

# ECO

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Agenda 22 – Invasive Alien Species

## Precaution and Prevention Action to address IAS effectively

*Peter Peuschel, International Fund for Animal Welfare*

Challenges with *Invasive Alien Species* (IAS) are numerous and clearly increasing worldwide with substantial implications on people, livelihoods and national economies as much as on biodiversity, wildlife and their habitats.

Invasions are often addressed by stout-hearted, rather isolated rapid response measures focused on quick reduction, which rarely solves the problem. Often such actions only reduce the problem for a short period of time, and may result in unacceptable impacts on non-target species, their habitats and ecosystem services. Wherever possible, it is far more effective if any such action is part of a larger IAS management plan, developed to implement a national or regional strategy to realize long-lasting solutions - based on the Precautionary Principle - guided by ecological and biological sustainability and the ethical treatment of animals affected.

Of course it is not that easy - and in many cases even impossible - to remove invasive species already spreading within an ecosystem.

### Human introduction versus migration

To make it more complex: different approaches are needed depending on whether species are *introduced* by humans (intentionally or unintentionally), or if they *migrate* into a new geographical area by themselves, triggered perhaps by climate change or other reasons for large-scale transformation in ecosystems.

If a species has migrated into an area, then management actions may wrong the wrong choice as the species in question might seem invasive today, but may prove to be beneficial within the natural adaptation process tomorrow. Therefore precaution must be the guiding principle when identifying species as being invasive. The decision whether management action is appropriate or not has to be taken carefully and wisely.

### Prevention comes first!

Prevention is the most efficient and effective approach, wherever it is successfully applied. If pathways cannot be closed, new invasive species will arrive perpetually, escalating the ecological and economic problems and possibly undoing previous progress against existing invasions. Many countries have already started good efforts and initiatives around the world, but unfortunately these are often too sketchy, too late or too little, or they remain shelved for lack of capacity and resources. It is most urgent to close pathways, as otherwise every day new species may arrive.

Therefore the closure of pathways should be handled as top-priority, including pathways for species known to be aggressively invasive as well as those “just” potentially invasive. In order to achieve real prevention, we have to move past the usual practice of waiting until a species has invaded an ecosystem and until their ecological impact has been scientifically proven. That is too late and too little and usually results in costly damage limitation. Prevention needs to be pro-active based on precaution resulting in the closure of pathways already when species are considered to be potentially invasive.

### Aichi Target 9

It is high time for CBD to shift gears in order to achieve Aichi Target 9 by 2020. COP12 needs to adopt the draft decision tabled here under item 22, just including new text recommendations that strengthens and clarifies the decision. We hope that all Parties then give highest priority to diminish the risk from alien species (including those that are potentially invasive); particularly, but not limited to prohibit imports, trade, sales, breeding, keeping and release into the environment.

To focus on species as pets, aquarium and terrarium species and as live bait and live food surely is a good start.

## NBSAPs - the hard way

Ana Di Pangracio,

Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN)

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are the principal instruments for implementing the CBD at the national level. But their development and implementation face several challenges.

It became clear from CBD Alliance side event “Advancements and reflections on fulfilling National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans” yesterday, that the level of articulation and appropriation of the resulting NBSAPs from all actors involved is key to making of such product a reality in the territory. Public participation allows to link planning and implementation. It also permits to obtain access to a full range of knowledge and information, raise awareness, build consensus and maximize policy coherence and efficiency.

NBSAPs should be adopted at the legal level and as public policy, with a clear and aligned commitment from all state agencies. Representatives with decision-making power - not only technical staff - must be present all along the NBSAP process as to ensure inter-sectorial articulation to prepare the ground for future implementation. That is, mainstream and integrate biodiversity onto broader national development towards sustainable development.

The inability of NBSAPs to influence mainstream development outcomes so far, can be largely attributed to weaknesses in the process of their development. Many processes were often more technical than political, and did not manage to sufficiently influence policy beyond the remit of the national agency directly responsible for biodiversity. NBSAPs are a political process hence, political attention to biodiversity must be obtained in order to ensure mainstreaming. The process is as important as the substance so there is no need to rush it. Finally, NBSAPs also need to be realistic and develop a resource mobilization strategy as to not to rely fully on external support for implementation.

## 500 years versus 3 days

### Mount Gariwang must be protected

Korea Civil Network for CBD

Mount Gariwang, located near Pyeongchang where COP12 is being held, is one of the best natural forests in Korea. Mount Gariwang's unique and well-preserved ecosystem has been protected by the government for more than 500 years since the Chosun dynasty.

The Korean government, however, decided to build a ski slope in the very center of Mount Gariwang for a 3-day-long alpine skiing during the 2018 Winter Olympic Games to be held in Pyeongchang. In order to do so, the government made a special law and lifted the development ban on Mount Gariwang, threatening the ecosystem of the mountain. And the construction of the ski slope has already begun without thorough environmental impact assessments. The logging of more than 40,000 trees is under way in spite of severe objections from academia and civil society, and only about 200 trees are scheduled to be transplanted. There are, of course, several alternatives instead of destroying the unique ecosystem of Mount Gariwang.

One of the options is to have the alpine skiing at Yongpyeong ski slope which is near Pyeongchang and the other is to use the two-run system which also complies with the regulation of the International Ski Federation. It is obvious that constructing new ski resorts without considering negative impacts on biodiversity leads to loss of biodiversity.

The Korean civil society strongly urges the Korean government to stop destroying the ecosystem of Mount Gariwang and reconsider what would be the best to preserve biodiversity. The 2018 Winter Olympic Games must be an eco-friendly event for our future.

