



A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the Ninth Conference of the Parties (COP 9) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

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Events convened on Tuesday, 20 May 2008

Life Web: Global Initiative on Protected Areas

Presented by the Federal Ministry of the Environment of Germany



Sigmar Gabriel, Federal Minister for the Environment, Germany, described protected areas as the “safety nets of the world.”

More information:

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/hls-cop-09/other/hls-cop-09-lifeweb-de-en.pdf>

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Sigmar Gabriel, Federal Minister for the Environment, Germany, described protected areas (PAs) as the “backbone of the CBD,” and lamented the inadequacy of the current extent of their coverage. One reason for this, he suggested, is a disconnect between countries with finances and those with an abundance of biodiversity. The Life Web Initiative (the “Initiative”) aims to address this problem by creating a global partnership between donors and countries seeking funding for PAs as a means to create a sustainable source of financing. He announced that Germany has allocated an initial €40 million and invited others to become partners.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, CBD Executive Secretary, welcomed the Initiative, praised Germany’s allocation and hoped that, in the continued spirit of Rio, all 191 parties to the CBD would become Life Web partners.

Jochen Flasbarth, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Germany, stated the objectives of the Initiative are to match states’ voluntary commitments to designate new PAs and improve the management of existing PAs with donors’ commitments to implement the elements of the CBD Programme of Work on PAs (PoWPA). Parties are invited to notify potential candidate sites to the Secretariat of the CBD, from which donors are invited to allocate additional and preferential resources. In this context, he underscored that the Initiative is not a fund, but a mechanism to create bilateral and multilateral partnerships. Also, because it will operate within the framework of the PoWPA, no new criteria on selection will be necessary.

In the discussion, many participants welcomed the Initiative, including those from Egypt, Ethiopia, Uruguay, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Madagascar. A participant from Mexico said that the Initiative could facilitate swift action to increase Mexican PAs ahead of 2010. An Indonesian participant announced the launch of a marine PA in the Savu Sea. A delegate from the Democratic Republic of Congo highlighted his country’s intent to create five new PAs. A participant from Denmark underscored that its overseas development assistance conditions would apply to any contributions via the Initiative, including the requirements that a PA has links to development and poverty eradication.

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European Commission: Biodiversity and Climate Change

Presented by the European Commission

Karin Zaubnerger, European Commission (EC), explained that Natura 2000 is a network of conservation areas established to protect natural habitats. She presented existing policies within the EC, focusing on Natura 2000 and its importance to preserving biodiversity in the European Union (EU). She noted that Natura 2000 acknowledges that many human activities rely on land use.

Astrid Kaemena, EC, outlined the funding programmes at the EC for research and noted that scientific excellence, research-policy interfaces, impacts and long-term availability of results were central to successful research proposals.

Oliver Schweiger, Heimholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ, highlighted the results and policy perspectives of three existing projects being funded by the EC, namely: Assessing Large-Scale Environmental Risks with Tested Methods (ALARM); Understanding Effects of Land Use Changes on Ecosystems to Halt Loss of Biodiversity due to Habitat Destruction; Fragmentation and Degradation (COCONUT); and Minimization of and Adaptation to Climate Change Impacts on Biodiversity (MACIS).

Participants discussed: how to extend Natura 2000 to other sites in Europe; its contribution to mitigation and adaptation for climate change; how to make the Natura 2000 less static; the need to increase public awareness for biodiversity efforts, with particular attention to Natura 2000; and the specifics and timeframes of the outputs of the MACIS project.



Oliver Schweiger, Heimholtz Centre for Environmental Research - UFZ, outlined three EC-funded biodiversity projects and highlighted how the project outputs have contributed to biodiversity and climate change knowledge.

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/climate-change>

<http://www.ec.europa.eu/research>

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Relation between the IMoSEB Initiative and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

Presented by the Institut Française de la Biodiversité

Hal Muni, Stanford University, described the development of the International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB), emphasizing the need for biodiversity research to be ongoing and made policy-relevant. Michel Loreau, McGill University, described the IMoSEB worldwide consultation process, which resulted in a number of recommendations on how to improve the science-policy interface, including the creation of a single platform that will incorporate the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA).

Laurence Tubiana, Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), said that in the first phase of developing the combined platform an evaluation of research needs will take place, based on consultation held during 2008. Bakary Kante, UNEP, emphasized the need for coherent and synergistic integration of the MA and IMoSEB, and encouraged support for this process.

Braulio Dias, Brazil, urged making better use of existing international bodies before creating new ones. He highlighted that the results of Brazil's 2007 scientific community consultation would be distributed during COP 9. Elsa Nickel, Germany, said that the CBD should learn from the climate process and how it achieved political will. She encouraged international ownership of the process, and said that the new platform should serve all relevant conventions.

Asghar M. Fazel, Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) Chair, said that he did not believe that SBSTTA and IMoSEB are in competition with each other, noting that they perform distinctly different roles. Neville Ash, IUCN, said that the new platform is needed in order to link scientific research with the CBD and other COPs, and should be responsive to current issues at multiple scales.

Participants discussed methods of communicating complex issues associated with biodiversity, and how to make research policy-relevant.



Hal Muni, Stanford University, said that IMoSEB strives to increase the policy relevance of biodiversity-related research by engaging directly with governments.

More information:

<http://www.imoseb.net>

<http://www.unep.org>

Contacts:

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BioTrade Opportunities in Developing Countries

Presented by UNCTAD

Claudia Denss, Switzerland, welcomed the new phase of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) BioTrade programme, and announced that Switzerland has leveraged US\$3.4 million for the second phase of the programme. She also stressed the importance of making the BioTrade programme a milestone in implementing the CBD. Fulai Sheng, UNEP, argued that a continuous assessment of trade and liberalization policies is necessary to address the negative impacts of trade on biodiversity. He highlighted the importance of BioTrade initiatives, but cautioned that they alone cannot reduce poverty and pressures on biodiversity.

Florence Kata, Uganda Export Promotion Board, presented on challenges and opportunities for biodiversity-based products and services, and stressed the strong opportunity for diversification that exists within the ecotourism market. Jose Antonio Gomez, Sustainable BioTrade Programme, Colombia, presented on access to financial resources, and noted that the traditional financial sector neither recognizes nor has experience in BioTrade financing. He also explained how the BioTrade Colombia Fund is promoting the development and expansion of domestic enterprises.

Lorena Jaramillo and Eduardo Escobedo, UNCTAD, made a presentation on creating an enabling policy and legal environment for BioTrade. They explained the linkages between sustainable use, commercialization and trade, and noted that both developed and developing countries are aware that regulations should facilitate the trade of biodiversity-based products.

Participants discussed the links between ecotourism and trade in natural products, including organic production, and the need to highlight the positive aspects of BioTrade.



Claudia Denss, Switzerland, encouraged other countries and donors to support valuable BioTrade initiatives financially or by other means.

More information:

<http://www.biotrade.org>

<http://www.fondobiocomercio.com>

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The Social and Ecological Impacts of Genetically Engineered Trees

Presented by the Global Forest Coalition

Anne Petermann, Global Justice Ecology Project, outlined the myths and realities of genetically engineered (GE) trees. She highlighted concerns regarding GE trees, including health risks, loss of biodiversity and increased economic incentives for GE tree plantations.

Ricarda Steinbrecher, EcoNexus, underscored the risks and uncertainty from the process of genetically engineering trees. Hermann Hatzfeldt, Ecoropa, noted that forest ecosystems have developed over millennia and that any changes instituted, most notably from GE trees, would impact the entire web of forest life.

Wally Menne, Timberwatch Coalition, noting that negative changes in forest ecosystems permeate surrounding ecosystems and livelihoods, highlighted that GE trees reduce the water table in water scarce countries. Noeli Fabordi, Movimento de Mulheres Camponesas, highlighted the importance of women in the preservation of natural resources and biodiversity. She emphasized that trees planted in place of natural habitat is damaging peasants' ability to generate income.

Camila Moreno, Terra de Direitos, lamented that many biofuel projects and other industrial activities are using natural forest resources. She warned that many corporate organizations are supporting these activities and replacing natural forests with GE trees.

Participants discussed: the production merits of GE trees; whether the research of the risks of these trees can be confined to science; and the effect that GE trees and biotechnology has on local communities.



Camila Moreno, Terra de Direitos, warned that the increase in eucalyptus plantations in Brazil are replacing natural forests.

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Applying the Ecosystem Approach to the Programme of Work on Agricultural Biodiversity

Presented by: Ecoagriculture Partners

Sara Scherr, Ecoagriculture Partners, explained that the ecosystem approach is a holistic form of land management, and highlighted the potential benefits of its application to agricultural landscapes.

Arturo Massol, Casa Pueblo, illustrated the power of multi-stakeholder processes for landscape management by presenting a case study of a social movement against open-pit mining in Puerto Rico that resulted in the communities becoming managers of state forests.

Donato Bayobay Bumacas, Kalinga Mission for Indigenous Communities and Youth Development, provided examples from the Philippines of indigenous peoples' sustainable agricultural technology, and highlighted the importance of investing in community institutions and securing land tenure.

Leah Mwangi, Kijabe Environmental Volunteers (KENVO), illustrated how KENVO links conservation to local livelihoods and noted how the framework is being used in central Kenya to facilitate ecologically sound, local community-driven development.

Felipe Carazo, the Nature Conservancy, stressed the importance of coordinating environmental and agricultural policies for more effective landscape planning. He outlined the Agroenvironmental Strategy, a Minister-led initiative for processes that support environmental, social and economic sustainability in Central America.

Participants made a number of comments, including that: a landscape is created by the relationship people have with the land; community developed indicators are the only true determinant of a project's success, and the process of defining outcomes is a transformative process in itself; that despite agricultural land covering a significant proportion of all land, few farming groups attend the COP; and although the ecosystem approach comprises 12 principles, not all of them need to be applied in every case.



Sara Scherr, Ecoagriculture Partners, introduced the application of the ecosystem approach to agricultural landscapes.

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Launch of Asian Biotechnology and Development Review: Special ABS Issue

Presented by RIS

Balakrishna Pisupati, UNEP, stressed the need for a focus on issues of ethics and equity with respect to genetic resources, and said that the special issue of the Asian Biotechnology and Development Review (ADBR) attempts to capture experts' views on ABS issues by highlighting their implications for biotechnology and development.

Bakary Kante, UNEP, stated that ABS issues within the CBD will be as contested and challenging as the Kyoto protocol, and that UNEP welcomes the release of this special issue of the ADBR as a timely input to ABS discussions.

Doris Schroeder, University of Central Lancashire, noted that while human rights are relatively easy to be agreed upon by countries, there is a strong need to raise awareness regarding the high social utility of having a system of national rights over genetic resources.

Tomme Rosanne Young, consultant, argued that the lack of progress on ABS reflects the fact that CBD negotiations are creating something completely new. She highlighted that there is a lack of enforcement of national ABS laws, which is due to the lack of harmonization regarding the interpretation of ABS contracts and obligations in national courts.

B. S. Parsheera, Ministry of Environment and Forests, India, expressed hope for a positive outcome from the ABS process ahead of the 2010 deadline. Participants discussed: issues relating to the implementation of prior informed consent and equitable participation in ABS decision-making.



Tomme Rosanne Young, Consultant on International Environmental Law and Policy, stressed the need to deal with the issue of indirect access to genetic resources from intermediaries and enforcement of ABS obligations.

More information:

<http://www.ris.org.in>

<http://www.unep.org/dec>

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