



WORKSHOPS-DISCUSSION GROUPS

**“Living mountains for a more harmonious development of the world”
Oloron Sainte Marie
Wednesday 29th and Thursday 30th September**

The two days of workshops are the indoor continuation of the three days of meetings between the visiting delegations and the local inhabitants of the 3 Valleys of the Haut-Béarn that will be hosting us. There is a strong connection between these two parts of the meeting. The contents of the discussions during the indoor workshops will be enriched by the contributions that you will make in Oloron as well as experience sharing between local actors in Oloron and their guests.

How should you prepare to participate in these workshops?

Our expectations are that you will come to Oloron as:

- ◆ People who represent a life-style experience, an identity, a culture, a project...
- ◆ Members of a mountain community who is facing or has faced conflictive situations, is committed to local territorial projects involving multiple actors in its advocacy
- ◆ Witnesses to the complexity of issues that your communities are facing
- ◆ Actors living in and committed to mountain communities, involved in actions of peaceful resistance, technical, legal and political support, building citizens' networks, advocacy strategies....

We therefore request that you come to Oloron with documents (texts, PowerPoint presentations, posters, videos etc.) that present the key challenges your mountain community or organisation is facing and that are relevant to the theme of our meeting **“Communities, territories and management of natural wealth”**. Your presentations will be used by the organisers to summarise the diversity and scope of the situations that you represent, as World Mountain Peoples.

We would also appreciate your bringing any documents, videos, photos, objects and products that you consider important to share with the other participants, as they testify to your mountain culture, your struggles and your local projects.

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Wednesday 29th September morning

WORKSHOP 1: Strengths and challenges for mountain territories

Plenary session: 9h-10h30

The first part of this workshop will be held as a plenary session. It will enable us to establish the key ideas for the discussions that we will have during the indoor workshops. It will be based on:

- A summary of the workshops and meetings that will have taken place on Monday and Tuesday
- Work carried out in recent years by members of the WMPA in regional workshops, that highlights the shared challenges confronted by mountain territories as well as the regional specificities .

Breakout session in small groups, 10h30-12h30

Our mountains, territories, and communities have many assets that vary from one mountain range to another. This diversity should not mask the fact that there are also many shared characteristics based on the multiple uses of the space and resources:

1. Renewable natural resources (water, land, biodiversity, forests) and non-renewables (glaciers, mineral resources).
2. Agricultural and herding know-how, forest and water management, handicraft, small scale industries etc, that are based on sustainable production and organisational methods that respect natural balance and careful, fair use of jointly managed non-renewable resources.
3. Cultures that are thousands of years old, and based on collective organisation and strong solidarity.
4. The exceptional scenery is the result of the relationship between communities and the areas they inhabit.

Yet in a world where urbanisation and over-consumption are leading to the increased scarceness of resources, the mountains are now considered as “reservoirs or reserves”. Our mountains do indeed contain and include many natural resources of high quality; these resources are being depleted on a daily basis to guarantee the current and future survival of human society.

The World Mountain Peoples are currently facing many challenges to preserve their historic, intimate or even “sacred” connections to their mountains.

There are many challenges: climate change, deforestation, water, air and soil pollution are all having negative impacts on mountain territories that are affecting the survival of certain communities. Water, land, minerals, and wood are coveted and often confiscated from local communities in the name of the requirements of economic growth and global demand for raw materials and energy. In order to carry out large-scale exploitation of these resources, the land is leased out to companies for many years. Land-grabbing of mountains has become a reality.

Mountain dwellers were marginalised for a long time, as their areas were hard to access, and poorly considered; but they are now facing the challenges of the globalisation of the economy, and a more-or-less legal and legitimate influx of actors who are attempting to gain control over their resources.



These include centralised and/or decentralised States, regional powers, international economic organisations, multinational companies and the NGOs to whom they subcontract, etc. In this context, what is the role of the mountain people's communities, of those who are "natives" or indigenous to the area and who live on and from the mountains?

Agriculture, forestry, pastoralism, handicraft or the small and medium-sized industries are the pillars of our native mountain economies; they are now increasingly threatened by global competitive markets, such as agricultural and finished-good markets. In the name of free markets, the States and international organisations are cutting back on grants for these fragile areas where it is so hard to live. The tools for economic regulation and local planning are gradually disappearing, leaving mountain producers, irrespective of whether they are herdsmen, grow crops or are involved in small-scale crafts and trades, to cope on their own... Facing the inability to preserve their ancestral rights over their territories and make a fair living from what they produce or the services that they provide locally, the mountain peoples are increasingly forced into exile and move to huge cities – where the all too often end up as slum-dwellers – or suburbs that are increasingly inhuman and explosive. Mountain peoples are becoming a cheap source of labour for urban development.

Parallel to this, public authorities (States and the international community) are creating natural reserves and parks to "protect" nature and biodiversity. These areas that are the delight of both scientists and tourists, are marked on maps and fail to take into account the fact that those who live in the area, who farm the land, experiment and build their territories are best placed to guarantee their preservation. Once again, the men and women, the community to which we belong, is being overlooked. Worse still, they are often excluded and pointed to as the cause of "the destruction of nature in its natural state".

In the mountains, internal conflicts and rivalries can deeply affect those who live in one and the same area: men/women, different tribes, castes, towns/rural world, religions, politics etc. These conflicts are the source of many serious violations of human rights (rape, arbitrary imprisonment, repression etc.) that continue to exist in many mountainous areas of the world. The role of the WMPA is to create a space that allows the actors of any given territory to reconnect and discuss matters, and to solve and overcome certain conflicts.

The challenges that the World Mountain People need to take up are those of preserving their special connection to their territories, their resources, their cultures, and their fellow citizens, all of which are a source of strong identities in a world of profound change. They need to take up the challenge of adaptation and innovation, the fight against the loss of their values and specific societies, all of which are threatened by the steamroller of the global economy. By preserving or recovering their specificity, their ways of life and know-how, the mountain peoples will be able to inhabit areas that are alive and open the door to "living well together". Rich of their experience, mountain peoples are aware that territories cannot exist without society or a living culture. They have experience in managing the wealth of their territories as "commons". They have lived for thousands of years and continue to live with the belief that their territory results from the work of people, a collective commitment to preserve the fragile balance between nature and Humankind on a day-to-day basis.

Key questions for workshop 1:

- 1) What are our assets?
- 2) Who are the actors involved in our territories, how and why?
- 3) What recent changes have occurred to our societies and the way natural resources of our territories are being managed and valorized that threaten these resources and our "good living"?
- 4) What challenges are we facing? Lack of means (technical, financial, human), marginalisation, internal or external conflicts etc.?



Wednesday 29th September afternoon

WORKSHOP 2: Proposed and existing actions in different mountain areas around the world

In small groups, 14h30 to 18h

The demands and proposals that World Mountain Peoples are putting forward are essentially based on the fruit of experience and the intimate knowledge of the territories that they have developed in the course of their history. Concrete answers exist or are emerging in every territory; they showcase their resources and counter the threats to which both the mountains and their inhabitants are subjected today.

These actions are many, varied and rich... but all too often overlooked and not given enough consideration. They exist at different levels: (local, national, regional, international) and take different forms: independent structures for managing resources and territories, political projects and actions, techniques and methods for organising work, sectorial organisation, alternatives to dominant economic models, social mobilisation around territorial projects, trade union struggles etc.

These actions share the will to regain control over technical, economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of territories that are threatened by degradation, exodus of populations, or the private appropriation of natural resources. These actions that have been initiated by mountain peoples are based on life-styles and ancestral know-how as well as on specific cultures. They use and develop them to confront the new economic, political and technical contexts that they are facing, and to avoid becoming marginalised.

It is this experience that has enabled the mountain peoples to maintain a concrete and innovative connection with their territories. It has helped them to develop sustainable ways and means of managing and valorizing natural resources that respect natural and human balance. It is the mountains that impose their laws on humankind. But mountain peoples know how to adapt to include them, and to respect nature. In this respect, they can be considered as “innovators”, as their approach is based on reasonable, fair, sustainable management and utilisation of natural resources. An example that illustrates this is the management of the way in which the heritage of commons of land, water and forests is managed, the systems for selling produce and cultural exchange between towns, plains, foothills and highlands, local production and commercialisation that use direct marketing, make the most of scenery, the many activities based on the natural rhythm of the seasons, hosting tourists etc. All over the world, we can see new ways of organising natural resources being developed in mountain ranges. They are open to the rest of the world yet always based on sharing the wealth and responsibilities so that those who live together have a “shared community future”.

It is these concrete local actions that make the mountain peoples of the world legitimate in their demands and the political actions that are aimed at preserving their values and ways of life as well as the shared management of resources. Over centuries, it has shown that Humankind is not a threat to nature; on the contrary, without a human presence and projects organised around the community way of life and that take a shared future into account, mountain territories will be in great danger.

Key questions for workshop 2:

- 1) What elements of our culture and identity can be used as a basis for proposals to promote “living well together” in our mountains and beyond?
- 2) What knowledge, experiences and actions in our mountains can provide us with alternatives to meet the challenges that we and the world are facing?



- 3) What do we share that can help us to put forward strong proposals and allow us to move from resistance to reconquering our mountains?

Thursday 30th September morning

Workshop 3: How can solidarity between mountain peoples be strengthened through organisation?

In small work groups, 9h to 13h

Mountain peoples of the world are the best guardians of their territories, provided they have the resources necessary to continue living in their areas. If we are to rekindle hope, fight against impoverishment and rural exodus, it is important to organise actions rooted in strong solidarity-based networks of world mountain peoples and to include outside partners.

It is not enough to just be aware that mountain people have a shared destiny. We also need to develop strong, lasting solidarities that will allow us to mobilise together and overcome the challenges faced by the world and our territories and regain control of our own development.

There are many local, regional and international organisations that exist in the different mountain ranges that are working on these territories. They all have their own history that shapes their structure, the way they mobilise, the kind of actions they engage in, the communication etc. There are also alliances with partners from outside the mountain areas, who feel concerned by their development (local authorities, NGOs, industries, national and international bodies, consumers etc.)

Based on the experiences you have brought to share, we will highlight:

- What are the key principles of organisation and action that the mountain people of the world defend?
- What messages can we send that can help us develop alliances and partnerships with the rest of society?

We shall also exchange to decide what spaces we wish to become involved in, and we shall jointly work to present the ideas for action plans that put forward our technical, economic, organisational, political and cultural proposals.

- Should solidarity like this be developed at the local level? Or at the level of the mountain ranges, the continents or at the global level?
- Should we build specific solidarity according to the type of threat confronting our territories? (Melting of glaciers, mines, exploitation of forests, big dams, privatisation of land ownership etc.)
- How should we implement solidarity once this WMPA meeting is over, so that it can continue and be consolidated?
- How can we help our projects to converge, link our actions, and, in spite of the distance that separates us, build networks to share and provide mutual support for and between world mountain peoples?
- What type of mobilisation and actions can we initiate locally in our territories as well as at a broader level and on a wider scale?



There are many different political spheres where the future of our mountain territories, our cultures and identities is currently being played out, and where it is important to make our voices heard as well as our determination to keep our mountains alive.

Key questions for workshop 3:

- 1 Different forms of organisation: what organisational principles should the world mountain peoples adopt?
- 2 Means of implementation: what means have we got, and how can we build or strengthen them?
- 3 What messages do we wish to send out to build alliances with mountain peoples and the rest of society?
- 4 What should be the role of the World Mountain Peoples Association (WMPA) as a privileged platform for meeting, organising and building actions?



Thursday 30th September afternoon

Workshop 4: What strategy, what action plan?

Plenary session 14h30 to 18h

It is urgent to address the question as to what actions the world mountain peoples could jointly undertake. In many ways, the mountains represent a leading issue, and we are standard bearers of the idea "Living mountains, for a more harmonious development of our world".

The international agenda for the coming years includes many meetings that will prove to be decisive for the future of our territories, their natural resources and populations. The issues that mountain peoples are facing are cross-cutting ones, and we need to take action in the various agenda for biodiversity, indigenous peoples, climate change, natural resources, crops that are considered or declared illicit etc.

- ◆ The First Global Forum of Producers of Crops Declared to be Illicit (FMPCDI) was held in Barcelona in January 2009, under the auspices of the CERAI, WMPA and TNI. This meeting brought together 60 leaders and producers from Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe involved in growing plants for various reasons (subsistence, tradition); these crops, such as cannabis, opium poppies and coca have been declared illicit; since then, the FMPCDI has created a space for dialogue and expression to enable them to put their proposals to the General Assembly of the United Nations that is dedicated to the global problem of drugs, the UNGASS. It is here that international status is determined for crops and substances.
- ◆ The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) held their 9th session from 19th to 30th April at the UN Headquarters in New York on the theme of "Indigenous Peoples: development, culture, identity". In their report it states that the dominant development model "has shown itself incapable of promoting the cultural, political, social, ecological and economic integrity of indigenous peoples and their communities". It further states that it is essential to "develop a development model based on culture and identity that reflects the vision of the indigenous peoples themselves as well as the perspectives and strategies that respect both their individual and collective rights and the principle of self-determination. They should also be of a nature that is relevant to the situations and the communities".
- ◆ The next United Nations conference on climate change is due to take place in Cancun in Mexico in December 2010. Mountain peoples are among those most affected by climate change, as the speed at which the glaciers are melting has already had serious impacts on their territories and the livelihoods. Bolivia has had a new text included in the official negotiations that includes the proposals that came out of the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth that took place in Cochabamba in April 2010¹.
- ◆ Next December 11th is also International Mountain Day. This year it will be dedicated to Mountain minorities and indigenous peoples. What message do we want to send out, and what actions are we able to organise in our home countries and internationally?
- ◆ The World Trade Organisation has just published their report on world trade (2010); the objective of this is to analyse the extent to which countries authorise trade in their natural resources. The project of commodification of "biodiversity" has begun. There are emerging markets of "eco-systems". They operate on a financial basis. The banks will manage the compensation rights that can be cashed and exchanged for any damage to biodiversity. About

¹ <http://www.cumbrescambioclimatico.org/cancun/noticias/196-cumbre-de-mexico-incluiren-su-agenda-declaracion-de-tiquipaya>



100 governments took part in the creation of the “Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and EcoSystem Services (IPBES)” that is supposed to be created in 2010, the international year for biodiversity. This issue involves highly complex negotiations that are being carried out behind closed doors, which provides us with all the more reason to follow developments very closely. How can we influence decision-making and gain respect for the mountain people’s perception of nature?

- ◆ In 2012 there will be a major international meeting held in Rio, when the Earth Summit of Rio + 20 will take place. It was in the first Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 that mountains first gained international recognition as a major aspect of the future of human society. Chapter 13 of the final declaration refers to the “sustainable development of mountains”. 20 years ago this declaration was alerting people to the fact that: “The environment is becoming degraded in most mountainous regions of the world. This is why special attention needs to be paid to suitable management of mountain resources and socio-economic development of their population, and why it requires immediate action”
- ◆ In Europe, will the CAP reform of 2013 continue to uphold a specific policy for “mountains”?

How can we evaluate the 20 years commitment by the international community to supporting mountains? Will our mountain peoples be present at the Rio + 20 meeting, and if we do decide to go, what demands and proposals do we wish to put forward there?

The issues of the towns situated in the foothills and the mountains are directly related to the way in which the natural resources are managed. We shall therefore examine this question, their status and the specific related issues.

Given the international context that is both rich and dense, it is our responsibility to decide how best the WMPA can have a genuine influence at local, national and international levels. Since the meetings that were held in Chambéry in 2000 and the creation of the WMPA in 2001, our commitment led us to write the Charter of the World Mountain People’s Association in 2003², based on the work of the Quito Meeting (2002). In all the main ranges (Europe, Andes, Himalayas) and more recently in several mountain ranges in Africa, cross-cutting shared work has been carried out to pull together our thoughts on the nature of mountains, and what it means to come from and live off the mountains.

Today, through the project for a “Global Charter of Natural Resources”, that is complementary to our own charter, which is still valid, the WMPA wishes to underline the importance of the management and valorisation of natural resources, as these questions are now at the heart of the expectations of mountain peoples and the survival of their territories. A charter is but an instrument that needs to be moved forward by a strategy of shared actions. This workshop will provide us with the opportunity to discuss the areas where the WMPA should engage itself, as well as the action plan and alliances for the years to come.

Key questions for workshop 4:

1. What should be our priority focuses?
2. What actions should we take?
3. In which institutions?
4. How can the voice of the Mountain Peoples be made heard in the international bodies?

² WMPA website: <http://www.mountainpeople.org/fr/histoire/charte.php>