



Legal, sustainable and safe use of biodiversity is a right of IPLCs

Community Leaders Network, Resource Africa, Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organizations (NACSO) and African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA)

While sustainable use is one of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), it remains in the shadows of the other objectives, especially the one on conservation. The Aichi Targets failed to deliver on sustainable use because of a disproportionate focus on conservation. Sustainable use is about community ownership. And it is a positive, holistic approach to addressing biodiversity loss. For sub-Saharan countries, sustainable use is not theoretical. It is the heart of local and national economies. It supports cultural and religious beliefs and livelihoods. It powerfully embraces conservation and benefit sharing - neither is viable without the other. Especially where the majority of the population is rural, it is a tool for empowerment of IPLCs. These rural populations understand the complexity of living with and managing biodiversity. In a

globalised world where economic volatility is exacerbated by climate change, for rural communities the legal, sustainable and safe use of biodiversity is a vital safety net. So, why is #COP15 keeping sustainable use under the radar? This is because sustainable use is being labelled 'backward' when in fact, it continues to deliver major conservation and livelihood benefits.

Customary use is a part of sustainable use. To make "sustainable use" synonymous with "customary use" undermines the contribution of biodiversity to local and national economic activities. Africa cannot be reduced to a continent reliant only on a subsistence economy. We strongly urge COP15 to cast the sustainable, safe and legal use of biodiversity in a positive light and recognise and respect its broader contribution to the wellbeing of Africans.

"Nature Positive": the new 'con' in conservation

Simon Counsell, Advisor to Survival International

There has been strong pressure from business lobbyists such as WBCSD and Business for Nature, along with certain big conservation corporations, for inclusion of the term 'Nature Positive' in the mission of the GBF. This slogan sounds nice but could mark a serious step backward in achieving the objectives of the CBD.

"A Nature Positive world" is not a science-based aim like keeping climate change to 1.5 degrees. It moves the CBD away from its precisely defined mission concerning biodiversity to the very imprecise term "nature" - which has long been understood to be a cultural construct rather than a measurable object. It pitches the GBF into the realm of subjectivity, uncertainty and potential abuse. The separation it implies between humans and nature is widely discredited and alien to many communities especially Indigenous Peoples. It begs many questions as to whose nature is being referred to, and what it means in terms of, say, genetic diversity, endangered species, endangered populations, ecosystems, biomes etc.

Proponents of "Nature Positive" claim that it is

"measurable", though the massive list of things they say would have to be monitored is, in reality, highly implausible. For conservation organisations, perhaps "nature positive" helps sidestep the problem that the intended near-doubling of protected areas to 30% will not necessarily help biodiversity much, though it'll certainly involve a lot of "nature". For large corporations, it could serve a similar role as misleading "net zero" does on climate. Corporate claims to "nature positivity" could involve almost anything involving living organisms, and conceal any amount of damage to actual biodiversity. In fact it invites a torrent of corporate greenwashing and false "solutions" rather than meaningful science-based action to protect biodiversity. It is a solution to the problem of how to avoid any accountability for impacts. It offers a "contribution": a mere part in place of the whole of biodiversity. It has no place in the GBF and should be rejected.

Complete article at: bit.ly/3V7oFCx

Civil society organizations call CBD to strengthen precaution on geoengineering

Laura Dunn and Silvia Ribeiro, ETC Group

Ninety-one national and international organizations from forty countries released an open letter calling on the CBD and its Parties to reinforce the existing landmark decisions and moratorium on the deployment of climate geoengineering technologies.

Precautionary decisions from the CBD are more necessary than ever as geoengineering experiments increase. These experiments threaten land and marine ecosystems, the climate, the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities around the world. Recently, Australia and the UK have conducted open-air solar and marine geoengineering experiments without reporting these activities to the UN. Other experiments in Sweden and Alaska have been blocked by Indigenous peoples and civil society organizations.

In an extremely concerning move, a body of the Paris Agreement on climate change, has proposed several geoengineering technologies as potential sources for carbon credits. Opposition from civil society stopped the decision, but the discussion is ongoing. This proposal (2) disregards the precautionary calls from the CBD and the fact that the London Convention on ocean dumping is evaluating these techniques for potential “adverse impacts on the marine environment”. The letter calls for

the following:

- Parties to the CBD must affirm precaution and prevent geoengineering from harming biodiversity, the environment, the climate, the rights of Indigenous peoples and the human rights of local communities and recall past CBD decisions against geoengineering.
- COP15 must ensure that geoengineering (including “Nature Based Solutions”) is explicitly excluded from the Global Biodiversity Framework and any other decisions on marine biodiversity and climate at COP15.
- The CBD Secretariat should proactively reach out to all other UN bodies discussing geoengineering to share relevant CBD decisions, highlighting the need for a precautionary approach.
- Parties to the CBD must require countries to report on any geoengineering initiative taken in or by their countries.

Sign the letter at: bit.ly/3FgjdHe

(1) Available at: <http://bit.ly/3WaqpeT>

(2) Available at: <https://bit.ly/3hrMKWy>

Centering Human Rights in the global biodiversity agenda

Cristina Eghenter, WWF International

COP15 of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) is in the final week of negotiations on the next global biodiversity framework. Resource mobilization and DSI need to be resolved in effective and just ways. Human rights and equity need to be centered in the framework and its implementation. For people and nature, the stakes have never been higher.

For biodiversity conservation and the resilience of life systems, a human rights-based approach (HRBA) is an essential and enabling condition. A global commitment to transform a development model that has undermined biodiversity for the benefit of a few, is urged by civil society, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), women and youth. HRBA recognizes and empowers all custodians of biodiversity and rights holders who have too often been neglected, “invisible” in biodiversity decision- and policy-making. Without Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, and

other custodians of land, water and life, we cannot heal our broken relationship with nature.

Applying human rights to halt and reverse biodiversity loss requires deep transformation of production and consumption. Businesses need to adhere to both environmental and human rights standards. Governance systems need to be inclusive, embedding the knowledge and institutions of those rights holders who are most dependent on biodiversity, and its best custodians. IPLCs, women and girls and youth need to be empowered, supported with adequate resources, and equal partners in any planning and decision-making impact on their lives, waters and territories. The Montreal negotiators must deliver on their good intentions, with strong and effective rights-based rules, to realize the vision of an ecological harmony between humanity and nature. Only by doing so can we bequeath future generations a thriving planet.