

Rio Conventions Pavilion Wednesday, 21 November 2018

On the fifth day of the Rio Conventions Pavilion, participants convened a series of panel and roundtable discussions under the overall theme of ‘Rethinking Biodiversity Governance for Transformative Change.’

The discussions explored how the growing diversity of actors, modes and narratives in the governance of nature and biodiversity could be integrated in the design of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other initiatives and interventions in the framework of the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework.

The Day was co-organized by Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Norway, PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), Strathclyde University, SwedBio - Stockholm Resilience Centre (SwedBio/SRC), UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and Agence française pour la biodiversité (AFB).

Global Changes and Biodiversity Governance

Facilitator Marcel Kok, PBL, introduced the Rethinking Biodiversity Governance Network, explaining that the aim is to integrate social science within biodiversity science. He noted the current opportunity to critically reflect on biodiversity governance, learn from past experiences and explore new approaches for the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework. Kok

described some of the guiding principles of the network, including the need for reflexivity and contributing to a polycentric governance landscape, but observed that the network needs to become more geographically representative.

Jonathan Pickering, Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance, Canberra University, discussed how to cultivate reflexive transformation across institutions, change agents, processes and discourses, and emphasized the importance of identifying actors who can contribute to bending the curve.

A roundtable discussion then took place, moderated by Aleksandar Rankovic, IDDRI.

Lin Li, WWF International, encouraged the various stakeholders to find a common language as it would facilitate collective decision making on the governance of nature, which impacts all of humanity.

Trevor Sandwith, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), noted the need to unpack the motivations and successes of the diverse organizations working on biodiversity issues. He added that “science is telling us that we must put nature and social well-being as co-dependent outcomes in the same equation, yet there is still no action on this.”

Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen, Wageningen University and Research (WUR), said that biodiversity has not been mainstreamed within parliamentary decision-making in the same way as climate. She emphasized that as long as civil society remains disconnected from nature, policy makers will not get the necessary push to take action on biodiversity.



From L-R: Lin Li, WWF International; Jonathan Pickering, University of Canberra; Trevor Sandwith, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen, WUR; and Marcel Kok, PBL



Mika Schröder, University of Strathclyde

Responding to questions from the audience, panelists discussed some legal modalities for the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, and highlighted the importance of empowering youth and understanding their perspectives on possible solutions for more effective decision making.

The Conventions Landscape in a Post-2020 Context

Moderated by Niamh Brannigan, UN Environment, this session discussed the current international biodiversity governance landscape and explored ways to strengthen global governance linked to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Jerry Harrison, UNEP-WCMC, noted the abundance of biodiversity-related conventions and organizations with overlapping interests. He noted that the Aichi Targets offer an avenue to link diverse agendas, but this requires a good understanding of the institutional landscape to identify opportunities for interconnectivity and mutual support.

In the ensuing panel discussion, Sonia Peña Moreno, IUCN, explained that the SDGs and the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework provide an opportunity to verify what is working and where each convention can contribute. Andreas Obrecht, UN Environment, emphasized that more needs to be done to map the global landscape, in particular with regard to legal and policy making processes. Christian Prip, Fridtjof Nansen Institute, highlighted the need to bring more attention to biodiversity.

Suggesting that it might be time to take a step back to examine various drivers that may facilitate, or impede, post-2020 ambitions, panelists agreed that more gravitas is needed at the highest political forums, such as the World Trade Organization. One speaker encouraged the three Rio Conventions to take a cue from the success with climate change messaging, by working together to adopt one headline statement that speaks to nature.

Human Rights and Biodiversity: How to design the Post-2020 Governance System

Tristan Tyrrell, SwedBio/SRC, facilitated this session, noting it would explore how biodiversity-related MEAs can pay greater attention to human rights in the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework.



Tristan Tyrrell, SwedBio/SRC

Mika Schröder, University of Strathclyde, drew attention to the 2018 UN Framework Principles developed by the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment. She highlighted how UN Framework Principle 15, which requires States to comply with their obligations to Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities, can help determine the parameters of fairness and equity of benefit-sharing under the CBD. She further noted that international biodiversity law can provide specific guidance for the adoption of best practices for impact assessment and for the full realization of human rights, through the Akwé: Kon Guidelines and the CBD Convention article 8(j) and article 10.

Claudia Ituarte-Lima, SwedBio/SRC, highlighted some legal tools for transformative change and for advancing the achievement of SDG 16, with a focus on access to justice for peace and a healthy planet. She highlighted the important role of environmental defenders and how they contribute to the biodiversity and human rights nexus.

Philippe Puydarrieux, IUCN, noted that land and resource tenure is one entry point for linking the rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other vulnerable populations with conservation objectives. Puydarrieux suggested that the IUCN could act in this space as a facilitator for dialogue. He also promoted three components for strengthening links between human rights and biodiversity: empowering environmental human rights defenders; supporting learning and capacity building; and mainstreaming rights-based approaches.

Andrew Rylance, Government of Seychelles, discussed two examples of co-management of protected areas (PAs) in the Seychelles. He highlighted a community-driven initiative that led to the formal protection of a culturally and ecologically significant site in Grand Police – the first cooperatively managed PA in the country – and a voluntary fishing ban introduced by local communities in a quiet bay area aimed at replenishing stocks for times when it was too dangerous to fish in open seas.

In the ensuing discussion, panelists highlighted the importance of bringing together diverse communities of practice to fully understand the connections across biodiversity and human rights issues and translate global agreements to



Yann Laurans, IDDRI

become meaningful on the ground. Wrapping up the session, Tyrell noted the discussions had highlighted that decisions and guidelines made at MEA level “do matter outside this bubble.”

How to create an enabling environment to engage businesses in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?

Facilitated by Cyrille Barnérias, AFB, this session consisted of a roundtable to share feedback from businesses initiatives under the CBD’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 with a view to improving business involvement in the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework.

Yann Laurans, IDDRI, outlined the governance of business collaboration post-2020. He explained that the era when states were the major actors has passed, with a rise in business involvement over the years linked to increased deregulation and certification schemes. He underlined the importance of: strengthening traceability mechanisms; helping markets to become more sustainable; increasing consumer awareness in emerging economies; focusing the dialogue on biodiversity pressures; and enhancing cooperation projects between consuming and producing countries.

François Gauthiez, AFB, discussed his agency’s efforts to enhance the involvement of the private sector in the National Strategy for Biodiversity. Outlining some strategies towards this end, he noted the use of a clear assessment grid and sharing best practices between diverse stakeholders.

Jaco du Toit, WWF UK, stressed that businesses do not get enough support from government for their work in biodiversity conservation and conversely governments presume businesses have no interest in biodiversity.

Jon Ekstrom, The Biodiversity Consultancy, remarked that transformational change requires stepping out of the “them and us” paradigm, towards building a social infrastructure for collaboration. Characterizing “no net loss” approaches as part of the industry solution, he welcomed IUCN’s proposal for an apex CBD target on stabilizing trends in species and ecosystems by 2030, stating it will help businesses to set actionable science-based targets.

In the discussion that followed, one speaker suggested that business engagement in the CBD is on the rise, but practical mechanisms are needed for the sector to participate more effectively. One participant called for more efforts to involve



Jaco du Toit, WWF UK

influential leaders from government, business, finance and civil society. Others highlighted challenges around citizen mobilization and monitoring on the ground, with one participant cautioning that “we don’t need deep transformation of everything” and calling for more efforts to refine messages to the public and business.

Other issues discussed included the need to: feed these messages to trade negotiations and other economic forums; ensure more interlinkages between biology and engineering sciences within education systems; and provide business with intermediary targets and indicators that can be more easily translated to shorter-term business cycles.

The future of biodiversity governance for civil society

Moderated by Tristan Tyrell, this session provided a space for representatives of diverse civil society groups to debate how enhanced biodiversity governance can strengthen their standing and influence in a post-2020 context.

Mika Schröder, University of Strathclyde presented an analysis of participation within CBD COP decisions. She emphasized the importance of communicating the need for local stakeholder participation, empowering stakeholders, and holding states accountable to ensure local stakeholder participation.

Kristina Raab, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research, discussed the EKLIPSE programme, noting it offers a flexible mechanism for evidence-informed decision-making affecting biodiversity and ecosystem services. She explained that EKLIPSE aims to, *inter alia*, identify current and future emerging issues, create a responsive and active network, and improve citizens’ engagement.

Florence Daguitan, Tebtebba Foundation, highlighted some elements in the indigenous governance of biodiversity, including: respect for nature and spiritual values; democratic decision making; and a focus on the common good. She described sustainable use and conservation mechanisms adopted to “do nothing” or ensure minimal economic activities in sacred sites and to adopt active protection, such as erosion control mechanisms.

Jinfeng Zhou, China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation, mentioned the importance of citizen awareness and gave examples of partners that work together in collaborative governance. He reported that recent

changes to China's environmental laws have empowered non-governmental organizations to monitor biodiversity conservation through the use of Environmental Public Interest Litigations.

In ensuing discussions, panelists and participants exchanged views on the importance of dialogue, citizen engagement and the role of media advertisement.

Local governance – the key role of cities and other sub-national initiatives in transformative change for biodiversity

Facilitator Cyrille Barnerias, AFB, invited experts from Mexico, South Africa and France to present case studies and lessons learned about the involvement of local governments for biodiversity.

Laura Tozer, Durham University provided an introductory presentation on urban nature explaining that supporting nature in urban settings requires the incorporation of local knowledge, ownership, authority and a shared agenda dispersed across public and private actors.

Hesiquio Benítez Díaz, Mexican National Commission for Biodiversity Knowledge and Use (CONABIO), talked about Mexico's National Biodiversity Strategies Action Plan and highlighted in his presentation that biodiversity is an option for progress. He maintained that it promotes the direct engagement of communities and creates job opportunities while protecting nature.

Ingrid Coetzee, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, discussed the role of sub-national governments in protecting biodiversity, with a focus on local initiatives to conserve wetlands in South Africa. Coetzee conveyed the importance of a paradigm shift from business as usual to enhancing nature-based solutions to meet local needs.

During discussions, panelists emphasized that the responsibilities as well as capacities of local authorities with regard to the environment are increasing. They further noted that the positive momentum emerging in cities would increasingly influence the Rio Conventions.

Post-2020 – Policy panel

The concluding panel was moderated by Aleksandar Rankovic, IDDRI, and Marcel Kok, PBL.

Kok asked the final panelists to identify and discuss their hopes for the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, with a focus on possible bottlenecks in future negotiations and what they expect from non-state actors in the coming two years.

Basile van Havre, Canada, drew attention to the importance of recognizing the power of targets and the need to adopt a new and more precise agreements.

Edda Fernández, Mexico, highlighted that 25 years is enough to acquire experience and the time has come to adopt new language to communicate more with business, consumers, producers and civil society.

Humberto Delgado Rosa, European Commission, observed that many politicians do not refer to biodiversity as they do to climate change and that more political awareness and communication is critical.

Neville Ash, UNEP-WCMC, emphasized that addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss, adopting a holistic approach and internalizing a synergies approach is essential to bend the curve. He challenged participants to reach out beyond the biodiversity community, for example through adopting more inclusive hashtags in social media campaigns.

Elisabeth Chouraki, Expertise France, stressed the importance of strong monitoring and enforcement mechanism and paying more explicit attention to women, youth, indigenous peoples and civil society.



From L-R: **Edda Fernandez**, Mexico; **Basile van Havre**, Canada; **Humberto Delgado Rosa**, European Commission; **Elisabeth Chouraki**, France; and **Neville Ash**, UNEP-WCMC