



A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the Tenth Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

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Events convened on Thursday, 28 October 2010

Advancing the Biodiversity Agenda: A UN System-Wide Contribution

Presented by the Environment Management Group and the CBD



Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP, said that participants must be aware of the danger of unintended consequences when collaborating, in addition to operating under the “cartel” mentality.

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This event convened to discuss further work on biodiversity within the UN system.

Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP, chair of the session, said the challenge is for the Environment Management Group (EMG) to see how biodiversity issues can be mainstreamed within the mandates of the various UN institutions, and how this affects the UN “Delivering as One” initiative.

Gretchen Kalonji, Assistant Director-General, UNESCO, emphasized the need to link biodiversity to all scientific domains. She said that if the UN-system can handle ABS issues mindfully, there could be great opportunities to work with member states in technological sectors and higher education programmes.

Calling for sustainable agricultural practices, Eduardo Rojas-Briales, Assistant Director-General, FAO, said the future needs to be based on a green economy. Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary, UNFCCC, lamented that climate change has already led to biodiversity loss. She called for well-managed, protected areas to act as buffers for fragile habitats.

Åsa Norrman, Ministry of the Environment, Sweden, outlined issues to consider, including: linking the goals of treaties and UN programmes with the strategic plan on biodiversity; recognizing that human wellbeing is underpinned by biodiversity; and linking of synergies. She called for more economic valuation of biodiversity issues within the UN system to enable easier collaboration and linkages.

John Scanlon, Secretary General, CITES, highlighted the importance of collaboration for effective implementation of plans and treaties, noting that CITES works with a number of other organizations including UNEP and ITTO. Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary, UNCCD, emphasized the link between biodiversity loss and land degradation, noting that many households rely on biodiversity for income and that properly established payments for ecosystems services can assist conservation and secure livelihoods.

Saying that the CMS relies on collaboration to foster successes, Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary, CMS, highlighted the importance of migratory corridors for the preservation of species. Olav Kjørven, Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP, noted UNDP’s work in protected areas, saying that this does not solve the problems of biodiversity loss. He underscored mainstreaming biodiversity into all forms of policy for conservation and protection to be truly achieved.

Ahmed Djoghla, Executive Secretary, CBD, noted that future meetings of the Chief Executive Board will discuss how the UN system can implement the strategic plan on biodiversity.

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The Nature Diversity Act - Best Biodiversity Policy for The Future Policy Award 2010

Presented by the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment

This event provided further insight into the Norwegian Nature Policy Act of 2009.

Erik Solheim, Minister of Environment and International Development, Norway, introduced "Norway's most important piece of legislation on the environment," the Norwegian Nature Diversity Act, noting that the government is in the process of implementing it.

Together, Heidi Sørensen, Deputy Minister of Environment, Norway, and Torbjørn Lange, Deputy Director, Ministry of Environment, Norway, described the Act in more detail, explaining that: it entered into force on 1, July 2009; it is comprised of 10 chapters and 77 sections; and although only one-year old, it was nominated for the Future Policy Award 2010. After providing a brief history of Norwegian conservation legislation, which reaches back to 1910, they said the Act differs from previous legislation as it combines both the principles of sustainable use and conservation.

Sørensen and Torbjørn outlined the Act's three focal areas: protected areas and priority species; selected habitat types, areas with specific ecological functions and alien organisms; and general provisions and principles. They said the Act recognizes the intrinsic value of nature, notes that biodiversity provides vital experiences and recreation, and that biodiversity is the world's most important resource. They noted that key principles of sustainable use outlined in the act include: knowledge-based management; the precautionary principle; the ecosystem approach; and the user-pays principle.

Sørensen and Torbjørn then highlighted some of the more forward-thinking facets of the Act, including its new set of regulations concerning the utilization of genetic material, which states that genetic material obtained from the natural environment in Norway belongs to the society as a whole. They emphasized that this means nobody has an exclusive right to genetic material on the basis of ownership of the biological material from which it is derived.

Participants discussed: the selection criteria for the Future Policy Award; what sets the Act apart from other environmental laws; and how compensation for protected areas is part of the Act and therefore compensation is reliable and predictable.



Heidi Sørensen, Deputy Minister of Environment, Norway, underscored that the Nature Diversity Act is truly about sustainable use and conservation and that it outlines management objectives that will now serve as Norway's nature management roadmap.

More Information:

<http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/md.html>

Breaking Boundaries for Biodiversity: Expanding the Policy Agenda to Halt Biodiversity Loss

Presented by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Bureau

Mark van Veen, Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), stated that the event would present findings from the PBL's reports "Rethinking Global Biodiversity Strategies" and "Breaking Boundaries for Biodiversity: Expanding the Policy Agenda to Halt Biodiversity Loss."

Maarten Hajer, PBL, argued that trade chains bring local biodiversity loss to a global scale. He suggested that globally sustainable trade, national spatial planning and sustainable local development are critical to stopping biodiversity loss.

Margarita Salazar, Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), explained that countries within the Commission undertook an initiative to implement GLOBIO3 modelling methodologies to help them assess human-induced changes on terrestrial biodiversity at various scales.

Suyapa Triminio, Regional Strategic Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation Program (PROMEBIO), explained that PROMEBIO had



Noting that land use and conversion are major drivers of biodiversity loss, Maarten Hajer, Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, discussed two options to overcome this challenge: separating agriculturally-intensive areas from biodiversity-rich areas; and combining biodiversity-rich areas with agricultural and urban areas.

coordinated the CCAD's initiative, and that the GLOBIO3 methodology was developed by PBL in collaboration with other partners. She described training workshops to familiarize technical experts with the modeling tools as well as local officials with how to incorporate modeling results into decision making. She said decision makers hope to use the modeling tools to determine possible impacts of trade agreements and green development alliances in Central America.

Helen Mountford, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), said agricultural expansion will be a major driver of biodiversity loss. She highlighted the potential role of eco-labelling and certification schemes as one of many options to reduce its impacts, but highlighted challenges associated with these schemes. Pointing to an OECD survey of 10,000 households across 10 countries on environmental policy and household behaviour related to five consumption areas, she said energy labeling has thus far been more successful than organic food labeling.

Participants discussed: the danger of making simple linkages between global trade and biodiversity loss; the potential to learn from the Netherlands' zoning strategies for intensive agricultural production while retaining biodiversity-rich areas; the resources needed to engage in modeling exercises to enable such zoning; tracking the impacts of modeling exercises on policy decision making; and the implications of data sources on the outcomes of modeling exercises.

More Information:

<http://www.pbl.nl/en>
<http://www.ccad.ws>
<http://www.oecd.org>

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Biodiversity Policy and Practice: A Knowledgebase on UN and Intergovernmental Activities Addressing International Biodiversity Policy

Presented by the International Institute for Sustainable Development and the GEF

This event officially launched the International Institute for Sustainable Development – Reporting Services' (IISD-RS) newest information and knowledge management product, "Biodiversity Policy and Practice." IISD-RS is also the publisher of the "Earth Negotiations Bulletin."

Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI, Director, IISD-RS, explained that IISD has been involved in the process of informing environmental and sustainable development policy makers over the last 20 years, and that most recently it has been moving from conference reporting services to the area of knowledge management, including the use of community lists for community practitioners to interact in a virtual environment.

Using a team of thematic experts, Goree said IISD has begun tracking the activities of UN agencies and programmes in their efforts to preserve biological diversity. Data gathered by IISD is organized in an online knowledgebase and distributed in an email newsletter, called the Biodiversity Update, to over 15,000 readers on the IISD Biodiversity-L community listserv.

Thanking the GEF for the seed funding for the biodiversity knowledgebase, Goree explained that the objective of the project was to highlight UN system activities and encourage the coordination of programming and harmonization of activities among MEAs and international organizations. He noted that "Biodiversity Policy and Practice" would contain short summaries of meetings, community lists, a calendar of biodiversity-related meetings, and twice-weekly newsletter updates.

Mark Zimsky, GEF, stated that "Biodiversity Policy and Practice" was an opportune initiative to support in the International Year of Biodiversity. He lauded the recent launch of SIDS-L, a similar update on issues related to small islands developing states, noting that IISD-RS is a trusted source of unbiased information. He said he hoped that others would value this initiative, which has been a "long time coming" and fills a gap in the many products that IISD provides.



Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI, Director, IISD-RS, presented David Ainsworth, CBD Secretariat, a terabyte of raw images from CBD meetings over the history of the CBD.

More information:

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Arctic Biodiversity: Status and Trends

Presented by the Arctic Council's Working Group on the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna

This event presented the report of the Arctic Council's Working Group on Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, "Arctic Biodiversity Trends 2010: Selected Indicators of Change." The report is the first output of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA). The Assessment's results will be launched in 2013.

Karen Ellemann, Minister of Environment, Denmark, said the ABA will provide a thorough understanding of changes in the Arctic, which in turn will provide a foundation and impetus for political decisions, including on adaptation strategies.

Participants watched a short film that outlined the report's seven key findings, namely that: unique Arctic habitats for flora and fauna have been disappearing over recent decades; some of the species that are important globally and to Arctic people are decreasing; climate change is emerging as the dominant stressor on Arctic biodiversity; although the extent of Arctic protected areas has increased, marine areas remain under-represented; changes in Arctic biodiversity provide challenges and opportunities for Arctic people; long-term observations are required to identify changes in biodiversity; and changes in Arctic biodiversity have global repercussions.

Gunn-Britt Ritter, Saami Council, explained that the Saami Council is one of six indigenous groups that has permanent participant status to the Arctic Council. She said the Arctic Council provides a unique model for collaboration between Arctic states, indigenous peoples' organizations and research organizations, which enables both science and traditional knowledge to inform political decision making.

Mark Marrisink, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, explained that the ABA will provide a description of the current state of the Arctic's ecosystems and biodiversity and creates a baseline for use in global and regional assessments of Arctic biodiversity. He said it will include policy options and their implications for use by policy makers. Marrisink added that some of the first report's findings were incorporated into the Global Biodiversity Outlook.

Tom Christensen, National Environmental Research Institute, Denmark, stated that Arctic biodiversity has global importance because: physical changes in the Arctic are occurring on a large scale relative to the rest of the world, which affects biodiversity; some of the Arctic's biodiversity and habitats exist only in the Arctic; and the Arctic is an important region for many migratory species.

On the importance of the ABA, Christensen emphasized that it is the first step to developing a foundation of data, collected in a systematic and coordinated manner, to inform future decision making. Inge Thaulow, Greenland's Ministry of Environment and Chair of the ABA, added that the Arctic Council has already started to follow up on some of the first report's key findings.

Participants discussed: linkages between the Arctic Council's work and the CBD, as well as work under other multilateral environmental agreements; capacity-building needs to ensure full participation of indigenous populations, including training to communicate traditional knowledge; and steps the Arctic Council can take to address under-representation of marine areas in protected areas. Participants offered numerous suggestions for future collaboration to further the Arctic Council's work and raise the profile of Arctic biodiversity globally.



Karen Ellemann, Minister of Environment, Denmark, listed stressors to Arctic biodiversity, including: climate change; contaminants; invasive species; shipping; and increased habitat fragmentation.



Gunn-Britt Ritter, Saami Council, explained how indigenous peoples' organizations contributed to the report's key findings, including on identifying the challenges and opportunities that changes in Arctic biodiversity create for indigenous populations.

More Information:

<http://www.arctic-council.org>
http://arctic-council.org/working_group/caff
<http://www.arcticbiodiversity.is>
<http://www.saamicouncil.net/?deptid=1116>
<http://www.swedishepa.se/en/In-English/Menu>

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