WORLD MOUNTAIN PEOPLE ASSOCIATION

Report

Tiquipaya Meeting (Bolivia) on Climate Change

&

Stay in Bolivia: setting up the World Meeting at Oloron Sainte-Marie (French Pyrenees)

Programme

“COMMUNITIES, TERRITORIES AND MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES”

April-May 2010

WMPA (World Mountain People Association)
50 boulevard Malesherbes - 75008 Paris - France
Tel.: +331.42.93.86.60. - Fax: +331.45.22.28.18.
chartepmm@gmail.com
Figure 1: Official poster for the conference

**Political climax in Bolivia: World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth.**

This article appeared in the May 2010 issue of the RELATIONS magazine (Quebec, Canada). http://www.revurelations.qc.ca/relations/

By Marie Mazalto, coordinator of the “Communities, territories and management of natural resources” Programme of the World Mountain People Association (WMPA). Associate researcher of The C.-A. Poissant Research Chair on Governance and Development Assistance, at UQAM (Université du Québec à Montréal), and of CIRAD (French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development).
World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth was held in Tiquipaya, Bolivia, from 20 to 22 April 2010. The summit, initiated by Evo Morales’ socialist government, brought together more than 20000 people from 36 countries. The Government and the organizing NGOs had two goal objectives in mind: to break with the approach that legitimates the scientific expertise exclusively—in order to make the voice of the mountain people heard—, and to find a greater social and political understanding of the potential problems that climate change could pose.

After the failure of the UN Copenhagen Climate Conference 2009, the World People’s Conference was regarded as a challenge set by the Latin American socialist countries (Bolivia, Cuba, Venezuela, etc.) for the Northern countries. Copenhagen Conference revealed the failure of the “international democracy”. Northern countries unilaterally tried to set a pseudo-consensus, revealing their reluctance to co-operate in reducing negative impacts of the productivist development and of the consumist way of life on global warming.

Furthermore, in the medium term the World People’s Conference represents a crucial opportunity to make proposals from Southern countries emerge for the next UN meeting on climate change (to be held at Cancun, Mexico, on December 2010). The Plurinational State of Bolivia, strengthened after the victory of its first “indigenous” socialist government, has initiated the reflexion on the structural causes of climate change. The Tiquipaya Conference was the opportunity to strongly affirm that climate change is a direct consequence of the capitalist development model, which jeopardizes all sources of life.

The conference was regarded as an anti-globalization meeting, because its purpose was to reject the liberal capitalist system. The subject matters were inspired by the Andean indigenous people’s culture (Aymara and Quechua), and by the Western human values (Declaration of the Rights of Man). Discussions centred around the principles that place natural and social balance, as well as the “living well”—as opposed to living better, viewed only as a wild race for individual happiness— in the heart of the socio-economic and political project.

In addition to the Vandava Shiva’s, Naomi Klein’s most keenly-anticipated speeches, as well as that of the Head of State of Bolivia, Evo Morales, and his Venezuelan counterpart, Hugo Chávez, an outstanding number of “self-convened” events—that is, organized by the participants— were carried out in parallel with the core work developed by the 17 working groups. Likewise, far from experts’ discussions, some social groups, NGOs, Northern and Southern representatives, political representatives, citizens, and thousands of Bolivians replied to the call for social dialogue on climate change. Participants spoke, discuss and reported negative impacts of “global capitalism” and of limitation on the access to natural resources in their territories. Country and town people evoked the negative impacts of melting glaciers on the access to water resources; the indigenous people show the social and environmental impacts of mining mega-projects on their territories; some participants said deforestation, pollution, drying up of rivers and lakes were the factors which triggered off the massive rural exodus. Sometimes, climate seemed to be at the same time everywhere and nowhere. Above all, it seemed to be an excuse for silenced voices to state, discuss and take and stand.

The conference, culminating on 22 April, coincided with the International Mother Earth Day proclaimed by the United Nations in 2009, and it was an excellent opportunity to remember that
the future of mankind depends on its ability to identify development model risks and to assume responsibilities in order to defend the “Rights of Mother Earth (Pachamama)”. 

In addition to the statements and reports, the participants outlined the basis of proposed alternatives to the dominant development model, which is based on the unlimited use of natural resources. In the People’s Agreement, that synthesizes the conclusions of the 17 working groups, the proposals were from the concept of climate debt, to setting up a climate justice court, through a projected global referendum on root causes of climate change.

In South America, the meeting led to the opening of an alternate space to address climate change through critical reflection and public mobilization. It only remains for the future Climate Negotiations and for Northern countries to take people’s voices and proposals into consideration.

For further information on the conference and its following events, visit the official Website in English and in Spanish: [http://cmpcc.org/](http://cmpcc.org/)

*Figure 2: CMPCC Closing ceremony*
WMPA’s participation in the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth

Our participation as WMPA in the Climate Change Conference encompassed:

- An increase in the quantity of filmed interviews with mountain people from all over the Andes. We had a meeting with the representatives of the communities in order to understand their relationship with the territory and with the ways of use of natural resources. We have above 20 hours of film, to be edited and displayed at the Oloron Sainte-Marie Meeting: Bolivian miners, the Peasant-Farmer Federation of the Uyuni Desert, a representative of the Chile’s Mapuche communities, a Peruvian leader of a mining-affected community, etc.

- Our participation in setting up a workshop, in collaboration with the Solon Foundation, the NGO Agua Sustentable and the Institute of Hydraulic and Hydrology (IHH) of the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (UMSA), concerning glaciers: “Climate change, glaciers, and socio-economic, human and cultural rights”. More than 70 participants.

- Our participation in setting up the workshop: “How to construct an alliance of mountain countries vulnerable to climate change within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change?” Between 50 to 60 participants. This workshop allowed to strengthen the ties with the traditional WMPA’s partners and to present current actions to the representatives of WMPA’s potential member organizations.
- Attendance to some workshops concerning “Andean Indigenous people’s living well as an alternative to the climate change”, “Mining mega-projects in Argentina”, “Collective rights and Rights of Mother Earth”, etc.

Glaciers: at the heart of the reflections in mountain countries

Glaciers are at the core of the current discussions about negatives impacts of climate change. In Bolivia, Argentina and Peru, among other countries, there is already talk of glaciers shrinkage and negative impacts on ways of live.

![Image of Andean range with text: "Nuestro Derecho al Agua de los Glaciares"](image)

Figure 3: The Andean range, in the heart of the glaciers

I- Glaciers are sings and factors of the global warming

“The rapid melting turns mountain glaciers into a relevant factor and sign of climate alterations. Even if the glaciers have a total surface area (excluding Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets) scarcely larger than that of the French country (~680000 km²), for ten years their rapid melting means –on a global scale– a third (that is, ~1 mm/yr) of the sea-level rise (~3 mm/yr). However, the knowledge on the evolution and functioning of glaciers is very incomplete, owing to the lack of glacier observation. The typical climatic conditions for the mountain areas –snow storms, cold, numerous crevasses, avalanche risks, etc.– make the in-situ measures more delicates. For that reason, only about 50 small-sized glaciers in 160000 glaciers worldwide receive regularly field visits of glaciologist”.

This is an extract from the article “Les satellites aux chevet des glaciers de montagne”, appeared
II- Glaciers are tools to regulate water resources and they are the main source of supply in arid areas.

One of the main functions of the glaciers is its ability to regulate the run-off water supply during dry and warm periods by storing water in the form of ice during cold and damp periods.

- **Human consumption**
- **Irrigation** (Glaciers are water reservoirs which represent the main source for most rivers supplying irrigation water to agricultural areas. The Met Office [Britain’s Meteorological Office] estimates that it could cause a decrease of 20% in agricultural production worldwide).
- **Electric energy** (Most Andean countries get most of their energy supply from hydro-electric production: Bolivia, 50%, Colombia, 73%, and Peru, 81%. This rate could significantly bring down in regions and river basins supplied by glaciers).
- **Ecosystems integrity**: numerous consequences of glacier melt.
  - A large number of species migrate to upper elevations in search of the same climatic conditions.
  - Mountains become a more dangerous environment (melting and erosion).
  - Increase in flood and drought (irrigation-related problems)
  - Increase in risks of contagion from infectious diseases (malaria, yellow fever and dengue vectors, that spread at warmer temperatures).

Mountain dwellers are among the world’s poorest and they run the risk of being the main victims of these changes.

Over the last century, glaciers in the European Alps and in the Caucasus lost about 50% of their area. Over ten years, glaciers in the Swiss Alps lost about 12 of their area, according to a study by the ETH Zurich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich) on 1500 Swiss glaciers. The overall trend is accelerated shrinking.

In Africa, the volume of the largest glacier on Mount Kenya has retrieved about 90% of its area. Between 2000 and 2007, the glacier on Mount Kilimanjaro, in existence for 12000 years, lost a quarter of its area. In the Southern area, the ice shelf has decreased 5 metres during the same period; and the Furtwängler glacier thinned 50%.

III- Glaciers shrinkage threats water supply of 30 million people in Latin America.

- Peru: 10 million people living in Lima depend on the water flowing from the Quelcaya glacier.
- Quito: obtains 50% of the safe drinking water from the glacier basin.
- La Paz: obtains about 30% of the safe drinking water from the glacier basin. Water consumption exceeds demand.
In Bolivia, the Chacaltaya glacier, in existence for 18000 years, started to melt during the 80s and it disappeared in 2009. Scientist initially thought that the glaciers on the region could melt by 2015. Most glaciers could melt within 30 years, jeopardizing access to water. Rainfall in the Andean region tends to decrease with increasing hydraulic stress.

Figure 4: Two mountains in the Andean altiplano: 10 years ago the right one was covered with perpetual snow.

**Argentina: an unsuccessful attempt of Glacier Law**

On 22 October 2008, the two chambers of the Argentine Congress passed a law that established minimum budgets for the protection of glaciers and the periglacial environment.

1. The law required the inventory and monitor of the state of glaciers.
2. It also prohibited certain activities in glacial or periglacial environments.

On 11 November 2008, the President Christina Kirchner vetoed the law, causing public scandal. The mining lobby made tip the balance in its own favour, because they work in periglacial areas. Maria Maffei is the ex-representative responsible for the law.

In June 2009 a binational Chilean and Argentinean demonstration took place (Organization: Don’t touch the glaciers) against Barrick Gold's project (Canadian company). The union of the civil assemblies (Self-convened Argentineans) mobilized and obtained local and provincial victories.
“Communities, Territories and Management of Natural Resources Programme” has started in Latin America…

Figure 5: Jean Bourliaud, Vice President of the WMPA at the Tiquipaya Conference

WMPA developed a collaborative project with some of the people we met.

- During our trip, we met Chantal Liégeois, who is in direct touch with Bolivian communities fighting against a Japanese mining enterprise based in their territory (Potosí, Chilean border). The communities want the enterprise to contribute to sustainable use of water resources (groundwater level) and to allow them to access basic services. We will send them the call for exchange of experiences.
- We have the chance to meet Miguel Villepin, leader of the Andean Coordinating Committee of Indigenous Organizations (CAOI). He informed and invited us to take part in an international Forum on mining at the end of July. The forum will bring together the representatives of the communities from 6 Andean countries.
- We agreed with the ONG Agua Sustentable-Bolivia that they will carry out an ECADIM concerning glaciers and people’s livelihoods at the bottom of the Illimani Mountain.
- We suggested carrying out an ECADIM concerning protected areas and the evolution of Bolivian laws (in particular with regard to the autonomy of indigenous territories) to Fernando Mendoza (WMPA-Bolivia). He seemed well-disposed to carry out it.
- After carrying out the “alliance of mountain countries workshop”, we came into contact with a Chilean NGO, Chile Sustentable, which got engaged to carry out an ECADIM concerning glaciers, mining and water supply in Chilean mountains (Pascualana Project, Barrick Gold Corporation).
- Roger Moreau confirmed us the carrying out of an ECADIM in Argentina concerning mining in Jujuy.
**Whit a view to setting up of the Oloron Sainte-Marie 2010 World Meeting of Mountain People.**

We visit the French Ambassador, Antoine Grassin. There also were: Sabino Mendoza, member of the team of the Bolivian Ministry of Autonomy, and responsible for the Administrative Decentralization Law, which organizes the level of autonomy of the executive powers, including the new power of the indigenous autonomies; Sarah Metais, manager of Agronomes et Vétérinaires sans frontières (AVSF); and Jean Bourliaud. The Ambassador showed his interest in supporting any related activity, for example, a new Seminar (referred to that set up in 2005).

Concerning autonomies and territories, Sabino Mendoza, on behalf of the Ministry, invited the WMPA and AVSF to join the platform of external associations, set up in order to have a group discussion on the topic and to have a common tendency of action.

We participated in a first meeting on: “How can the territories having elected the indigenous status by referendum be financed? The discussion was completely identical to that which caused French mobilization for a specific policy on mountain, fiscal equalisation.

In addition, we establish a very close relation with the Plurinational Public Management School (EGPP), towards its director headmaster and the French envoy. The WMPA, as well as its eventual contribution to mobilize the expertise within the new formations offered to public employees, arouse their interest. In this context, two people financed through the programme could participate at the Oloron Meeting, as part of their course of study.

Therefore, we have a set of activities in line with the heart of the WMPA’s Project, as it was officially presented.

**The WMPA… in Bolivia**

We met up with Dionisio Núñez, Sabino Mendoza and Fernando Mendoza.

- They have planned to set up a restricted meeting on mountains, communities, natural resources and territories to be hold on June (expected participants: some ministries, the NGO Agua Sustentable, The Solon Foundation and AVSF).

- The offspring of this meeting could be applied to set up a larger meeting on August and to write an orientation document carried out with WMPA’s support. Furthermore, they have planned to create an observatory and a Bolivian-mountain people’s way of life defend platform.

**Field study within the confines of the Andean range: gold price rise jeopardizes breeders’ traditional ways of life.**

Field study carried out by Marie Mazalto with the communities depending on alpaca breeding and on gold mining in the range.
She was with the AVSF team for two days in the Apolobamba Reserve, located 150 Km away from La Paz and on the border with Peru. She met all leaders of the territory during her attendance to a workshop carried out by UICN (the International Union for Conservation of Nature). This work resulted in a Framework of reference for the elaboration of a case study in multiple dimensions (ECADIM), with a view to the Oloron Sainte-Marie Meeting. This document is about protected areas and the competition between alpaca breeding and the potential increase in little gold mines located in the territory.

Overall:

The Apolobamba reserve, located in the Department of La Paz, in the very heart of the Andean range, ranges in altitude up to 6000 meters. It is also known as Ulla Ulla. It is one of the 22 protected areas in Bolivia. After it was established in 1972, it was upgraded by UNESCO into a Biosphere Reserve in 1977, and it was renamed Ulla Ulla National Reserve in 1983. Since 1999, the Apolobamba reserve, which encompasses an area of 476526 hectares, has the category of integrated management natural area (The Apolobamba Integrated Management Natural Area-ANMI). It constitutes a mosaic of ecoregions and natural communities.

![Figure 6: One of the latest llama caravans transporting crops from lowland to highland valleys.](image)

This wide variety of landscape is inhabited by an exceptional flora and more than 275 animal species, most of them on the verge of extinction. More known species are Andean bear and vicuña, both being protected species.
Apolobamba Reserve constitutes a wildlife reserve of significant importance. Historically, in the Andean high plateaus, alpaca breeding was focused on garment and blankets making –alpaca produces one of the warmest fibres available– and on its meat. Perched at an altitude of 4500 metres, one part of the “Marka Antaquilla” population depends exclusively on the alpaca breeding.

One of the breeders says: “We depend on the alpaca breeding. There are mines in the territory, but the alpaca is our livelihood. Nothing grows here. If one family depends on 30 alpacas, that’s not enough. It needs much more. One alpaca produces 6 to 8 pounds of fleece every two years.

In 2006, the price of alpaca fleece was 8 to 12 bolivianos (i.e., between 1.14 and 17.71 USD). In 2010, a steady upward trend in prices for alpaca fleece is observed: the breeder gets 17 bolivianos (i.e., about 2.4 USD per pound or 5 USD per kilo). Concerning gold prices, alpaca fleece represents an insignificant source of income for the population.
Aymara local populations inhabiting the high plateaus (4500-4900 meters) have historically depended on alpaca breeding. The gold craftwork manufacturing enabled communities to make some extra income. The inhabitants of Antaquilla remember that their parents and grandparents usually go to seek gold in riverbeds: “When gold price was lower, our parents sought gold in the rivers, armed with a sieve, all was made by hand (Miner from the Gold Drops Mine)”. Over the centuries, the gold and alpaca fibre craftwork manufacturing coexisted, but were not in competition with each other; both played complementary roles in the local economy.

Over the centuries, in Bolivia, the commercial value of gold was not notable; instead it carried a cultural and symbolic value. Throughout the 80s, gold price was higher, but there was not such a gap between the gold price and the price of community’s products. For example, in 1985 the gold price found at Antaquilla was 20 to 25 bolivianos (i.e., 3.5 USD) per gramme. In 2010, the gold price at La Paz is 240 bolivianos (i.e., more than 34 USD) per gramme. In Peru the gramme of gold is cheaper, which is why Antaquilla people only sell gold in Peru in case of emergency.
Figure 9: The increase in mechanized gold mine in the reserved area is jeopardizing the social and ecosystem balance.

The increased presence of mechanized, community-exploited golden mines has been a constant in recent years. This situation is threatening the financial and social balance in the area, which suffers directly from the pressure and changes in global gold and textile markets.