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What will be your next steps to protect biodiversity?

CBD Alliance Statement at the High-level Segment

Biodiversity is not only in protected areas

The CBD need to pay more attention to areas that are not protected areas but transboundary areas with rich biodiversity, such as the Demilitarized Zone on the Korean Peninsular. The DMZ has had a unique ecosystem and is a temperate forest without human intervention for more than 60 years. Setting a conservation strategy for the DMZ will contribute to achieve the Aichi Target 11 that improves status of the biodiversity by 2020 at least 17% of terrestrial and inland water and 10% of coastal and marine areas. Further - as Korean Prime minister Chung, Hongwon said on his opening statement - it plays a very positive role in easing tension and regaining mutual trust between the two Koreas.

We cannot continue to sacrifice biodiversity to big projects.

Mainstreaming

There are several examples of successful mainstreaming at the national level. They are the presidential priority on peatland conservation in Belarus, adoption and implementation on guidelines for mining and biodiversity by the Mining ministry of South Africa, and a presidential priority in Belarus and having the mining ministry adopt and implement guidelines for mining and biodiversity in South Africa, decision to save Garorim bay taken by the Korean ministry of environment. Biodiversity and genetic resources are critically important, yet we continue to destroy it everywhere around the world.

For example, Mountain Kariwang in Kangwon province, a "forest genetic resource reserve" 50km away from the Alpensia, is being devastated for only three days downhill ski in line with the so called "environmentally sustainable Winter Olympic games" initiated by International Olympic Committee (IOC) and International Ski Federation (FIS). We cannot continue to sacrifice biodiversity to big projects. Instead of cutting down 500 years old native forest trees, our actions to save the forest should

be taken by international community. It greatly contributes to mainstreaming biodiversity not only domestically but also globally.

Civil society from around the world is deeply concerned to note the deplorable state of biodiversity conservation. This was dramatically shown by the recent publication of the Living Planet Report- which showed us that we are not on track to implement most of the Aichi Targets.

Biodiversity and genetic resources are critically important to the survival of humanity, yet we continue to destroy it all around the world with projects to expand big infrastructure like large dams, roads, mining, and large-scale monocultures for bioenergy and feedstock production. Policies to protect biodiversity are bound to fail if consumption and production patterns, and economic models, are not changed. These megaprojects are based upon the needs created by unsustainable consumption patterns that are often associated with increasingly unhealthy lifestyles and diets. We have to ensure transformative change in the system itself.

Agro-industry versus biodiversity

As is well-known, one of the main causes of biodiversity loss is the ever advancing frontiers of agro-industry, through the promotion of large-scale monocultures and intensive livestock. These use agrochemicals that kill pollinators and birds, while eliminating agricultural biodiversity and contaminating natural varieties with genetically modified ones. Agriculture needs to be a standing item on the agenda of the COP, also to generate effective support to the real food producers of this world; women, small-scale farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk and indigenous peoples, who also play a central role in plant and animal genetic resources conservation.

Preventing damage to biodiversity

Instead of supporting corporate-driven and risky technologies, we should act to prevent damage to biodiversity wherever we can. That is precisely why the Precautionary Principle is at the heart of this Convention. However, some parties are unwilling to take it seriously.

Specifically, a precautionary approach should be applied to synthetic biology, which will have grave impacts on biodiversity and traditional livelihoods in many developing countries. It is already expanding globally, without any global or national public oversight or regulation, without capacity to perform adequate risk assessments, without consultation or information to affected peoples and countries. The establishment of an international framework for the regulation of synthetic biology should be approved at this COP.

Other dangerous technologies like genetically engineered trees will inevitably and irreversibly lead to GE trees invading and contaminating native ecosystems. The CBD COP-9 decision calling for application of the Precautionary Approach regarding transgenic trees must be applied. For civil society, the push for GE trees is unacceptable, for example, in Brazil.

Legally binding commitments are needed

The CBD is a binding treaty but there is a big gap in compliance with the legally binding commitments of the Convention, and its Strategic Plan. Even key institutions of the Convention itself sometimes fail to implement existing decisions. Worse still, issues seem to disappear from national and international agendas. Such is the case for agriculture, forests, and biofuels. These work programs and decisions should be standing items on the agenda of CBD COPs. What we need is implementation.

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are the principal instrument to implement decisions taken at the COP at national level. History has learned that only those NBSAPs that had a real process of broad rightsholder and stakeholder involvement were successful in their implementation. It is therefore of utter importance

The Precautionary Approach must be applied to Synthetic Biology and to GE trees.

Conflict of Interests: private funding is replacing public funding and with it come private interests.

that when developing NBSAPs, parties dialogue with all rightsholders and stakeholders, and mainstream biodiversity concerns in all the sectors of the country.

Parties must not walk away from Article 20

The decisions that will be taken here at COP12 should not only have a central place in the Pyeongchang Roadmap, but also in the Gangwon Declaration, as this is essential for the integration of biodiversity into sustainable development and the enhancement of the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Financial resources are key for implementation and economic incentives should be realigned in line with Aichi Target 3. However, discussions here at Pyongchang on resource mobilization have been stranded. Major differences on issues have still not even been discussed.

Most Northern countries are walking away from their binding commitments to provide funding, as established in Article 20 of the Convention. They are now shifting the burden to the South and its peoples in the name of domestic resources mobilization. Parties must reiterate their commitments from Hyderabad, and show progress on the agreed doubling of international financial flows to developing countries by 2015.

Biodiversity Offsets are *not* a financial mechanism.

Nature must not be commodified

We question the intent to raise funds through innovative financial mechanisms, promoting market and private sector interests, which will lead to the financialisation and commodification of nature. We cannot put a price on nature.

Biodiversity offsetting is a controversial proposal, which has inherent dangers such as promoting destruction without the guarantee that lasting solutions will provide a real compensation. Extinction is forever. The precautionary approach must be applied. We also warn against the undermining of rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women through this kind of policy.

There are growing conflicts of interest within the Convention: private funding is replacing public funding, and with it come private interests. We urge the

CBD Secretariat and Parties to fully disclose all information regarding funding and input for biodiversity-related policy processes. Perverse incentives must also be tackled.

Radioactivity effects biodiversity

During the last few days, the attention of delegates was drawn to the issue of the impact of radioactive radiation on biodiversity. We would recommend the CBD to make an official study of the impacts of nuclear radiation on biodiversity, and then take the necessary steps according to the outcome of such a study.

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are key to biodiversity conservation

‘Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities’ are paramount to the implementation of the convention. In line with international human rights agreements the terminology ‘indigenous peoples’ as well as their Free Prior and Informed Consent should be adhered to.

Indigenous and community actions have since millennia played a fundamental role in biodiversity conservation. *Indigenous Peoples’ and Community Conserved Territories and Areas* (ICCAs), can significantly contribute to the implementation of the Pyeongchang Roadmap, the Aichi Targets and the Strategic Plan, provided they are recognized in an appropriate and effective manner.

Also, women’s rights, roles, needs and aspirations should be mainstreamed in all biodiversity-related decision making, as indicated by the decision adopted here at this COP.

Forests must be on the COP agenda

Forest ecosystems are estimated to represent up to 80 to 90% of terrestrial biodiversity, yet forest policies seem to have shifted away from the CBD to other forums. The implementation of the CBD’s Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity has lost momentum. There is more to forests than REDD+ and capturing carbon, we need to conserve forest ecosystems in a holistic, integrated, non-market-based, manner.

Forests represent the majority of terrestrial biodiversity – but they are not on the agenda.

What will be the next concrete steps you will take once back in your countries?

This Convention needs to address the drivers of forest loss and determine policies to enhance the enforcement of forest and human rights laws and agreements. Parties need to build on the many positive policy recommendations that already exist and implement them on the ground.

Destruction of marine and coastal biodiversity must be addressed urgently

Marine and coastal biological diversity is greatly endangered, despite being a long enduring priority program in the CBD. Issues such as the impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity of anthropogenic underwater noise and ocean acidification, and the destruction of coral reefs must be addressed urgently. In the discussion on *Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas* (EBSAs), forthcoming decisions must be consistent with earlier CBD commitments.

Sustainable development is at the heart of the biodiversity policy

Lastly, biodiversity is at the heart of sustainable development. However, we should also place sustainable development at the heart of biodiversity policy. We strongly support the Chennai Guidance for Implementation of the Integration of Biodiversity and Poverty Eradication in this respect, as well as the Plan of Action on customary sustainable use of biological diversity and the other outcomes of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Article 8(j). We call upon the Parties to the CBD to give an explicit mandate to the Secretary General to ensure these important COP12 outcomes are used as a basis for the further work on the post-2015 development agenda, including in particular the framework of indicators that is still to be developed to assess implementation of the proposed Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

We would like to raise one last question: after all the beautiful words and promises we hear at the convention center: what will be the next concrete steps you will take to really protect biodiversity, once back in your countries? We call on you to ensure the central involvement of civil society and indigenous peoples, local communities and women, because we have so much to contribute to this task.

Racing to the bottom: the fate of a mountain

Helena Paul, Econexus

On Saturday a small group of us from the CBD Alliance, together with campaigners from Korea, visited Mountain Kariwang in Kangwon province, where many thousands of trees are being cut down to make way for a downhill ski course for just three days during the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. The special protective status of this important mountain was removed to facilitate the construction of the ski course, which opponents consider could easily have been constructed elsewhere.

We travelled through a landscape full of autumnal colour to the bottom of the mountain and then began the long ascent to where the work is taking place. It was a strange contrast, rising ever higher into the mountains along the small winding road, until we suddenly arrived at a very different scene – one of violence against nature, a scene that is being repeated all over the world, as our ever more powerful technologies enable us to cut into the earth, dam rivers or tear down trees with ever-increasing mechanical power.

Against the backdrop of bulldozers and enormous trucks on which cut trees were being precariously piled for the profit of private companies, we learned from local campaigners about the impacts of the project, and how most local people living in this remote area support it, because they hope to benefit economically from it. However, they probably do not realise that, as is so often the case, their jobs will only last a short time; this is not sustainable development, it is exploitation by, in this case, the relentless machine that the Olympic Committee appears to have become. It was interesting to hear that some countries are now dropping their bids to participate in the winter Olympics, including some of the earliest to be involved in winter sports, such as Switzerland and Norway, perhaps because they know the true cost. Krakow in Poland submitted its bid for the 2022 games to a local referendum, which rejected the plan so they then cancelled their bid. So did Munich in Germany.

So often it seems, people around the world have to go through the same experience of being promised everything if they allow the exploitation of their resources, and then finding that they are left with the devastation while the profits go elsewhere. After all, Alpensia has not yielded the profits expected of it, and the resort was deep in debt at the end of 2012. It is quite wrong to do such damage to a forest for one sporting event, but this unfortunately this is a pattern that constantly repeats itself around the planet and is one of the reasons why vertebrate species numbers have dropped by half since 1970.

Resource Mobilisation

Antje Lorch, Ecoropa

The Contact Group on Resource Mobilisation has been meeting 8 times since last Wednesday. Time enough to battle out the important issues and come to some kind of decisions, one would assume.

But the truth couldn't be any further from that. Some major issues were not actually been discussed, even though Parties requested to do so.

One glaring example: Switzerland bracketed 2015 as date for Target 20 because their national laws do not allow them to act faster. Should this throw other Parties off-track as well? Wouldn't it be possible to uphold the preliminary target from COP11 that resources are needed by 2015?

We don't know because this bracket was not discussed in the contact group. Neither was the proposal "to double the doubling by 2017", or the question on whether it will now be a "final" target.

On Wednesday morning, the issue was moved to the ministerial level. In the evening, it was announced in Working Group 1 that "invited Parties" would discuss the matter after dinner. Half an hour later, even one of the main negotiators had no idea whether their country was part of that group.

We all knew beforehand that resource mobilisation would be an important issue at this COP. Why do we end up with "informal" contact groups running parallel to the Working Group and regional consultations? Why is it now a topic to be discussed by a selected number of Parties sometime after dinner?

Who will now close all those brackets?

Tree cutting at Mount Kariwang

