

## UN BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS: SATURDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2016

The HLS met for its final day on Saturday, 3 December, with delegates convening in two parallel roundtable discussions on forests, and fisheries and aquaculture in the morning. In the afternoon, the HLS met in a closing plenary to adopt the Cancún Declaration on Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Well-Being. Delegates also highlighted enhanced actions towards fulfilling the Aichi Targets under the umbrella of the Cancún Coalitions and Commitments for Enhanced Implementation.

### ROUNDTABLE ON FORESTS

Moderator Jorge Rescala, Director, National Forestry Commission, Mexico, highlighted the importance of forests for medicines, carbon sequestration, biodiversity and communities. INDIA noted that mainstreaming includes incorporating sustainable forests management in poverty reduction and NBSAPs. FINLAND highlighted conservation programmes to protect forests and called for sustainable management to safeguard forest biodiversity.

SWEDEN said that forests hold many of our future solutions for a post-fossil fuel era, including ecosystem services. POLAND noted traditional activities in forests can increase carbon sequestration and biodiversity-rich areas. FAO said mainstreaming biodiversity into national policies increases both food production and forest cover.

SOUTH AFRICA, with ECUADOR, NEPAL and MYANMAR, highlighted community participation in the management and sustainable use of natural resources. MALAYSIA stressed the importance of connecting environmentally sensitive areas, and, with ZIMBABWE, MYANMAR, NEPAL, BHUTAN and others, called for capacity building and human and financial resources.

ECUADOR underscored that through constitutional reform, the deforestation rate was reduced by 49% nationally. ROMANIA stressed: functional zoning of forests; harmonization of forest and PA management; and extension of forestry certification systems. CAMEROON highlighted the need to harmonize the approaches for conservation and sustainable management in line with the Aichi Targets.

Announcing a voluntary contribution under the Bonn Challenge to reforest and promote regeneration of 12 million hectares, BRAZIL stressed the importance of adapting strategies to national realities. ZIMBABWE underscored the critical role forests play in sustaining human livelihoods and helping communities adapt to climate change. MYANMAR highlighted the vital role of forest dependent communities in forest management. NEPAL discussed their national forest inventory and successes in fighting against illegal wildlife trade.

NICARAGUA noted that PAs and biospheres are responsibly managed at the national level to reduce negative impacts on biodiversity. The CZECH REPUBLIC, with SINGAPORE, underscored the importance of integrated approaches supporting both the economy and biodiversity.

RWANDA noted the benefits and opportunities provided by forests, such as environmental goods and services. ZAMBIA underscored enhanced stakeholder participation in formulating sustainable forest management and plans. PERU said that cultural heritage depends on biodiversity and forest conservation, and successful mainstreaming of biodiversity contributes to climate change adaptation and mitigation. HAITI underscored the importance of traditional knowledge and creation of new PAs to enhance ecosystem services.

COLOMBIA noted the impacts of war on forests and highlighted plans to recover and restore them. UGANDA underscored its commitment to implement the SDGs while protecting its forests. CANADA noted close work with government, indigenous peoples and stakeholders to promote the forest sector, which is mainstreamed and science- and policy-based. ARGENTINA outlined its law on conservation of native forests, noting that the law changes the land-use planning paradigm. TURKEY stressed that discussion on biodiversity and development does not only concern cross-cutting but also overlapping issues.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION underscored: the role of biodiversity for poverty elimination; forests' role as carbon sinks; and efforts to address illegal logging. Noting that the race for wealth has led to the ecological disaster, VENEZUELA stressed that capitalist expansion brought forth an apocalyptic scenario, threatening human livelihoods. INDONESIA addressed national regulatory efforts to mainstream biodiversity.

BHUTAN discussed robust scientific data on forests' ecosystem services. BENIN drew attention to the need for harmonized forestry and agricultural policies that also address climate change. BOLIVIA noted that forest functions should be protected holistically, preserving human rights and those of Mother Earth. SAMOA highlighted the role that forest restoration plays in promoting food security, environmental health and economic growth.

### ROUNDTABLE ON FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

Moderator José Calzada, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development and Fisheries, Mexico, reminded delegates that protection of marine biodiversity lags behind efforts to protect terrestrial biodiversity. ESTONIA presented on cross-sectoral approaches to rebuild salmon stocks. JAPAN described the Shiretoko MPA, where sustainable fisheries management is ensured through co-management. PERU reported on actions taken to reduce vulnerability through adaptation and regulatory measures for fisheries. Calling for an intersectoral approach to integrated oceans

governance, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA reported on the Global Dialogue of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative, hosted in Seoul in September 2016.

FAO noted that fish provides the world's poor with over 50% of their protein intake and therefore biodiversity conservation is linked to poverty reduction. SEYCHELLES stressed the need for enhanced cooperation at the regional level, exchange of information and a healthy environment as the basis for food security.

Announcing the intention to establish two new MPAs, CANADA urged ambitious, transparent and credible reporting on the Aichi Targets. TONGA called for strengthening the collaboration among development partners, governments, local communities and other relevant stakeholders to ensure effective biodiversity mainstreaming into fisheries management.

The EU underlined the importance of including actions to address illegal fishing in the Cancún Declaration; highlighted the need for adequate financing to manage MPAs; and called for increased oceans research. BELIZE noted that the country's fisheries agenda is driven by sound science, securing fishing tenures for fishermen, community-based management, and identification of higher value markets to ensure the sector is sustainable. SOUTH AFRICA warned that aquaculture can have high negative impacts including through disease transfer, and stressed that wild caught fish is essential to food security.

PANAMA underlined the need to implement the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing; and shared experiences from implementing the FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. INDONESIA and MOROCCO reported on their efforts to address illegal fishing. VENEZUELA reported on the national ban on bottom trawling to avoid destruction of the sea floor and reduce overfishing, and measures to recognize small-scale fisheries and their ancestral rights.

NAMIBIA noted that four ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs) have been identified within the country's jurisdiction, and called for the development of effective management tools to protect these areas. COOK ISLANDS highlighted the benefits of community-managed MPAs.

CHAD pointed to challenges faced by inland fisheries, calling for innovative and sustainable funding sources to implement a sustainable fisheries plan. The UNITED ARAB EMIRATES said that diverse fishstocks constitute the basis for food security. MALDIVES highlighted the country's management plans for coral reef fisheries.

NORWAY said all its commercial stocks are now sustainably fished and subsidies for fisheries have been eliminated. SPAIN informed delegates of an increase in national MPAs to 8% and highlighted the establishment of non-trawling zones. MALTA said mainstreaming is necessary to maintain natural capital for future generations.

#### **CANCUN COALITIONS AND COMMITMENTS FOR ENHANCED IMPLEMENTATION:**

CBD Executive Secretary Dias reported that he had invited parties to provide examples of actions taken towards implementing specific Aichi targets; and that 20 submissions had already been received and would be posted on the CBD website. In that regard, FRANCE reported on the work of the International Coral Reef Initiative and commitments taken on by members to counter coral bleaching, prohibit dredging close to coral reefs and combat micro-plastics especially from single-use plastic bags. The NETHERLANDS presented the Pollinator Initiative noting the importance of pollinators for future food production and its commitment to conduct further research. BRAZIL described its initiatives to: combat IAS, protect threatened species, and create a South Atlantic whale sanctuary. GERMANY reported on its international climate initiative and annual funding commitment of €500 million to support climate and biodiversity related projects

including in relation to the Aichi targets. JAPAN described the capacity-building initiatives on the Aichi targets delivered through the Japan Biodiversity Fund set up under the CBD Secretariat.

Reporting on IAS, NEW ZEALAND: noted its support to the Honolulu Challenge on IAS put forth by IUCN; called all potential partners to develop a programme of work on IAS; and stressed that achievement of all Aichi Targets requires strong political will and the engagement of IPLCs.

Speaking on the operationalization of the Nagoya Protocol, SOUTH AFRICA underscored the importance of fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from biodiversity, stressing the need for support for countries that do not have national regulatory frameworks in place.

PERU addressed the need to maintain the genetic diversity of cultivated plants, and farmed and domesticated animals, and of wild relatives, including strategies to minimize genetic erosion and safeguard genetic diversity.

#### **CLOSING PLENARY**

Delegates adopted the Cancún Declaration on the Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Well-Being by acclamation. Miguel Ruíz Cabañas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico, lauded the Declaration, appreciating the efforts of all those involved in its elaboration. HLS Chair Pacchiano welcomed the strong political message that the Cancún Declaration will send to all countries. The complete Declaration can be downloaded at this link: <http://tinyurl.com/zmd9pe2>

Guatemala, for the Like-Minded Megadiverse countries (LMMC), recognized the importance of PAs in promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to achieve the Aichi Targets and the Paris Agreement, among others. Samoa, for PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES, stressed that it is time to reinforce the complementarity of biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction, and invited countries to assist in the implementation of the S.A.M.O.A Pathway.

Egypt, for the AFRICAN GROUP, called for the creation of an enabling environment that will allow African countries to follow recent developments in the fields of, *inter alia*, geoengineering, synthetic biology, marine and coastal biodiversity, risk assessment and management. He reiterated Egypt's proposal to host CBD COP 14, as well as COP-MOP 8 and COP-MOP 3 of the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols respectively. Slovakia, for the EU, highlighted: the crucial role of the private sector; the need for increased synergies with other processes; and the importance of concrete decisions regarding mainstreaming. Peru, on behalf of GRULAC, stressed that biodiversity should be mainstreamed and addressed in a holistic manner, and called for financial and technical support for successful implementation.

CBD Executive Director Dias thanked Mexico for its vision in hosting this interministerial HLS ahead of negotiations to advance biodiversity mainstreaming. HLS Chair Pacchiano gavelled the meeting to a close at 6:34pm.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

With the adoption of the Cancún Declaration, the curtains closed on the first ever HLS to precede the main negotiations at a CBD meeting. Many lauded the far-reaching Declaration, and noted that negotiators are now primed for the aptly named "UN Biodiversity Conference," consisting of the CBD COP, and the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocol COP-MOPs. Ready to take up the mantle, one eager negotiator shared "it is now up to us to heed the warnings from our Ministers about threats to biodiversity and surpassing planetary limits, and find consensus on tangible actions to mainstream biodiversity and implement the Aichi Biodiversity Targets."

Looking ahead to the looming negotiation process set to begin in earnest on Sunday, some delegates warned that, with one COP and two COP-MOPs crammed into two (and not three) weeks and thousands of pages of substantive documents to read over, negotiators will need to move at lightning speed to make it through the packed agenda.