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“One Health” and effect of Uranium mining

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In the morning of 26 April 1986, a Soviet nuclear plant at Chernobyl near Kiev, exploded, pouring radioactivity into the environment, setting off the worst disaster in the history of nuclear energy.

More than 130,000 people had to be evacuated from the central contaminated zone and permanently resettled. A million live under radiological watch in high radioactivity zones, and over 600,000 - including 250,000 children - are hospitalized. Chernobyl was the greatest environmental catastrophe in the history of the earth and uranium mining.

And, the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster is one of only two INES1 Level 7 events in world history.

Radioactive substances have spread to not only within Fukushima but also to the whole eastern part Japan through wind, and it has brought a serious damage to the primary industries as well as to biodiversity. Highly radioactive water from storage tanks keep leaking, and polluted groundwater is pushed from the mountain side into the ocean. There is a massive amount of radioactive substances and radioactive rubble floating in the Pacific Ocean and there is a concern they will drift to reach the Pacific islands.

We have to clearly recognize that *all* nuclear power plants in operation have the same kind of risk for accidents and could cause irreversible environmental pollutions across borders.

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CBD has to recognize that such kind of economic activities are a great threat for biodiversity.

The uranium industry - specially uranium mining - is

more active in the land of Indigenous people than any other place in the world and is destroying their lifestyles.

Wollaston Lake in India is one of the small communities struggling to survive. In 1985, the west side of Wollaston Lake, all traffic in and out of Rabbit Lake and Collins Bay uranium mines was blocked for 80 hours. The blockade marked the first act of civil disobedience against the uranium industry in Saskatchewan.

Corbin Harney is an elder and spiritual leader of the Western Shoshone, a native people indigenous to Idaho, Nevada, Utah and California and is leading his people to protest the US governments nuclear testing and uranium mining:

“As I see it all around me, the trees are dying out, our water is contaminated, and our air is not good to breath, we have to come back to the Native Way of Life, the Native Way is to pray for everything, our Mother Earth is very important, we can’t just misuse her and think she is going to continue.

We’ve been told to take care of what we’ve got so that we can leave something for the younger generation, we the people are going to have to put our minds together to save our planet here.

We only have one water, one air, one Mother Earth.”

Everything we live on, such as air, water, soil and food come from the ecosystem and diverse living things. We should recognize that our health are hurt by hurting the health of the earth by mining uranium.

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Offsetting – a counterproductive mainstreaming tool

Tikli Loivaranta, University of Turku & Nele Mariën, Friends of the Earth International

The whole point of the mainstreaming exercise is to make sure that biodiversity is a priority factor taken into account when sectors define their development plans. It should ensure human development does not surpass planetary boundaries.

For this, the Aichi targets and the SDGs have defined a few objectives, such as the conservation of 17% of terrestrial land (AT11), halt deforestation and the loss of biodiversity and of (SDG15.2 and 15.5) and restore degraded forests and degraded land (SDG 15.2 and 15.3). These objectives are to be reached each and every one separately by 2020, and we are not reaching them.

It comes then as a huge surprise to see that biodiversity offsetting is being considered as a tool for mainstreaming. How can the protection of biodiverse sites possibly compensate for the loss of biodiversity in another site? When actually it is essential for Nature that both sites maintain intact?

That is no solution; it is a tale to make energy, mining or industrial sectors seem green, and appease the conscience of those using the resources and products.

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The notion of “No Net Loss” makes no sense on a planet where the amount of biodiverse rich sites is limited and shrinking quickly. There is no space for compensating a loss with the conservation of an existing site.

Biodiversity offsets - by definition - give industries the liberty to not address biodiversity loss at the site where these adverse effects are generated, but to conduct mitigating measures at somewhere easier or cheaper. Thus, offsets are a convenient way for justifying the continuation of

business as usual - while perversely earning an “ecological image”. This is exactly opposite of the crucial and fundamental “transformative change” called for during the negotiations.

Offsetting mechanisms are complex, requiring valuable human and financial resources as well as long preparative phases. Time and resources spent on displacing biodiversity, not on saving it!

Measuring baseline scenarios and comparing them with and actual scenarios involves highly hypothetical elements. The level of detail of measuring and the number and type of species taken into account can only be defined with a big degree of uncertainty. Nevertheless, this is the basis for offsetting. Its complexity and lack of transparent follow up systems opens the possibility to false reporting of benefits, corruption and misuse.

Biodiversity offsets also have multiple negative effects for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities who are suffering a double impact, for example of mining activities: they get displaced from the mining site, as well as from the offsetting site. Human right abuses have been reported in many cases.

Living in harmony with nature requires addressing the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and climate change. Thus, mitigating biodiversity loss requires broad re-evaluation of our economic and financial systems, and not further “innovations”.

Further commodifying nature through offsets is contradictory to living in harmony with nature. On the contrary, Parties should ensure stringent regulation so that sectors maintain their action within the planetary boundaries.

The opinions, commentaries, and articles printed in ECO are the sole opinion of the individual authors or organisations, unless otherwise expressed.

Submissions are welcome from all civil society groups.

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Mainstreaming biodiversity in the energy and mining, infrastructure, manufacturing and processing, and health sectors

Statement from EcoNexus, Friends of the Earth International, Global Forest Coalition, USC CANADA, Global Youth Biodiversity Network, Mexican Biodiversity Alliance, ProNatura and Uusi Tuuli, all members of the CBD Alliance.

Madame Chair,

The mainstreaming document should set out policy guidelines that ensure that the energy, mining, manufacturing and processing and infrastructure sectors operate within planetary boundaries. Otherwise we will rapidly reach irreversible tipping points, locally, nationally and globally.

However, the current document:

- Gives only a list of possible tools, most of which are not new, such as Certification and Environmental Impact Assessments, which have not been able to mitigate negative impacts, as well as several tools that commodify nature and have very negative impacts on local communities, such as biodiversity offsetting
- Gives not one single recommendation for real action, or for policies to be implemented by parties
- Does not take into account IP/LC and the need for equitable and fair sharing of energy, resources, and manufactured goods.
- Does not consider the phase out of perverse incentives that still support harmful projects and sectors, in line with Aichi Target three and the relevant milestones.

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The Community Conservation Resilience Initiative revealed that the sectors under consideration have a particularly devastating impact on human rights and the lives and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women, which should be duly recognized.

If this document is used as the basis for negotiations as it stands, no serious outcome for the mainstreaming of biodiversity can be achieved.

Truly transformative solutions that put biodiversity in a wider systemic context, are being proposed and carried out every day by peoples' organizations, and local communities. By not exploring them seriously, we are missing opportunities for real transformation.

We strongly suggest developing a new draft for SBI which is more balanced and takes our concerns into account.

Towards a global post-2020 biodiversity framework

Guenter Mitlacher, WWF Germany & Dr. Cornelia Paulsch, Institute for Biodiversity Network

The way to a new global post-2020 biodiversity framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity is one of the SBSTTA 21 hot topics.

In 2020, the 15th Conference of the Parties to the CBD in China is expected to decide about a new strategic framework. WWF Germany is preparing a contribution to this discussion on a new CBD strategy in consultation with experts from different stakeholders and disciplines.

The aim is to develop a discussion paper as a concrete input to the CBD negotiations and to provide ideas and proposals relevant for the positioning of different actors. The project is supported by the Federal Environment Ministry of Germany, which will hold the EU Presidency in the second half of 2020.

In the margins of SBSTTA 21 in Montreal a first international stakeholder workshop was held to discuss if the 2050 vision, the text of the 2020 mission and the five strategic goals of the current strategic plan 2011-2020 should be maintained, amended or replaced in a post-2020 framework.

Further workshops to discuss targets are planned for SBSTTA 22 and COP 14.

More information on the project and the workshops: www.biodiv.de/en/projekte/aktuell/cbd-strategy.html

About Biodiversity Governance and Conflicts of Interests

Simone Lovera, Global Forest Coalition

The word “we” was used frequently during the official discussion on scenarios and pathways for the 2050 vision for biodiversity, and the related side events on Monday. It is clear that it will depend on the pathway “we” choose whether planetary disaster will be prevented. But as David Cooper of the CBD Secretariat pointed out during one of the side events, it is the people that will determine which pathway we chose. And those people are not one coherent “we”, but a group of very diverse actors: different people working for different Ministries and industries, consumers, scientists, and groups representing rightsholders like Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, farmers, and workers.

Biodiversity policy implementation depends on biodiversity governance, and it is important we avoid the term “we” when biodiversity governance is being analysed. For it is exactly the dynamics between different stakeholders and rightsholders that has caused the failure to reach the Aichi Targets so far. Sure, all human beings depend to a certain extent on biodiversity, but Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women in rural areas often depend on it for their entire livelihood, while urban elites or industries tend to have the financial resources to replace the

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contributions of biodiversity with alternatives like imported food, or bottled water. Meanwhile, the people who depend most on biodiversity tend to be economically and politically marginalized, [and despite efforts by the CBD to involve them in the overall process,] they are still virtually absent from most of the discussions on the post-2020 biodiversity framework. As a result, “their” pathway, the pathway of land rights, traditional knowledge, customary sustainable use and community conservation, is hardly taken into account in the various scenarios.

Rather, many pathways and scenarios seem written from a typical Anglo-Saxon perspective in which neoliberal economies are the rule and any policy that challenges them the exception. The growing “dialogue” with business, and the increasing tendency of the UN system to rely on private sector “partnerships” and other forms of corporate financial support, undoubtedly plays a role here. It is important to take into account the inherent conflict between corporate interests and the concept of planetary boundaries. Corporations can show a lot of goodwill towards policy measures that might enhance the quality of their production or protect their “natural capital”. But due to the rules of capitalism, corporations need continued growth, so they can never accept policy measures that impact on the growth of their industry. Meanwhile, it makes little sense to bite the hand that feeds you, and research has revealed that people have a tendency to subtly, or not so subtly, align their discourse with their economic interests. So is it strange that little progress has been made on a target like Aichi Target 3 that would impact on corporate interests?

It is clear that there is an urgent need for a CBD conflicts of interest policy. Every actor has interests, and those are seldom exactly similar to the public interest, so conflicts of interests are unavoidable when private and public policies mix. But if humanity wants to stay within planetary boundaries, and halt forest and biodiversity loss by 2020 as mandated by the SDGs, there is a need for strong regulatory policies and quantitative measures that will conflict with private commercial interests. For that reason, biodiversity governance has to be freed from the conflicting private interests of business and industry if the 2050 vision is to be fulfilled.

Yesterday at the plenary, the representative of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network was cut off in their intervention after exactly minute.

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Is this really all the time the CBD wants to spend on the concerns and the contributions of youth or civil society organisations?