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Protected Areas, Indigenous Territories and ecosystem conservation and restoration

Tarsicio Granizo – WWF; Living Amazon Initiative

The document on Ecosystem Conservation and Restoration was presented yesterday in Group II. There have been no major reactions from the countries, and therefore is expected a more or less agreed CRP. Protected areas are (or should be) the core of every conservation effort, at any scale. This is particularly true when they are associated to international and national biodiversity protection targets. Nevertheless, protected areas alone are not enough to ensure the conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem functions and socio-cultural features.

Protected areas maintain representative samples of habitats and ecosystems, preserve the natural and cultural heritage in a dynamic and evolutionary state, and offer opportunities for research, environmental education, recreation and tourism. In addition, they improve the ability of natural ecosystems to adapt to extreme climate phenomena and ensure the provision of fundamental goods and services in the context of climate change.

From a socio-economic perspective, protected areas offer work opportunities and means of subsistence to the people who live in and around them, contributing to the alleviation of poverty and to the promotion of fair and equitable participation in the benefits of conservation. They are also spaces in which diverse forms of governance and management are developed.

At the same time, there is increasing evidence of the

important role that indigenous territories play in the conservation of biodiversity and protection of critical spaces for the maintenance of ecological processes and provision of ecosystem services. Although the main purpose of these territories is to secure the tenure of the ancestral lands of indigenous peoples and safeguard their cultures, the conservation of the biodiversity in their territories is fundamental for their survival and is strongly tied to their livelihoods and to ensuring their access to the natural resources they depend on.

WWF holds the view that national systems of protected areas are a core element of a nation's public policy framework, and alongside other key public policies, such as education, health or food security, should receive the same attention and generate similar obligations. Protected area systems should be the foundational building blocks of responsible and sustainable development strategies that work with, rather than against nature.

At the same time, indigenous peoples and their territories belong to each other. They are inseparable. For indigenous peoples, their territories are the seeds that initiated the existence of their peoples and their distinct cultural identity. The relationship between indigenous peoples and their territories is vital, since it provides the food, shelter and space that allow the continuity of their culture. Without a territory, and without its contents and rich biodiversity, there is no life.

Nuclear Energy; New Threats to Biodiversity

KCN-COP12/JCN-UNDB/Support Mongolia

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets aim to achieve the goal of a society that coexists in harmony with nature. But Nuclear Energy is posing big question.

Damages to flora and fauna

In the case of the Chernobyl nuclear accident, flora and fauna exposed to radiation underwent rapid changes within the span of a few years, and there were pronounced effects on the lives and ecosystems of a variety of plants, mammals, birds, amphibians, microorganisms, and other life forms. It is confirmed that similar phenomena are occurring in the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear accident.

Unprecedented Ocean Pollution

Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant highly radioactive water from storage tanks keep leaking, and polluted groundwater is pushed from the mountainside into the ocean. According to the Tokyo Electric Power Company's press release as of August 26th, 2014, serious ocean pollution was still under way; 5,000,000,000 Bq of strontium-90, 2,000,000,000 Bq of cesium-137 and 1,000,000,000 Bq of tritium per day were pouring into the ocean. We do not have means to control such situation.

Violation of Human Rights

Health of the people in affected area is also of heavy concern. Nuclear radiation Radioactive contamination at uranium mining sites could be very serious. Madaï uranium mine, Mongolia, is an open cut mine and there is a uranium waste disposal facility in the vicinity of "gers," the traditional housings of nomads. Level of the radioactivity is said to be 24µSv/h; as high as that of the Fukushima danger zone. People in affected area are forced to move out of the region and farmers, fishers have hard time continuing cultivate land.

Call for CBD

Realization of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets is our true wish. We strongly urge the Convention on Biological Diversity should take role in solving nuclear energy related issues to contribute to the true sustainable development and the world where all life-on-earth live in harmony with nature.

Lake Victoria Basin

A message to policy makers

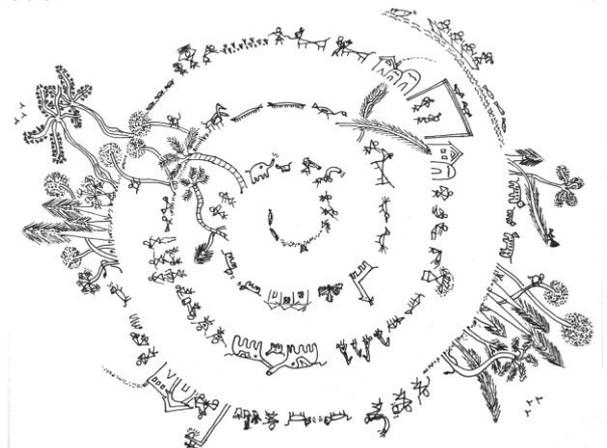
Birdlife International, Africa

Lake Victoria, with the world's most productive freshwater fishery, and the second largest freshwater surface area in the world, together with its basin comprise an ecosystem with extraordinary biodiversity and ecosystem service values, supporting the livelihoods of over 500,000 people with annual fisheries' landed value of about \$400 million.

However the lake basin is threatened by unsustainable consumption and production patterns, including expanding agriculture, hunting, over-exploitation of natural resources, alien invasive and pollution from land-based sources, exacerbated by climate change. All these leading to erosion, flooding, crop failure (food insecurity), and increased water borne diseases.

Local communities are the chief stewards of the world's ecosystems, and the vast majority of daily environmental management decisions depends on their local knowledge, and is determined by how they use land and other natural resources. The communities living around Lake Victoria Basin want policy makers at COP12 to know:

- The revision of National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans (NBSAP) should take into consideration communities' concerns and engagement in the review process.
- Urge parties to integrate biodiversity in their national priorities and development plans and to make appropriate financial provisions by 2015.
- Call for adoption of the draft decision on ecosystem conservation and restoration that seek to, among others, support indigenous and local communities in their efforts to conserve biodiversity via Indigenous and Local Communities Conserved Areas.



Forests: out of the radar

Ana Di Pangracio, *Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN)*

Forests are a community of plants, animals and micro-organisms that offer shelter to over 80% of the world's terrestrial species. They provide a wide range of goods and services as well as livelihoods for people worldwide.

Still, forest biodiversity is more and more threatened by the conversion of forests to agricultural land, unmitigated shifting cultivation, overgrazing, unsustainable forest management, invasive alien species, infrastructure projects, climate change, among other factors. Given the reigning alarming scenario, forests should be high on the CBD agenda. Instead, they are absent from this COP 12.

Forest policies seem to have shifted away from the CBD to the UN Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It looks like CBD's Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity has lost momentum and has lately centred its tasks on REDD+, providing guidance on this mechanism and its safeguards. This is valuable but there is more to forests than REDD+. Non-market-based approaches, as an alternative to preserve forests, must be embraced. It is auspicious that recognition of these latter is under consideration of the Parties at COP 12.

CBD needs to address drivers of forest loss, develop restoration initiatives and determine policies to enhance the enforcement of existing forest and human rights laws and agreements. Therefore, Parties need to build on the many positive policy recommendations that already exist and implement them on the ground, bringing forests back to the CBD.

The opinions, commentaries, and articles printed in ECO are the sole opinion of the individual authors or organisations, unless otherwise expressed.

Submissions are welcome from all civil society groups.

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The role of collective action in the conservation of biodiversity

Side event of the Bolivian delegation

On October 8, Bolivia presented at a side event this conceptual and methodological framework for assessing the contribution of collective action to conserve biological diversity.

At COP11 of the CBD in Hyderabad, India the original proposal of the framework for Financial Resources Mobilization identified resources only from the public sector and the private sector. However, Bolivia noticed that one of the most important and fundamental stakeholders to the conservation of biodiversity and its sustainable use, indigenous people, was absent from the discussion of the contributions in mobilizing resources.

It is in this sense that Bolivia proposed at COP11 the recognition and evaluation of collective action by indigenous peoples and local communities in their contribution to biodiversity. Given that most of the community organizations in the sustainable management of their community resources develop enormous collective efforts, this contribution cannot be invisible and should be recognized in the context of mobilizing financial resources and their contribution to the achievement of the Aichi Targets.

This proposal was adopted in Decision XI / 4 in its paragraph 23, in order that in the "context of mobilizing financial resources incorporating the role of collective action is considered in assessing the conservation of biodiversity."

In this sense, Bolivia has been working in the development of a conceptual and methodological framework for evaluating the role of collective action that has been presented at COP12 as an information document No. 7.

Biofuels and Biodiversity

Almuth Ernstin, *Biofuel Watch*

The Missing Agenda Item

Back in 2007, SBSTTA recommendation XII/7. Biodiversity and biofuel production acknowledged key threats of biofuel production to biodiversity and human well-being: Loss, fragmentation and degradation of forests, grasslands, wetlands, peatlands and other habitats, increased greenhouse gas emissions due to land conversion, increased competition for land managed by indigenous and local communities and small farmers, food insecurity, increased water consumption and pollution, increased agro-chemical use, soil degradation and erosion, uncontrolled spread of GMOs, spread of invasive alien species and air pollution harming human health.

...under Aichi Target 3, biofuel subsidies clearly constitute harmful incentives ...

Since then, evidence has mounted that those threats have indeed become a reality across ever more countries and regions. For example, biofuels are the main driver for vegetable oil price rises worldwide and those price rises are the main cause of palm oil expansion. Back in 2007, expectations of future EU biofuel markets were already fuelling deforestation and peatland destruction for oil palms in Indonesia and Malaysia. Since then, Indonesia's rate of deforestation has shot up from just over half a million hectares in 2006 to 840,000 in 2012 – the highest deforestation rate of any country worldwide. A further 14 million hectares of, supposedly 'degraded' forest are slated for destruction by 2020, much of it for oil palms. No longer is deforestation for palm oil limited to South-east Asia – it is increasingly a driver of deforestation in Africa, too, including in the Congo Basin. In the EU, populations of farm birds have fallen by 50% since 1990, however surviving populations began to stabilise in the late 1990s – until set-asides were abolished, following intense lobbying by the biofuel industry. Since then, there are many indications that numbers have dropped further with declines amongst 26 out of 30 species in Germany, for example.

Yet at COP12, the worsening impacts of biofuels and increasingly other types of industrial bioenergy are virtually not on the agenda. The only 'item' found on it is a 'progress report'¹ to be noted. The report attempts to assure delegates that "the

activities of processes and forums other than the Convention on Biological Diversity" are already addressing the impacts of biofuel production. The forums identified include the *Global Bioenergy Partnership*, which last discussed biodiversity and sustainability in general in 2011. They include the *Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials*, a voluntary certification scheme which has certified an ethanol project in Sierra Leone despite strong evidence that it had increased hunger amongst local communities. None of the forums listed has any special focus on biodiversity. And above all, no evidence has been provided – and none exists - that any of the approaches they have chosen – mainly sustainability standards – have had or can have any measurable impact in terms of reducing adverse impacts of biofuel production. And for all the past talk about positive as well as negative impacts of biofuels, the Secretariat's progress report highlights that not one country has provided any concrete example of positive impacts on biodiversity.

Biofuels – driven by subsidies and other incentives – continue to undermine the Aichi Targets – indeed, under Aichi Target 3, biofuel subsidies clearly constitute harmful incentives which should be phased out. The CBD must not evade its responsibility to address such a major threat to biodiversity by deferring to other agencies. An immediate new work programme leading to strong action is essential.

1 Biodiversity and Biofuels: Implementation of Decisions, UNEP/CBD/COP/12/23



Poison Dart Frog (*Dendrobates leucomelas*)

Amerindian indigenous people use their toxic secretions to poison tips of blow-darts. As a result of habitat loss (due to logging and farming), and due to chytrid diseases they are listed as threatened. (*Global Youth Biodiversity Network*)