MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN
green for 150 YEARS 1859–2009

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For Immediate Release

SCIENTISTS AT THE MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN AIM TO BRING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE INTO CLIMATE CHANGE MONITORING AND POLICY

(ST. LOUIS): Scientists at the Missouri Botanical Garden are calling for the inclusion of indigenous peoples around the world in helping monitor the effects of global climate change and develop policy. In a special issue on traditional peoples and climate change in the May volume of "Global Environmental Change" published by Elsevier, guest editors Dr. Jan Salick, Senior Curator at the Missouri Botanical Garden, and Dr. Nanci Ross, research specialist at the Missouri Botanical Garden, highlight the role of indigenous people in adapting to and mitigating climate change.

The special volume is a result of a two-day symposium in April of 2007 at the Environmental Change Institute of Oxford. Researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds gathered to discuss how indigenous and other local people are affected by global climate change, and how they perceive and react to these changes. The focus was not only on the plight of indigenous peoples, but also on their resourcefulness and active responses to climatic variation. Attendees discussed how to promote indigenous peoples' voices and actions within climate change research, actions, and policy. The scientific research and results discussed in that meeting are presented in the special issue.

"Indigenous and traditional people are on the frontline of climate change, experiencing unprecedented heat, melting icecaps, droughts, floods and threatened natural resources," said Jan Salick, principal editor of the special volume and an ecological ethnobotanist specializing on Tibetan and tropical ethnobotany. "They are adapting to and mitigating climate changes worldwide. Isn't it time their voices are heard at international climate change forums?"

(over)

ADD ONE: Indigenous People

Salick and Ross maintain that indigenous and other traditional peoples are rarely considered in academic, policy and public discourses on climate change, despite the fact that they will be impacted by impending changes. Their livelihoods depend on natural resources that are directly affected especially by climate change, and they often inhabit economically and politically marginal areas in diverse, but fragile ecosystems. Local peoples are vital and active parts of many ecosystems and may help to enhance the resilience of these ecosystems. In addition, they interpret and react to climate change in creative ways, drawing on traditional knowledge and new technologies to find solutions, which may help society at large to cope with climate change.

Jan Salick is Senior Curator of Ethnobotany at the Missouri Botanical Garden. She works on sustainability of Tibetan plant genetic resources and land management in the Himalayas. Salick is the Past President of the Society for Economic Botany, sits on the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS), and heads the Committee on Traditional Knowledge and Science of IUBS and the International Council of Scientific Unions.

With scientists on six continents in 36 countries around the globe, the Missouri Botanical Garden is one of the three largest botanical garden science programs in the world. Garden scientists conduct the essential work of plant identification, classification, and conservation in locations throughout the globe, focusing its work on areas that are rich in biodiversity, yet threatened by habitat destruction and climate change. Garden researchers collaborate with local institutions, schools, and indigenous peoples to understand plants, create awareness, offer alternatives, and craft conservation strategies.

The Missouri Botanical Garden is the oldest continually operating botanical garden in the nation, celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2009. *Missouri Botanical Garden: Green for 150 Years.*

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<u>NOTE</u>: A digital color image is available by request. Download media materials at www.mobot.org/press.

The Missouri Botanical Garden's mission is "to discover and share knowledge about plants and their environment, in order to preserve and enrich life." Today, 150 years after opening, the Missouri Botanical Garden is a National Historic Landmark and a center for science, conservation, education and horticultural display. *Missouri Botanical Garden: Green for 150 Years.*