



NbS, the myth of a solution for our multiple crises

Financialization of nature won't solve the crisis - agroecology will

By the African Centre for Biodiversity

The term Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) is a catchphrase found in the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and elsewhere and may pose threats if they incorporate false solutions to addressing our multiple crises. Increased corporate interest and investment is a sign of such threats.

In the context of agriculture, NBS may include maintaining soil structure, pollinators, biological pest and disease management, crop diversity, swales, planting basins, green manure, and building on indigenous, local, and women's knowledge. In the context of climate change, the emphasis of NBS is on reducing deforestation increasing agroforestry, conservation areas, and reducing the use of synthetic fertilizers.

While these practices may align with agroecological approaches, they also create a dangerous myth that NBS can have carbon-sequestering possibilities of nature to compensate for the continued burning of fossil fuels - in technical carbon market terms, offset them. This myth financializes biodiversity and shifts the burden of mitigation to lower-income countries and peoples further externalizing biodiversity and social impacts.

NBS has attracted the largest share of public and private funding directed to net zero schemes and carbon offsets. This monetizes and commodifies nature and emissions, and further separates humans from our actions and responsibilities. Further to this, the financial sector investment in land management schemes has led to the displacement of local and indigenous peoples and widespread human rights violations. The focus here is on mechanisms for financing, rather than impacts on people on the ground. Such initiatives will undoubtedly have negative consequences for the climate system, biodiversity, and ecosystems – through land dispossession, destructive monoculture plantations, and deepening inequalities, hunger, and injustice.

Transformative agroecology encompasses 'streets ahead' alternatives, with practices embedded in a wider social justice context.

It is critical that as further deliberations on NBS take place, they include the need for red lines of prohibited practices for agroecology, such as prohibiting offsetting of nature. Such a myth is not the solution to our crises.

Extracted from: <https://acbio.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Cultivate-diversity-Africa-food-systems.pdf>

Addressing gender dynamics in Sustainable Wildlife Management

Alejandra Duarte, Policy Associate, Women4Biodiversity

Wild species are important sources of food, medicine, and fuel. Millions of people depend on species and their trade as important sources of goods and money income. They are also central to the identity, cultural expressions, and livelihoods of many indigenous peoples and local communities. The sustainable use of wild species is rooted and maintained through traditional knowledge, practices, and spirituality². With the growing demand for wild meat, if hunting is not managed sustainably, wildlife populations will decline, and hundreds of species will face extinction.

Thus, sustainable wildlife management (SWM) requires that all land users within the wildlife habitat are aware of, and consider, the effects of their activities on the wildlife resources and habitat, and on other user groups. Although gender differences play an important role in the use, management, and conservation of wildlife, it is often overlooked in its management, but it's essential to consider gender issues in order to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Research has shown that despite women facing challenges escalated by planetary crisis they typically favor wildlife reintroduction efforts and find lethal control of wildlife less acceptable than men do; women, also place more importance on unbiased facilitation and open exchange of ideas in wildlife management decision-making compared to men, and support funding measures that contribute to conservation.

In addition, women regularly support conservation efforts in creative ways while attempting to mitigate economic losses, highlighting the importance of understanding the differentiated ways in which decisions can affect all of us. There is also growing evidence that women acting as leaders in wildlife management and protection roles and culture preservation contribute to biodiversity protection and have far stronger results for SWM and peace.

Key factors influencing SWM such as human-wildlife conflicts, unsustainable and illegal trade tenure rights, poverty, and food and livelihood security all have significant gender dimensions, which are not fully addressed and understood in most national plans, programs, and strategies.

As a result, the effectiveness of management measures adopted has been limited, exacerbating gender inequalities⁵, leading to inequities in the distribution of costs and benefits from wildlife use, and affecting the ability of indigenous peoples and local communities to maintain and restore practices associated.

Incorporating gender dynamics into SWM can impact positively equal access to resources and land tenure, access to capacity building, and effective participation and representation in policy and decision-making processes.

It will also increase our ability to fully understand, prevent, and combat human-wildlife conflicts, and unsustainable and illegal trade, and to improve the effectiveness of projects that acknowledge local contexts, their social norms, and their values. Therefore, we must promote the inclusion of a gender perspective and ensure that women's voices are heard and their needs are taken into account.

Human Rights At Risk in Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Without Headline Indicators for Targets

Christine Eghenter, WWF

Finalization of the monitoring framework for KMGBF with the help of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) and its approval at COP16, is a key for promoting consistent and quality reporting, and for assessing how actions and strategies can be strengthened and readjusted to ensure the impact needed by 2030. This is part of our accountability towards people and nature.

However, a few concerns remain around headline indicators and the quality of the measuring and reporting. A few targets do not have headline indicators yet. Targets 22 and 23 especially are critical targets for the Human Rights Based Approach.

The implementation of the framework without a headline indicator based upon which parties would report their achievements is not acceptable. Headline indicators should be prioritized for all targets and for the consideration of a composite structure for most targets. This is in recognition of the complex nature of drivers of biodiversity loss, of people-nature interactions, and the bio- and cultural diversity of our planet. We need to embrace this complexity, rather than simplify in a few numbers and quantitative elements.

More headline indicators, a wider spectrum of knowledge systems and sources, and relevant disaggregated data for all targets can help more meaningful monitoring and reporting. Measuring is part of our accountability towards future generations. It is to demonstrate that we are doing all we can to protect, restore, and sustainably use biodiversity in ways that are equitable and human rights-based. This is one way we can contribute to bequeathing a healthy and just planet.

War and military activities should be considered by SBSTTA

Masami Mel Kawamura (The Informed Public Project)
Hideki Yoshikawa (Okinawa Environmental Justice Project)

Reports from the war-inflicted Ukraine told us about the destruction of biodiversity and ecosystems as well as the losses of human lives and the damaged infrastructure. Unfortunately, regional conflicts that have the potential to escalate into war are abundant.

The issue of such importance, that the impacts should be studied, and considered by SBSTTA. It has been well documented that war, military training, military bases/facilities, and military-produced contaminants have created tremendous negative impacts on ecosystem structure and function.

Habitation alteration, pollution, and other forms of disturbance from these military activities and entities have led to population declines of species populations and loss of biodiversity. These impacts and changes around the world have affected our planet's capacity to combat climate change. Also, given that proper research cannot be conducted in many war zones and military activity areas due to limited access, the real extent of such negative impacts and changes is unknown.

The relationship between biodiversity, climate change, and military activities has many complex dimensions. Military technology such as GPS and drones have contributed to enhancing the understanding of ecosystems of the world. In some cases, the isolation of, and limited access to, military training areas have contributed to the preservation of biodiversity and populations. Because of the priority placed by state parties upon "national security" and geopolitics, war and military activities and their negative environmental impacts are often treated as exceptions and are excused from general discussions of environmental protection and conservation. This attitude and practice need to be changed.

As the CBD community strives to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, ecosystem preservation needs to be vigorously applied to military-related matters. As members of civil society in Okinawa, Japan, where military-related environmental issues are acute and persistent and need to be resolved, we are determined to bring up these issues as a vital part of the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Preventing gene drives to become the next invasive alien species

Barbara Pilz and Naomi Kosmehl, Save Our Seeds

Approximately 45,000 species have gone extinct since Parties to the CBD met at COP15 in Montreal, Canada. This extinction is attributed to over-exploitation, land-use change, and the proliferation of, invasive alien species (IAS) among other natural calamities and human activities. An alien species is considered invasive when its introduction and/or spread threatens native biological diversity. To address IAS, the Post-2020 Kunming-Montreal Agreement outlined an ambitious Target 6, which calls for “reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of other known or potentially invasive alien species by at least 50 percent, by 2030”. This target primarily focuses on islands, which are disproportionately affected by IAS.

Proponents of gene drive technology see this focus as an opportunity to collaborate with island conservation organizations to present gene drives as a solution for eradicating invasive alien species such as mice, cats, opossums, rats, weasels, and other introduced species. However, similarly to the concept of IAS, gene drives have the ability to propagate a particular gene throughout a population at an accelerated rate and to spread it without regard to ecological or geographical boundaries as true invaders.

After the adoption of COP15 and the present SBSTTA 25 meeting, an open-ended online forum was constituted to discuss various IAS-related issues. The draft text proposal for this Nairobi meeting strongly reflects the forum's emphasis on accessible, early warning detection, low-tech solutions, and proactive measures to prevent pathways of introduction of invasive and alien species. The forum also supports passive and active management techniques led by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). Gene drives are inherently invasive and have stirred significant controversy within UN debates. As such, they should not be quietly inserted into discussions on IAS. Instead, the focus should be on implementing actionable, effective strategies and tools that can make a meaningful impact by 2030.

As highlighted in the online forum, delegates here in Nairobi should be vigilant about stakeholders attempting to slip in gene drives as a potential tool for IAS eradication just before closing time.

The precautionary principle is a cornerstone of the Convention on Biological Diversity, its protocols, resolutions, and therefore, for Target 6 of the GBF. There is also a clear aim to address structural issues over (not so) quick fixes. In this case, focusing on pathways of introduction and harmonized guidelines, all while advocating for practical solutions that are inclusive and accessible.

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