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Targets 2 & 3: Advancing Effective Gender Integration

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Biodiversity conservation and restoration, without recognition and legitimisation of women's consistent efforts cannot be achieved. Yet, women from Indigenous Peoples and local community groups face persistent and systemic barriers including lack of legal and customary access and ownership to land and territories and natural resources, exclusion from funding processes, and marginalization in decision-making spaces which are well established critical areas to achieve conservation outcomes. The overall trends in conservation spatial planning processes around the world also show an alarming lack of recognition and upholding of Free Prior Informed Consent as well as customary conservation practices. Achieving Targets 2 and 3 therefore requires active, inclusive, and effective participation of women, youth, and children, supported by enabling conditions to make their involvement possible. This brings us to the need to apply a gender-responsive approach, which helps analyze differentiated contributions to biodiversity conservation and restoration, and to design targeted, and thus more effective, strategies and programs. At the same time, an intergenerational approach is essential to highlight the roles and contributions of youth, whose initiatives have often been rendered invisible.

What concrete actions can we take to apply a gender approach? Securing tenure and access rights, and strengthening co-management mechanisms that share authority and benefits. Legal and policy frameworks must recognize nature's ecological, cultural, and

spiritual dimensions while addressing the structural power asymmetries that limit women's participation. Moreover, the collection of sex-disaggregated data should be prioritized to monitor progress on both Targets 2 and 3, as well as Target 22, to ensure dynamic, flexible, and transparent funding for women-led initiatives.

It is essential that the development of the elements for the guidelines related to Tasks 1.1 and 1.2 of the programme of work on Article 8(j) and other provisions be structured with the goal of reducing these gaps and, above all, that they be applied at both national and local levels. We are halfway through the implementation timeline of the KMGBF, and we have already failed to meet the Aichi Targets. It is time to acknowledge that without genuinely inclusive, rights-based implementation and binding accountability mechanisms, we will fail again. The development of these guidelines must be seen as an opportunity to correct course, empower rights-holders, especially women, and ensure that transformative solutions reach those on the front lines of conservation and restoration.

More info: <http://bit.ly/4o6Ov80>



Corporate invasion of Indigenous territories and infringement of collective rights coincides with biodiversity loss

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Around the world, indigenous peoples and local communities are suffering a double attack: on the one hand, extractive projects by transnational companies that devastate their territories and, on the other, human rights violations that occur when they resist. The destruction of biodiversity and the denial of collective rights are two sides of the same coin, both driven by a global economic model that prioritizes investment over human and collective rights and the lives of indigenous communities.

Transnational corporations are primarily responsible for biodiversity loss. Large-scale mining, industrial agriculture, oil and gas extraction, and infrastructure mega projects fragment ecosystems, poison water, soil and air, and push species toward extinction. These activities are not isolated accidents, but systemic characteristics of an extractive economy. For indigenous peoples, whose territories contain much of the world's remaining biodiversity, the consequences are devastating. Their ways of life depend on forests, rivers, and soils, but these are often taken away or destroyed without their free, prior, and informed consent.

When indigenous communities resist, they face intimidation, criminalisation of social protest and violence. Their leaders are being killed at an alarming rate, with mining, agribusiness and logging being the deadliest sectors. Each attack on defenders weakens community control over land, paving the way for further environmental destruction. The resulting loss of traditional governance, knowledge and management directly accelerates biodiversity decline. This pattern reveals that when the collective rights of indigenous peoples are eroded, biodiversity is affected.

The destruction and violation of rights by Chevron/Texaco in the Amazon

The Chevron-Texaco case in Ecuador is one of the most

serious examples of collective rights violations, environmental devastation and corporate impunity in Latin America. Between 1964 and 1992, the oil company dumped more than 60 billion litres of toxic waste and 600,000 barrels of crude oil in the Ecuadorian Amazon, contaminating 25,000 km² of forest and affecting more than 30,000 people from the Waorani, Siekopai, Siona, A'i Kofán, Shuar and Kichwa peoples, as well as local farming communities. The pollution destroyed rivers, soils and livelihoods, causing disease, displacement and the loss of ancestral cultures. In 2018, the Constitutional Court of Ecuador recognised the victims and ordered Chevron to pay \$9.5 billion in reparations. However, the company evaded its responsibility through international ISDS arbitration, which forced the Ecuadorian state to pay compensation of two to three billion dollars for violating investment treaties and damaging Chevron/Texaco's image.

In turn, the Ecuadorian state passes on this injustice to those affected, who initiated the lawsuit seeking reparation and justice. As a result, the Union of People Affected by Texaco's Oil Operations (UDAPT) – an organisation of affected Amazonian communities – has been subjected to institutional repression and political persecution, and is now suffering the arbitrary freezing of its bank accounts without a court order or valid intelligence report. At least ten social, indigenous and environmental organisations face similar measures, in a context aggravated by the Organic Law on Social Transparency, which restricts the actions of organisations defending the territory and contradicts the constitutional right to resistance. These actions violate fundamental freedoms such as due process, legitimate defence and freedom of association, and reflect a state strategy aimed at silencing the defence of the environment and indigenous peoples.

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Reflections from a Side Event on Gene Drives

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Yesterday I attended a side event on gene drives. I am not an expert on the technology, but I do know it is one of the most controversial topics under the Convention on Biological Diversity. My main interest was understanding how dialogue with Indigenous Peoples on this issue would unfold — and whether it would reflect a genuinely participatory process.

To my surprise, the concept of gene drives itself was never properly explained. It was very clear that most people in the room did not understand what gene drives actually are — technologies designed to spread a genetic trait through a population so effectively that it can wipe out an entire species, for example malaria-carrying mosquitoes or invasive rats on islands. Yet, this profound and irreversible aim, nor its potential social and ecological consequences, were ever clarified. Instead, the focus of the event was almost entirely on describing the consultation process between pro-gene-drive researchers and Indigenous participants. The atmosphere was full of mutual compliments and respectful tones — but it felt as if those Indigenous representatives who had serious concerns about gene drives were not present. I later realized that Indigenous Peoples involved in this process had only been in dialogue with researchers promoting the technology, while those scientists warning of its environmental and social risks had never been invited into the discussion.

The process was presented as deeply spiritual, with re-

peated references to respect for Mother Earth, ethics, spirituality and to listening to each other. While such spirituality is essential, the core issues — how gene drives may affect life, biodiversity, and cultural or spiritual relationships with the natural world — were never discussed. Spiritual moments were treated as proof of a meaningful process, but spirituality without substance can easily become a tool to mask imbalance.

As the discussion opened, most interventions turned to traditional medicines and past abuses by industry — legitimate concerns, but largely unrelated to the gene drive issue itself. This allowed the facilitator, who was clearly in favor of gene drives, to run out the clock without addressing the deeper risks and ethical questions.

As someone experienced in participatory processes, I could recognize a familiar pattern: when those in power seek “consent,” they often design dialogues that appear inclusive but strategically avoid real debate. The event left me with the strong impression that genuine participation was being replaced by performance — a process meant to legitimize rather than question.

Given how dangerous and irreversible gene drive technologies could be, any claim of Indigenous consent must come from a truly broad and inclusive process — one that actively seeks out and listens to those with deep concerns. Anything less risks turning consultation into complicity.

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The Chevron-Texaco case transcends the local level: it is a symbol of the global crisis of environmental justice and corporate power over the rights of peoples and nature. Amazonian communities continue to defend their territory and their lives, despite attempts to delegitimize and halt their struggle. The CBD and its member countries must consider this case as an example of corporate damage that violates rights and destroys ecosystems. In order to meet the objectives of the CBD and the 8J, it is urgent to address these processes of structural damage.

The United Nations has already drawn attention to this case.

More info:



Rethinking ecological restoration from the perspective of local communities and their ancestral knowledge

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In recent years, there has been an increase in initiatives to restore ecosystems in all their diversity, but these lack sufficient information on the contributions of indigenous peoples to restoration.

Evaluation of indicators in restoration projects is essential to measure their progress and effectiveness. This requires the selection of metrics such as abundance, coverage, or species richness, as well as indicators that reflect the incorporation of traditional knowledge and ancestral wisdom, so that they reflect the objectives set for each stage of the process.

Although indigenous communities have the greatest knowledge of ecological cycles to understand the natural restoration of our ecosystems through ancestral knowledge and have the potential to close information gaps unknown even to academia, there are still no agreed-upon indicators that measure the non-quantitative contribution to restoration. The quantification of the contribution of indigenous peoples to ecosystem restoration must be based on respect for their free, prior, and informed consent, protecting their knowledge even within national regulatory frameworks. This should translate into community monitoring, allowing for the adjustment of strategies, improvement of results, and justification of the investment made, culminating in the documentation of the achievements.

Furthermore, it is necessary to remember that not only degraded ecosystems require restoration; restoration must also prevent the catastrophic scenarios that climate change would generate. It must also promote the improvement of the livelihoods of local and ancestral communities, the empowerment of governance, and its intergenerational transmission.

The guidelines discussed in items 5 (a) and (b), as well as the implementation of KMGBF target 2 and the actions within the framework of the United Nations Declaration on the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, need to incorporate a documented measurement of the contribution of indigenous peoples, through clear and measurable indicators based on the objectives set, recognizing the role of indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as the incorporation of scientific and technical knowledge for the scaling up of these practices. It is important to conceive of restoration as more than simply repairing degraded areas, recognizing its different approaches and purposes beyond water supply, but also ensuring the strengthening of soil health, natural ecological cycles, disease control, and reducing the risk of natural disasters.

It is necessary to rethink ecological restoration as a comprehensive and collective process in which the contribution of indigenous peoples is distinguished and quantified in order to achieve greater coordination based on local knowledge and efforts, moving from seeing communities as agents of restoration to living voices and knowledge that must not be lost because it is vital for cultural identity, environmental sustainability, and adaptation to climate change. Only through this can we preserve invaluable information for our ecosystems and the continuity of the benefits they provide to humanity.

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