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Global Biodiversity Outlook 4 proves that we are *not* on track

Increased action is needed – but the right one!

Friedrich Wulf, Friends of the Earth Europe

One of the key issues which this CBD COP will deal with is the mid-term review of the Strategic plan. We are close to the halfway mark to the 2020 target date, but GBO-4 will reveal that individual nations and trade blocs are not on course to meet their commitments to reverse biodiversity decline. Without concerted effort over the next few years, governments are set to miss their own deadlines.

“Four years ago, governments met in Japan to discuss their failure to make progress towards their 2010 biodiversity goals. Today, the talks look set to be depressingly similar: after four years, there has been little action to suggest that governments are serious about meeting their 2020 commitments and responsibilities to nature.”

According to an advance copy of the review, “[the current rate of] progress will not be sufficient to achieve the targets unless further urgent and effective action is taken to reduce the pressures on biodiversity and to prevent its continued decline.”¹ Out of 20 targets, 19 are not on track to be met.

Many CSO representatives are afraid, however, that the wrong conclusions will be taken: “There are grave concerns that governments, instead of acting on their commitments to protect and restore nature and ecosystems, are commodifying nature and spending time and money promoting unproven initiatives like biodiversity offsetting. This would deliver a ‘license to trash’ – it would be a conservation disaster.”

As a result of inadequate progress, the meeting is likely to demand renewed effort to catch up and put nations on course for 2020. Civil society calls on governments to follow the call for “urgent and effective action”, step up public funding for biodiversity conservation, and scrap false solutions like biodiversity offsetting, and put nature first.

Paragraph 4a, page 4, UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Add.2, 1 August 2014 – draft decisions for the meeting.

See the summary of the general conclusions of the Global Biodiversity Outlook <https://www.cbd.int/gbo4advance/>

Chandrika Sharma

Shradhanjali – In Memoriam



Chandrika Sharma, Executive Secretary of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) was on the ill-fated flight MH370 that

disappeared on 8 March 2014. Chandrika was on her way to Ulanbaatar to attend an FAO Asia-Pacific Regional Conference.

Chandrika has been one of the few people to have followed the Programme on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity from 2004. She has played an active role during the CBD preparatory meetings of the CSOs as well as getting small scale fishing communities to participate in the negotiations. She has been active at all COPs trying to ensure that coastal and small-scale fishing communities can actively participate, make statements and hold side-events, to ensure that the rights of small-scale fishing communities, including their right to participation, access to resources and recognition of their traditional knowledge is respected.

Her amazing energy and unfazed commitment has ensured that all these aspects are reflected in the Decisions of the COP. She was instrumental in getting links with the indigenous peoples network, and ensured the participation of fishing communities as representatives of local communities. Chandrika was also instrumental in networking with so many other groups within the CBD Alliance as well as others outside, and was keen to take forward the decisions of the COP in true spirit, by seeing the inter-linkages between the decisions in different programmes and cross-cutting areas. She will be thoroughly missed at this COP, and at all future COPs.

ICCAs are the World's Best Bet for Achieving Many Aichi Targets

Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh

Indigenous peoples' and local community conserved territories and areas (ICCAs) are spread across the world, and may cover as much or more of the world than official protected areas. ICCAs are embedded in the rights of indigenous peoples' and local communities to their territories, self-determination, and cultural identity, and to their human rights. They also reflect the recognition of the crucial role of such peoples and communities in sustaining ecosystems, species, and ecosystem functions. While thereby helping to achieve conservation, their primary motivations and objectives are ethical, economic, political, cultural, material, and/or spiritual; often they are simply a people's or community's way of life. They are recognized in international policy, including the CBD (particularly under its Programme of Work on Protected Areas), and by global organisations such as IUCN in a series of resolutions and recommendations over the last decade or so. It is important here to clarify that the term ICCA is used as a convenient umbrella (much like the term 'indigenous people' or 'local community'), and is not meant to displace the enormous diversity of names that indigenous people or local communities themselves use.

ICCAs have already been performing functions that contribute to the goals and targets of the CBD Strategic Plan of Action (and specifically the Aichi targets). They embody and help spread keen awareness of the values of biodiversity (Target 1), contribute to appropriate well-being and are centrally relevant to national development, sustainability, poverty reduction, and biodiversity plans (Targets 2, 4, 17), involve systems of rules that combine incentives and disincentives for sustaining biodiversity (Target 3), contribute significantly to reducing natural habitat loss, sustaining fisheries and aquatic ecosystems including coral reefs, and conserving threatened species (Targets 5, 6, 10, 12), are the world's best chance of achieving a massive increase in conservation coverage in ways that are equitable and effective (Target 11), encompass sustainably managed production ecosystems including agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, and the domesticated and related wild diversity contained in them (Targets 7, 13), use innovative strategies to help restore and safeguard ecosystem functions including through reducing or eliminating pollution

and tackling invasive species, (Targets 8, 9, 14), provide climate resilience through connectivity, migration corridors, mitigation and adaptation of various kinds (Target 15), are powerful means of achieving equitable access and secure benefits for communities that need these (Target 16), embody sophisticated and diverse forms of knowledge, including traditional and modern science and technology (Targets 18, 19), and present innovative means of financing and provisioning (including through non-financial, voluntary means) biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of biological resources.

Yet ICCA across the world face multiple threats: lack of tenurial security, extractive industry and inappropriate development, imposition of inappropriate land uses including top-down government protected areas and industrial agriculture, internal inequalities and injustices relating to gender, class, caste, ethnicity, race, and others, demographic and cultural changes eroding traditional cultural values, and incursion of external markets. These are often exacerbated, or made possible, due to lack of recognition of ICCAs, especially at national and sub-national levels. Despite 10 years of the existence of the PoWPA under CBD, a majority of countries are yet to provide adequate and appropriate recognition to ICCAs. More recently, ICCAs face the risk of commodification and marketization programmes such as REDD, especially when these are in the absence of tenurial security and recognition of community governance.

With appropriate recognition and support, the role of ICCAs in achieving the Aichi Targets could be significantly enhanced. This would especially include the following steps, as requested or required by the relevant peoples and communities, with free and prior informed consent, and at the pace and time that they comfortable with:

- Recognition of their collective territorial and resource rights, and governance institutions, including in national laws and policies;
- Recognition of the local/traditional knowledge and practices, protection against their piracy and mis-appropriation, and their synergy with appropriate outside/modern knowledge systems;

- Facilitation in documentation, assessment, outreach, capacity enhancement, and public awareness of ICCAs;
- Help in resisting threats, especially from powerful industrial and commercial forces;
- Support to appropriate livelihood activities, skills and new knowledge to enhance the economic, social and political basis of ICCAs, in particular for younger generations ;
- Incorporation into systems of protected areas, other effective area-based measures, or other networks of conservation as appropriate ;
- Facilitating the empowerment of women, landless people, minorities, and other weaker sections of peoples/communities, to take part in decision-making;
- Support to networking among ICCAs, and alliances among indigenous peoples, local communities, human rights advocates and development and conservation practitioners.

This is a summary of a Policy Brief prepared by the ICCA Consortium, CBD Alliance, Kalpavriksh and CENESTA, available as COP12 Information Document UNEP/CBD/COP/12/INF/18

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Little progress, conflict of interests & unabated unintentional transboundary movements

Closing Statement by Civil Society at MOP7

While we welcome the continued work on **risk assessment** and **socio-economic considerations** via the continuation of two AHTEGs, progress on these issues is regrettably still too little, very late and largely repetitive.

These issues are of central importance to the Protocol, and to many Parties' **implementation of biosafety**. There must be no more delay in developing further guidance and guidelines in order to assist Parties in their implementation of the Protocol. Implementation is crucial to safeguarding biological diversity, human health, and the well being of peoples everywhere.

In the composition of the two extended AHTEGs, civil society demands that potential **conflict of interests** (including financial and other vested interests) are transparently declared and scrutinized, and that the appropriate steps are taken to avoid conflicts of interest unduly influencing decisions.

We wish to remind Parties that the work of the socio-economic AHTEG must be within the scope and objective of the Protocol, which is to contribute to ensuring an adequate level of protection with regards to LMOs that may have **adverse effects** on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health. The issue of the benefits of modern biotechnology is not within the scope, nor in line with the objective of this Protocol.

Cases of **unintentional transboundary movement** of LMOs continue unabated. This is exemplified here in Asia with the discovery of unapproved LM papaya imported into Japan and subsequently cultivated. There is urgent need for measures to prevent more cases from happening, and increased capacity to take emergency action where prevention is no longer possible. Illegal transboundary movement must be addressed.

Parties need to have the capacity to **detect and identify LMOs**, and LMO developers must provide the necessary information for authorities and citizens to detect and identify LMOs used both in field trials and commercially. This information must include sequence information and reference materials. Parties can and should require this in their national biosafety laws. The Strategic Plan requires guidance on how to detect and take measures to respond to **unintentional releases** of LMOs to be developed. We must begin this work.

We will meet the challenges of **concurrent meetings** of the COP and COP-MOPs in 2016. These organisational changes also have financial implications: the full and effective participation of developing countries, especially least developed countries, small island states and countries with economies in transition, must be ensured by providing adequate financial support.

The EU at COP 13, 14, 15...

Struggle in Brussels on new Commission's priorities key for future biodiversity policy

Konstantin Kreiser, NABU/BirdLife Germany and BirdLife EU-Task Force Coordinator

The distance between Pyeongchang and Brussels is almost 9000km, but EU negotiators might check their emails and newsletters from back home even more frequently than normally during this COP abroad. A heavy fight about the European Commission is taking place these days, which is also likely to impact on the EU's role in the CBD.

The outgoing EU Environment Commissioner Janez Potocnik has shown a great commitment to biodiversity policy during his term and he surely will do his best at this COP as well. In Brussels, he prevented the weakening of existing environmental legislation, and even achieved some new. More than once he stood up against his boss, outgoing Commission President Barroso, who increasingly focused on environmental deregulation, thus pleasing EU-sceptics and crisis stricken governments searching for scapegoats.

Hopes were high as to Barroso's successor, a respected promoter of EU integration from Luxembourg. But the plans Jean-Claude Juncker presented one month ago came as a shock for anyone who still believes in progressive EU environmental leadership. Juncker proposes to scrap the concept of dedicated Commissioners for the environment (to be merged with fisheries) or climate (to be merged with energy), and shows via set-up and work mandates that he will not tolerate any meaningful new environmental initiatives that do not fit his priorities; namely growth, jobs, competitiveness and "better regulation".

However, the tip of the iceberg were the portfolios Juncker gave to individual candidates. Just to name a few: a former financial consultant from London to regulate the banks, a Spanish oil businessman to take the lead in climate change policy and a Maltese Ex-Minister to review bird legislation.

However, it seems he went too far: High level members of the European Parliament now threaten to *not* approve the new Commission unless at least the most apparent conflicts of interests are addressed. The Environment Committee has asked to make sustainability a top-priority of the new Commission and to give the Environment Commissioner a robust mandate for an environmental policy that deserves its name.

So far, Juncker merely reacted by saying that sustainability would be taken care of anyway and by everyone in his team, and that there was no need to be explicit about it. Whether he can get away with this, or whether the EU can be brought firmly back on a save environmentally progressive track is now largely in the hands of the MEPs, but also of the 28 governments who certainly are not just standing by in this fight for power.

The next two weeks will therefore be decisive for the EU's performance at future COPs.



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Submissions are welcome from all civil society groups.

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