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Indigenous Knowledge in Peru

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ABSTRACT Indigenous knowledge protection is a key issue that has been addressed by international organisations during the last decade. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) declared 1993 as the International Year for the World's Indigenous People in order "to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous communities in areas such as human rights, the environment, development, education and health" (CIESIN, 2005). In Latin American countries, there is an increasing concern for indigenous knowledge protection, particularly in Peru, due to its megadiversity and great cultural heritage. This paper analyses the general aspects of indigenous knowledge, intellectual property, author's rights, patents and the international agreements for the protection of indigenous knowledge. In addition, an overview of the importance of indigenous knowledge in the Amazon region is provided. Information on indigenous knowledge in Peru is also analysed. A specific case study on agricultural practices as well as the current situation of medicinal plants in Peru are described. Finally, basic elements for the establishment of indigenous knowledge protection in Latin America, and the options and instruments for the protection of indigenous knowledge are explained.

Efforts need to be added In order to implement interdisciplinary development projects, agreements and national policies in Peru with regard to indigenous knowledge protection, coordination and cooperation at the national and regional levels for protection of biodiversity and the rich cultural heritage in Peru is necessary. This constitutes a challenge for not only the Peruvian authorities, but the whole population.