**Category: Obligations Relating to Those in Vulnerable Positions**

**Sub-Category: Indigenous Peoples**

**Name of Good Practice: Community-Based Sustainable Forest Management Plans**

Key Words: Awareness Raising, Conservation, Indigenous, Participation

Implementing Actors: Indigenous Peoples Organisation: Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management; Indigenous Peoples Communities

Location: Belize

Description: The Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management (SATIIM) is a community-based indigenous environmental organization working in the far south of Belize, in a region in the Toledo District that lies between the Sarstoon and Temash Rivers. SATIIM co-manages, with the Belizean Forest Department, the 41,898 acre Sarstoon Temash National Park (STNP). The Park was declared on lands traditionally used by indigenous Garifuna and Maya communities who live in the area. SATIIM was established in 1997 after the communities around the STNP came together to “stake a claim in the management of the land and natural resources in and around the park.” Its mission is to “promote and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and safeguard the ecological integrity of the Sarstoon Temash Region and promote the sustainable use of its resources for its Indigenous People’s economic, social, cultural, environmental, and spiritual wellbeing.”

One programme SATIIM has implemented to protect the rights of indigenous communities to access the natural resources in their traditional lands as well as to prevent environmental degradation of STNP is the promotion of community-based sustainable forest management plans. With the assistance of SATIIM, in 2008 the communities of Conejo and Santa Teresa prepared forest management plans as a way to identify how they could continue to access their customary rights to the natural resources in the park in order to promote their livelihoods and culture, while also preserving the ecological integrity and biodiversity of the STNP. The Conejo Community Forest Sustainable Management Plan has a 20-year cycle while Santa Teresa has a 25-year cycle. Each plan identifies the timber and non-timber resources that each community can harvest based on an ecological survey of the area that the communities conducted themselves after receiving training, and includes mitigation measures for any possible adverse impacts to the environment.

Further Information: SATIIM’s website: <http://www.satiim.org.bz/>; its 2008 annual report: <http://www.satiim.org.bz/download/newsletters-and-updates/annualreport08.pdf>.