

MAY 2012 • Issue 6

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CBD NEWSLETTER FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

## SPECIAL FOCUS

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE  
**CBD Executive Secretary**  
on challenges ahead



### Achieving Aichi Target 1

Zoos and aquariums  
help raise awareness

### Scaling up biodiversity finance

Civil society views on market-based  
mechanisms for biodiversity conservation



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Convention on  
Biological Diversity

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This newsletter aims to present a diversity of civil society opinions. The views expressed in the articles are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, its Secretariat or the CBD Alliance.

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## Contents



- 3 Fewer decisions, more implementation**  
Exclusive interview with Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, CBD Executive Secretary
- 6 Message from the CBD Alliance**  
by the Board of the CBD Alliance
- 7 National campaigns to implement Aichi Targets start with civil society**  
by Teppei Dohke, Japan Committee for IUCN
- 8 Zoos and aquariums contribute towards achieving Aichi Target 1**  
by Markus Gusset, Carole Lecointre and Gerald Dick, World Association of Zoos and Aquariums
- 10 Helping Parties meet Aichi Targets for preventing extinctions**  
by Nick Holmes, Bradford Keitt, and Olivier Langrand, Island Conservation
- 12 Scaling up biodiversity finance, resource mobilization and IFMs – the civil society view**  
by Simone Lovera, Global Forest Coalition, and Rashed Al Mahmud Titimur, Unnayan Onneshan, CBD Alliance
- 14 The problem with bioenergy**  
by Rachel Smolker, Biofuelwatch
- 16 Removing brackets on social and cultural criteria for EBSAs**  
by Ramya Rajagopalan, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers
- 17 Protecting marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction**  
by Christoph Schwarte, Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development
- 19 Does Rio+20 hold promise for the Earth?**  
by Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh
- 20 The future we want**  
by the CBD Alliance
- 22 The UN Green Economy proposal – loopholes abound**  
by Mary Gilbert and David Millar, Quaker Earthcare Witness

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE CBD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

# Fewer decisions, more implementation

with **Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias**

● Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

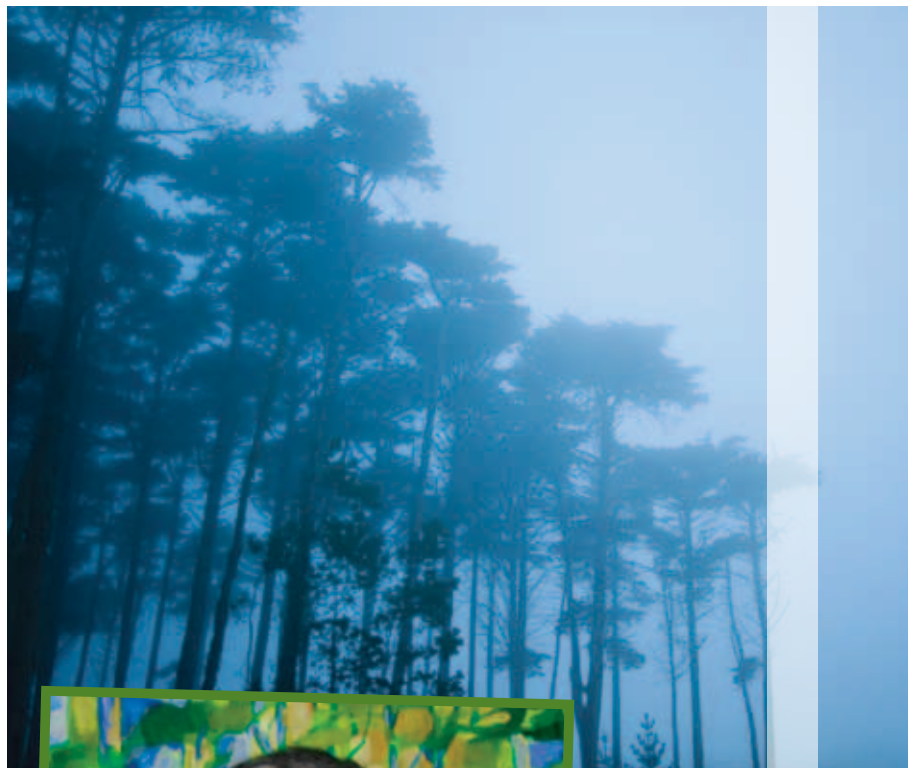
The CBD Alliance recently posed a set of questions to the new Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, reflecting some of the hopes and concerns of civil society as the CBD stands on the cusp of its 20th anniversary and begins the transition from a negotiation-focused phase to an implementation-focused phase.

## 1. In your tenure as Executive Secretary will you do different things, do things differently, or perhaps both?

My three priorities for the Convention moving forward are implementation, implementation, and implementation. The Secretariat as a whole will continue the work that we have been doing, but I believe that we now need to start discussing how to implement the Convention in a more effective manner. In particular, there is a need to streamline the work of the Conference of the Parties. We need to better integrate our work programmes and cross-cutting issues to fully explore synergies. Other important issues that we must focus on is the mainstreaming of biodiversity into the development agenda, through the promotion of biodiversity issues in the wider society and across government departments/ministries; resource mobilization beyond identification of needs to leveraging of resources; continuous monitoring system for the Aichi targets; enhance support to Parties, in particular the least developed and small island developing states through a more structured and continuous process at regional and sub-regional levels; promote a more effective scientific and technical cooperation; the stronger recognition and support for community based approaches; expand the engagement of the business sector; and promote the early ratification of the Nagoya Protocol.

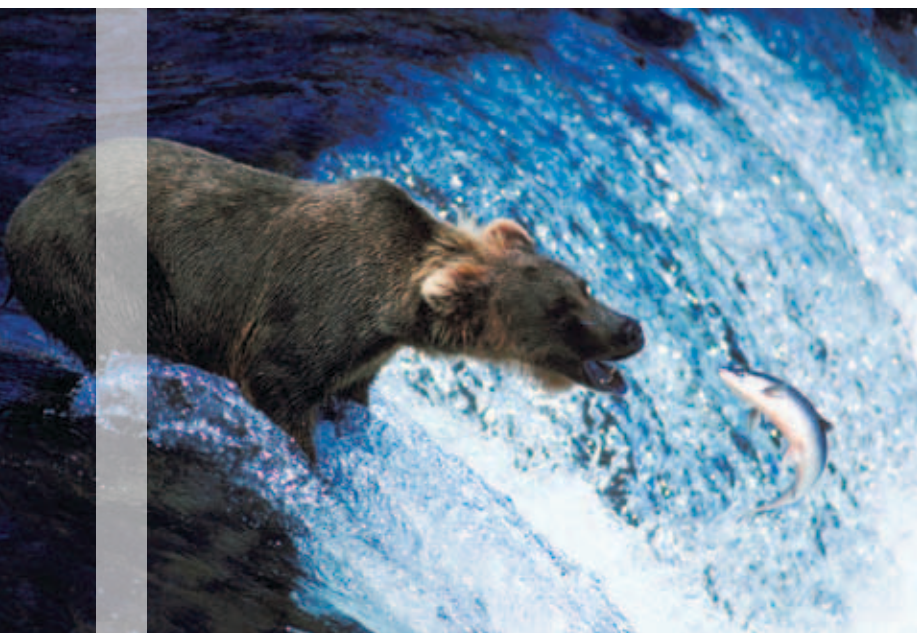
## 2. What are the main challenges for the implementation of the CBD? How will you address them? What are the strengths according to you?

There are several challenges before us. The main driving forces behind biodiversity loss are still going strong, such as population and consumption growth, climate change, globalization which promotes enhanced transportation with greater risks of invasion of alien species etc. These driving forces need to be tackled in a more effective way, and we now have the new Strategic Plan and the Aichi Targets which try to address some of these issues. Better decisions for biodiversity need to be made at all levels and in all sectors, particularly in the major economic sectors. We need to do a better job in order to achieve these targets. Obviously we did not globally achieve the 2010 Biodiversity Targets. In order to achieve the Aichi Targets we need enabling conditions and processes in place necessary to achieve this. Hence we need to engage other



sectors because unless we do effective mainstreaming we are unlikely to meet all of the targets. We also need better resource mobilization, which will not be easy with the world facing an economic crisis. We need better support for capacity-building in developing countries and we need to reach out to various sectors, including business, agriculture, health, NGOs and indigenous peoples and local communities. In other words, we need to go beyond simple outreach and actually get these sectors fully involved in the CBD

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processes. To do this, the CBD has established several initiatives, for example, the cities and biodiversity initiative and the business initiative. So we have already started this process but we need to work closer with these groups on implementation. We also need to make structural changes in the way governments and businesses deal with biodiversity. To be able to promote sustainable products, for example, the market must internalize its responsibilities toward biodiversity. In terms of our strengths, the CBD is universally recognized as being the global forum to negotiate biodiversity issues.

New mechanisms, such as the Intergovernmental Platform for Science-Policy interface on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), together with the follow-up processes of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and the study on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), could also play an important role similarly to the one played by the IPCC in support of the UNFCCC, by taking a more science-based approach in supporting policies. We do however need to strengthen the NBSAPs, how they are planned etc., so that they can be implemented as a policy instrument and help establish commitments at the country level.

**3. There is criticism from civil society about the lack of focus on the legally-binding nature of the treaty that Parties are obliged to enforce. What can be done to strengthen the legal weight of the treaty?**

There are different views on this. Some people would like to see the CBD as an instrument that would fiscalize and penalize countries if they don't follow the treaty. They think the CBD should have stronger teeth in compliance. But we have to realize that the CBD promotes a shift in paradigm – we're promoting a culture change in how we relate to nature. This of course takes time and is mostly the responsibility of countries at the national level. The CBD promotes this process and should be a supporter

of countries to implement their commitments. The challenge here is that many countries lack the ability to do so, and it is up to the international community to help countries achieve this. With the Strategic Plan adopted at COP 10 in place, we are presently in a transition period where we are establishing the conditions for implementation. Some countries are not there yet but we should not pick on them but rather view this as a process that takes time, especially now that we have a good timeframe in place, until 2020. But again, we need to emphasize that to be more effective we must engage other sectors. Environmental ministries do not have the mandate to fulfill all of the Aichi Targets; we need other sectors to be involved. That is a big challenge and our attitude should be one of providing support to ensure that this happens.

**4. The COP is expected to “keep under review the implementation of the Convention” but what has never been discussed by COP meetings are questions on infractions, and how to deal with them. The only issue of infraction ever addressed by a COP body was the LOHAFEX (German-Indian ocean fertilization experiment) under civil society pressure. Will the Secretariat advise the COP to leave enough space on the COP meeting agenda to review implementation?**

We should try to move the CBD process towards reducing the number of decisions and dedicate more time towards implementation. We should also be able to discuss how we are making improvements and to find solutions to overcome bottlenecks. I have already started to discuss with my team and partners how we can put in place monitoring of the Aichi targets. The challenge here is to make the indicators implementable. Online reporting systems should be established so that we are not surprised in 2020, but rather that we know well in advance if we will meet the targets or not. We should also review the effectiveness of the kinds of measures taken by Parties. So far we have not done a good job at that and more work on that needs to be done. To promote mainstreaming, sustainability criteria in government procurement, etc. we should be able to provide Parties with lessons learned and guidelines of what works if all the elements are in place.

**5. We had a lot of hope in the legally-binding ABS articles stemming the tide of biopiracy but to date no single case of invoking the CBD to challenge patents in violation of the CBD in a court of law has been reported. Is this a failure of the CBD? What will the Secretariat do to change this perception?**

The problem here is that the CBD established the principles but had not established the rules to conduct ABS. Only at COP 10, after many years of negotiations, did we agree to adopt the Nagoya Protocol. But before we can think about compliance to the Nagoya Protocol we need 50 ratifications for the Protocol to enter into effect. Ninety-two countries have presently signed the Protocol, but only three countries have ratified it so far. This is a very complex issue that deals with different groups in society, different users, different providers, and affects various sectors such as agriculture, health and biotechnology. My hope is that by COP 12 we will have the Protocol in effect. But this will only

be achieved if countries push for ratification. In terms of compliance, the Protocol does not go into detail about this but provides basic commitments that will need further discussions. Further discussions on this issue have started at the Intergovernmental Committee of the Nagoya Protocol, which will have its second meeting in New Delhi in July this year. In addition, we have taken initiatives, with support from the GEF and the Japan Biodiversity Fund, to organize a range of regional workshops to help countries prepare for ratification.

**6. In light of the recent CBD workshop in Quito on biodiversity financing, and the general agreement about the risks of, and need for alternatives to, market-based mechanisms, do you see a role for the CBD to share and promote this expertise/position with other relevant fora, such as RIO+20 and the UNFCCC?**

The very good discussions we held at Quito are being made available as an information document for WGRI-4 and will be a good reference for discussions on resource mobilization. Negotiations will start at WGRI-4 but the most difficult negotiations will take place at COP 11. We have already started to contribute to the UNFCCC on this, for example we organized workshops with stakeholder groups on the need for biodiversity safeguards for REDD+, and we will discuss recommendations from SBSTTA 16 that will be sent to the COP. This is of course relevant for RIO+20 as well. In order to move forward we need to consider the concerns expressed at Quito, such as the need for the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities to be respected. The Quito meeting revealed that most so-called innovative financial mechanisms are in fact established by governments, not by the market, and are only feasible if governments establish caps on emissions of greenhouse gases, use of water resources, exploitation of fisheries or deforestation and create revenue that could be used in for payment for ecosystem services.

**7. We are conscious and worried with good reason that the private sector is being put forward by many Parties as an important actor to solve the biodiversity crises, and they seem to get more weight in negotiations. The demonstrated risks involved with respect to governance, equity, livelihoods and culture of farmer, fish workers, indigenous people and local communities are widely known and apparent. What then is the role of the CBD to address these risks?**

The CBD decided, beginning with COP 8, that it is in our interest to engage the business sector because most of the pressure that leads to the destruction and loss of biodiversity comes from the business sector. We need to promote a better business attitude towards biodiversity in order for them to incorporate this into their business practices. Businesses should better respect the rights of the custodians of biodiversity and incorporate better business practices. To the extent that we can promote that, biodiversity will benefit. Business has a tremendous impact on the entire supply chain, and we need to fully engage the business sector for them to change the way that they do business. If we fail to do that, and only have the commitment of the environmental sector, we will not achieve the Aichi targets. Yes, there are risks involved. The


business sector is powerful but unless we work with them we will not change the ways things are done. We still see businesses following old practices but we also see increased understanding of the need to practice more sustainable ways. We see that because business responds to consumer demand. Businesses now are expected to have higher environmental standards in order to gain market shares, but if these demands did not exist there might not be enough drive for them to change. Negotiations are always done by governments. The Convention decisions are agreed by governments. Governments are free to choose who they ask advice from but in the end it is the government that makes the decisions, even if they engage business.

NGOs have been very effective in promoting outreach and changing consumer behaviour and we hope that they continue to play that role. We have many agreements with NGOs and I hope to enhance these partnerships.

There is a concern on the part of NGOs and indigenous and local communities that as we engage with business that this would dilute or reduce the force of the environmental aspects of the CBD and its effectiveness. But the CBD is more than just an environmental convention, as it deals with rights, sustainable use and benefit-sharing. Unless we deal with the sectors that are the main users and cause the most impact on biodiversity we will not solve these problems. The CBD should not just concentrate on environmental problems but should also contribute to sustainable development. By promoting the importance of biodiversity, business will better recognize its value and support for the implementation of goals and targets will be strengthened. But for that to happen we have to engage sectors beyond the environmental community. Some environment groups argue that we might be swamped by business but if we convince these actors that biodiversity is very important then we have powerful allies instead of enemies.

**8. Civil society has been very active within CBD negotiations, and their role is equally important. Do you have any ideas on how their participation, support and intervention can be strengthened to help you in your mission for implementation?**

The CBD has always been very open and active with the NGO community and with indigenous peoples and local communities. In fact, the CBD is seen by indigenous peoples and local communities as one of their main entry way into the UN system to address their concerns and needs. We can do more and we can do better. The CBD could have stronger partnerships with community-based organizations to, for example, promote protected areas, promote restoration of fishery stocks, and protect crop diversity which is very important for future adaptation to climate change and for food security. This is an area where we could do more. NGOs have been very effective in promoting outreach and changing consumer behaviour and we hope that they continue to play that role. We have many agreements with NGOs and I hope to enhance these partnerships. ❧



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF THE CBD ALLIANCE

## A paradigm shift is needed

**S**BSTTA 16 and WGR1 4 will discuss, decide and recommend on crucial topics such as marine and coastal biodiversity; biodiversity and climate change, financing, implementation of the Strategic Plan amongst others.

As the CBD turns two decades old, fortunately, the attention is brought to where it is due. However, as expectations are high so is the scepticism, as with each passing year, achieving 20 targets will only grow proportionally bigger. There seems to be little sign that Parties are sufficiently at work, and it is not hard to imagine that this is a colossal task. Perhaps because the three pillars of development – economic, social and environment in themselves are more often than not battling or competing with each other.

While Parties have 'urged' themselves to implement CBD's Strategic Plan, the operation of CBD as a legally binding treaty still has to happen.

Not too long ago, biodiversity did gain momentum and the warranted international attention in political discourse, but this has been susceptible to the changing state of the world affairs and the political and economic scenarios. The priority that biodiversity receives at international and national levels still needs tempering. Growth is back into attention and even if this growth is called green, the de-

lineating parameters of such growth hardly include biodiversity and the triple objectives of the Convention. This is the moment where we need to pull our strengths and intentions together and ensure that the Strategic Plan becomes one of the key road maps in the coming decade – at the international, national, regional and local level – for a healthy, biodiverse, and sustainable planet.

If the Strategic Plan is to be implemented as intended then biodiversity needs to be at the heart of every major policy and development issues. This would also imply that better synergies are established; and where they are already established, strengthened between various international environment and development policies such as climate change platforms, Rio +20.

As civil society we are more than eager to help Parties, the CBD Secretariat and each other with the new mantra of implementation. We have always been. We are particularly glad to note that the new Executive Secretary has committed himself to vigorously pursue implementation (see his interview in this issue). Besides seeking paragraph shifts we need to seek out paradigm shifts and not in discourse only, but the way we set out to achieve our aims. Therefore let us endeavour to make the CBD functional on the ground! ✎

# National campaigns to implement Aichi Targets start with civil society

by **Tepei Dohke** ● Japan Committee for IUCN

What do we need to do to fulfill the Aichi Targets? This question has been discussed many times by the Japan Committee for IUCN following the historic 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Nagoya in 2010.

Many doubts and ideas persist within Japanese civil society organisations: “Twenty is a difficult number to remember!”, “We will never meet the targets by continuing NGO conservation activities as usual”, “Targets never change the world, it must be translated into action on the ground”, “Will we be able to involve the other sectors?”, “Simple messaging is a must to make our actions easy understand”. But is this only unique to Japanese civil society? The answer is probably no, as these are common challenges facing the CBD community on the whole.

To tackle such challenges, the Japan Committee for IUCN started a national civil society campaign, called the Nijyu-maru Project (Double 20 Campaign). In Japan, the circle symbolizes harmony, life, goodness and perfection. Nijyu-maru implies making good achievements in 2020 on the 20 Aichi targets, and achieving the objective of living in harmony with nature.

Any group can become a partner to this campaign. Once the partner makes a commitment to participate, they register their action for the implementation of an Aichi target with the related Aichi target number. The partner then uses the campaign logo and 20 icons throughout their activities as proof of their commitment. The targets should be translated into conservation action on the ground. Partners should read all 20 Aichi biodiversity targets and think about the relationship between the targets and their group activities. This could also stimulate additional actions by other groups. While the campaign scheme is simple - Know, Think and Act - the expected outcomes are many.

The Nijyu-maru Project was started on 8 October 2011, a year after the CBD-COP10 with the involvement of 29 organizations who have registered 47 actions. Aichi Target 1, which relates to communication, education and public awareness activities, received 32 actions, but interestingly Aichi Target 16, relating to the promotion of ABS has so far not attracted any action. The very fact that there is no action for ABS goes to show that for

**We hope that the Nijyu-maru Project will work as a promotional tool towards the implementation of the Aichi Targets.**

Japan it is essential to work further towards that direction and take the necessary steps.

To be able to solicit more commitment, awareness and collective action, IUCN members in Japan and civil society groups are conducting seminars and workshops in several regions. Through such interaction it became apparent that many civil society groups in Japan, including in the COP 10 host city Nagoya, did not know that governments have promised to remove harmful subsidies for biodiversity (Aichi Target 3). If awareness about the targets is weak, the chances of reaching them remain bleak. To this end, IUCN-Japan will promote awareness, information-sharing and lessons learned from the work of implementation of the Aichi targets. We will also promote common actions during next 10 years, during the United Nations Decade of Biodiversity. Slowly this campaign is gaining momentum at the national level. We believe such campaigns are applicable not only to civil society organizations but also to business, local governments, and educational and scientific institutes not only Japan but across the world. We hope that the Nijyu-maru Project will work as a promotional tool towards the implementation of the Aichi targets. We want to share our experiences and expand the Nijyu-maru partnership all over the world. ✨

**The launch of the Nijyu-maru campaign.**



COURTESY OF TEPEI DOHKE

COURTESY JAPAN COMMITTEE FOR IUCN

# Zoos and aquariums contribute to achieving Aichi Target 1

by **Markus Gusset, Carole Lecointre and Gerald Dick** ● World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) Executive Office

Aichi Biodiversity Target 1 of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 states that “by 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.” As a contribution to achieve this target, and to effectively complement existing educational materials, the World

Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) will develop tools for raising awareness about biodiversity in zoo and aquarium visitors. These new tools will focus on global issues and personal engagement.

This will be accompanied by an evaluation of the knowledge about and perception of biodiversity in zoo and aquarium visitors, also to assess the effectiveness of the tools developed for awareness-raising. Such a large-scale evaluation of zoos and aquariums as education centres is mostly lacking and also needed by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for evaluating Aichi Target 1.

WAZA member zoos and aquariums – with its high level of public support and credibility and experience in fostering a connection between visitors and the animals in their care – are well-positioned to help educate the public about protecting biodiversity through a global awareness project in conjunction with

WAZA– with its high level of public support, credibility and experience in fostering a connection between visitors and the animals in their care – are well-positioned to help educate the public about protecting biodiversity through a global awareness project in conjunction with the UNDB.



ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK



the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. The main idea is to create a strategy and framework based on research and member input throughout the world.

This awareness project aims at strengthening the capacity of WAZA member zoos and aquariums to communicate about their conservation role and efforts: (1) to raise public awareness and inspire people to protect the natural world by taking action that helps conserve biodiversity globally; (2) to help zoos and aquariums to accomplish this through education programmes – entertaining and emotional experiences in zoos and aquariums – that inspire people to care about nature by seeing live animals; (3) to provide support for in-zoo and in-aquarium fundraising for conservation; and (4) to provide support for enhancing understanding and concrete environmental action, from personal lifestyle changes to national environmental politics.

WAZA conducted a survey in December 2011 with a selection of its member institutions and representatives of the International Zoo Educators' Association. The objective of the survey was to determine whether and to what extent institutions were using biodiversity-related educational materials. The majority of survey participants felt that there were gaps in zoo and aquarium biodiversity education that were pressing and urgent to fill. Tools for raising awareness about biodiversity most wished for were short videos and computer-based wildlife programs. Another suggestion was the idea to develop a centralised collection of existing educational materials. An online system of some sort, for example, could help zoo and aquarium educators share a wide range of resources.

Another survey recently conducted by WAZA, in collaboration with national and regional zoo and aquarium associations, showed that annually more than 700 million people visit zoos and aquariums worldwide, and are thus potentially exposed to environmental education. This figure is unparalleled by any other group of conservation-oriented institutions. Most of these people live in urban areas and have little or no contact with nature; providing a connection to nature plays an important part in creating an appreciation for biodiversity. Therefore, the world zoo and aquarium community has the potential to contribute significantly to achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 1. ❖



World Association of  
Zoos and Aquariums  
**WAZA** | United for  
Conservation®

*The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) is the unifying organisation for the world zoo and aquarium community. The more than 300 members comprise leading zoos, aquariums, associations, affiliate organisations and corporate partners from around the world. With over 700 million visitors annually, together they are 'United for Conservation'. WAZA aims to guide, encourage and support the zoos, aquariums and like-minded organisations of the world in animal care and welfare, environmental education and global conservation. It is an official partner of the CBD during the UN Decade on Biodiversity 2011–2020.*



JOHN FOX/STOCKBYTE/THINKSTOCK



COURTESY WAZA



COURTESY WAZA

**Tree planting at the Johannesburg Zoo; Biodiversity Week focusing on schools.**



COURTESY OF NICK HOLMES

Black-vented Shearwater on Natividad Island, Mexico.

# Helping Parties meet Aichi Targets for preventing extinctions

by **Nick Holmes, Bradford Keitt and Olivier Langrand** ● Island Conservation, Santa Cruz, California

Although islands make up less than 5% of the earth's land area, 80% of known species extinctions since 1600 have taken place on islands and 40% of IUCN Critically Endangered species currently inhabit them. Invasive Alien Vertebrates (IAV) have been a primary cause of insular extinctions, and recognized as a key risk to today's threatened species.

Removing Invasive Alien Vertebrates from islands is a proven strategy to protect biodiversity and prevent extinctions of threatened species. By removing the most damaging invasive vertebrates from islands – goats, pigs, rabbits, cats and rodents – member Parties of the CBD have significant potential to help achieve the 2020 targets set forth in the Strategic Plan, including:

- **Target 5:** loss, degradation and fragmentation of natural habitats is at least halved.
- **Target 9:** invasive alien species are identified, prioritized and controlled or eradicated, and measures to control introduction pathways in place.
- **Target 12:** extinction and decline of threatened species is prevented and their status improved.

There have been more than 700 successful eradications of invasive vertebrates worldwide, and practitioners are undertaking removals from increasingly larger, more remote and more technically challenging islands each year, with the global pace of invasive vertebrate removal increasing. Importantly, greater collaborative outcomes are being sought to share resources and expertise, such as the 2011 joint expedition to remove rodents from Palmyra Atoll, Henderson Island and Phoenix Islands. This ground-breaking project leveraged resources from multiple partners to accomplish more conservation than possible alone.

By eradicating IAV from islands, remarkable recoveries of endangered species can occur. Following removal of feral cats from Natividad Island, the Black-vented shearwater *Puffinus opisthomelas* showed dramatically reduced mortality and this species was subsequently down-listed by the IUCN from Vulnerable to Near Threatened. The eradication of sheep, fe-

ral cats and Norway rats from Campbell Island, New Zealand enabled the reintroduction of the flightless Campbell Island teal (*Anas nesiotis*). The teal has thrived and was down-listed from Critically Endangered to Endangered.

Following the removal of pacific rats from Table Island, New Caledonia, the IUCN Vulnerable Fairy Tern *Sterna nereis* recently nested there for the first time. An ambitious effort in the Galapagos Archipelago to remove goats from 12 islands totaling 719,410 ha, in combination with removal of other noxious invasives, will remove a key threat to this unique ecosystem, and provide important recovery benefit for threatened species like the Galapagos Rail *Laterallus spilonotus*.

Given the scope of the threat, efforts to eradicate IAV should be directed to islands and archipelagos that offer the greatest biodiversity benefits at the lowest cost, including consideration of the number of threatened species, scope and severity of IAV threats, island and human population size.

Island Conservation, Birdlife International and the UCSC Coastal Conservation Action Laboratory (CCAL) have built a database of insular breeding populations of IUCN Critically Endangered and Endangered mammals, amphibians, reptiles and birds of the world, using resources such as the IUCN Red List, the UNEP Global Island Database, and the Global Invasive Species Database. Figure 1 shows an example from this world first database.

**Removing Invasive Alien Vertebrates from islands is a proven strategy to protect biodiversity and prevent extinctions of threatened species.**

Achieving the Aichi Targets requires removing the threat of IAV to island species on a global scale. A global, coordinated and collaborative effort, fully endorsed by the Parties to CBD and funded by global mechanisms such as the GEF, multi-lateral and aid agencies and large private donors will inspire the global community to action. To prevent extinctions on islands we must catalyze the financial capital and engage a global network of partners to implement island IAV eradications on national and archipelago scales. 🦋

# Scaling up biodiversity finance, resource mobilization and IFMs – the civil society view

Compiled by **Simone Lovera** ● Global Forest Coalition and **Rashed Al Mahmud Titimu** ● Unnayan Onneshan for the CBD Alliance

The accelerated pace of biodiversity loss has compelled global society to think of new innovative ways to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity. Hence certain market-based mechanisms are being put forward by some as being “innovative and efficient” ways to achieve this. The 10th Conference of Parties (COP 10) in Nagoya in 2010 invited Parties “...to submit information concerning innovative financial mechanisms that have potential to generate new and additional financial resources as well as possible problems that could undermine achievement of the Convention’s three objectives.”

But will such market-based mechanisms lead to scaling up finance for biodiversity conservation? This issue needs to be addressed within two sets of questions: (a) whether a price tag could be put on biodiversity and ecosystem provisions, which are the result of complex processes closely interlinked and difficult to delineate, and, (b) whether there are demonstrated cases of revenue augmentation for gathering scaled-up resources for biodiversity.

## FINANCIALISATION OF BIODIVERSITY

The financialisation of biodiversity is a product of the neoliberal economic system where monetization is the main tool for using and conserving biological resources. It implies putting a price tag for the use and exchange of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Yet developing the necessary financial architecture for this purpose remains highly contestable, as pricing of many of the intangible benefits provided by nature is theoretically and practically impossible. We will explore some of the mechanisms used for this purpose and their associated risks.

## PAYMENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Payments for environmental services (PES) are probably the most used amongst the Innovative Financial Mechanisms (IFMs) proposed in the Conference of Biological Diversity’s (CBD) Strategic Plan for Resource Mobilization. However, Vatn *et al.*<sup>1</sup> discovered a weak relationship between PES and biodiversity conservation. Using Costa Rica as an example, they showed that even if PES had contributed in forest regeneration, determining its aggregate effect on avoided deforestation was difficult.

If they are to be considered economically effective, then such payments should be able to compensate the opportunity costs of conservation. PES is only cost-efficient where the opportu-

nity costs are relatively low, thus they are considered mostly suitable for small-scale agriculture activities. Areas with high biodiversity, however, are attractive for very profitable forms of agro-industrial production (soya bean, oil palm monocultures etc.), and compensating the opportunity costs of these crops is prohibitively expensive.

The question of equity, or the lack of it, is also an issue. Generally it is assumed that PES systems have the potential to benefit poor and marginalized communities. But Milder *et al.*<sup>2</sup> found that 87% of PES went to well-off landowners in developed countries out of its total estimated volume of USD1460 million per year.

In addition, according to a Norwegian study, as much as 99% of payments come from public sources, while for developing countries it is 97%. So, from the perspective of governments and the public, PES schemes can be a financial burden rather than a mechanism to generate finance for biodiversity.

## REDD+

In recent years, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and enhancing forest carbon stocks (REDD+) has gained focus as an important mitigation tool for climate change. A significant demand for forest carbon offsets is created with a combination of legally binding emission cuts and the possibility to offset such cuts with forest-based projects. But the 17th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change made it clear that no global legally binding emission cap will be in place until at least 2020, which may have a depressing effect on the growing carbon market, more particularly REDD+ markets. Under such a reality carbon offset, finance as an IFM will continue to be a highly volatile, instable and uncertain source of funding dependent on the outcomes of another international negotiation process.

## BIODIVERSITY OFFSETS

A biodiversity offset entails that the polluter pays for damage they have done to biodiversity by creating or buying an offset/credit. An offset implies that a certain biodiversity conservation initiative serves as compensation for a project or policy that destroys biodiversity, so the net outcome for biodiversity is at most zero. The major problem lies in the ‘non-interchangeable’ and ‘difficult to measure’ characteristics of biodiversity.

<sup>1</sup> Vatn, Arild, David N. Barton, Henrik Lindhjem, Synne Movik, Irene Ring and Rui Santos, 2011, *Can markets protect biodiversity? An evaluation of different financial mechanisms*. Noragric Report No. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Milder, J.C., S.J. Scherr and C. Bracer, 2010. Trends and Future Potential of Payment for Ecosystem Services to Alleviate Rural Poverty in Developing Countries. *Ecology and Society*, 15(2):4.



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The process of measuring two biological sites as ‘equivalent’ is incredibly challenging – if not impossible –because biodiversity in two locations can vary in species composition, ecosystem process services, food web etc. Unlike carbon markets, biodiversity offsets deal with biodiversity which is so much more than a list of species or the size of a population, and can be undermined by over simplification for ease of monetary valuation of biodiversity of project and offset site.

Another concern is that it may provide the right to continue destruction and pollution, acting as incentives to development. Indeed, there is evidence that wetland banking in the US focuses almost predominately on compensation rather than other aspects of the mitigation hierarchy, such as avoidance and minimization.

#### MARKET REGULATION

On the whole, there is a convergence that it is difficult to define biodiversity in monetary terms and that there are limitations to the use of markets in the protection of biodiversity. The State has the key role in rectifying the problems associated with market failures and scaling up finances. Even if private funding is generated, it is preferable to channel it through the State or its intermediaries, as most of the evidences suggest.

Another major issue is the need for regulating markets and corporations as these entities in most cases are driven by their

### Putting a price tag for the use and exchange of biodiversity and ecosystem services remains highly contestable.

motive of maximization of profit. A major issue is the setting up of the principles of financing of ‘provider gets’ or the principle of ‘polluter pays’.

#### STATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR ROLES

There has been a considerable convergence that scaling up of resources lies in the reforms of tax and subsidy regimes, which are at the core of these systems and need to be looked into more closely. These could be categorized: (a) fiscal reforms – reform of the perverse subsidies and redirecting harmful subsidies, environmental taxes, financial transaction taxes, ecological fiscal transfers (national and international) and other innovative public approaches; (b) public funding - appropriate incentive schemes for biodiversity conservation, especially by indigenous peoples and local communities), support for legal action and strengthening governance and capacity building, and (c) ODA – mainstreaming and direct funding. ❖

*This article is a condensed version of a full paper available at: [www.cbdalliance.org](http://www.cbdalliance.org).*



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# The problem with bioenergy

by **Rachel Smolker** ●  
Co-director, Biofuelwatch

**B**iofuels are on the agenda of the sixteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice agenda, having been recognized as a key issue for biodiversity conservation. Many of the serious implications for biodiversity conservation as well as food security and greenhouse gas emissions are identified and well-articulated. The stated goal is “to develop and apply tools and approaches to assist promoting the positive and minimizing or avoiding the negative impacts of biofuels production and use on biodiversity, and the associated socio-economic impacts.” This is encouraging. However, the discussion about how to address the serious impacts of existing biofuel policies is confined to a support for sustainability standards. What is lacking is a critical evaluation as to whether standards are credible and effective tools in the context of fast-growing new demands created by government subsidies, targets and mandates.

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s (CBD) report, *Biofuels and Biodiversity: Report on the work in progress in response to Decision x/37*, states: “Understanding the impacts of incentive measures, and more clearly identifying their objectives, is essential to addressing whether and how policies need to be adjusted to achieve sustainability. No science-based forum of discussion can avoid in-depth consideration of this topic, despite the political sensitivities.” Yet this is not followed by any further discussion of whether the precautionary principle requires such policies to be revoked or suspended. In view of the large amount of evidence compiled about the serious impacts of biofuels, the CBD should take the lead in calling for a proactive approach, rather than simply recording the impacts and trying to amend standards and criteria.

The rationale behind mandates and subsidies for bioenergy is linked to the false claim that bioenergy – at any scale - is “clean, green and renewable.” The Secretariat’s report recognizes the problems with these claims, citing many important recent reports which indicate that biofuels frequently result in more, not less, greenhouse gas emissions, that bioenergy crops further stress

limited water resources, result in soil degradation and increased use of fertilizers and agrichemicals, and often involve cultivation of invasive species. The report acknowledges that because of the very low energy density of plant materials, very large land areas are required to supply sufficient quantities of biomass. The implications for land use, both direct and indirect, are massive and complex. Yet they are poorly understood and, importantly, difficult to measure and assess.

A second key motive behind bioenergy mandates and subsidies is concern over “Energy Security”, essential to maintaining the current political and economic power balance. With oil reserves increasingly difficult to access and under control of governments with their own concerns and interests, the US and European Union (EU), among other powers, are increasingly vulnerable. Tellingly, the US military has taken steps towards finding alternative forms of energy, especially biofuels for powering machinery of warfare and installations, with its own internal mandate. Energy security is defined solely in terms of ensuring continuity of supply.

Viewed in this light, the magnitude of what is at stake, the interests and forces at play, and the position of biodiversity conservation within the constellation of concerns, is perhaps better appreciated. The impacts are already becoming clear. The current regime of mandates and subsidies has already propelled development forward beyond what should be considered sustainable. Various sectors – chemicals, plastics, aviation, military, cement and steel manufacturing etc. - all envision biomass and bioenergy alternatives, without awareness of competing interests, or a realistic assessment of what land, water and biomass is “available”.

Bioenergy is favoured among alternative energy possibilities, because it is not too difficult to refine into liquid fuels, and easily burned to generate electricity and heat - including in existing coal power stations, to provide consistent baseload power – something other “renewables” are less suited for. Hence, the bulk of subsidies for “renewables” end up going to bioenergy. In the UK, biomass plans announced by industry would require more than 60 million tonnes of wood being burned every year, six times as much as the country’s total annual wood production. Drax has now announced plans to co-fire biomass from at least 8 million tonnes of wood a year, with plans approved for two new power stations that, together, would burn about 5.8 million tonnes of wood.

RWE has been permitted to burn pellets made from up to 7 million tonnes of imported wood in just one power station (Tilbury). Most of the wood pellets would need to be imported, (including wood from beetle-infested forests, raising the possibility of spreading pests), hence many UK companies are also investing in pellet-making facilities in other countries to export back to their facilities. A new and expanding global trade in woodchips and pellets has abruptly emerged. In the US, in addition to massive expansion of corn ethanol, subsidies have spurred development of many new electricity generating incinerators, burning wood, garbage, ani-

mal manures, municipal waste, sewage sludge and in some cases even tires, subsidized as renewable bioenergy. The Secretariat’s report acknowledges some of the shortcomings of criteria, and especially lifecycle analyses for bioenergy, but does not question their fundamental utility. Sustainability criteria lay out concerns and principles for sustainability. But there is no assessment of their effectiveness on the ground. The EU has introduced mandatory sustainability and greenhouse gas standards for biofuels but set aside no resources for verifying and auditing any of the claims made by companies – which themselves often rely on a complex and non-transparent chain of supply. Human rights and the right to food are ignored entirely.

The Secretariat’s report acknowledges the problems with accounting for the major indirect impacts of biofuels but, worryingly, it notes that global standards for all agricultural commodities and wood might be the answer. Such an approach fails to consider ‘sustainability of demand’, i.e. to ask whether demands on land, water, soils and wood can be increased dramatically without disastrous impacts on biodiversity, climate and people. It also fails to distinguish between biofuels, for which subsidies and mandates have created an entirely artificial market, and food, which is a necessity. Calling for global standards could take decades to become a reality and would further delay action on the direct and indirect impacts of biofuels. Such action must include suspension of government incentives for biofuels.

**The impacts are already becoming clear. The current regime of mandates and subsidies has already propelled development forward beyond what should be considered sustainable.**

We can look to previous experience: a host of “roundtable” processes are underway with the intent of making soya, sugarcane, palm oil and wood products, more “sustainable”. These have been seriously challenged by civil society, as inadequate, ineffective and more than anything else, serving to greenwash practices that are fundamentally unsustainable. While it is not so great a challenge to develop “ideas” about what sustainability should entail, it is essential to recognize that ideas on paper are worse than meaningless if they cannot be implemented and effective. The problem is compounded by plans for mutual recognition of different sets of criteria. This might facilitate markets, but will lead to the dominance of a lowest common denominator amongst already flawed sets of criteria.

The CBD process has gone far in assessing and recognizing the problems with bioenergy, but must consider that standards and revised LCA’s cannot address those problems. The underlying drivers, subsidies and targets, must be eliminated. If we fail, the current trajectory indicates that bioenergy will be one of the leading causes of biodiversity loss. ❖

# Removing brackets on social and cultural criteria for EBSAs

by **Ramya Rajagopalan** ●

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)

One of the agenda items for the 16th meeting of the SBSTTA is marine and coastal biodiversity, with particular focus on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), marine spatial planning, and marine protected areas (MPAs). Over the past few years, the focus on EBSAs has been only the scientific and biological criteria, though there have been constant interventions from indigenous peoples and local communities calling for recognition of traditional knowledge and social and cultural criteria while declaring EBSAs, both within and beyond national jurisdiction. This was discussed by Parties at both the 9th and 10th Conferences of the Parties.

Based on Decision X/29, the Secretariat commissioned an interesting and useful study (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/INF/10) as preparatory material for the 16th meeting of the SBSTTA and to identify specific elements for integrating traditional, scientific, technical, and technological knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities with social and cultural criteria for the identification of EBSAs and for the establishment and management of marine protected areas. The study clearly acknowledges the linkages that exist between biological and social success and identifies indigenous peoples as rights-holders with inherent, proprietary and inalienable rights to their traditional knowledge and biological resources. It also identifies principles and elements that need to be recognized by Parties while declaring EBSAs, including MPAs, which to date have often been ignored or not taken into account.

Parties need to be aware of the various positive experiences in co-management and community-driven marine management in which communities' rights to their resources have been recognized, especially when identifying EBSAs and declaring MPAs. In addition to those mentioned in the study, there are other positive examples in which communities have already taken such initiatives. In some countries they are legally recognized, but in most others they are not. In Tarcoles, Costa Rica, responsible artisanal fishing has been promoted in the marine area by Coope Tarcoles R.L., a fishermen's co-operative society. There, measures implemented allow sustainable use of the local fishery and

also secure the rights of artisanal and small-scale fishers to access resources and participate in decision-making. The co-management regime has ensured food security for artisanal and small-scale fishers, promoted equity, and protected their cultural identities. In Indonesia, areas declared by customary institutions (such as Sasi laot) became legally recognized as part of aquatic conservation areas. There are similar positive examples from Brazil, Chile, Thailand, Madagascar, and the Philippines, among many others.

There has also been documentation on the lack of recognition of social and cultural aspects in most MPAs, particularly those declared by a top-down process. This has often led to conflicts between communities and managers and even eviction of communities, as seen in India, Thailand, Vietnam, and others. There have also been documented instances in which indigenous peoples and local communities are neither given prior information before the declaration of protected areas, nor are they part of the decision-making process. This contravenes Programme Element 2 of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas, which calls for full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in the management of existing and the establishment and management of new protected areas. It is also essential that qualitative governance assessment of existing MPAs is undertaken systematically before declaring any new MPA.

In a recent court case in South Africa, three members from a fishing community were charged of intention to fish within the reserve of an MPA. During the hearing, they argued that it is their community's fishing tradition and customary system of law regulating their access to the sea, and hence it is their constitutionally protected customary right to fish in MPAs as well. They argued that they were not against conservation, but preferred zonation within reserves where sustainable use of resources is permitted. In a recent workshop in India, communities demanded legal frameworks that protect the rights of fishers while promoting sustainable use of resources. They also called for an effective framework for conservation that particularly regulates cumulative environmental impacts of indiscriminate development projects.

It is imperative that all efforts to conserve resources and declare EBSAs take into account the social and economic aspects (especially livelihoods and well-being) of indigenous peoples and local communities who are traditionally dependent on the resources, ensuring that social and cultural benefits flow back to the communities. Marine spatial planning and management (including EBSAs and MPAs) should build upon traditional management strategies that sustainably use resources. ❧

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It is imperative that all efforts to conserve resources and declare EBSAs take into account the social and economic aspects of indigenous people and local communities.





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# Protecting marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction

by **Christoph Schwarte** ●

Senior Lawyer, Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development (FIELD)

One of the agenda items for the 16th meeting of the SBSTTA is marine and coastal biodiversity, with particular focus on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), marine spatial planning, and marine protected areas (MPAs). Over the past few years, the focus on EBSAs has been only the scientific and biological criteria, though there have been constant interventions from indigenous peoples and local communities calling for recognition of traditional knowledge and social and cultural criteria while declaring EBSAs, both within and beyond national jurisdiction. This was discussed by Parties at both the 9th and 10th Conferences of the Parties.

With the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have shown their determination to safeguard marine species, ecosystems and biodiversity. The targets underline the importance of managing fish stocks and ocean areas in a sustainable manner. For that purpose, they aim to ensure that by 2020, 10% of coastal and marine areas are conserved through ecologically representative and well-connected systems of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

Presently some 5,800 MPAs cover approximately 4.2 million square kilometres, or less than 1.5% of the world's oceans. In comparison, around 12% of the earth's land surface is subject to different nature conservation regimes. The vast majority of MPAs are also located along the coasts while only a marginal part of areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) is currently protected.

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ABNJ cover some 64% of the surface of our oceans and provide nearly 94% of its volume. They shelter the largest reservoir of biodiversity on the planet, but because of their remoteness and the technical difficulties in gathering data very little is known about them. It has been estimated that scientists have only explored 5% of ABNJ, and 0.01% in significant detail.

The international legal framework covering ABNJ is fragmented and focuses on specific sectors such as fishing, navigation or mining. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) lays down a global framework for the uses of the oceans and their resources. However, with regard to ABNJ it provides very few concrete rules and leaves large governance, regulatory and implementation gaps.

**The development of a legally-binding multilateral agreement under UNCLOS provides a unique opportunity to address existing gaps in regulation and governance of marine biodiversity in ABNJ.**

To date, the international community has failed to address the protection of ABNJ in a holistic way. In theory ABNJ are global commons belonging to all of humanity. In practice they are managed by those and for those who have the resources to exploit them. In order to avoid the devastating results of a “free for all” approach to ABNJ, effectively protect the world’s oceans and create an ecologic coherent system of MPAs a robust international governance regime is needed.

In 2004 the UN General Assembly (UNGA) therefore decided to establish the Ad-Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to address issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of ABNJ (working group). In June 2011 the working group recommended that the UNGA should initiate a process to address issues relating to the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in ABNJ.

This process should include the identification of ways forward - for example, implementation of existing agreements and the possible development of multilateral agreement under UNCLOS. The recommendation to consider the development of a new legal instrument has created a significant political momentum and opened up new possibilities for advancing conservation and management of the ABNJ. This is reflected in, for example, the zero draft of the outcome document for the “Rio+20” UN conference on sustainable development which makes express reference to an implementing agreement under UNCLOS.

While it remains to be seen whether this reference will find its way into the final documents of the conference, the development of a legally binding multilateral agreement under UNCLOS provides a unique opportunity to address existing gaps in regulation and governance of marine biodiversity in ABNJ. It would allow the international community to modernize the existing legal framework in light of present-day conditions and clarify the application of environmental principles such as precaution, polluter pays or common but differentiated responsibilities.

The new agreement could also be instrumental in improving the cooperation between states, and create the institutional structures necessary to manage ABNJ in a holistic and efficient manner. Specific national commitments supporting the Aichi Targets could be recorded and made legally binding. Procedures for the designation and management of MPAs as well as further competencies of coast and port states related to the implementation of MPA measures could be agreed under a new treaty.

To date, the CBD organs have considered the working group to be the primary forum for actions enabling the development of MPAs in ABNJ. In 2010, at their tenth meeting, the COP noted the slow progress in establishing MPAs in ABNJ and urged parties to take action to advance the work of the Group. The meetings of the CBD in 2012 provide an opportunity to further promote the idea of a new multilateral agreement and call on the international community to support its development as soon as possible. ❖



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# Does Rio+20 hold promise for the Earth?

by **Ashish Kothari** ● Kalpavriksh, India

If global conferences were an indication of humanity's commitment to make peace with the earth, 2012 should count as a golden year. At least half a dozen major meetings with thousands of people each are being held. However, if the upcoming Rio+20 summit in June is any indication, one wonders if the outcomes of such gatherings will be worth their enormous climate footprint.

Twenty years ago, world leaders gathered at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) recognised that humanity was rushing headlong into a disastrous confrontation with nature. They promised a new deal, moving countries towards 'sustainable development' and simultaneously working to erase poverty and inequalities. From this was born Agenda 21, a path-breaking vision of sustainability, and a number of international treaties and agreements, including the CBD. This year, leaders will meet once again in Rio to assess progress made towards implementing these visions and agreements.

We are now much more acutely aware of the damage humanity has caused the earth: crossing the limits of its resources, engendering ecological collapses with disastrous consequences for hundreds of millions of people, and pushing tens of thousands of species towards extinction. Will the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development help halt this rapid slide?

Not if one judges the conference by the Zero Draft of the outcome document produced by a high-level UN task force and currently under discussion by governments. The Draft frankly admits failure to achieve sustainable development and makes a renewed commitment to ecological sustainability, poverty eradication, and equity. However, it does not go deeper into the causes of this failure: a fundamentally flawed notion of 'development' that has overstressed material and financial growth at the cost of ecological, social, and cultural well-being, and a system of decision-making that is centralised and non-participatory.

The Draft is positive in advocating some elements of 'greening' the economy, including renewable energy and phasing out of perverse subsidies that promote ecologically destructive practices in energy, agriculture, and fisheries. However, these steps will be shortlived if they are not within the context of exploring various alternative ways of providing for human welfare that do not rely predominantly on economic growth and Gross Domestic Product.

One fundamental flaw is the failure of the Zero Draft to acknowledge that protecting our "life support system" is an ethical imperative, in essence, by stressing that nature and all species are to be protected in their own right and not only because they are of use to humanity. In doing so, it does not even respect one of the basic premises of the CBD.

Strangely, the Zero Draft advocates incorporating sustainable development strategies in national development plans, rather than suggesting that these plans need to become sustainable themselves. It talks of sustainable production and consumption, but makes no explicit mention of the enormously wasteful consumerism of the industrial countries and of the rich in 'developing' countries, and advocates no measures to rein in this profligacy. It also does little to put into place a regulatory framework for the corporate sector, instead talking rather mildly about the role of this sector in achieving sustainable development.

Perversely, it provides no central role in decision-making to the only humans who still live with reasonable sustainability, the world's indigenous peoples. Related to this is its weakness in advocating major governance changes towards a deeper, radical democracy and political decentralisation in which all citizens have the right and ability to participate in decision-making. It also fails to discuss the fundamental changes needed in governance of global institutions like the United Nations to include the voices of peoples and communities and not only nation-states.

**There continues to be an inequity between international environmental agreements (most which have little or no effective enforcement mechanism) and trade and economic agreements (which have various enforcement mechanisms).**

While the Draft proposes a set of sustainable development goals and a mechanism to monitor their follow-up, it does not set out any mechanism to take corrective action if they are not met. This continues the current inequity between international environmental agreements (most of which have no effective enforcement mechanism) and trade and economic agreements (which have various enforcement mechanisms such as sanctions). In fact, it continues to place reliance on institutions like the World Trade Organization, though such a trade regime has been shown time and again to be against the principles of sustainability and equity. More recent drafts that are part of the ongoing negotiations on the text have even diluted or altogether removed references to citizens' rights of various kinds.

If the Zero Draft is any indication, Rio+20 is only going to push 'business as usual' rather than usher in a genuine, effective path to sustainability and equity. The biggest saving grace for this jamboree may be the various exciting citizens' initiatives at alternative networking and action, as well as the few governments (most notably in South America) that are thinking out of the box in demanding an ethical, rights-based approach to the global environment and to development. ✨

For more information: [www.kalpavriksh.org](http://www.kalpavriksh.org).



# Rio+20: Concerns about the future we want

*Compiled by the CBD Alliance in consultation with other organisations, groups and networks working on forests and other ecosystems*

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity defines biodiversity as the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. The main objectives of the CBD are the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the sustainable utilization of genetic resources.

While acknowledging the need to protect our “life support system” and live “in harmony with nature”, Draft Zero does not put this as an ethical imperative, by stressing that nature and all species are to be protected in their own right.

Our proposed insertions in the draft are based on the CBD’s holistic definition, as well as decades of work by many CSO’s, and grassroots input from citizens and indigenous groups around the world. See also the October 2010 Biodiversity justice declaration, endorsed by various organisations for 10th Conference of Parties to the CBD. However, we would also like to use this opportunity to sound out our concerns on “green economy” which is being promoted strongly by Draft Zero. In the thematic cluster on biodiversity, we welcome Rio+20’s stated goals in The Future We Want and we commend the outcome document for its:

- Frank admission of the failure to achieve sustainable development and all the continuing crises of environmental degradation, poverty, and food insecurity.
- Renewed commitment to ecological sustainability, poverty eradication, and equity.
- Explicit acknowledgment of the importance of diversity, culture, and harmony with nature.
- Emphasis on renewable energy and conservation of natural resources.
- Emphasis on the need to reform current economic models, phasing out perverse subsidies that promote ecologically destructive practices in energy, agriculture, and fisheries.

However, the many NGOs and social movements we consulted are deeply concerned about the overall direction of the draft document. It is very apparent that the current framework of

the draft is set within an economic mould, which impresses upon the shape of action and thought for the next 20 years.

We quote here the concerns of La Via Campesina, the world’s largest movement of small-scale farmers, about the concept of the “green economy” and the Rio+20 Summit: “Twenty years later, governments should have reconvened to review their commitments and progress, but in reality the issue to debate will be the “green economy” led development, propagating the same capitalist model that caused climate chaos and other deep social and environmental crises....Today the “greening of the economy” pushed forward in the run-up to Rio+20 is based on the same logic and mechanisms that are destroying the planet and keeping people hungry”.

For instance, it seeks to incorporate aspects of the failed “green revolution” order to ensure the needs of the industrial sectors of production, such as promoting the uniformity of seeds, patented seeds by corporation, genetically modified seeds, etc.

The capitalist economy, based on the over-exploitation of natural resources and human beings, will never become “green”. In this period of financial crisis, global capitalism seeks new forms of accumulation. Today, it is the territories and the commons which are the main target of capital. As such, the green economy is nothing more than a green mask for capitalism. It is also a new mechanism to appropriate our forests, rivers, land... of our territories!

The “green economy” is marketed as a way to implement sustainable development for those countries which continue to experience high and disproportionate levels of poverty, hunger and misery. In reality, what is proposed is another phase of what we identify as “green structural adjustment programs” which seek to align and re-order the national markets and regulations to submit to the fast incoming “green capitalism”. Investment capital now seeks new markets through the “green economy”; securing the natural resources of the world as primary inputs and commodities for industrial production, as carbon sinks or even for speculation. This is being clearly demonstrated by increasing land grabs globally, for crop production for both export and agrofuels.”

We sincerely hope that our recommendations and amendments are given the due thought consideration they need, to “truly” validate the decision making processes of Rio+20. ✖

For more information on recommendations made to draft zero see: [www.cbdalliance.org/rio/](http://www.cbdalliance.org/rio/).



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# The UN Green Economy proposal: loopholes abound

by **Mary Gilbert and David Millar** ●

Quaker Earthcare Witness

Whenever we hear Achim Steiner, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director, speak we feel encouraged. He articulates very well what is happening to our planet – destruction of the sustaining environment; and he knows what is causing it – mindless corporate greed. He is convinced that once heads of corporations fully understand the problem they will become responsible, use pertinent scientific information in corporate decision-making, and plan for the long-term, which right now is not the case.

Steiner said UNEP isn't "...targeting the current powers for overthrow...It's not a discussion about a 'New Economic Order'... (Our approach must be) based in the current market economy... (This is) not ideological; we are just trying to bring the best ana-

lytical and empirical evidence to create a better debate." He also said, "Markets need regulatory systems; I want to learn which ones work." The Green Economy Initiative is promoting "the enormous social and environmental benefits from combating climate change and re-investing in natural infrastructure" so we can "move from mining the planet to managing and re-investing in it".

The big questions are whether the plan can work and what it will look like on the ground. The history of such good intentions is pretty poor. Can corporate investors be persuaded to forgo quick profits? Will governments remove those harmful subsidies to the fossil fuel and other industries, and redirect that money to green investment? What kinds of sound public policies and regulatory frameworks will countries put in place to realise these good intentions?

Can economic growth, the promise that is supposed to woo corporations, be decoupled from an increasingly scary environmen-

tal footprint? And how can the world be enticed to adopt a value system to replace the GDP with an index for human welfare? The people defining “green” give me little assurance. I see no evidence of concern for smallholder farmers, appropriate small hydropower, thriving local markets or anything decentralized that would put control into local hands.

Is “green investment” a Trojan horse? Time and again the rich countries have pledged and then refused adequate aid. Steiner’s own Green Economy report calls for \$1.3 billion per year, 2% of global GDP, from investment, international aid, and money from carbon trading income. Many people of goodwill support his goals, but are the means desirable and will the goals be achieved?

At COPs 15 and 16 of UNFCCC, business as usual won the day. If the green economy enables, extends and ‘greenwashes’ an unregulated carbon market, we will be faced with the worst possible result: emissions rising ever faster, with pollution permits based on inflated or unprovable claims. Ban Ki-moon and Steiner may be right, that climate action requires a massive bribe to the money powers, but we may pay the bribe, and get no results.

Carbon offsets are licenses to pollute, and there have already been serious abuses. The World Bank, which runs various climate funds, and has been given “temporary” control of the Green Fund proposed in Cancun, has a record of serious environmental damage. Friends of the Earth warns that an unregulated market could lead to a trillion-dollar “carbon casino”.

Despite good intentions, the details of the Green Economy Initiative are full of loopholes that various interests have fought for and will take advantage of. For instance, both LULUCF (Land use, land-use change and forestry) and REDD have such problems.

- Current text permits logging, gives credits for wood products, defines monoculture tree plantations as “forest”, and exempts draining peatlands and climate-caused forest fires from REDD accounting.
- REDD payment to “forest landholders” ignores indigenous peoples, peasants and others who cannot prove legal title to the land.
- REDD must specifically include the free prior and informed consent of forest-dwellers, peasants and indigenous peoples as specified in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. At this point under REDD these people have been evicted by security forces in numerous places.
- LULUCF defines inhabited savannah as “marginal,” allowing biochar, ethanol plantations and GMO megaprojects, and ignoring the rights of local people who practice dryland farming. This allows land grabs and dispossession, already happening on a grand scale.

So there’s a great deal to be encouraged about and a great deal to cause alarm. While it could be seen as a monumental effort to

change our way of living on Earth it is riddled with glaring flaws and loopholes. And a major issue not addressed by the Green Economy Initiative is the “ecological debt” to the global South – in the form of funding for adaptation to, and mitigation of, effects of climate change, the transfer of appropriate technology, and “climate space” (some permission to pollute under “common but differentiated responsibilities”) to assist their economic growth. ❖

## Removing Invasive Alien Vertebrates from islands is a proven strategy to protect biodiversity and prevent extinctions of threatened species.



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Convention on  
Biological Diversity



## The Convention on Biological Diversity

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