

- **Mainstreaming biodiversity**
- **Dodo Award nominee**
- **Tourism and Biodiversity**
- **Garorim Bay case**
- **Budhist declaration for life-peace**
- **Captain Hook awards**

Mainstreaming is not an easy task

*Ana Di Pangracio,
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Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 states that “by 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.” Mainstreaming biodiversity across sectors and society is one of the main challenges faced by CBD Parties towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan, and progress so far has been limited.

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) emerge as a good tool for helping mainstreaming. Yet, the latter entails a State multi-sectorial, long term commitment. Public agencies such as those of infrastructure, agriculture, livestock, mining, industry, finance and science are mostly involved in NBSAPs processes. However, they are usually represented by technical staff (of course relevant) whereas spokespeople with decision-making power at the high level are needed in

order to commit to integrating biodiversity into their actions. But in addition, what to do when environmental offices -often in charge of NBSAPs- are markedly the weakest? When there is really no political will from short-sighted country leaders who simply have another agenda and do not perceive the matter as crucial?

NBSAPs will then need to somehow become legally ratified as to establish a long term clear legal mandate for institutions at the local and national level. Law offers other additional means for achieving Target 2 such as environmental impact assessments, access to information and public participation, environmental territorial planning, mechanisms of payment for ecosystem services, inter alia. Considering the reigning scenario, if we want to see biodiversity concerns become part of long term broader national policies towards sustainable development, we will have to make use of them all, as much as possible, in the tough and unequal task for mainstreaming.

TODAY'S DODO AWARD NOMINEE IS.....

CANADA



During the synthetic Biology contact group, they proposed to remove references to two UN multilateral negotiating bodies (the Committee on World Food Security and the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues) and replace them instead with OECD and The Woodrow Wilson Centre for Scholars (a US think tank). The reason they gave was that the mandates of the two UN institutions were not relevant to Synthetic Biology!

Tourism & Biodiversity

A Critical Moment

*Alison M. Johnston, International Support Centre for Sustainable Tourism
with Tourism Investigation & Monitoring Team & Third World Network*

Tourism landed on the agenda of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1998, as a complex issue warranting a Ministerial Roundtable. Today a single question dominates the CBD discourse on tourism: whether to extend the existing workplan on tourism or fundamentally alter it. Do the CBD *Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development* really embody a precautionary approach? Or, do sixteen years of results say otherwise?

Discussion on tourism at COP12 focusses on the controversial guidelines. Their application is under review. Given this, it seems that due diligence is underway, with provision for affected peoples and communities to inform the process. However, the CBD process on tourism appears to be primarily a domain of consultants. The discourse has yet to be contextualized through an inclusive, balanced, grounded, and transparent process - meaningfully engaging civil society. It privileges industry perspectives and interests (essentially, growth), despite the costs and risks of tourism across generations.

In such a polarized process we risk framing options as either pro or against tourism, rather than as a mutual exploration of contingencies and a collective responsibility to inspire social change. Since Germany first proposed global tourism guidelines and invested in promoting them, the guidelines have been elaborately prepped, packaged, and positioned for dissemination. Their promotion continues in document UNEP/CBD/COP/12/24/Add.1. While such a commitment to implementation is generally positive, there is a need to yield to reality.

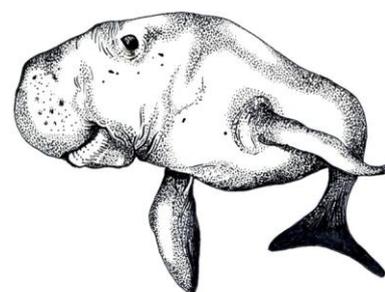
Emerging information on the magnitude of the biosphere crisis brings us to a new kind of site for decision-making. Although evidence may be cited to substantiate tourism benefits (especially gross domestic product, or GDP, as noted by industry), there also is ample community-based research clarifying actual tourism benefits versus costs. The latter foregrounds broader dimensions of well-being integral to achieving social justice among peoples and between generations. This research cannot be trivialized or neglected, if we aim to develop tools and instruments for tourism governance, which safeguard

the cherished components of biodiversity for humanity.

NGOs warn that the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development may seriously compromise both biological and cultural diversity. From the outset, NGOs have asserted that the guidelines could generate harm (NGOs Coalition, 1998, 2004). An ECO article at COP4 already stated that the guidelines could “*facilitate continued self-regulation by the industry*”. This business bias remains a central concern among NGOs. It has been noted by academics as well. In June 2014, NGOs sent an *Open Letter on Tourism and Biodiversity* to the CBD Secretariat and Parties, urging a process which complies with all applicable international law - first and foremost, a thorough review of the guidelines themselves (and not only their application).

We can either dismiss such statements as an indicator of possible loss and damage or explore why NGOs are sounding an alarm. Diverging voices must be welcomed and sustained in the CBD process on tourism, for a democratic, balanced, critical, and proactive review of tourism. Without real civil society participation, the process lacks both relevance and depth.

Let us remember the 1997 *Berlin Declaration on Sustainable Tourism*, signed by UNEP, the CBD Secretariat and Global Environment Facility as well as several countries. It states: “Tourism should be restricted, and where necessary prevented, in ecologically and culturally sensitive areas.” This is our mandate under the CBD, across local and global scales.



Dugong (*Dugong dugon*)

It is hunted for meat and oil, fact that contributes to its vulnerable status. Their long life span (70 years) and slow reproduction rate make them particularly vulnerable to extinction. (Global Youth Biodiversity Network)

Applause for Wise Decision on Biodiversity in Garorim Bay

Sung-gil Lee

We welcome that Korean Ministry of Environment refused to accept the environmental impact assessment submitted by a consortium of a power company and construction companies on the construction of a tidal power plant in Garorim Bay.

Garorim bay, located at the western seashore of Korea, is one of the most important tidal flats in Korea. It is home to many IUCN designated endangered species including spotted seals as well as an important spawning ground for numerous species of fish. Fortunately, Garorim Bay has managed to maintain good ecological health in spite of reckless development and shortsighted reclamation. In 2007, the Korean government evaluated the Garorim Bay area as one of the best-conserved tidal flats in Korea in 2007.

The construction of a tidal power plant was first approved back in 1980, when the Korean economy was hit by the second oil crisis. But as oil prices stabilized, the project already lost ground. The Korean civil society has criticized the project, arguing that the power plant is contrary to the purpose of renewable energy, because it would destroy the valuable tidal flat in the area, thus accelerating biodiversity loss and collapsing local communities.

The Korean government should recognize how the reclamation of Saemangeum tidal flat, also located in the western seashore, destroyed the coastal ecosystem. We learn lessons from our mistakes. One of our lessons learned is that tidal flats can benefit us the most, in the long term, when they remain as they are. We welcome the rejection of a tidal power plant in Garorim Bay and expect the government in collaboration with local residents to designate the bay as a protected wetland area to achieve Aichi Target. Taking this opportunity, we hope the government will continue to make wise decisions for conservation, wise use and restoration of tidal flats to increase coastal biodiversity.

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

Submissions are welcome from all civil society groups.

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2014 Pyeongchang Buddhist Declaration for Life-Peace

By viewing nature as a resource to be controlled and exploited, humans have largely destroyed the habitats of animals and plants, thereby driving them to the brink of extinction. This crisis comes back to us as in karmic form, posing in turn a threat to our very survival. The Convention on Biological Diversity has played a significant role in preserving biodiversity. However, it should be noted that the Convention is ethically limited as it also assumes living organisms to be an exploitable resource for economic benefit.

In Pyeongchang, the venue of the COP12, Korean Buddhists are to repent for the life-destroying activities undertaken so far and instead strive to create the momentum to restore our oneness with all living organisms. By doing so, we should end the prevailing culture based upon violent domination over nature and build a civilization of the living, where nature and humans co-exist in peace.

Saving life in crisis is an urgent, universal task. The moment to commence the walk to this goal is now. We cannot afford the luxury of further delay. Through the daily activities of individuals as well as cooperation at the local, national and global levels, we should strive together to build a sustainable all-encompassing society of life.

Woljeongsa monastery in Pyeongchang, where COP12 is taking place, is an ancient monastery extending back one millennium and containing the 40th Power of Vow, through which the Bodhisattva of Compassion aspired to purify the world by cooling all earthly fever. To seek the wisdom to live in harmony with all forms of life as well as cool the fever of Earth, Korean Buddhists promulgate the 2014 Pyeongchang Buddhist Declaration for Life-Peace which can be found at online.

<http://www.cbdalliance.org/en/index.php/en/more-in-news-cbd-alliance/122-pyeongchangbuddhist-declaration>



SIDE EVENT!

Hall G, room 3, 18:15- 19:45 Food will be provided

This side event will assess the current status of the work of the COP on issues as finance and resource mobilization, synthetic biology, the Nagoya Protocol as a milestone for Access and Benefit Sharing and its compliance mechanisms.

TWN
Third World Network

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The 2014 Captain Hook 2.0 Awards For Syn Bio Piracy

The spotlight this year is on Synthetic Biology - a collection of new techniques and tools that enable corporations to digitally build and steal living genetic sequences.

Syn Bio has thrown wide open nature's treasure chest to corporate plunder. Farmers, peasants, fisherfolk and pastoralists are experiencing a new wave of 'Syn Biopiracy' as corporations use the new tools to reengineer microbes to spit out valuable 'natural' compounds previously harvested from vanilla plants, stevia bushes, saffron fields, coconuts and more. Analysts predict a 40 billion dollar industry synthetically replacing the tropical commodities and traditional compounds developed and grown by communities. As livelihoods vanish so too could the biodiversity that they sustain.

This year we have 3 special awards on Synthetic Biology. And the Nominations are:

The "Monsanto-wannabe" award for destroying farmer livelihoods

Allylix Inc (USA) – Allylix has commercialized a synthetic biology version of the fragrance vetiver, a crop which supports 60,000 farm families in Haiti and may be the most important agricultural export.

Amyris Inc (USA /Brazil) – commercial introduction of Syn Bio Artemisinin in 2013 saw global planting of natural artemisia drop by 2/3rds and prices become highly volatile. At risk: over 100,000 artemesia farmers in Africa and South East Asia. Next up: Amyris are going after Asian patchouli and rubber growers.

Evolva inc (Switzerland) – 2014 of introduction of Syn Bio Vanillin which they intend to label Natural directly challenges livelihoods of 200,000 vanilla farmers in Madagascar, Comoros, reunion, Uganda, Mexico. Next up: Evolva are going after markets of Stevia farmers in Paraguay, Malaysia, Kenya and Saffron farmers in Iran, India, Spain, Turkey

Solazyme (USA) – Working with companies such as Unilever and Ecover, Solazyme boasts that its re-engineered syn bio algae oils are a direct replacement to coconut, palm and Babassu oils as well as cocoa butter. Coconut production alone supports 25 million people in the Phillipines . 5-6 million farmers grow Cocoa across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.



The "Wild 'n' Wacky Biohacky Award" for outlandish Syn Bio schemes

The 'Glowing Plants' Company (USA) – 3 biohackers raised public monies to make a small weed glow faintly green. Now they are promising to mail 600,000 Syn Bio seeds to thousands of random locations with no government oversight or monitoring– in December 2014.

Revive and Restore (USA) – This foundation is using synthetic biology to develop Jurassic park style 'de-extinction' techniques that they say might bring back the woolly mammoth, passenger pigeon and other animals as a technofix for biodiversity conservation.

Hyasynth Bio (Canada) – Why smoke cannabis when you can brew it in a lab? This Montreal-based startup is engineering yeast to produce syn bio cannabinoids.

Calysta Inc (USA) – Calysta is leading a new wave of Syn Bio Companies whose Syn Bio microbes turn fracked gas into fish food for aquaculture. Extreme energy extraction meets extreme genetic engineering.

The 'Pirates Cove' Award for sheltering Syn Bio privateers.

Brazil – Known as the 'sugar daddy' of the Syn Bio industry, Many Syn Bio companies have set up large biorefineries full of synthetic organisms in Brazil's sugar-growing region.

Canada – Founder of the Phytometasyn project which has sequenced 74 of the world's most valuable plant compounds and then is working make each of them in a vat using synthetic biology.

UK - In the face of its own austerity policies the UK Government has released around 100 million dollars to support the growth of the synthetic biology industry

USA – The USA is the undisputed leader in Synthetic Biology when it comes to number of companies and Syn Bio labs but is conspicuously 'missing' in action on regulation.

The 2014 Captain Hook Awards for Syn Bio Piracy are hosted by the following members of the *Coalition Against Biopiracy*: Econexus, ETC Group, Friends of the Earth US and Global Forest Coalition, SEARICE, Third World Network. www.synbiowatch.org