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Yesterday, people came together to honor environmental defenders murdered and disappeared, and to demand the killings to stop.

Biodiversity and climate change

Opportunities lost and gained on ensuring significant safeguards against False Solutions

Meenal Tatpati, Women4Biodiversity

COP 16 presented itself as a great opportunity to enhance collective action towards safeguarding biodiversity as well as addressing climate change while tackling false and inhibitive solutions towards the same. It was to consider and adopt conclusions and recommendations provided to COP16 by SBSTTA25. It is worthwhile to note that the entire document presented by SBSTTA to COP 16 was bracketed. However it had some important considerations which highlighted the caution with which the CBD has considered the effects of, as well as the many diverse 'solutions' being con-

sidered towards adaptation and mitigation of climate change on biological diversity.

SBSTTA acknowledged that:

large-scale intensive bioenergy and monocultural plantations have a negative impact on biodiversity since they replace natural forests and subsistence farmlands, thereby threatening food and water security, local livelihoods, and intensify social conflicts.

It encouraged Parties:

To implement strong social and environmental safe-

guards including ensuring a human-rights based approach and the full and effective participation of women and girls, children and youth and persons with disabilities, while meeting their obligations under Target 8 and 11.

And other governments and relevant organisation to access, manage and avoid the potential adverse impacts on biodiversity due to economic and sectoral transitions in land use, energy, infrastructure and industrial systems undertaken in response to climate change.

It also requested the Executive Secretary of the CBD to: *open a call for and compile submissions by Parties, observers and other organisations on existing information on carbon and biodiversity credits and offsets and other market-based approaches and their effects on biodiversity, and to make the compilation available to the SBSTTA at a meeting before COP17.*

Four contact groups later, the text stands considerably diluted on these major considerations. It has deleted the paragraph highlighting the effects of intensive, monoculture plantations on biodiversity, local livelihoods and social conflict. Apart from this, it has also deleted the call made to the Executive Secretary for an open call to collate existing information about the effects of carbon and biodiversity credits and offsets and market-based approaches on biodiversity. It has diluted the language which mentions specific sectoral transitions including land-use change, energy and infrastructure and industrial systems to access their impacts on biodiversity; and has replaced the strong and specific text calling for ‘the need for a human-rights based approach and full and effective participation of women and girls, children and youth and persons with disabilities’ to be considered during implementation of Target 8 and 11 with the often used and heavily diluted phrase “to be consistent with Section C and Target 22 of the KMGBF’.

While these crucial paragraphs have been deleted or diluted, the document has continued to maintain caution on adopting nature-based solutions by taking note of the fact that UNEA has recognised that ‘*Nature based Solutions*’ (NbS) might contribute to climate action but the need to analyse their effects and acknowledging that they do not replace the need for deep reduction in GHG emissions. The CRP also contains reiteration of its own decisions on geoengineering and acknowledges that climate geoengineering activities, including marine and solar geoengineering activities, could result in serious and irreversible impacts on biodiversity and the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities, and the growth of uncontrolled geoengineering field experiments may cause harm to biodiversity and people.

There are several examples all over the world of intensive monoculture plantations, credits and offsets and sectoral changes made as a response to meet *Nationally Determined Contributions* under the UNFCCC affecting rights of indigenous communities and local people and especially women, as well as harming critically endangered species and biodiverse habitats. It is important that these paragraphs are retained to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The call for the Executive Secretary to compile available information on the effects of carbon and biodiversity credits and offsets would have been crucial to integrate into the CBD process since it has historically compiled various studies and submissions on pertinent and relevant issues of importance with respect to biodiversity and climate change ever since this cross-cutting issue was included in the work under the CBD in 2004 through decision VII/15 of the COP. There is a need for strong and clear decision from CBD-COP16 to continue its cautious stand on false solutions and their effects on biodiversity and human rights.

See the online version for sources.

The necessary recognition and respect of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the protection of biodiversity

Isaac Rojas, Friends of the Earth International

The close relationship between Indigenous Peoples and local communities and biodiversity is again recognised in the new 8j work plan, which aims to be more holistic, integrated and harmonised with the *Global Biodiversity Framework*. It also recognises, supports and values respect for their territories, traditions and traditional knowledge, so their full, effective and active participation in the implementation of the plan - and the whole CBD - is key.

The work plan would contain nine elements, each with different actions. We highlight the recognition of the importance that the territories of IPLCs are in their hands to fulfil their role in the protection of biodiversity as well as its sustainable use. The recognition and call for the protection of traditional knowledge is strengthened by highlighting the importance - and necessity - of their full and effective participation. Therefore, we believe that their rights in relation to the conservation and use of biodiversity must be strengthened, respected and implemented.

The Working Group on 8j would become a Subsidiary Body that would advise the COP and other subsidiary bodies of the Convention, which represents an important step forward.

The COP would also approve a proposal from Colombia and Brazil to recognise the contributions made by Afro-descendant communities given their lifestyles and traditional knowledge as well as their connection to their lands. This recognition is important in order not to make invisible the contributions - and rights - of those who, in their daily lives and through their culture, play a vital role in the protection and sustainable use of biological diversity.

These proposals should be approved at this COP in order to continue with the recognition of the vital role that Indigenous Peoples and local communities play in

the protection of biodiversity. Through this recognition, it is evident that there is an urgent need to protect their rights so that they can remain on their lands, make decisions autonomously, organise themselves internally according to their traditions and have a role in defining public policies. Otherwise, their traditional and traditional lifestyles on their lands, as well as their culture, would be further eroded with a serious impact on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

The approval of the new work plan, form of organisation and recognition of Afro-descendant communities is evidence of the vital role played by Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the negotiations on these points, which could have more tools to defend and strengthen their lifestyles.

Implementation at the national level of all these future Convention agreements is key and should take place soon.

Finally, it is important not to forget that all this recognition, which would be reinforced at this COP16, must go hand in hand with effective protection mechanisms for human rights and environmental defenders in the face of the large number of attacks and violations of their individual and collective human rights.



Gene drive monitor launched!

Did you know that gene drives are under development or have been proposed in at least 82 species? Proposals range from feral cats to the common wasp – and of course mice and mosquitos. Will it actually work? At what cost? With which risks and harm? What about biodiversity loss?

Tracking plans to genetically modify wild species at genedrivemonitor.org



Biodiversity Crisis or Business Opportunity?

Conflicting Universes in the CBD

Nele Mariën, Friends of the Earth International

Biodiversity is rapidly declining, nearing the brink of collapse, with numerous reports highlighting its critical state. In the past two weeks, 18,000 to 20,000 people gathered - in the blue zone alone - to tackle this crisis. But how did these massive crowds engage with one another? Were they all cooperating for the benefit of Nature? Were they carefully listening to one another?

At times, it felt as if multiple universes coexisted within a single space. There was the universe of negotiations, buried under brackets and late-night deliberations. The universe of Indigenous peoples, closely connected to Mother Earth and deeply rooted in spiritual values interwoven with Nature. The universe of NGOs, passionately speaking up against false solutions and injustices. And the universe of business people, speaking in polished terms about their role in "the solution." Whenever someone from one universe ventured to speak in another, they were often regarded as aliens.

Except, perhaps, for the business people, whose perspectives seemed warmly embraced in the negotiation rooms and inside delegations. We heard of a small European country's delegation that included 60 registered business representatives, invited to exclusive receptions and granted special access to the minister. Although NGOs could join the delegation, they didn't have such privileges. This dynamic doesn't appear to be unique to that country.

This results in decision texts that put "the impact of biodiversity loss on business" at the forefront, with the impacts of business on nature only on a distant second place - after hard fights to even include them - and any regulatory measures to stop such impacts are entirely lacking.

Similarly, proposals that would permit businesses to continue expanding harmful operations like biodiversity offsetting - have gained significant traction among official delegations.

Biodiversity is certainly not improving!

A Tale of two CBDs – Trick or Treat at COP16

“Held in the world capital for salsa dancing, the COP was [...] something between an eco-jamboree, a trade fair and yes, serious diplomatic negotiations. [...] It's helpful to recognise that there was not one, but effectively two different 'spirits' occupying and animating the Cali COP during this season of spooks and spectres. **First, there's 'good old-fashioned COP'** – the spirit of CBDs past if you like. This spirit embodies the story, values, priorities, agendas and programmes that many of us CBD old-timers know too well. [...] But there was **a different kind of COP going on in Cali: COP 4.0**, a Davos-style neoliberal eco-trade fair mixed with norm-setting committees for enabling emerging biodiversity markets and next-generation high-tech gadgets. From Montreal onwards a gentrifying new crowd of younger, better funded 'green' NGOs, financiers and philanthropists seemingly 'discovered' the CBD as if moving into a run-down but pleasant neighbourhood they hadn't noticed before. They condensed around a biodiversity financialisation agenda of 'nature positive' biodiversity offsets, 30x30 conservation targets, debt for nature swaps and shiny new digital and genomic technologies (or "innovative solutions" as some prefer to tag them...

Continue reading at "A bigger Conversation"

<https://abiggerconversation.org/a-tale-of-two-cbds-trick-or-treat-at-cop16>

