

FINAL REPORT

Contract Reference: DSI97COO30

Project Name: (H173) Third Conference of the IAI-TPTF Nagpur, India

Activity Number: WW113601

Project Phase: Completion of Project

Duration: 15 February - 31 May 1997

Recipient Organisation: International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forest.

Date of Report: 15 August 1997

Reporting Period: from 15 February - 31 May 1997

1. Context for the activity/programme at the outset:

The Third Conference of the International Alliance of the Indigenous-Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests was planned to be held in Nagpur, India in March 1997, bringing together 125 members of the Alliance, which includes representative organisations of tropical forest dwellers from all around the globe. The Conferences are the central to the functioning of the Alliance, enabling indigenous forest peoples to develop concrete strategies to increase indigenous participation in international decision - making in the areas of human rights, ecological justice, social development, culture and education, and facilitate indigenous policy formulation, intervention and collaboration at regional and international levels.

The first Conference of the Alliance was held in Penang, Malaysia, in February 1992 at which the Alliance was created and the Charter of the Indigenous-Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests was defined. The second conference was held in Iquitos, Peru, in August 1993. Both Conferences were highly successful in establishing policies and modalities for indigenous co-ordination and interaction with national, regional and international policy - makers.

2. General Aims; target group

- 2.1 To strengthen regional, inter-regional and international co-ordination and networking of members;
- 2.2 To discuss key issues, problems and responses by indigenous-tribal peoples of the tropical forests;
- 2.3 To discuss and agree Alliance policy in relation to the key international institutions and processes affecting indigenous peoples:
 - UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
 - UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples
 - UN Decade for the world's Indigenous Peoples
 - Implementation of Agenda 21 in relation to Ips including participation in CSD meetings and Intergovernmental Panel on Forests
 - Convention on Biodiversity
 - Indigenous Peoples Policies of the multilateral development banks
 - Parks, Protected Areas and Conservation Programmes in Indigenous Territories
 - Indigenous peoples and trade
 - Guidelines/ Code of Conduct for Scientists, Researchers, NGOs
- 2.4 To agree basic activities in the next two years;
- 2.5 To receive reports on the Alliance activities, functions;
- 2.6 To strengthen the unity within the Alliance;
- 2.7 To assess the Alliance relationships with other indigenous peoples organisations and other key players on the Tropical Forests.

3. Activities planned:

3.1 Local Secretariat Activities

The major Conference administration was carried out by the National Secretariat in Delhi along with the local Secretariat in Nagpur. The National Secretariat was responsible for the formation and co-ordination of the National Organising Committee, Local Organising Committee and the various Sub- Committees constituted for carrying out the activities for the regional strengthening, leading up to the 3rd International Conference of the Alliance. The National Secretariat was also responsible for co-ordinating the other activities such as regional workshops in India on the Conference and related issues, preparation of a Situationer on Indigenous - Tribal Peoples of India, Translation of the charter of the International Alliance into 8 local languages; Indigenous-tribal Artist poster workshop; Exhibition on Adivasi life, Science and Culture and Mobilisation of Cultural groups for the Conference.

Besides this local activities, it was to co-ordinated with the South Asia regional members of the Alliance to facilitate their participation to the Conference, in terms of regional mailings, ticketing and travel arrangement including the internal travel of the international delegates.

The National secretariat along with the members of the National Organising Committee took responsibility to inform and get necessary clearance from the various concerned Ministries, from the Government of India for the smooth holding of the 3rd International Conference.

3.2 International Secretariat activities

The International Technical Secretariat was responsible for fund raising and financial management, ticketing and travel arrangements for international participants, international mailings and communications, and preparation of Conference documents.

3.3 Preparatory Meetings

3.3.1 Local Preparatory Meeting

Five National preparatory meeting by the South Asia regional co-ordinator and the National Organising Committee of the international Alliance members in India and South Asia for the Conference were planned.

3.3.2 International Preparatory Meetings

Two international preparatory meetings by the International Co-ordinating Committee of the international Alliance were planned.

3.4 Conference Activities

3.4.1 Conference Participants

It was planned to have 125 participants drawn from eight tropical forest regions as follows:

Central America & Caribbean	15
South America	20
Anglophone Africa	8
Francophone Africa	8
South Asia	30
South East Asia	12
Bahasa Region	12
Maritime Asia & South Pacific	20
Total:	125

A limited number of non-governmental organisations with a proven record of working with indigenous peoples would also be invited to the conference as observers and workshop participants.

3.4.2 Programme and Agenda of the Conference

Draft Conference Programme of Activities and Agenda

Pre - Conference:

February 23- Arrival in India

February 24-28- Visits to Local Indigenous/ Tribal Communities in 5 regions

March 1-2 - Arrival to Nagpur

March 3-8 - Conference

The following Agenda has been agreed:

Day 1 - March 3

AM

1. Opening Session of the Conference
2. Inauguration of the Indigenous Exhibition

PM

3. Regional caucuses and co-ordination for the eight Alliance regions on the following:

- Regional Situation and Items for Regional Reports
- Recommendations and Interventions based on the Agenda
- Resolutions

Day 2 - March 4

4. Reports and Actions on Reports

AM - 8 regions of the Alliance / Urgent Action Resolutions

PM - International Co-ordination Committee

- International Technical Secretariat

Days 3 and 4 - March 5 and 6

5. Discussion on Key Policy Areas

Aims of these Sessions:

- To affirm indigenous peoples perspective on the four themes and to present members' experiences
- To provide information to our membership about key international processes and institutions

- To present current Alliance Policy and Action
- To have a general discussion on strategies, policies and actions

Day 3 - March 5

AM - Plenary Presentation of working papers on the four themes:

- INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND HUMAN RIGHTS
- INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL RIGHTS
- INDIGENOUS ECONOMIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CONSERVATION

PM

8 Regional workshops on the themes of the conference

Day 4 - March 6

Reports on Regional Recommendations

Plenary Discussions on International alliance Strategy

Day 5 - March 7

6. Adoption of a Plan of Action on the 4 themes and Resolutions

7. Discussion on Conference Declarations

Evening - Cultural and Social Evening

Day 6 - March 8

8. Press Conference

9. Public Rally

Any adjustments:

The visits to the tribal communities in 5 different regions of India was cancelled due to the Indian government advise not to visit the localities. Also, instead of a public rally, a cultural programme was held instead.

Planned implementation period:

The 3rd Conference was originally planned to take place January 1997, but due to non- availability of the venue, it was moved to March 1997.

4. **Activities Carried Out**

4.1 Preparatory Meetings

4.1.1 Local Preparatory Meetings

Four national preparatory meetings and one ICC-NOC and local organising Committee meeting were held in preparation for the 3rd conference of the International Alliance.

The 1st national preparatory meeting was held in Delhi on 20th March, 1996. It was attended by delegates from different parts of India. In this meeting, pre-conference activities were chalked out including setting up of work groups and various committees. It was also decided to set up a national secretariat in Delhi.

The 2nd preparatory meeting was organized in Nagpur on 19th & 20th July, 1996. With two participants from Nepal and representatives of local organizations (Nagpur) and from other parts of India. Delegates from Pakistan and Bangladesh could not attend the meeting even though they were also invited.

During this meeting India was divided into five regions to ensure better participation of grassroots based organisations in the hosting of the 3rd International Conference. A National Organising Committee (NOC) was also formed consisting 3 members from each 5 regions (the regions are South India, North-East India, Gondwana, Western India and Jharkhand) and 6 associate members representing non-governmental organisations who have been actively involved in the Indigenous Peoples struggle.

The 3rd preparatory meeting was again held in Nagpur on 1st September, 1996. In this meeting it was decided to hold regional workshops as part of the preparatory work for the 3rd Conference and to strengthen solidarity for joint action amongst the mass based struggle organisations in the region.

Sub-Committees under different heads such as exhibition committee, souvenir, cultural, exposure trip, conference kit and publicity materials, media and press etc. were formed.

The NOC and local organizing committee had a one day meeting with the ICC on 15th October, 1996 in Nagpur. Reports from both the national and international Secretariats were given on the preparatory works being taken up. During this meet the final venues and dates of the Conference were decided.

The 4th preparatory took place on 10th January, 1997 in Nagpur. During this meet the NOC members assessed the preparatory work already undertaken under various sub-committees and were further consolidated. It was also decided to set up a local secretariat at Nagpur.

The NOC members also had meetings with local organising committee members in Nagpur to look after the various logistical aspects of organising the conference viz., transportation, food, accommodation, reception for the conference, medical aid, rally and other cultural celebration programmes.

The November NOC meeting planned to be held in Manipur, North-East could not take place due to some organisational difficulties from the local host.

An emergency meeting of the core group members of the NOC was called to tackle the last hour withdrawal of permission to hold the 3rd Conference by the external affairs ministry. In this meeting the NOC had taken a collective political decision, that Indigenous-tribal peoples issue is an open issue which should be discussed openly with transparency and that there is nothing clandestine about the issue. Hence the NOC resolved to go through proper official channels to get the clearance for organising the Conference.

4.1.2 International Preparatory Meetings

There were two international preparatory meetings by the International Co-ordinating Committee (ICC) of the Alliance. The first one, held October 1996 in Nagpur, India was a combined meeting of the ICC and NOC which agreed the Conference Programme, division of tasks, and coordination of local preparations.

The Second meeting of the ICC was held February, 1997 in London. It looked at the detailed Agenda of the conference and the necessary documentary preparations, finalisation of participants and reports by the International Co-ordinating Committee and International technical Secretariat.

4.2 Local Secretariat Activities

The South Asia regional co-ordinator, the NOC members along with the Delhi Secretariat staffs participated actively in carrying out the activities for the 3rd International Conference of the International Alliance. The Delhi Secretariat was managed by the Secretariat co-ordinator along with two member staffs from the NPMHR secretariat. The staffs of 'The Other Media', a Delhi based NGO who rented out space to accommodate the 3rd Conference Secretariat of the Alliance also help side by side with the co-ordinating activities for the Conference.

One interesting outcome, alongside the preparation for the 3rd International Conference has been the extensive networking and organising work among the indigenous-tribal organisations in India, as well as the South Asia region of the Alliance..

Some of the major activities carried out in preparation and during the 3rd Conference by the National Secretariat in Delhi and local Secretariat in Nagpur, include the followings:

- Translation of the International Alliance charter into 8 local languages and Nepali language.
- A national networking tour to various regions in India.
- Formation of NOC, local organising committee and various other sub-committees.
- Prepared profile of the five regions-North -East, Jharkhand, Gondwana, South and West India.
- Organised thematic workshop on posters and Conference logo for the Adivasi-tribal artist in November, 1996 at Bangalore.
- Organised five regional workshops revolving around the Conference themes with emphasis on the tribal peoples land rights struggle and environment.
- Printed Conference flyers in English and Hindi.
- Organised Conference Kits from different parts of the region like Naga bags, Jharkhand file holder, etc.
- Arrangement for exposure trips to the five regions were made but the trip could not take place due to objections from the Ministry of welfare, Government of India.
- Materials for exhibition of indigenous-tribal crafts, artefacts, seeds, etc. were organised.
- Cultural troupes were organised from different regions in India.

- A video film of the 3rd Conference was made.
- Status report of the Indigenous-tribal peoples situation is being prepared by the NOC.
- A post-conference meeting was carried out in Bombay.
- Souvenir for the 3rd Conference were made .

Further additional South Asia regional strengthening and networking process is continuing , funded separately from the 3rd International Conference of the International Alliance.

4.3 International Secretariat Activities

The staff of the International Technical Secretariat all participated in carrying out the activities in relation to the 3rd International Conference. These included the Executive Secretary, the international secretaries from South America and South Asia and the Office Manager. This activity took up to 1/3 of all office and staff activities for duration of the Project.

A Conference Co-ordinator, Katy Armstrong was hired for the duration of the busiest period- January- March 1997, primarily to ensure the communications and travel arrangements for all the international participants.

The preparatory documents for the meeting were prepared by the International Technical Secretariat, and included the following :

- Report of the International Co-ordinating Committee and the International Technical Secretariat, and including the Financial Report (August 1993 - February 1997)
- Background Papers on the four Main Themes:
- International Institutions and Mechanisms affecting Indigenous Peoples
- ‘Beyond Participation’ : Indigenous Peoples, Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Area Management
- Indigenous Peoples and Human Rights
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Forests : An Introduction

The Conference Kit also included the following documents:

- Rainforest Wisdom, Bulletin of the International Alliance
- “ Indigenous Peoples, Forest and Biodiversity “, a book jointly published by the International Alliance and IWGIA .
- Charter of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests
- Proceedings of the Second International Conference of the Alliance
- Proceedings of the first Asian Regional Meeting on Forests
- Chairpersons Report of the Letecia Intersessional Meeting : “ International Meeting of the Indigenous and Other Forest Dependent Peoples on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All types of Forests”

A set of the Conference Papers and materials in the Conference Kit are enclosed

as an Annex to this report.

After the Conference, the International Technical Secretariat was responsible for the preparation and publication of the Report of the 3rd Conference, as well as the arrangements for auditing and reporting on conference funds.

4.4 Conference Activities

4.4.1 Conference Participants

The Conference was attended by 154 people composed as follows:

Indigenous Delegates from 28 tropical forest countries, comprising:

Central America & Caribbean	12
South America	5
Anglophone Africa	9
Francophone Africa	5
South Asia	31
South East Asia	8
Bahasa Region	11
Maritime Asia & South Pacific	9
Local indigenous communities	45
Indigenous delegates from 2 northern forest regions (2)	
Non-governmental organisations	7
International Technical Secretariat	4
Local Conference volunteers	7

The majority of South American delegates were prevented from attending the Conference by the Indian Government which instructed consular offices in the region not to issue visas. One participant from Malaysia was prevented from attending by the confiscation of his passport by the Malaysian government.

4.4.2 Programme and Agenda of the Conference

The work carried out by the Conference comprised:

- Exchange of information through reports from the regions and the work of the International Co-ordinating Committee and the International Technical Secretariat;
- Presentation of briefing documents and invited Keynote addresses to orientate discussions on the four themes of the Conference;
- Regional workshops to develop national and regional strategies to address the four themes, and proposals for action to be taken by the Alliance;
- Review of the structure and functioning of the Alliance in the light of reports and proposals from the regions, and decisions on action;
- Agreement on Resolutions;
- Production of the Nagpur Declaration.

A report of the proceedings of the 3rd Conference is enclosed as an Annex to this report.

4.4.3 Cultural Exhibition

A cultural exhibition of indigenous arts , crafts, technology, books and material from all regions of the world was on display and for sale.

4.4.4 Cultural Programme

A key element throughout the Conference was the celebration of the rich diversity of indigenous culture and spiritual beliefs. In addition to the inaugural ceremonies performed by the elders from the three different tribes in India, the Conference organisers arranged a magnificent display of crafts and cultural exhibits as well as several sessions of dancing and music by indigenous peoples from the region. The final day of the Conference was a cultural programme, prayers and closing ceremonies from all over the world. A copy of the Cultural Programme is included as an annex to this report.

4.4.5 Press Conference

A Press Committee liaised with the local and national press, with press stories appearing in the local newspaper throughout the week. A press conference attended by representatives from all 8 global regions of the Alliance was held at the end of the Conference. a sampling of press releases is enclosed as an annex to this report.

4.4.6 Conference Report

The proceedings of the 3rd Conference will be published, and will become one of the basic materials for all Alliance members, similar to the Charter of the Alliance, and the Proceedings from the 2nd Conference

Implementation period

Conference are very much time-bound activities. However, the original date of the 3rd Conference was moved from January 1997 to March 1997, mainly to secure the chosen venue for the conference. This however meant, a longer period for the operations of both the local and international secretariats.

There are also some post-conference activities like finalisations of accounts, auditing and publication of the Conference Proceedings. The International Alliance has been able to keep to its timetable for implementation.

5. Interim Assessment of the Activity

5.1 Interim and final goals achieved

The 3rd Conference successfully met the goals that were set by the International Alliance.

In terms of networking, members were particularly happy for the opportunity to meet in regional groups, which allowed regional co-ordination and planning. For the first time, the adivasi and tribal organisations from all regions of India were able to come together in a meeting. The Conference has resulted in the formation of an All-India Forum for Indigenous Peoples, a continuing network for co-ordination of adivasi and tribal organisations in India.

In terms of discussion of key issues, problems and responses by indigenous peoples, this were reflected in the regional reports, conference resolutions and plans of work by the different regions.

In terms of Alliance policy in relation to key international institutions and processes, important information was shared with the members and their responses were noted. Taking advantage of the 3rd Conference, a research was also carried out about "Indigenous peoples participation in Global Environmental Negotiations" through a questionnaire survey of our members. The questionnaire responses will be used in a research to be submitted to the European Commission.

The International Coordinating Committee and the International Technical Secretariat reported to the members on past and ongoing activities, and received members' recommendation on the structure and functions of the International Alliance.

In order to build on the unity of the Alliance, and alliances with others, it was decided to invite indigenous representatives from other types of forests- e.g. the Sammi Council and the International Indian Treaty Council in order to further collaboration with indigenous peoples in all types of forests.

Furthermore, NGOs in close collaboration with indigenous peoples were also invited to the 3rd Conference, and they also provided some services in the Documentation and Translation Team of the Conference.

6. Have the general goals been achieved ?

As mentioned above, the general goals of the Conference were fully met.

Has the target group been reached ?

The National Organising Committee had meticulously prepared all the communications and obtained all the permits necessary from the Indian authorities to hold the 3rd International Conference in India.

However, just one week before the Conference, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs suddenly withdrew its approval for the Conference, without providing any clear reasons to the organisers. It was reported that the Indian Government, specifically those involved in UN Affairs, objected to the use of the term

“Indigenous-Tribal Peoples”. The Ministry then gave instructions to its consular offices not to issue visas to Conference delegates. This unfortunate move by the Indian government prevented the delegates from South America from receiving visas and attending the Conference. Only 5 delegates who travelled as tourists were able to gain visas to India.

Except for the absence of many participants from South America due to Visa problems, all other regions of the International Alliance were well represented.

Shortly after the 3rd International Conference in India, COICA, the Co-ordinating body of Indigenous organisation in the amazon, and regional co-ordinator of the International Alliance in South America held its general assembly. One member from the International Co-ordinating Committee and one member from the International Technical Secretariat attended that meeting to share and discuss with our South American members, the results of the meeting.

Conclusions as regards the skills of the implementing body:

The component parts of the International Alliance: the International Co-ordinating Committee, the International Technical Secretariat and the South Asia Co-ordinator and members in India, all played their parts in successfully planning and steering the 3rd International Conference.

The process of organising the meeting was just as important for strengthening the International alliance, as the substantive agenda during the Conference. The International Co-ordinating Committee was involved in setting the Agenda for the Conference, and in the preparation of reports and keynote addresses. They also identified participants and communicated with members in their regions to ensure widespread attendance and participation. during the Conference itself, the ICC, as Steering Committee for the 3rd Conference met daily, together with the local organising committee to ensure the smooth running of the conference.

The International Technical Secretariat has become well-experienced in organising international meetings, as a result of this Conference, and other international activities. Its skills in technical preparations and documentation are well developed, including ensuring availability of documents in English and Spanish and some in French. its systems for bookkeeping, accounting and auditing are also systematised, to allow efficient handling of project funds. In the original budget, the full services of the International Technical Secretariat were not fully costed, taking into account only the short-term employment of a Conference Organiser. However, during the duration of this project, 1/3 of all staff and office resources were actually devoted to this project.

Further information on the above conclusions:

The above conditions explain the greater than budgeted for costs on Secretariat expenses.

Suggestions for the future/ lesson learned

International Conferences can provide the impetus for strengthening local organisations where the meeting will be held. The success of the 3rd Conference of the International Alliance was preceded by one year preparatory work in India which saw the mobilisation of grassroots organisations in all different regions of India. Thus, there were many local and national benefits, as well as the over-all gains achieved by the Conference.

In future projects of this type, funds should be budgeted for regional communications in the eight regions, and not just in the local and international secretariat. The regional co-ordinators carry out a large part of direct communication with the members and delegates.

The timetable for carrying out a project of this type includes at least 8 months preparatory work and 3 months post-conference work to finalise accounts, reports and publish proceedings. This additional work by the local and international secretariats, need to be adequately budgeted for in the project.

There needs to be flexibility at all times to respond to the actual political conditions in the host country. It is desirable for the International Co-ordinating Committee of the International Alliance during such occasions to meet formally with the authorities of the host country, to engage in dialogue about indigenous peoples rights and welfare.