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The experience of Indigenous Peoples in the CBD process

Maria Eugenia Choque, International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB)

We Indigenous Peoples, gathered here at WGRI 5, have given interventions on the full participation of Indigenous Peoples throughout this process. The implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets should consider our full participation. This involves considering the proper organisational processes of Indigenous Peoples, our governance systems, internal decision processes, active incorporation of indigenous women, our own language, the vision regarding the relationship that Indigenous Peoples have with Mother Nature, which concerns life, because there are many protective deities through which Indigenous Peoples have developed an intrinsic relationship of respect and synergies with biodiversity.

It is important to emphasise that in order to improve capacity building, educational programs should be developed. In this regard we suggest that these programs need to be implemented in indigenous languages, with culturally appropriate methodologies. This process must take the approach of the world view and indigenous knowledge on biodiversity.

We recommend that parties, the United Nations systems and society in general take into account that Indigenous Peoples have ways followed by men and women. The exercise of authority is fulfilled according to identity, customs,

rituals, principles of respect for the right of territoriality and management of natural resources. The issue of indigenous governance should be incorporated in a broad discussion on incorporation of collective rights, such as free and informed consent, and the full and effective participation in the Nagoya Protocol.

Referring to the experience of major groups, Indigenous Peoples throughout this process have been continuously emphasising our condition and our status as Indigenous Peoples under the *Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Also, in many countries there is ample recognition of the term *Indigenous Peoples* in the national constitutions. It is therefore necessary to harmonise the international instruments with national norms, when referring to Indigenous Peoples.

The challenges to achieve the Strategic Plan 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, show the need to involve the main actors of biodiversity. Indigenous peoples are the direct actors in this respect: due to our territorial ownership, ancestral rights, ownership of indigenous knowledge, great contributions to conservation, preservation of biodiversity under different cultural forms of payment for access to resources. This payment method is very different from conventional ones, and it is counter-productive when the parties to the CBD refer to payment systems that must be performed under the logic of the Western market. Proof of this is that during these last decades there is a rapid growth of extraction policies without taking into account the depletion of natural resources.

Furthermore, so far are only few countries that have a standard of free, prior and informed consent for access to indigenous territories. Mother Nature and humanity is threatened on a daily basis!

CBD Alliance would like to thank Swedbio for their continued and ongoing support

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Submissions are welcome from all civil society groups.

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Proposal for a Strategy on Youth Engagement for Biodiversity - Not supported by Parties

Christian Schwarzer & Melina Sakiyama, Global Youth Biodiversity Network

On Wednesday, WGRI-5 considered agenda item 12.2 on Stakeholder Engagement. The Global Youth Biodiversity Network delivered an intervention to highlight the importance of youth engagement on Biodiversity and proposed the development of a “Strategy on Youth Engagement for Biodiversity.”

Over half of the world’s population is under thirty. Children and youth will be most negatively affected by the anthropogenic loss of Biodiversity and it will be *their* responsibility to manage these challenges in the future. However, when it comes to young people’s contribution to biodiversity conservation, we see two very different pictures: On one hand, several studies have shown that awareness about and particularly understanding of Biodiversity is shockingly low among children and youth. On the other hand, thousands of young people all over the world are taking action to preserve Biodiversity. They volunteer for environmental organizations, take part in practical nature conservation activities, organize conferences and awareness raising campaigns and make their voices heard in decision-making processes.

At COP11, parties to the Convention adopted Decision XI/8, which recognizes the importance of youth participation in biodiversity-related decision making processes on all levels, and the CBD Secretariat has always been very committed to support young people and their activities on Biodiversity. However, compared to other UN processes such as on Climate or the CSD, youth participation in the CBD is still relatively weak. This is due to a number of obstacles that prevent many youth from participating. The greatest obstacle is the lack of funding. Most youth delegates are volunteers and -specifically in the Global South - do not have access to any sources of funding. Apart from a few positive exceptions, no dedicated funds to support youth participation in international biodiversity governance exist in the majority of countries. There is also a lack of youth friendly information resources, and many youth delegates struggle to understand the very complex system of negotiations and do not fully grasp their role in the CBD process.

Furthermore, the current forms of participation and engagement of stakeholders limit the potential of major

groups to truly contribute to the Convention. For instance, the current format of the meetings does not include opportunities for direct dialogue or discussions between parties and stakeholder groups. Building upon the positive experiences in other processes, GYBN called upon parties to provide resources for the development of innovative stakeholder engagement mechanisms and strongly supported the proposal to hold Stakeholder Forums before the COP meetings.

GYBN is deeply convinced that young people can play an important and active role in implementing measures to achieve the objectives of the Convention, its Protocols and the Strategic Plan. GYBN therefore proposed the development of a “Strategy on Youth Engagement for Biodiversity”. This strategy should include outreach and awareness raising activities, the development of information and training resources for education and capacity building, support for local and regional youth activities on Biodiversity, support for youth participation in the CBD through the creation of a voluntary fund, and a call for governments to engage youth in their implementation plan of the Convention. Ultimately this strategy would not only support, but accelerate the implementation of the convention and achievement of the Aichi Targets 1, 17 and 19.

Unfortunately GYBN’s proposal didn’t get support from parties and was thus deleted from the draft text on Thursday. However, thanks to a compromise proposal by India, the pre-final document also refers to youth and calls upon parties to include all stakeholders in the revision of NBSAPs as well as in decision-making processes on the regional and national level. GYBN regrets that its proposal to develop a Strategy on Youth Engagement for Biodiversity could not find support among parties. However, we hope that the final decision will serve as a stepping stone to scale up youth engagement on Biodiversity.

Young people can add a lot of value to the CBD processes by providing innovative and daring perspectives on issues that directly affect them and their future. Allowing them to play a more active role in Biodiversity governance on the national and international level would enable young people to become part of the solution to prevent the loss of Biodiversity.