



Indigenous Forum

Sacred Sites and their Custodians: building resilience to deal with the threats of climate change, extractive industries and loss of ancestral territories

Tuesday May 22, House of International Relations, 9:00 – 17:30
Sacred Natural Sites Initiative, The Gaia Foundation, Sacred Land Film Project

Purpose:

To convene a dialogue with indigenous custodians and others involved in protecting sacred natural sites. The session will enable discussion on the main themes that arise from the earlier ICE workshop on “*Sacred lands - dynamic archetypes for changing times*” (S35), as well as other issues participants raise during the day.

Objective:

The main objective is to share strategies for building resilience of sacred sites to deal with modern threats – from strengthening community governance and ritual practice, to raising public awareness, to engaging in advocacy and education, to registration of sacred sites and developing legal strategies. The participants will discuss common custodian-based guiding principles for the recognition of indigenous sacred sites systems and territories, the IUCN Motion and Guidelines around sacred natural sites in protected areas. They will explore how to strengthen international recognition of sacred sites from an indigenous perspective. The event will re-affirm support for the Statement of Custodians of Sacred Natural Sites and Territories (IUCN WCC, 2008) and the Opinsaht Declaration (ICE, 2010). Participants will also reflect on how best to approach international meetings and film screenings of the “*Standing on Sacred Ground*” documentary series during 2012-14 to gain more support for the protection of sacred natural sites.

The one-day session will open and close with indigenous blessings. The focus will be mostly on group discussion and feedback, for dialogue to be open and free-flowing. It will include the screening of excerpts from *Standing on Sacred Ground* and several other films relating directly to custodians of sacred natural sites.