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Is this how we save life on Earth?

If any everyday resident or visitor to Rome walked into the FAO this week, it would be hard to explain to them that this was the forum that aspires to save life on earth. There have certainly been some bright spots. Drives from some parties and many observers for ambition on supporting a range of ambitious global goals, targets and implementation mechanisms.

But the week of negotiations kicked off (and let's be honest - will likely finish) with the familiar tactics of division, obfuscation and delay from a very very small number of parties that somehow feel like the world needs them, but they don't need the world. Tactics driven by parties that see themselves as less as a part of a global community, and more as isolated bastions of populism, division and difference.

The tactics of these parties are as transparent as they are disruptive. They come and throw mud, make a huge mess, revel in it and then stand up and say "look at me and this mess I made". It's designed to make their stand in the world. To make the case for domestic nationalism, parochialism and feed their need for validation. There are, of course, genuine policy issues at play and these shouldn't be diminished, but they get lost to the theatrics and disruptive tactics deployed.

There are bigger geopolitical issues that are at play through these forums. The unsaid things that tie parties to positions and cause people in nice suits to act like an elementary school debating team. The CBD is not immune to the hostility directed to the UN from populist regimes. If there is going to be a successful GBF in China, the many actors invested in its success will need to evaluate the range of means to bring about a change in the tactics and posture of those that simply want to throw mud, and empower a range of other actors to help drive change.

But there is hope. There have been genuine and touching interventions from delegates and observers that are here from different walks of life, from people passionate about creating a better future for people and our planet. The openness of the CBD is one of its strengths, and spaces should be continued to be made for the active participation of the many groups that occupy the back rows of the plenary.

As has been noted throughout this working group - we are yet to break this conversation out into the mainstream. But there is a latent connection and adoration for nature within our societies. It will take all

sectors to work together to effectively and meaningfully tap into this. To find a common ground that unites and inspires action, that cuts across different values and political viewpoints.

It is entirely possible to build a broad-based movement that will drive political ambition. When we have people in the streets, in the boardrooms, in the ballot boxes and at our kitchen tables demanding action, we know change will come. The beautiful thing about global movements is that they are truly global, and leadership can come from surprising places - just ask a young Swedish schoolgirl.

Entry points to develop a gender-responsive GBF

By Amelia Arreguín – CBD Women Caucus

Since 1992, CBD has recognized the vital role of women in the conservation of biodiversity, yet still after 30 years there are very few concrete advances regarding women's empowerment or gender equality. Developing a gender responsive framework is not just about naming "women" or adding "gender" to different parts of the document, nor is it only about promoting women's participation in decision making process. I am not saying however, that these are not important measures, but gender responsiveness is way more complex.

In this regard, the linkages between women and biodiversity must be understood. Generally, women and girls, due to gender roles, are responsible for nurturing and caring for the entire world. This is a role that they must fulfill in silence, without support while facing many risks and violence. In particular, these linkages between women and biodiversity include: their different knowledge resulting from their specific interactions with biodiversity, their differentiated needs and priorities, the inequalities in rights and access to resources, their under-representation and unequal participation in decision making processes; and the increased risks, vulnerabilities and violence they face due biodiversity loss and also with regard to the initiatives that aim to halt this loss.

Towards that aim, the Global Biodiversity Framework has an important role to play in guaranteeing that any of the measures that we agree do not increase the burden on women and girls; *au contraire*, that they will contribute to bend the curve of gender inequalities. This can only be done by recognizing that the socioeconomic model that drives the biodiversity crisis is the same system that first put women and girls in such a vulnerable position.

Therefore, to build a gender responsive GBF, many initiatives should be developed and integrated at all levels of the Strategic plan. These could include:

- Review, update and integrate the Gender Plan of Action in the GBF
- Develop goals and targets keeping in mind the specific roles and vulnerabilities of women and girls, not just including a reference to gender or women at indicator level.
- Establish a participatory monitoring, review and reporting mechanism, which acknowledges the contribution of women and addresses gender inequalities.
- Define criteria for a resource mobilization mechanism and strategy that is gender responsive.
- Ensure equitable governance throughout all biodiversity related processes, including the full and effective participation of women and girls at all levels.

The Need for Technology Horizon Scanning and Assessment in the GBF

Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC Group)

A precautionary assessment of the impacts of emerging technologies has become more urgent than ever before, particularly as converging technologies in the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution work in concert, and as a small number of large corporations control greater and greater portions of the natural world. For better or worse, disruptive and powerful technological platforms are now transforming our societies and environment at speed – from artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics to biotechnology and blockchains.

To be sure-footed in navigating this rapidly-shifting technological terrain and avoid false solutions, governments and other policymakers need better maps and decision-making tools to make wise choices about technology. Precaution demands the careful assessment of technologies before, not after, governments and inter-governmental bodies start funding the development of technologies and enabling their deployment. National and international processes on technology assessment with the participation of the people who are directly affected are critical. People must have the ability to decide which technologies they need, and to reject technologies that are not environmentally sound, socially acceptable, equitable and gender responsive.

Currently, there is no multilateral body specifically mandated to take on the governance and regulation of emerging technologies. The technology cycle is seen as “research, development, diffusion, deployment” but there is no international process where technologies are carefully evaluated for their social, environmental and other impacts before they are rushed out to market. With new technologies that purport to manipulate entire planetary systems and build new life forms from scratch,

an international governance mechanism has become an urgent matter.

To strategically respond to the potential impacts of new and emerging technologies on biodiversity and on indigenous peoples and local communities, technology horizon scanning that involves foresight exercises and information sharing, and assessment and governance of new and emerging technologies must be incorporated in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework based on the following principles:

- Strict application of precautionary principle
- Ensure environmental integrity
- No unilateral deployment of technologies with transborder impacts
- Full consideration of potential negative social, economic, health and environmental impacts
- Equal consideration of other alternatives and options, including non-technological and social innovations, to address challenges and threats to biodiversity
- Open and transparent process with full civil society participation
- Fair, full and equitable representation and participation of developing countries, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, Women, Youth and Civil Society organizations.

Founding principles and the post2020 framework

Helena Paul, Econexus

Sometimes it seems that in our eagerness to develop the framework, there's a risk that we forget the basic rules of the CBD as set out in the convention text and annexes. Just one example is the second part of Article 3, Principle, which says that ‘states have the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction’. Now that we are living in this increasingly interconnected world that is being driven by digital and physical infrastructure ever closer to planetary boundaries, the potential for one state to cause damage to other states is probably greater than ever. It is thus essential that the post2020 global biodiversity framework should be fully based on the founding principles and previous decisions of the CBD. It certainly must not undermine them.

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