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Volume 62, Issue 2
Monday, 28 March 2022

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Isolated Goals and targets won't lead us to a holistic GBF

Frederick Kwame Kumah, Africa CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA)

As the OEWG3 reaches its final stages, one might ask, what has been achieved? Well, general statements have been made on all the 21 targets. The interest of negotiators and observers, has been noted for consideration.

All 4 goals and 21 targets of the GBF need to be treated with equal urgency and importance, with particular attention to their interdependence because the success of each depends on the success of the others.

Traditionally, Goal A – relating to the conservation of biodiversity - has attracted the greatest interest. While this is important, its success is hardly possible without an equal emphasis on meeting people's needs (Goal B),

ensuring equitable sharing of benefits (Goal C), and being supported by effective means of implementation (Goal D).

A key to a successful GBF is its transformative nature, which is best achieved through system change in the core sociological, economic and ecological systems. Opportunities for transformation of all 3 core systems are present across 4 goals and 21 targets of the GBF, in an integrated approach.

All parties need to commit to treat each target as equally important and promote their interdependence. This will set the stage for a whole of government approach to the effective implementation of the GBF.

Replanting agricultural biodiversity in the CBD

Faris Ahmed

Agricultural biodiversity is a central part of biodiversity overall, underpinning the food system and providing fibre, feed, fuel, medicines, and materials or shelter;

However, it is increasingly neglected by the CBD. From an all-important setting at the heart of sustainable development, use, equity and conservation in the early years of the CBD, agricultural biodiversity has lost its central place in the Convention. So has agriculture itself, as the Convention and its Parties fail to implement policies to meet the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

As negotiations on the GBF continue, it is essential that agriculture returns centre stage. It needs to be addressed both as a destructive force, and for its ability to nurture and restore biodiversity. Today's industrial, large-scale

agriculture and intensive livestock production are identified as the biggest driver of land-use change, ecosystem exploitation and destruction. However, agriculture is also a solution: in contrast to industrial agriculture, peasant agriculture and food provision, practised by the majority of the world's small-scale farmers, nurtures and safeguards agricultural biodiversity.

A new Friends of the Earth International report explores the ways in which the CBD and the international community can place it at the centre of rebuilding an agro-biodiverse and just world.

Read the publication here:



Market systems or earth systems?

Helena Paul, Econexus

Economies around the world are based on endless growth, which in turn means ever-increasing extraction, exploitation, consumption and related biodiversity destruction, and greenhouse gas emissions. Corporations - including the finance sector - should change their behaviour, but instead they are seeking ways to avoid systemic change. Therefore, they say the problem is that 'nature' has no value in the market, so the 'solution' is to give it a price by marketing 'ecosystem services' for privatisation and exploitation. This means that when 'services' such as regulating climate or providing water, food and medicine become scarce, their market value and the profits to be gained will increase accordingly.

The financialisation project has assumed many disguises over the years, using different kinds of market

instruments such as REDD and REDD+, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), wetland banking, Verified Carbon Standard (VCS), and Payments for Ecosystem services (PES). Now there are new terms that conceal these instruments behind positive-sounding concepts, such as Nature-based Solutions and "Nature-Positive". In this context, the drive to turn at least 30% of all land and oceans into 'protected areas', with 'nature' used as carbon sinks to offset continued emissions of greenhouse gases, becomes just another booster for the financialization project.

Read the in-depth article on this topic here:



Are we on a road to nowhere?

Friedrich Wulf, Friends of the Earth Europe and Antje Lorch, Ecoropa

We have had ample time to craft a set of goals and targets that will enable us to halt biodiversity loss and IPBES has told us clearly what is required to bring about the changes we need.

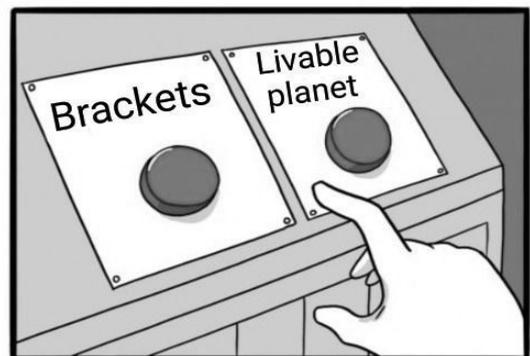
Yet every target - already reworked several times - still becomes a Christmas tree full of brackets in no time.

One wonders if all parties share the sense of urgency to create a meaningful agreement; or whether some are even questioning the Convention itself.

- In Target 15, at best governments ask businesses to self-regulate and report without oversight or control. Past experience has shown that this leads to human rights abuses and environmental damage without legal consequences.
- In Target 16, parties refused to name states as key actors; to use incentives to guide consumer behaviour; or to take measures consistent with biodiversity, and some even questioned the inclusion of overconsumption, a major driver of biodiversity loss.
- For Target 17 we can clearly see that for some Parties at least the discussion is not about the target itself, but about attempting to re-negotiate several important principles, values and decisions of the CBD.

Time is running out in Geneva. This is the opportunity for

parties to reconsider tackling issues which seriously affect biodiversity even if they extend beyond traditional environmental remits, for example economic agreements. IPBES has clearly stated that these must be addressed. Now is the time to act accordingly.



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We strongly advocate rights for IPLCs, women, youth ... But will other targets simply undermine them?

Helena Paul, Econexus

Unless we address serious problems with targets 14, 15, 16 and 18, we will continue to lose rights on the ground.

These targets, which address government (target 14), business (target 15) and society (target 16) separately, completely fail to address the core issues that link them. The role of governments must be to develop regulatory frameworks to control the activities of businesses all the way along their supply chains. This is vital to protect the people and biodiversity where goods are extracted and manufactured from exploitation, human rights abuses and environmental degradation, as

well as consumers from deceptive information.

Implementing Target 18 on subsidies and incentives is urgent, to address the biodiversity destruction, human rights violations and injustice they cause, as well as identifying any new and/or undetected subsidies.

Without such regulatory frameworks we do not have a chance of stopping biodiversity destruction or human rights abuses.

365 organisations speak up against Nature-based Solutions

Nele Mariën, Friends of the Earth International

In a joint statement, 365 organisations from around the globe express their concerns about the concept of Nature-based Solutions (NbS).

They stress that it is being marketed as agroecology and natural regeneration initiatives, while actually advancing harmful practices such as offsetting, monoculture tree plantations and industrial agriculture.

Typically, the concept NbS is used by corporations for greenwashing, by reducing “nature” to a service provider for offsetting their ever-growing GHG emissions.

So far, there is no governance body to define which projects can or cannot be called NbS. This way, well-

meaning projects actually elevate the standing of NbS, paving the way for corporations to benefit from its positive appearance.

The signing organisations also question the meaning of the word “nature”, as NbS proponents seem to imply it implies “enclosed spaces devoid of people”. This is not compatible with nature understood as territory, a life space inseparable from the cultures, food systems and livelihoods of the communities who care for it.

Read the full statement here:



You may have missed some interesting articles from the online ECO:

- **Sustainable intensification: green-washing conventional intensive agriculture**
Although sustainable intensification practices are a massive contributor to climate change and the destruction of biodiversity they are promoted as NBS and in the GBF.
- **Resource mobilization for biodiversity in an extractive and inequitable context**
There are fundamental flaws in the way the global economy is structured, which continue to perpetuate biodiversity loss and impact negatively on IPLCs.
- **Net gain is a lose-lose option for women, indigenous peoples and local communities**
“Net” approaches to biodiversity loss inherently ignore the local social, economic and cultural values of biodiversity, especially for rightsholder groups that disproportionately depend on these values.
- **Implementing a human rights-based approach in GBF: a matter of urgency**
Implementing a HRBA means, that biodiversity policies, governance and management do not violate human rights and that those implementing such policies actively seek ways to support and promote HR in their design and implementation.



Over 600 marine science & policy experts call for a halt to deep seabed mining activities

Ricarda Steinbrecher, Federation of German Scientists

Discussion time on coastal and marine issues was completely inadequate, as is para 9 of the resulting L12 document: “Encouraging parties ... to minimize and mitigate impacts of deep-sea mining on coastal and marine biodiversity.”

This phrase allows seabed mining to move ahead, in conflict with the precautionary principle and the current scientific understanding of the inevitable impacts. It suggests a desire to prioritise gain of resources over protecting vital systems.

The deep ocean constitutes more than 90% of the biosphere, and plays a key role in climate regulation, fisheries production, and elemental cycling.

Serious concerns include:

- Production of large, persistent, sediment plumes: affecting seafloor and midwater species and ecosystems well beyond the actual mining sites;

- Resuspension, release and spread of sediment, metals and toxins into the water column, both from mining and the discharge of mining wastewater from ships
- noise pollution

There is a lack of rigorous scientific information available concerning the biology, ecology and connectivity of deep-sea species and ecosystems, as well as the ecosystem functions they provide. Deep-sea mining would add to existing stressors, resulting in the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, irreversible on multi-generational timescales. Until and unless it is possible to rule out any significant damage, deep seabed mining must not be an option.

Read the expert statement here:



On 24th March there was an action to remind us all of the environmental human rights defenders who have lost their lives in defence of their lands and their communities. Many of these men and women have been murdered for defending ecosystems that are so vital to all life on Earth. Indigenous Peoples and local communities are disproportionately affected. Each year the numbers rise. This quiet, reflective action reminded us of their courage and resolve and how we must all take action to defend Mother Earth.

