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A statement on Target Malaria's Gene Drives

Ali Tapsoba

A statement from Ali Tapsoba, President of the organization Terre à Vie and spokesperson for the Citizen Collective for Agro-ecology in Ougadougou, Burkina Faso. Despite submitting all necessary documents, Mr Tapsoba, a leading voice of Burkinabé civil society against gene drives, was denied a visa by the Canadian embassy in Dakar to attend SBSTTA-22.

Dear participants in SBSTTA-22,

I salute your collective commitment to a protective vision of humanity. For thousands of years, local communities have safeguarded food sovereignty and healthy ecosystems. Unfortunately, for more than a decade, our traditional systems has been threatened by multinationals.

African states, including Burkina Faso, are under increasing pressure from multinationals that are imposing genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in complicity with our governments. While BT cotton failed miserably in Burkina Faso, we still dare to subject ourselves to BT Cowpea and genetically modified mosquitoes.

The ultimate goal of the Target Malaria consortium is to deliberately release mosquitoes through a gene drive, in order to reduce the population of mosquitoes *Anopheles gambiae*, which can transmit the malarial parasite vector. It is an aberration, and a leap to the unknown with disastrous health and environmental consequences. Who can reassure us that by modifying the genome of the mosquito, the mosquito will not harbor more deadly diseases than malaria? Who can reassure us of what the consequences will be? Beyond these legitimate concerns, Target Malaria's project also raises questions of ethics: is it normal to embark on a costly project of 37 billion FCFA (for its first phase) for extremely risky research, whose results are uncertain? We refuse to be guinea pigs for the merchants of science. Our food and sovereignty and health are not negotiable. This is why civil society and farmers in Burkina Faso, along with the Citizen Collective for Agro-ecology initiated an online petition titled "Burkina Faso is not a country of guinea pigs" and organized a demonstration against genetically

modified mosquitoes on June 2 in Ouagadougou. More than a thousand people came out to say no to this project.

Africans do not need gene drives; we have enough indigenous knowledge to solve our problems. We are united and determined to win! Thank you !

EBSAs traditional knowledge training manual provides important guidance to Parties

Vivienne Solís Rivera, ICCA Consortium

Traditional knowledge has been considered as a crucial issue to be consulted and incorporated into the ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) recognition process. Many territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities (ICCAs—territories of life) in marine and coastal areas are overlapped by EBSAs. These territories and areas have the richest traditional knowledge and biological and cultural diversity, which has historically been overlooked and sometimes destroyed.

In 2016, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to establish an informal advisory group (IAG) on EBSAs (decision XIII/12, para. 11), with the terms of reference contained in Annex III to that decision. The ICCA Consortium was invited to be part of this IAG for EBSAs and a representative summarized the analysis of the traditional knowledge training manual (CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/21) at the first meeting of the IAG from 30 June to 1 July in Montreal. Indigenous Peoples and local communities relate to marine resources and have knowledge based on the values related to culture, sustainable use of resources; they have a right to participate and have clearly developed a process oriented towards the recognition of their rights to participate and share power concerning these marine territories and resources.

The training manual on the incorporation of traditional knowledge into the description and identification of EBSAs is very clearly directed to both Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and also to managers and scientists and presents examples concerning the importance of the traditional knowledge in the definition of valuable and rich biodiversity and cultural areas.

It provides a framework that is based in ethical values of common understanding and with a very logical route to follow based on a true and frank situation. The manual presents some of the main challenges to promote the use of traditional knowledge within the process of the EBAs description process: the need of knowledge co-production, the need for the integration of knowledge holders into the process and a necessary shift from developing knowledge integration products to developing

knowledge to integration processes enabling multiple views and multiple methods.

Today, national authorities have a responsibility and the potential to engage with indigenous peoples and local communities in an effective and meaningful way as part of their national EBSA preparatory process. Two good examples of how this has been done are the Canadian EBSA process and Arctic region EBSA description process

Major conference in Montreal celebrates community-led micro-reserves in Kyrgyzstan and other community conservation initiatives

Anna Kirilenko, BIOM, Kyrgyzstan

The Community Conservation Resilience Initiative (CCRI) is a collective effort of Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations to carry out bottom up assessments in 22 countries and document the resilience of community conservation initiatives. One of the countries where in community conservation was documented is Kyrgyzstan. The CCRI in Kyrgyzstan has shown significant involvement of local communities in biodiversity conservation, including activities that protect traditional knowledge and recognize women as active actors in sustainable development and preservation of ecosystems. Additionally, Ecological Movement BIOM, an environmental organization in Kyrgyzstan, together with local communities, scientists and government bodies have been working on a methodology to assess ecosystems and implement public monitoring.

These initiatives are accelerating in the backdrop of changes in a law about protected areas in Kyrgyzstan, which are connected to expanding rights and roles of local communities in biodiversity conservation. Local community members that engaged in the CCRI project had participated in consultations on the change of this law. According to the new law, local communities are able to organize micro-reserves. Micro-reserves are natural territories that represent natural or cultural values of local communes. These can be places where rare and/or endemic plants grow, highly productive ecosystems preserved in meadows and forests, holy places, or water sources, amongst others. Local communities can organize and preserve natural territories and engage larger populations in the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems. There are few examples of such activities in the country today. For example, in Issik Kul oblast, a micro-reserve "Orchard Valley" has been created where local communities preserve plants. In Djalal Abad oblast, a micro-reserve has also been created to preserve traditional local people

's worship places. In Chy oblast a micro-reserve in the territory of a school has been established for growing relict apple varieties (Nedzvedskiy apple tree), that are being introduced in the Red Book of Kyrgyz Republic.

These initiatives are important for Kyrgyz Republic as its mountainous landscape offers a diversity of ecosystems, but with limited areas. Efforts of local communities are integral for preserving ecosystem diversity and rare and endemic species. Collaboration amongst government and local communities in environmental conservation of natural ecosystems and natural cultural places is also important. The experiences in Kyrgyzstan show clearly that the contribution of community conservation initiatives should be acknowledged in any assessment of the implementation of the Biodiversity Convention and its Aichi Targets, and fully integrated in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and the future CBD Strategic Plan.

The CCRI aims to make concrete policy recommendations for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Strategic Plan. From 4 to 8 July 2018, more than 100 representatives of the Indigenous Peoples, local communities and environmental groups are here in Montreal to celebrate the second Fostering Community Conservation Conference and participation in the conference is still possible, provided you contact marylouisemalig@globalforestcoalition.org in advance.

You can find the full program at: <https://globalforestcoalition.org/fccc-2018/>

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