



Protecting Indigenous Peoples and Biodiversity: What synergies?

IDDRI Seminar 19 May 2015

Indigenous Peoples

- c.370 million indigenous peoples (farmers, forest dwellers, pastoralists, fisher-folk)
- Often inhabit areas of high biodiversity. Depend on biodiversity & TK for food, health, income, culture.
- Extensive knowledge about conservation & s. use.
- Make up 1/3rd of the world's poor.
- 5000 different cultures. 50-90% of languages will be lost by 2100 (UNESCO).
- Often face marginalisation, displacement from their territories, denial of land rights, and adverse impacts from large-scale development (UNPFII).

Indigenous Peoples slow deforestation

- Brazil: Deforestation greatly reduced partly because tradl communities have **secure rights** to c. ¼ of forest.
- Indonesia: Deforestation far higher - govt. slow to recognise rights (WRI report *Securing Rights, Combatting CC* >> 130 studies & satellite data).
- Guatemala, Bolivia, Tanzania: deforestation is much lower in titled community forests than in national parks.
- Nepal & Niger: forests regenerated after community control.
- Panama: Kuna Yala (titled collective territory) far less encroachment than Embera-Wounan (not titled).
- Community leaders are **activists**, risk their lives to defend forests (eg. Brazil, Panama, Indonesia, Kenya/Ogiek).
- Slash & burn – less impact than logging (eg. Karen).

I.P.s conserve agrobiodiversity

- I.P.s have domesticated, improved & conserved 1000s of crop varieties & livestock breeds.
- Rapid loss of crop diversity in last 20 yrs - but ILCs conserve them due to cultural values (*'Protecting Community Rights over TK'* - India, Peru, China, Kenya).
- ILCs plant diverse varieties to reduce risk of crop failure eg. Potato Park's ancestral strategy. PP conserves c. 650 potato varieties (c.1300 types).
- Revival of traditional crops & livestock with climate change.
- ILCs conserve livestock diversity (camels, sheep, goats, cows, chickens, pigs).
- Many agroecological practices are based on TK.



Customary laws promote conservation

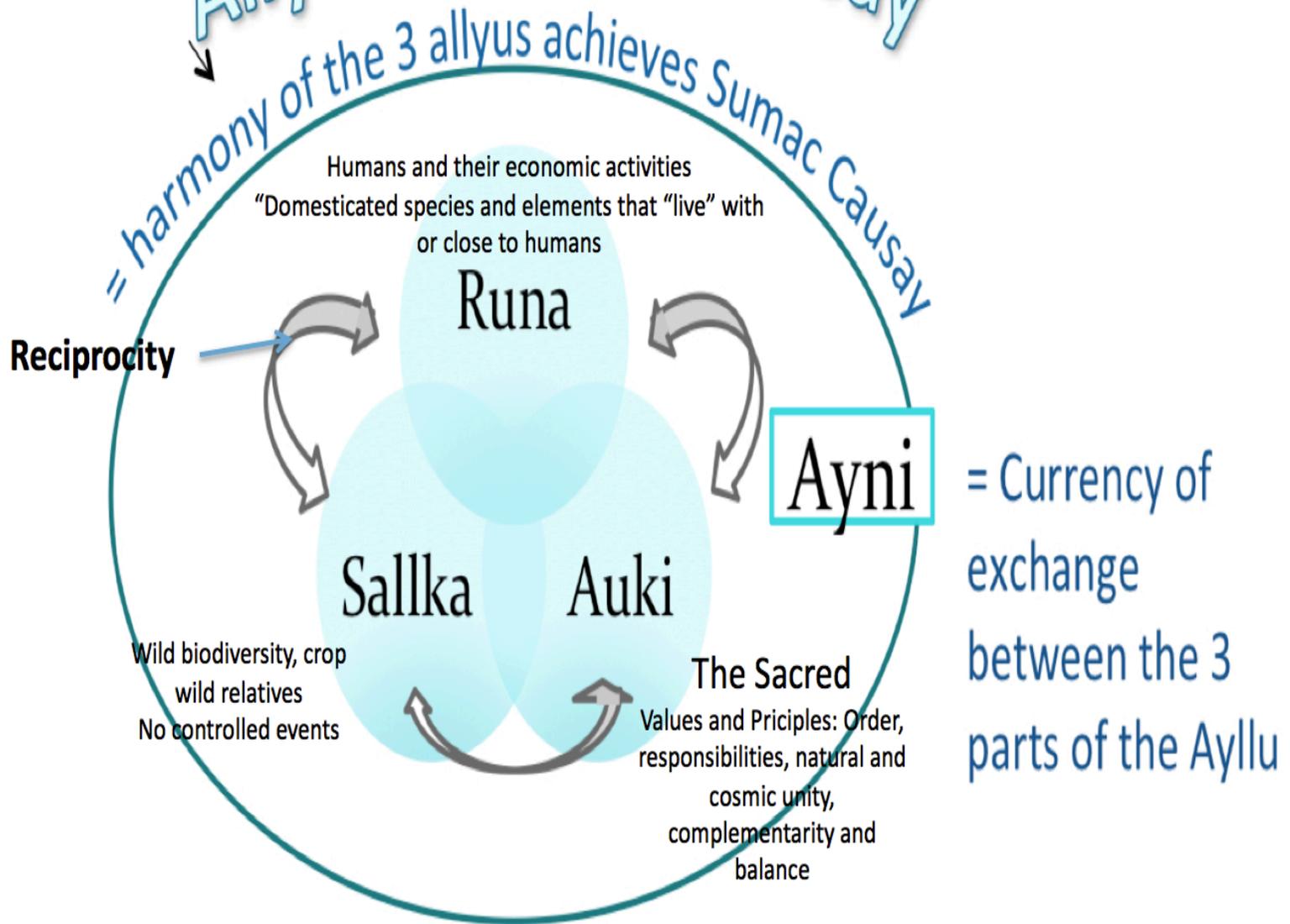
Customary governance, eg. Kaya forests; Ngitili. Customary laws prevent over-harvesting (plants, fish).

Cultural & spiritual values **embody conservation ethics**:

- All nature/land is sacred (spirits/gods)
 - **Equilibrium**: balance/harmony in nature & society.
 - **Reciprocity**: equal exchange with nature & in society.
 - **Duality**: Complementary opposites (traditional & modern).
 - **Solidarity**: helping those in need/equity.
- >> 11 groups in 5 countries (Protecting TK project)

Holistic worldview. Eg. Andean: 3 “Ayllus”: i) human/ domesticated, ii) wild, iii) sacred. Balance & reciprocity bet. them leads to *sumaq causay* (well-being).

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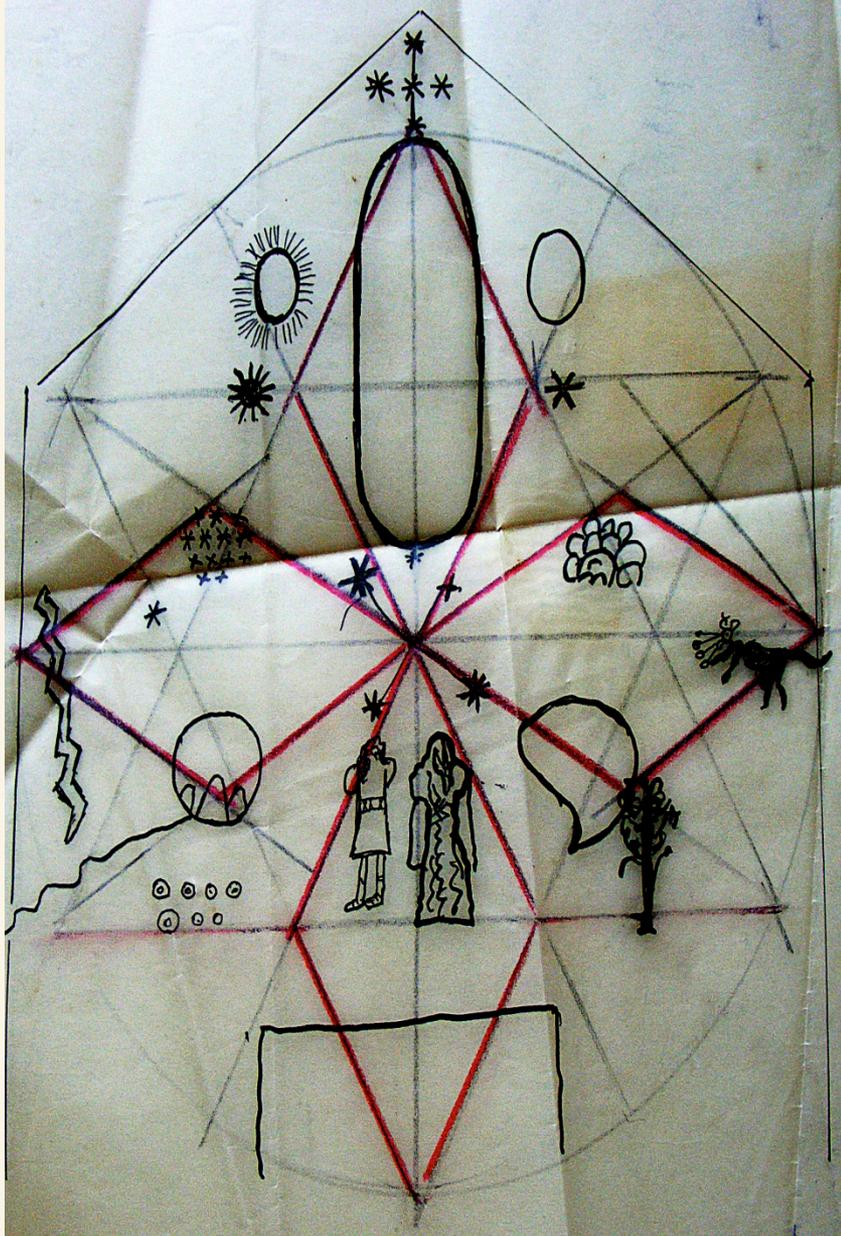
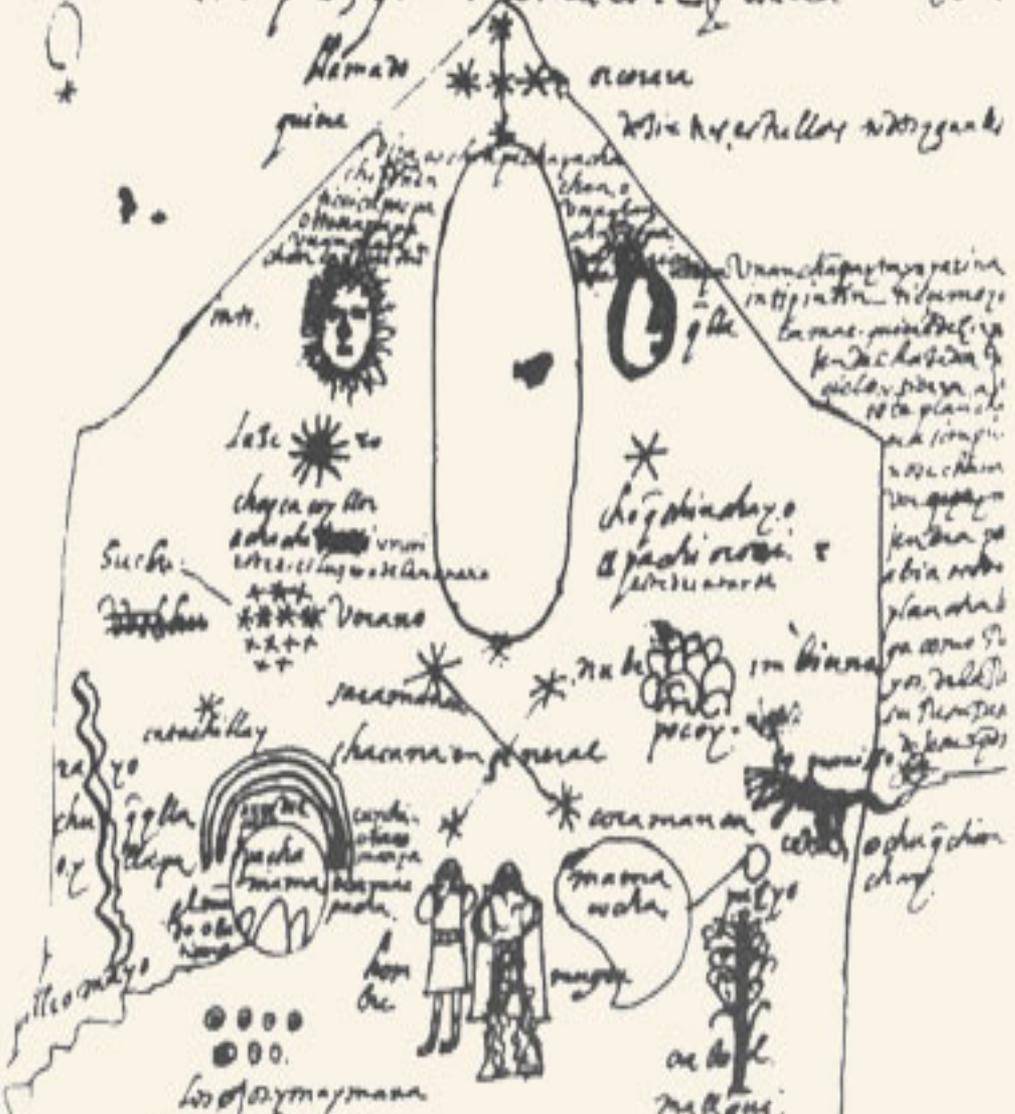


Conditions that promote synergies

- Strong **cultural values**, identity/cohesion & TK systems.
- Legally recognised **land & resource rights** – vital to defend biodiversity + Govt. support to stop encroachment
- Indigenous **leadership**: recognising the validity of IK & Ind. approaches to achieve conservation goals – vital for ownership. Eg. Potato Park highly **participatory** research approach, use ind. concepts & history (pride).
- **Strong Collective** institutions: eg. Association of PP Communities; Inter-Community benefit-sharing agreement; economic collectives; Potato Guardians. (landscape level)
- **Markets** for biodiversity & TK-based products – eg. herbal products & tourism (PP); farm-direct restaurants (China).
- **Linking TK & science** – eg. co-management, PPB, IPBES.

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Potato Park Biocultural Products

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Krystyna Swiderska
19 May 2015



PPB & CSA - Guangxi, SW China



Conditions which weaken synergies

Insecure land rights and resource rights.

- Loss of ancestral land & access to sacred sites (for development & conservation).
- Limited participation in conservation/PA management.

Loss of cultural values, TK, languages due to:

- Unsupportive policies (eg. education, health, agriculture).
- Modernisation; weakening of traditional institutions.
- Racism.

ETC – Erosion of Rights, Technology, Concentration of power. Patents & PBRs. Trade agreements: TRIPs +

Limited markets for traditional crops/products (changing food preferences / consumer demand).

Options to foster synergies

- **Nagoya Protocol** – endeavour to support community protocols; take into consideration customary laws & community protocols. But GR rights depend on domestic legislation.
- **Community protocols** – Assert rights over GRs & NRs/land, based on customary laws & relevant national & intl. law; re-affirm cultural values.
- Strengthen biodiversity governance internally – eg. PP Inter-Community Agreement. Process is very important (10 BCPs reviewed, PLA 65).
- Nagoya Protocol has limited scope - much TK/GRs already collected & GR erosion.
- Need **repatriation** - eg. Potato Park-CIP agreement repatriated 400 native potato varieties.



Protecting Bundles of Rights

- **UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIPs)**. Rights to land, NRs, GRs & TK. Signed by many countries (inc. US) - but not legally binding.
- **ILO Convention 169**. Rights to land & NRs. Legally binding – but few countries signed/ratified (Lat Am).
- **FAO Treaty & Farmers' Rights** – protection of TK; benefit-sharing from PGRFA; participation in national decision-making regarding GRs; rights to save seed. But lack of implementation.

Options to foster synergies (cont.)

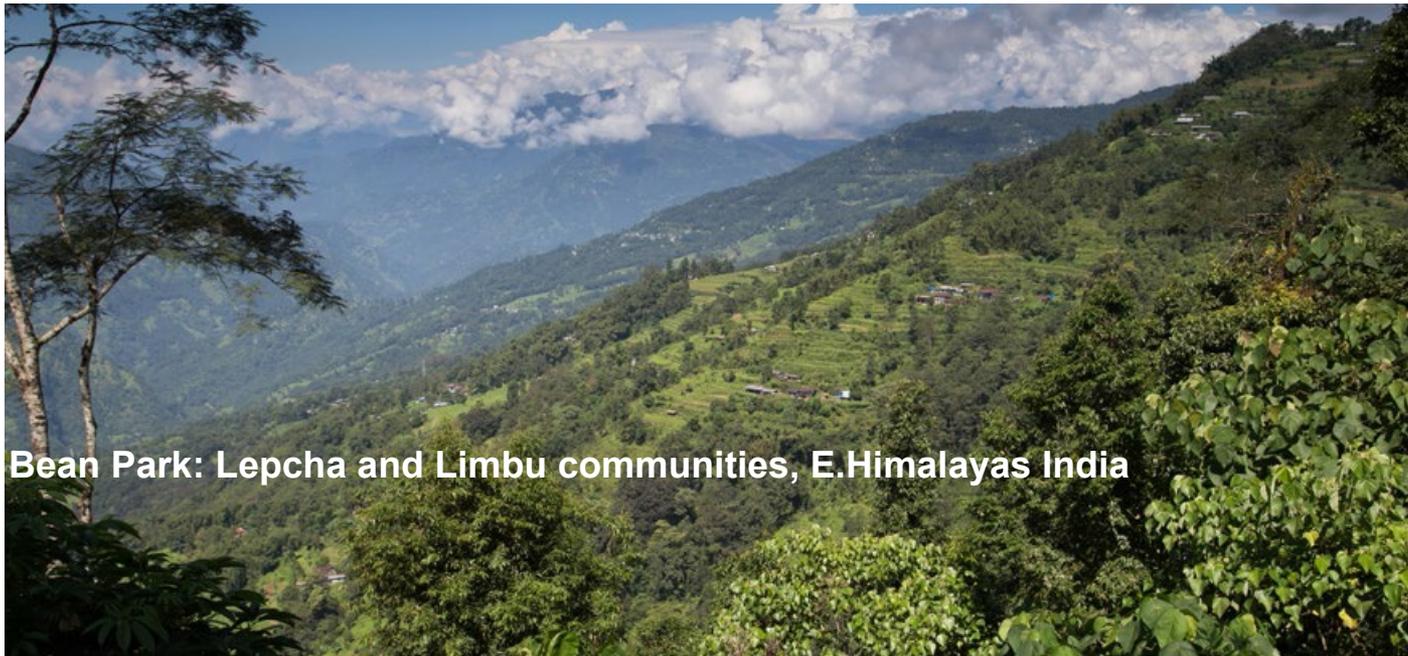
- **Mainstream** TK, culture & participation in conservation, NRM, agric. research, development & trade policy.
- Strengthen **TK-based innovation** for adaptation, eg. breeding, domestication, seed exchange.
- Take a holistic approach - protect **biocultural heritage** as a whole –biodiversity, landscapes, TK, cultural and spiritual values, customary laws.
- Use BCH to develop tools & policy proposals, eg:
- **Biocultural Heritage Territories** – use indigenous peoples' memories and lived experiences for biodiversity conservation & endogenous development.
- **Biocultural Heritage Indicator** – label/certification to protect & promote BCH-based products.



Potato Park, Písaq, Cusco, Peru



Seed Park: Stone Village, Lijiang, Yunnan, SW China



Bean Park: Lepcha and Limbu communities, E.Himalayas India



Cassava Park: Cultural Village, Rabai, Mijikenda Coastal Kenya

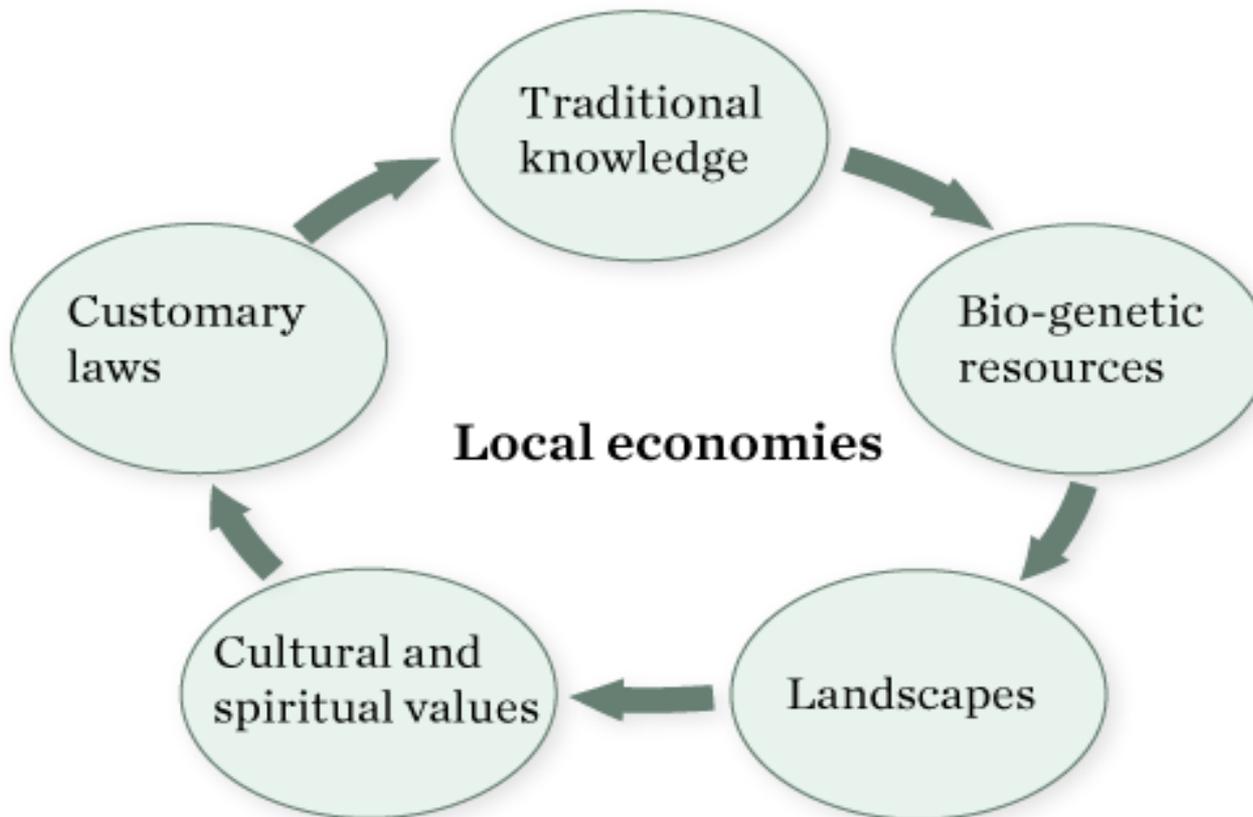
“Biocultural Heritage” concept

- Responds to separation of rights over TK & GRs (state owned).
- Reflects holistic worldview (PP) & Traditional Resource Rights (D. Posey)
- Developed by partners at ANDES-IIED Cusco workshop, 2005:

“Traditional Knowledge, innovations and practices which are collectively held and inextricably linked to:

- the diversity of genes, species and ecosystems
- traditional resources and territories,
- cultural and spiritual values,
- customary laws and institutions, and
- local economies”

5 inter-dependent parts



Evidence of the inter-linkages – 11 ethnic groups

- Use of **biodiversity** sustains & renews **TK**.
Restoration of traditional crop varieties restores TK & cultural values.
- Ancestral **landscapes** and access to sacred sites (eg. forests, mountains) sustain cultural & spiritual values & TK transmission (mountains teach TK)
- Landscapes sustain biodiversity & seed networks.
- **Cultural values & beliefs** require TK transmission & conservation of crop diversity.
- BCH concept – useful research framework to understand indirect drivers (complex systems).

Thank-you! Merci!

www.bioculturalheritage.org



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