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Human Rights need to be at the core of the GBF

Ana Di Pangracio, FARN Argentina

Aichi Biodiversity Targets were, with a few important exceptions, blind to human rights. The GBF offers the opportunity to embed a human rights-based approach (HRBA) for equitable, diverse, inclusive and just biodiversity action.

Biodiversity policies, governance and management should not violate human rights. The HRBA has to be at the heart of the GBF, in goals and targets, but also reviewing, reporting, and monitoring. Embedding the rights of IPLCs, women and girls, youth and children, people with disabilities and diverse gender identities can ensure the effective implementation of the GBF and address the intertwined world crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution and inequality.

We cannot protect biodiversity if we do not protect human rights defenders in environmental matters who are being killed, harassed or attacked for protecting nature and the rights of communities. The CBD cannot be blind to this. Women's rights are human rights. A gender-specific target,

together with disaggregated data across targets and indicators, would mean having a truly gender-transformative post 2020 GBF, while an intergenerational approach is required to ensure the rights of youth and children and future generations.

Finally, it is imperative to advance towards eliminating perverse incentives, subsidies and projects that are harmful for biodiversity and that negatively impact human rights. This would imply government regulation of business, ensuring transparency, liability and redress, and ensuring that environmental assessments include cultural, gender and human rights impacts, and safeguards.

Read the full version of this article here:



Mainstreaming biodiversity in business - or business in biodiversity?

Helena Paul, Econexus

In CRP 16 on Mainstreaming, Parties are invited to 'welcome' the documents on the Long-Term Approach to Mainstreaming (LTAM) documents as currently drafted even though:

- they have never had the chance to discuss them
- they are also being asked to approve further measures for their implementation, including allocation of financial resources by the GEF.

They are also requested to agree the setting up of an AHTEG, to decide how to implement them.

The problem however is that the LTAM does not advocate government regulation, but business self-regulation and self-reporting, while leaving 'consumers' to address issues of over-consumption and waste without regulatory support. This process will further tip the balance of power towards corporations.

This problematic situation came about because drafting was done by:

- An informal advisory group (IAG), set up according to CBD practice and now closed.
- An 'extended consultative network' (ECN), in which many corporate representatives with conflicts of interest have participated, and which did not follow CBD practice but is continuing to operate.

To be legitimate, action on the mainstreaming process should involve all Parties in open discussion. We therefore propose to bracket the whole text until Parties have genuinely discussed and agreed on how to address the issue of mainstreaming.

Read more on this issue here:



Business self-regulation undermines the GBF

Nele Mariën, Friends of the Earth International

Target 15 of the GBF makes businesses the central actors, and seems to assume that by their voluntary actions, their impact on biodiversity can be sufficiently reduced to avert biodiversity collapse. But is this really so?

A Greenpeace report called “certified destruction” shows that certification – one of the most promoted means of self-regulation- is too weak a tool and many certified companies continue to be linked to forest and ecosystem destruction, land disputes and human rights abuses.

8 certification schemes were analysed. All scored negative on many or most of the criteria. On some, particularly relevant for preventing biodiversity impacts, NONE of the certification bodies scored positively.

A Friends of the Earth Netherlands report on Palm Oil Certification by RSPO “Not out of the Woods” demonstrated criti

cal gaps in their consultation processes, which further undermine the credibility of the certificates.

Currently, certification enables destructive businesses to continue operating as usual. Policy makers rely upon assurances from business, and therefore step back from regulating them. Certification schemes thus end up greenwashing products linked to deforestation, ecosystem destruction and human rights abuses.

This also has strong implications for Target 16, as it requests consumers to buy responsibly; however, they are not in a position to do so, because they lack the necessary information.

For more information on the detail of these schemes and the issues with them, please visit



GBF Target 18

Perverse incentives: Elimination of “eliminate”?

Antje Lorch, Ecoropa

More than a decade ago, in 2010 the CBD decided to “eliminate, phase out or reform incentives that are harmful to biodiversity.”

Now it's 2022 – Aichi Target 3 was not achieved and we are discussing new targets – but instead of stepping up the efforts, the goal of “eliminating” is itself being eliminated.

Thus in the discussion of this target we now hear some Parties arguing that the target should not contain the word “eliminate”. Some even argue for adding a qualifier to say “in

line with WTO rules” so that this target would not disrupt trade.

It's 2022 and Parties did not fulfill the Aichi Target 3, but instead of stepping up implementation of their obligations, we are falling dangerously short of the ambition and vision we had 12 years ago.

Read the full story of the decline of attention to perverse incentives in the online version:



Imminent risk of irreversible biodiversity loss from deep-sea mining

Matthew Gianni, Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC)

Large areas of the deep-sea rich in biodiversity are at imminent risk of being opened to industrial-scale mining by the International Seabed Authority within the next two years. Scientists warn that this would cause irreversible loss of biodiversity and risk driving species extinct, some before they have been identified. The mining could ultimately destroy hundreds of thousands of square kilometers of deep ocean life and impact species and ecosystems across millions of cubic kilometers of open ocean over the next 30 years if the ISA begins licensing mining.

We were shocked by COP-14 ‘welcoming progress’ by the ISA

to develop mining regulations. COP-15 must correct course, sending a clear message that driving large-scale biodiversity loss in this planetary frontier is unacceptable and fundamentally counter to commitments and obligations to protect biodiversity. SBSTTA should amend CRP.2, paragraph 9, to ‘ensure’ deep-sea mining will not be permitted if it risks biodiversity loss or degradation of ecosystem functions, in particular carbon sequestration.

DSCC recommendations to SBSTTA can be found here:



Putting people at the center of biodiversity conservation and equitable and inclusive benefit sharing

David Obura, Yemi Katerere, Simangele Msweli - African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance

The CBD is dedicated to promoting sustainable use (art. 6 & 10) and yet goal B, on Sustainable Use, appears as the weakest goal of the GBF.

Sustainable use represents a powerful core that delivers on all three goals of the Convention. A sustainable use approach delivers on societal aspirations and conservation outcomes because it is people-centered, embracing inclusive and fair access to benefits and inclusive governance systems that respect the rights of indigenous people, local communities and small-scale food producers. Benefits from sustainable use of nature are varied. Hence sustainable use should not be based only on wild species, but on functioning ecosystems as well as managed or domesticated ecosystems and species.

Goal B appears as the weakest of the goals. Goal A and conventional conservation received the greatest attention historically, still evident in the dominant focus on “30x30” and “nature positive” messaging. Goal C, with its Nagoya Protocol, is focused on the domain of benefits from genetic resources. Many in Africa feel that Goal B should be more focused on sustainable use.

“Sustainable Use” is not a license to exceed nature’s capacities and we must hold each other to account so that we remain within planetary boundaries.

Systemic versus technofix innovation

Christine von Weizsaecker, Ecoropa

We would not be here if our ancestors had not applied the precautionary approach. At the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 „Principle 15: Precautionary Principle“ was agreed. It widens the possibilities of governance in cases of scientific uncertainty. This Principle is addressed in the preamble and underlies the CBD, and very specifically its Cartagena Protocol.

Innovation is only mentioned once in the Text of the CBD in Article 8(j), regarding knowledge practices and innovations of IPLCs. Now, „innovation“ is creeping into the proposed

draft decisions in many places and obviously not as a pointer to Article 8(j).

Innovation - as a principle - has been pushed by European business actors in recent years. The relationship between precaution and innovation is still under discussion, e.g. in the European RECIPES project.

What does innovation mean at a time of multiple crises? Continue reading



New Target 22 on gender equality, proposed by Costa Rica and 10 other parties

“Ensure women and girls’ equitable access and benefits from conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, as well as their informed and effective participation at all levels of policy and decision making related to biodiversity.”

Proponents: Costa Rica, Guatemala, Argentina, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Chile, Cote d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Togo, Benin, Cameroon and Tanzania.

More info at:



Biodiversity targets will not be met without debt and tax justice

Jessica Dempsey, Associate Professor, University of British Columbia, Canada

Current structural conditions of the economy (such as over-reliance on debt with highly unequal and unfair conditions) create the economic pressures that drive biodiversity loss, while undercutting public spending available for biodiversity goals.

Two types of reforms should be considered: tax reform and debt justice. Such approaches to biodiversity funding would more permanently counter the debt-austerity nexus that limits developing countries from reaching their biodiversity targets, while beginning to right the historic imbalance between those who have economically benefited the most from biodiversity decline and those who have not.

In light of the grossly insufficient international public finance currently committed to support developing countries to meet their biodiversity targets, such structural reforms should be on the table as part of fulfilling the common but differentiated responsibilities set out in Article 20 of the CBD. The current GBF negotiations should integrate these imperatives. By doing so, public resources will be greatly mobilized and harmful financial flows deflated, while dismantling the political and economic structures that inhibit implementation of biodiversity policy in the first place.

Nature E&E article to be found at:



How the UN agencies are eating into development funds for the global south

Souparna Lahiri (GFC), Yemi Katerere (ACBA)

The three Rio Conventions, Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF) and FIP (Forest Investment Program) provide most of the financial support to the countries in the global south. There are national entities from the global south with the capacity to receive and channel funds to respective governments and other non-state implementing entities. These funds should empower these national entities including government agencies, and build capacity in the global south to design, implement, monitor and review the projects and administer the funds. Instead it has become a norm for some UN agencies like UNDP, UNEP and FAO to

“capture” financial resources intended for member states taking over and duplicating roles of national governments in managing both the projects and funds. The UN agencies have higher overhead and staff costs including a reliance on expensive international consultants.

The cumulative effect is decreased financial flows to the actual and direct beneficiaries of the projects. Read on in the online ECO:

