



## Attends World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, Spain, October 5-14 : Resolution to support UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples passes

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**Akwesasne, NY-** International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP) recently returned from attending the 2008 IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) in Barcelona, Spain from October 5-14, 2008. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network. Formed in 1948 as part of the United Nations system, the IUCN is comprised of governments, NGO's, and scientists from across the globe. Grants from The Christensen Fund and Ford Foundation made it possible for IFIP to travel to the event and provide strong support for Indigenous Peoples' issues and concerns.

Given that Indigenous Peoples' human rights issues are inextricably interwoven with global issues of ecological health and biodiversity, IFIP felt it was vitally important that Indigenous voices and perspectives be expressed at the World Conservation Congress. IFIP attended as an active supporter of Indigenous Peoples' organizations and representatives who attended the Congress.

As one of the many representatives of donor organizations attending the Congress as well as a member of IFIP's Board of Trustees, Ken Wilson of the Christensen Fund said that "in numerous ways, and to a degree unimaginable only ten years ago, the IUCN and its members are increasingly and very concretely recognizing the myriad ways in which the diversity and vitality of the planet are served by deep and honest alliances with Indigenous Peoples. Another manifestation of this was the passing with

98% member support of a resolution on the respectful joint management of Sacred Natural Sites and the publication of a set of guidelines on how to do this developed through long and careful work with the guardians of such sites from around the world, many of whom also attended the congress."

IFIP was provided with an exhibit booth at the WCC thanks to generous support from Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and The Leitner Fund. The booth provided many opportunities for networking and for Indigenous Peoples' concerns to be heard. It was part of a cluster of booths that were part of the *Journey on Bio-Cultural Diversity and Indigenous People*, and was strategically located next to the Global Diversity Foundation. IFIP Executive Director, Evelyn Arce-White stated, "IFIP provided a much needed space for Indigenous organizations to leave their materials at the booth so that it can be shared with all IUCN participants. We also had several donors express interest in joining IFIP's growing network and in learning more about how to increase understanding between Indigenous communities and donors in order to support sustainable communities"

Yale doctoral candidate Cintra Agee, stated, "Yale's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies is honored to have worked with IFIP and other Indigenous organizations and representatives who gathered together to achieve common goals at the 2008 Congress. With successes in so many fields of conservation and sustainable development, a certain highlight was the WCC endorsement of the UN Decla-



From Lt to Rt: Yale doctoral candidate Cintra Agee, Yale student, Vin Conti, Co-founder of Indigenous Law Institute, Steve Newcomb, and IFIP Executive Director Evelyn Arce-White at IUCN

ration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples."

IFIP was also able to sponsor a major reception and several workshops that were heavily attended. A "Global Greengrants Fund" workshop provided an opportunity for Indigenous Peoples representatives to learn about funding support for achieving healthy environments in such areas as Mexico, Brazil, Southeast Asia, and other parts of the globe. "Rights and Resources Group" presented "the experience and perspectives of Indigenous peoples on climate change issues." An "Australia Tropical Forest Institute" session followed up on a previous day's workshop, "Indigenous Cultural Action for Biological and Cultural Conservation and Human Well Being."

The tremendous amount of work accomplished at the WCC by IFIP was in line with its goal of bringing "global awareness of Indigenous issues to the philanthropic community in order to help build capacity for Indigenous communities around the world."