environs Pty. Ltd.,
Civic Structural and Building Contractors, 200 East Tce.,
Adelaide 5000, South Australia.
(company contracted to date to construct the bridge)

The Chief Exective [no name yet], Westpac Banking Corporation,
c/o State Administration Head Office,
2 King William St
Adelaide 5000, South Australia.
(financier of the halted development at Hindmarsh Island)

NOTE: The Ngarrindjeri Nation is seeking financial support in the way of contributions towards the Ngarrindjeri Justice Fighting Fund, which is being raised by the Ngarrindjeri Nation.

** For further information on the fighting fund, please contact the Ngarrindjeri Lands & Progress Association Inc., who are administering the fund on behalf of the Ngarrindjeri Nation:
(Tel.) 61 08 8575 1557;
(FAX) 61 08 8575 1448

Donations may be made to:

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Ngarrindjeri Justice Fighting Fund  
c/o Ngarrindjeri Lands & Progress Association Inc.  
P.O. Box Association Inc.  
P.O. Box 126  
Meningie South Australia 5264.  
(this is a postal address for Camp Coorong)

Other addresses for making Ngarrindjeri contacts include:

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Ngarrindjeri Heritage Committee
Attn.: Mr. Peter Rigney
22 Margaret St.
Murray Bridge 5257 South Australia.

Point McLeay / Raukan Community Council
Att: Mr. Henry Rankine, O.A.M.
c/o Post Office
Point McLeay 5259 South Australia.
Tel.: 08 8574 0064

I think "killed" is really a key word here, and in this sense I'm afraid I can't share David Crystal's seemingly lighthearted way of putting it: "[English] was always in the right place at the right time" [in his book "English as a Global Language", 1997]. What Crystal neglects to take into account is the amount of pressure that went and continues to go along with the spreading of English (and other major languages) around the world. These languages have not just innocently and innocuously imposed themselves as the "languages of greater socioeconomic opportunities". They have imposed themselves through forced acculturation of indigenous and minority peoples, often through the actual prohibition (even by law!) as well as denigration of these peoples' languages and their cultures, and in many cases even actual physical punishment of indigenous or minority individuals for speaking their languages (witness, close to home, the historically documented treatment of Native Americans in boarding schools, beaten and whipped for speaking their languages). These phenomena continue unabated to this day. I heard horror stories during the 16th. session of the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Population in Geneva last July. And just to give you another example, see the attached piece from the Endangered Languages electronic list, on the linguistic situation in Belorussia. (I am also putting in the mail for you a copy of a review [in European English Messenger 7:1, Spring 1998] of Crystal's book by colleague Robert Phillipson, which expands significantly on these points). More often than not, these circumstances can only be described in terms of linguicide, as defined by the U.N. (see the U.N.E.P. chapter I sent you for the definition [L. Maffi, T. Skutnabb-Kangas and J. Andrianarivo forthcoming: "Linguistic Diversity". In: "Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity", ed. by D. Posey. United Nations Environment Programme]). It is *literally* a matter of killing languages (as well as the people who speak them, sometimes physically, always morally).

When these elements are taken into account, then I believe one begins to get a rather different perspective on why, as Ladefoged argues, indigenous and minority parents may "proudly" decide not to teach their children the mother tongue [as reported by Ladefoged in his 1992 article in Language]. When one takes all these other factors into account, then one does begin to wonder whether such decisions may be called "choices" at all, as I point out in the U.N.E.P. chapter. True, who is a linguist to tell a speaker whether they were right or wrong in their decisions. But I believe it behooves linguists to say *who else* is wrong when indigenous or minority language speakers come to the point of giving up their languages. These decisions *never* happen in a vacuum or *only* because the parents see greater opportunities for their children in the majority languages. I'm afraid that to confine oneself to saying "who am I...", or "[English/Spanish/ Russian...] was always in the right place at the right time" is either plain naïve, or worse.

I am saying this in the hope that it might stimulate you to inquire into the other side of the picture, and to report on it to your readers. Also, I think that it is important for readers not to come away with the feeling that all that is happening in the world today is the unstoppable march of English and the other dominant languages, and that all we can do is mourn the loss of the small ones. All over the world we are witnessing an explosion of indigenous and minority peoples' initiatives for the preservation or revitalization, and continued development, of their languages and cultures. It is not just linguists who are running around trying to document dying languages before it's too late. The speakers of these languages are taking charge. It would be GREAT to see a follow-up article of yours focusing on these other aspects of the picture. For leads about indigenous/minority language revitalization you may want to look at the correspondingly named section in the U.N.E.P. chapter. Among people you may wish to talk to are Prof. Leanne Hinton (Linguistics, U.C. Berkeley), Profs. Jane Hill and Ofelia Zepeda (Anthropology and Linguistics, U. AZ., Tucson), Prof. Marie Battiste, Education, U. of Saskatchewan. University of Hawai'i is an excellent place to learn about the revitalization of the Hawaiian language. And, of course, you could talk to Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer, whose book ["Endangered Languages: language loss and community response", 1998] you cite. And so on — these are only examples in the U.S. and Canada, but they could be multiplied from all over the world. I believe that, to get a balanced picture, readers should know what other forces are at work in this context.

Once again, many thanks for your sympathetic article. I am looking forward to hearing from you on these thoughts. Best regards,

Luisa Maffi
President, Terralingua

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Indigenous Peoples Coalition Against Biopiracy

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A Conference on North American Genetic Research and Native Peoples

in Polson, Montana

at the Kwataqnuq Resort on October 11 & 12, 1998.

Hosted by The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and  
the Montana/Wyoming Area Indian Health Board

Dear Friends:

Please circulate this conference information to your networks. We especially would like to get the word out to tribal communities. Since many tribal governments and organizations are not on electronic mailing lists it would be helpful to fax this information to tribes in your area. Alternatively, you can send me contact names and fax numbers and I will fax the materials. Thanks for your help.

Debra Harry, Co-ordinator,  
Tel: (702) 574-0248  
FAX: (702) 574-0259  
E-mail: dharry@niec.net  
Pager text messaging: 7028480073@mobile.att.net  
<http://www.niec.net/ipcb>

The primary audience for this conference are leaders in tribal governments and programs who have the responsibility to address issues of genetic research and its impacts to their respective tribes. The conference will bring together an impressive list of speakers and resource people representing the scientific, legal, bioethics, governmental, and tribal communities. Topics to be addressed include: the science of genetics, domestic and international genetic research protocols, repatriation and archaeological issues, policy models for tribal genetic resource protection, and the ethical and moral implications of genetic research for tribal peoples.

This will be the first major conference to address the impacts of human genetic research on tribal peoples, bringing together a broad base of tribal representatives from throughout North America. The Conference will provide a forum to discuss the protection of human and tribal rights in the face of genetic research in the future. Because indigenous populations represent a significant percentage of the world's human diversity, they are also priority subjects for genetic research. A number of research projects such as the Human Genome Diversity Project (H.G.D.P.), the National Institutes of Health (N.I.H.) Environmental Genome Project, as well as numerous independent research projects, are interested in collecting human DNA samples from Indigenous peoples. These research efforts raise significant issues for tribes and will require access to information, expertise, and analysis of the legal, political, social and cultural implications of genetic research. The comprehensive nature of the conference agenda will help tribes make better, informed decisions on genetic research issues.

Genetic research generally, and projects such as the H.G.D.P. raise a complex range of legal, ethical and social issues which concern Indigenous peoples. Current legal protocols governing the conduct of research on human subjects fail to recognize the rights of groups, like tribes, to control genetic material and information shared collectively by the group. While tribes have recognized rights and jurisdiction over their territories and membership, recognition of collective intellectual and cultural knowledge, and genetic resources, are yet to be written into law and policy. In this new age of biotechnology, indigenous knowledge

and biological resources are greatly threatened by appropriation. This conference will help tribes explore options to protect their biological resources from exploitation.

Conference organizers have also issued "A Call for Papers" to thoroughly examine any of the aforementioned topics. A summary of these papers will be presented at the conference and published for international distribution. The paper size is unlimited but must include a one page summary or an abstract of the content. Send papers to: Ms. Judy Gobert, Salish Kootenai College, P.O. Box 117, Pablo, MT. 59855; or e-mail <judy\_m.\_gobert@skc.edu>. For more information on submitting papers or for conference details, call Judy at 406-675-4800.



I am writing from the Taiga Rescue Network (T.R.N.). T.R.N. is an international network of Non- Government Organisations and Indigenous Peoples and Nations, working for the protection and sustainable use of the Boreal Forests. A short background on T.R.N. is at our web site: <http://www.sll.fi/TRN/> .

In the near future T.R.N., together with the Estonian Green Movement (E.G.M.) is organising an international conference called "Boreal Forests of the World IV: Integrating Cultural Values in to Local and Global Forest Protection". The Conference will take place in Tartu, Estonia, on 6-8 October, 1998. Some information on the preliminary conference programme is listed below.

This conference is the fourth one in the series of international conferences on boreal forests held by T.R.N. all over the boreal forest region since its foundation in 1992. The conferences have brought together representatives from research, industry, government, N.G.O.s, indigenous groups, local communities and media interested in the future of the world's boreal forests. The themes of the conferences have varied from boreal forest ecology to world trade and the social significance of the forests.

Until now, most of the debate concerning forest management has been set in terms of the conflict between economy and ecologically sustainable development/ biodiversity. Social values have been reduced to mean jobs created in local economies by forest related industries, forsaking the much broader and deeper cultural and spiritual values attached to the forests by indigenous and other local people.

With this conference T.R.N. and the Estonian Green Movement wish to raise the cultural values' relevance to an equal status as biodiversity, economy and jobs in the discussion over the future of the boreal region. The ability of the globalised forest industry to take local cultural values into consideration in their operations, at home as well as abroad, is one of the themes discussed at the conference.

A broad, vivid and fruitful discussion is best achieved with a wide participation of different interest groups. With this letter we welcome you to participate in the conference — to discuss, to make new contacts, to learn about the views of the boreal region N.G.O.s and indigenous people, as well as other interest groups. For more details on how to register, please see the enclosed conference announcement.

Background information about the conference can also be found in Estonian Green Movement's Internet website at <http://www.online.ee/~roheline/mets/conference.html> .

Best wishes,  
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For details of this conference, please contact, preferably by e-mail or FAX, the conference co-ordinator:

Taime Puura,  
Estonian Green Movement,  
P.O. Box 318, Tartu, EE2400, Estonia.  
Tel: +372 7 422 598; FAX: +372 7 422 084; or  
E-mail: [for-est@erl.tartu.ee](mailto:for-est@erl.tartu.ee)

Preliminary program:







This announcement invites pre-applications for graduate fellowships in academic disciplines relating to environmental management including physical, biological, and social sciences and engineering. These Graduate Fellowships (offered by the E.P.A.) for Master and Doctoral level students in environmentally-related fields of study are intended to help defray costs associated with advanced environmentally oriented study leading to the Master's or Doctoral degree.

Subject to availability of funding, the Agency plans to award approximately 100 new fellowships. Master's level students may receive support for up to two years. Doctoral students may be supported for a maximum of three years. The fellowship program provides up to \$34,000 per year of support. This amount covers a \$17,000 annual stipend, \$5,000 for authorized expenses, and up to \$12,000 for tuition and fees. Actual annual support may vary based on length of fellowship award and tuition and fees.

Closing Date: 10 November, 1998.

This request for applications is available in HTML and PDF formats on the N.C.E.R.Q.A. Web site at URL:  
[HTTP://www.epa.gov/ncercqa](http://www.epa.gov/ncercqa)

NOTE: U.S. citizens and legally resident aliens of the U.S.A. are eligible to apply. Before a fellowship is awarded, the resident status of all aliens will be confirmed with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

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#### ANNOTATED LISTING OF USEFUL/INTERESTING SOURCES

From: Andres Edwards <aedwards@linex.com>

"Tibet: enduring spirit, exploited land"; by Robert Z. Apte and Andres R. Edwards.  
 Heartsfire Books, U.S.A.. Tel. (800) 988-5170.

We have recently published a book, "Tibet: enduring spirit, exploited land", which focuses on the environment and cultural heritage of Tibet. In the book we describe the traditional livelihood of Tibetan nomads and farmers and the current challenges and environmental impact brought about by the rapid economic development occurring in China. The material is ideally suited as a case study for a course on the repercussions of economic development on an Asian culture, as well as for individuals with an interest in this region of the world.

This is one of the few publications that describes in a clear, effective way the current environmental situation in Tibet within an historical and anthropological context. The source material for our book came from an oral history project where we interviewed former nomads and farmers living in India, Nepal, and the United States. Their stories of thriving on the Tibetan Plateau highlight the values of nomads and farmers who have an earth-based wisdom acquired over many generations. Their skills include animal husbandry, farming, wildlife management, social structures, and health care, and illustrate a valuable asset which is being threatened by uncontrolled development marked by clear-cutting of forests, soil erosion, mining, pollution and a population-transfer policy.

The environmental ethic of co-existence with the environment without depleting the earth is natural resources is a model for the world to study. Tibetans and other indigenous cultures face a challenge as modern society exploits the land and undermines traditional values. In "Tibet: enduring spirit, exploited land" we explore alternative scenarios for a viable solution to the issues confronting Tibet which could perhaps be duplicated in other regions of the world.

Educators are eligible to receive an examination copy for 50% off the cover price. If you are interested in purchasing an examination copy of the book for possible course adoption, please contact Heartsfire Books at (800) 988-5170.



