



## Community participation from Central Asia in the GBF

Elena Kreuzberg, Global Forest Coalition

At COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Montreal, we can see many delegates from different countries and regions of the world. The recent assessment indicates a participation of approximately 20,000 delegates. But there is one under-represented region. This is Central Asia. This time, only one environmental NGO from Kazakhstan – the Association for Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan – is present. No signs of any other representatives of civil society until now. The governmental organizations are also minor. The official delegation from Kazakhstan just arrived. Other countries – Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – sent one or two delegates only.

And it is a pity, because the voice of civil society from Central Asia will not be heard. It is also a pity, because civil society is not engaged in the negotiation process on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) which will negatively influence its implementation. At the same time, the recent analysis of the commitments and implementation of Aichi Biodiversity Targets in countries of the region showed that their performance failed. Countries allocate insufficient resources for biodiversity conservation and management. For example, Kazakhstan spends on biodiversity less than 0.1% of the national GDP with a trend of decrease. According to the Six National Report of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Biodiversity (2018), in 2008 this figure was 0.18%, and by 2014 it had dropped to 0.08%.

The region has a population of currently more than 68 million people. All 5 countries selected their own socio-economic development scenarios. They are very different now, but all of them face similar problems related to biodiversity conservation and management. Impacts of climate change lead to increased desertification of many areas and complicated access to freshwater resources, affecting people and biodiversity. Land use transformation in drylands provides new barriers for biodiversity, creating new isolation for declining populations of many native animal and plant species. Biodiversity loss is often associated with unsustainable use of natural resources and there is a lack of information sharing and participatory approach.

The civil society in the post-soviet countries appeared relatively recently; these organizations still need support for their capacity building because this is a long way. So, it is very sad, that members from CSO of Central Asia do not have chance to be a part of the global process and excluded from negotiations related to the development of the new Post-2020 GBF which jeopardizes its implementation in a large region with one of the 36 Global Biodiversity Hotspots\* named the Mountains of Central Asia.

\*Global biodiversity hotspots are areas with rich biodiversity that are threatened due to development.

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# Rights guarantees for Colombia, the “world power of life”

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The year 2022 has brought several changes at the political level in Latin America. The election of the first left-wing government in Colombia, headed by Gustavo Petro and Francia Márquez, is representative of that. The national government has established as its main objective to convert Colombia into a “world power of life”. In official speeches, the environmental issue is highlighted in a transversal way, calling for the urgency of facing two major global crises: biodiversity loss and climate change.

For a real commitment to social justice and peace, it is essential that Colombia, as a megadiverse, multiethnic and multicultural country, builds a solid position around biodiversity conservation, including the defense of the rights of the people who have taken care of it.

Within the framework of COP 15, the Colombian delegation is expected to represent the previously described positions of the national government, which include respect for rural communities.

One way to do this is to prioritize Other Area-based Effective Conservation Measures (OECM) described in Decision 14/8 of CBD COP14 in 2018. OECMs correspond to areas governed and managed for biodiversity conservation, with the direct participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities that have historically contributed to this purpose<sup>(1)</sup>.

Forests can coexist together with communities, taking into account that, unlike the conception of the traditional model of protected areas, these are not enemies of conservation. It is important to ensure that communities can continue to inhabit the forests based on their own organizational systems, politics, and traditional practices.

Their dignified permanence and with guarantees of collective and gender rights can enable Colombia to be a true world power for all forms of life.

(1) <https://www.survival.es/conservacion>

## Developed Countries’ Double Standards on One Health

Nithin Ramakrishnan, Third World Network

One of the most prominent battles fought in the Post-2020 GBF is about the inclusion, or otherwise, of the One Health (OH) approach. On the face of it, the approach is an appealing concept that encourages partnerships for promoting the health of people, animals, plants, and the environment. Nevertheless, under the aegis of a new pandemic treaty being negotiated in the WHO, the OH approach is currently being appropriated by developed countries to expand the legal obligations on developing countries to share wide-ranging biological information, including digital sequence information, without an undertaking on sharing of benefits.

The quadripartite partnership between the secretariats of the FAO, OIE, WHO and UNEP has side-lined (if not avoided) the need for access and benefit sharing (ABS) in their joint plan of action (JPOA) on the OH approach. The JPOA aims to create a formal framework at the international level, but it clearly lacks deliverables on benefit sharing. It is in this broader context that the UK has proposed to include the OH approach in the GBF, however, again without addressing the ABS

concerns. On the other hand, the approach, in the name of holistic prevention, demands unrestricted access to genetic sequence information on all species, microbes or parts thereof.

Developing countries are therefore proposing to address benefit sharing in any text on the OH approach in the GBF. Developed countries continue to oppose this, stating that ABS is an unrelated concern. Prevention of disease and its spread requires timely access to medicines and health products for responding to infections in plants, animals and humans. As such, a Namibian delegate speaking to TWN said, “our request for addressing ABS concerns in OH is not a negotiating tactic, but an implementation reality - a way forward”. The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment present at COP15 also called on developed and wealthy nations to share more benefits, fairly and equitably, in going forward with the OH approach. The developed country Parties’ emotive calls for cooperation and collaboration in the OH approach is therefore a manifest double standard.