ECO

www.cbd-alliance.org
twitter: CBD_Alliance

Monday, 16/10/2023

Follow the daily online ECO here

The outcome of UNEA consultations on NbS is not suitable as a basis for CBD negotiations

By Souparna Lahiri, Global Forest Coalition

The draft SBSTTA recommendations 'request the Executive secretary to review the outcomes of the intergovernmental consultations on nature-based-solutions undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme in compliance with United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/5, on nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development, 1 and to provide guidance on their application in the context of the Convention and the implementation of the Framework,' for consideration of COP17.

While SBSTTA is discussing the implementation of the KMGBF and Target 8 on climate is agreed upon, it is surprising that rather than developing a party-driven guidance, SBSTTA is importing the outcomes of the UNEA consultation to feed into this guidance. We must remember that the outcome, as provided by the report of the co-chairs of the UNEA or the forthcoming report from the UNEA on the intergovernmental consultation, is the result of a consultative outcome and not a negotiated outcome from a party-driven process. For those who participated in the UNEA consultation, it is clear that the true outcome of the consultation is not a consensus on NbS but a divergence of views, often confusing both the Parties and the non-party stakeholders. There was no consensus in the regional sub-groups also.

Under this circumstance, it is completely unfair to use a non-negotiated outcome document to input into a Party-driven negotiation process undertaken within CBD, supposedly to strengthen the implementation of the KMGBF. Furthermore, the CBD still needs to untangle the divergent views arising from Target 8 itself in the context of equating and harmonizing NbS with the ecosystems approach. The best way to address this is to delete paragraph 7 of the recommendations and let the current SBSTTA negotiations form the basis of any recommendation for COP16, basing itself on target 8 of the GBF.

NBS consultations end with confused and non-agreed outcomes

Valentina Figuera, GFC & Nele Marien, FoEI

The recent consultations on Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) have concluded, leaving behind a trail of confusion and disagreement among participating parties.

The discussions leaned heavily towards pro-NBS voices, often side-lining those who raised critical perspectives. The imbalance raised questions about the validity of the consultation process and whether diverse opinions were genuinely considered.

The summary of these consultations will be written by co-chairs without the opportunity for further input by participating parties. Many parties have been worried that the final summary, expected to be available only in November, might not accurately represent the breadth of discussions held during the consultations nor divergences among parties.

The meeting produced an inf document" featuring "considerations by the co-chairs," which, according to some parties, reflected only "the opinion of the co-chairs". All Parties coincided it was not a negotiated outcome. Therefore, this document is not suitable as a basis for the development of further work on nature-based solutions.

CBD must stop geoengineering experiments!
Reinforcing precaution on geoengineering is key to protecting biodiversity and communities

Laura Dunn and Silvia Ribeiro, ETC Group

In the midst of this ongoing climate and biodiversity crisis, geoengineers are racing to increase
the deployment of risky experiments and dangerous distractions from real solutions, like mega-scale algae monocultures and other forms of marine and solar geoengineering.

The world needs strong protection from false technofix solutions, as they distract from addressing the real causes of the crises. The CBD has played a landmark role in reinforcing precaution against geoengineering. In a laudable example of foresight and precaution, the CBD has made highly relevant global consensus decisions on geoengineering at several SBSTTA and COP meetings since 2008. To underpin these decisions, it has also produced peer-reviewed technical and scientific reports on ocean fertilization and the potential impacts of geoengineering on biodiversity and related regulatory matters. (See documents at https://www.cbd.int/climate/geoengineering/)

Based on the precautionary approach, COP 9 called for a moratorium on ocean fertilization(1), and COP10 (2) called for a moratorium on the deployment of geoengineering activities until a set of conditions are met. These include having in place a transparent multilateral global governance mechanism, assurances no transboundary harm would occur, and an adequate scientific basis that justifies these proposals.
Although none of these conditions have been met, there is a concerning increase in outdoor geoengineering experiments, many planned over Indigenous People´s territories.

The CBD has made ground-breaking decisions, protecting biodiversity and communities from dangerous geoengineering experiments. Now is the time to reinforce and strengthen these decisions.
The CBD can and must:

- Affirm precaution and prevent geoengineering from harming biodiversity and
- communities.
- Ensure that open-field geoengineering experiments are not permitted.
- Mandate the CBD Secretariat to proactively reach out to other UN bodies discussing to inform them about relevant CBD decisions.
- Mandate the CBD Secretariat to require all Parties to report, on a regular basis, any
- geoengineering activities they undertake or support.

---

1 Dec IX/16
2 dec. X/33 par.8 (w)

Delivering synergistic biodiversity, ecological integrity and climate mitigation and adaption outcomes.

Virginia Young, Australian Rainforest Conservation Society

The clear recommendations from the IPBES/IPCC joint workshop in 2021 identified a cascading set of priorities for synergistic action. Firstly, to improve protection and secondly, to restore, carbon-dense and species-rich natural ecosystems, “especially forests, wetlands, peat-lands, grasslands and savannahs; coastal ecosystems such as mangroves, salt marshes, kelp forests, and sea grass meadows; as well as deep water and polar blue carbon habitats”. (IPBES-IPCC 2021). The IPCC picked up on this idea in AR6 WG111 when it noted that primary forests have high synergies with biodiversity.

These recommendations are critically important for the success or failure of the CBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD, and SDGs and highlight where key goals of the CBD and UNFCCC overlap (synergies) and encourage parties to both Conventions to first protect and then restore, carbon-dense, high integrity natural ecosystems while respecting the rights and supporting the livelihoods of indigenous and local communities.

We all know that ecosystems with naturally evolved patterns of biodiversity are the most stable and resilient and, within their system limits, confer natural resistance to threats that are increasing with climate change, particularly drought, fire, and pests.

Unpacking the significance of Goal A and several of the targets in the GBF post-2020 framework could help the UNFCCC understand the functional role of biodiversity in underpinning ecological integrity and why ecological integrity is critically important for the ecosystem service of carbon retention and reducing the risk of releasing ecosystem carbon stocks to the atmosphere. **For example, releasing the relatively stable, resilient, and very large carbon stocks contained in primary and old-growth forests would make limiting warming to even 2 degrees impossible. Any further deforestation is therefore unacceptable.**

We know that the biodiversity and climate crises amplify each other. But there is no mechanism in either the CBD or UNFCCC to prioritize the protection and recovery of high integrity, low-risk ecosystem carbon stocks. Synergistic climate and biodiversity action – as called for by the UNFCCC at COP 27 - must take action now to work with communities to buffer and reconnect existing areas of primary forest and other carbon-dense natural ecosystems to improve their integrity, stability, and resilience. Equally importantly a joined SBSTA work programme (1) should work to deliver synergistic climate and biodiversity action.

Many Parties are overlooking the critically important fact that “because the ecosystem provisions of the UNFCCC (Article 4.1 (d)) and the Paris Agreement (Article 5) have never been fully ‘operationalized’ it is difficult, if not impossible, to prioritize and implement Nature-based (climate) solutions(2).” Moreover, “current UNFCCC LULUCF rules are unfit for operationalizing NbS(3) and it is arguable that all the rhetoric around ending deforestation (first by 2020 and now by 2030) fails because of this oversight.”

---

1 https://doi.org/10.25904/1912/4822

2 pers. Com. Christina Voight Chair, IUCN Commission on Environmental Law, WWF hosted a side event at COP 27

3 Keith et al 2021

CBD SBSTTA must examine the Biodiversity Effects of Parties´ National Carbon Offset Strategies

Nele Marien, Friends of the Earth International

Recent studies have raised alarm over the lack of consistency and effectiveness of carbon offsets for the climate[1]. However, too little attention has been paid to the biodiversity impacts of biological carbon removal offsets.

The Land Gap Report[2] published last year, examined the area of land required to meet projected biological carbon removal in national climate pledges and commitments from all parties. It found that, to meet the NDC pledges, 451 million hectares of land is projected to be used for carbon removals by 2030, and almost 1.2 billion by 2060. This brings severe concerns for biodiversity and indigenous peoples, necessitating a thorough review by SBSTTA.

1. **Evaluating the coherence with Target 3**: It is imperative to scrutinize the relationship between Target 3 of the GBF and the vast land projected to be used for climate offsetting. SBSTTA should comprehensively review the coherence – or lack thereof- between these goals.
2. **Assessing the Availability of Planned Hectares for Offseting**: SBSTTA must review whether the vast expanse of land required for carbon offsetting is realistically available from a biodiversity point of view. It requires careful examination to ensure that this does not result in the displacement of certain types of vital ecosystems by others that may be more favored in climate policies but are destructive to biodiversity.
3. **Scrutinizing Climate Offset Types and Biodiversity Impacts**: SBSTTA must study global tendencies in offsetting types, paying particular heed to projects involving monoculture tree plantations, as they have detrimental effects on biodiversity, leading to the loss of diverse ecosystems.
4. **Impact on Indigenous Peoples and Their Territories**: Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) have been stewards of biodiversity-rich lands for generations. SBSTTA should critically review the impact of carbon offsetting plans on IPLCs and their territories. First, it is essential to consider the potential displacement of IPLCs. Secondly, to review the indirect consequences of altered ecosystems on their traditional practices and livelihoods. Any compromise in this regard could have far-reaching social and environmental implications.

Based on such critical review, SBSTTA should:

1) propose a decision for the COP to prohibit biodiversity-damaging climate projects
2) mandate the secretariat to raise the issues with the UNFCCC and other relevant fora

[1] https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/jan/18/revealed-forest-carbon-offsets-biggest-provider worthless-verra-aoe
[2] https://www.landgap.org/

ECO

Follow the daily online ECO here