



Guiana Shield Facility- UNDP partners with Cobra Project  
to “Share Experiences and Lessons Learned”  
at the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas  
held in Resguardo Indigena, La Maria Piendamó, Caucau Columbia  
13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2013.





The Guiana Shield Facility (GSF) - UNDP Guyana facilitated the participation of the COBRA Project at the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas held in Resguardo Indígena, La María Piendamó, Cauca, Colombia from 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2013.

GSF in fulfilling its mandate of “Promoting conservation and Supporting sustainable development”, acknowledged the relevance of COBRA’s work in the Guiana Shield and as a result, partnered with the project to share experiences, and lessons learned at the V Summit of Indigenous Peoples.

Odacy Davis, Project Manager at

**GSF & COBRA Banners on display at the Summit** Iwokrama International Centre and Ryan Benjamin – Community Researcher, North Rupununi District Development Board, represented the COBRA Project at this event. The GSF funded delegation comprised representatives of GSF/UNDP Guyana, UNDP Columbia, Guyana, Suriname, Acatiseña and Mataven of Colombia.

The V Summit saw over 4000 persons gathered to deliberate on matters of interests to the indigenous peoples of Abya Yala (original name of the Americas) and to prepare their contributions to the First World Conference on the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to be hosted by the UN in New York 2014 .

The Indigenous Summit of Abya Yala is held every four years and this year saw the participation of several countries - Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Guatemala, Chile, Mexico, Honduras, Panama, Uruguay, Colombia, USA, Canada, Suriname , Guyana , French Guiana, Belize, Paraguay and Nicaragua represented by over 40 indigenous groups.

On arrival to Colombia, the Team was briefed by GSF/UNDP Columbia Staff and representatives of the Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC) (summit organizers) who were thereon responsible for our engagement at this event.



The summit opened with a grand indigenous ritual ceremony followed by opening remarks from summit organizers, participating countries and indigenous organizations. All presentations made, echoed the urgent need for protection and conservation of natural resources and most importantly for the rights of indigenous peoples of Abya Yala to govern their land, be respected and granted. Special emphasis was also placed on the role and value of indigenous women in the Abya Yala. To conclude the first day’s events, presentations were made on the “development model” for the peoples of Abya Yala. This was followed by a lengthy period of debate, discussions and proposals. On day two - the summit organized nine round table sessions that dealt with various topic including; the Millennium Development Goals, Right to Self Governance, Right to Free Determination, The Good Life, Rights of the Mother Land, Conference of Indigenous

Peoples in 2014, Territories, Food Sovereignty and Climate Change, Explotación, and Colonización of Indigenous Territories, Education and Health.



Odacy Davis & Ryan Benjamin talking COBRA at Round Table discussion on Territory, Food Sovereignty and Climate Change!

The GSF- COBRA Team participated in round table 6 on **“Territories, Food Sovereignty and Climate Change”**. Odacy Davis of COBRA proposed the recognition and inclusion of “Community –owned solutions” in the approach to address climate change and food sovereignty issues. The Cobra approach and best practices of the North Rupununi indigenous communities were shared with the group. In addition Ryan Benjamin expounded on the importance of indigenous communities documenting and sharing best practices with each other, he did this using the example of the recently concluded sharing of Cobra’s best practices with the community of Kwamalasamutu, Suriname.

On the final day of the summit all the proposals made in each round table session were presented to the entire Summit, after which they were compiled and used to inform the final declaration of the summit. (See final declaration and statement) <http://www.cumbrecontinentalindigena.com/declaracion-de-la-maria-piendam/>

During these three days, Odacy and Ryan used every opportunity to share the COBRA approaches and experiences with individuals and representatives of several indigenous communities and organizations. In addition, and most rewarding, was the exchange session facilitated by GSF/UNDP between the Acatisema/Mataven Team of Columbia and Project Cobra. ( full story in future article). The COBRA Team was also interviewed by many media teams at the summit. (see Cobra featured briefly in this UNDP Columbia video)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2ZhyvmlAcw&feature=youtube\\_gdata\\_player](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2ZhyvmlAcw&feature=youtube_gdata_player)

UNDP Columbia’s photos of the summit

<https://plus.google.com/photos/112718451447909838705/albums/5947481060987772305?banner=pwa%5C>

*“Sharing knowledge and experiences with frontline managers of ecosystems and biodiversity is important....and indeed GSF is committed to building on this emerging partnership between GSF and COBRA.” -*

Dr. Patrick Chesney, Chief Technical Advisor  
Guiana Shield Facility, UNDP - Guyana

This has been a rewarding experience and a great opportunity for the Cobra Project to share its approach while building partnerships with organizations and indigenous communities. As we move forward after this summit, the Cobra Project would be seeking to foster a closer working relationship with the Guiana Shield Facility as we advance the promotion of “local community owned solutions that are addressing emerging challenges related to well being, sustainable development and management of natural resources.