



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 Thursday, 22 May 2008

Forest Conservation at the Landscape Level

Presented by CIFOR



Meine van Noordwijk, World Agroforestry Centre, presented a study on landscape mosaics, co-authored with Jean-Laurent Pfund, CIFOR.

Jeff Sayer, IUCN, presented on the landscape approach to forest management, noting that this attempts to balance conservation with development while explicitly identifying tradeoffs between the two. He underscored the importance of understanding and managing the drivers behind change in land use patterns, as opposed to resisting change altogether. He stressed that policy must be linked to local practice, that management must be adaptive, and that managers must be able to measure change. He noted that the world will soon need to accommodate and feed nine billion people in the face of declining fossil fuels and increasing climate change, and that this will place additional strain on forest resources. He concluded by suggesting a move away from a reactive, threat-based approach to conservation, towards one based on long term objectives at the landscape level.

Meine van Noordwijk, World Agroforestry Centre, presented on landscape mosaics, and emphasized that protected areas alone are insufficient to maintain ecological connectivity at the landscape level. He introduced the concept of "sustain-agility", which emphasizes the need to remain flexible in the face of changing conditions, including those that may result from climate change. He described how the landscape mosaic approach can be used to consider various ratios between land designated for environmental services as opposed to commodity production.

Alain Billand, Agricultural Research Center for International Development (CIRAD), observed that a clear trend is emerging regarding collaboration between production and conservation forests. He noted the efforts of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC), which has coordinated the efforts of the various ministries of forests from countries in the Congo Basin to produce a convergence plan for the region.

Participants took part in a discussion led by a panel consisting of: Robert Nasi, Centre for International Forestry Research; Gill Shepherd, IUCN; Andre Kamden Toham, WWF; and Jane Carter, Intercooperation Switzerland. Participants discussed: how to differentiate between logs coming from sustainably versus poorly managed forests; managing human-wildlife conflicts; underlying social justice issues; the need for free and informed consent; trends in donor funding; and the feasibility of the landscape approach. Several participants suggested strategies to achieve local support for a long-term landscape approach to management.

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Invasive Alien Species and National Efforts: Lessons from the Field

Presented by Global Invasive Species Programme

Sean Austin, The Nature Conservancy, presented on behalf of the Micronesia Invasive Species Council, which was formed to unify regional efforts towards combating invasive alien species (IAS). He listed the efforts, including: a strategic plan; inter-regional cooperation; and public awareness campaigns.

Huw Thomas, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, United Kingdom, provided an update on Great Britain's work on IAS, including: an assessment of needs and priorities; ongoing risk assessments; surveillance and monitoring; and a national strategy.

Haigen Xu, Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences, China, presented China's efforts on IAS, including: a nationwide IAS investigation; development of regulations; an online database; and awareness raising.

Brian Nkandu, CABI Africa, presented on collaborative work taking place in Uganda, Zambia, Ethiopia and Ghana aimed at removing barriers to IAS management in Africa. He explained that the activities include: strengthening the enabling policy environment; implementing pilot control intervention programmes; and capacity building.

Roxana Solis, Ministry of Environment, Peru, presented on the national implementation of CBD Article 8(h) relating to IAS. She detailed a raft of new programmes, including: legal regulation on the ballast water exchange; an action plan on the national strategy for biodiversity; an IAS inventory; and an online biodiversity clearing house.

Delegates discussed: codes of conduct; China's list of IAS; barriers to managing IAS in Africa; the water hyacinth; and a number of country reports.



Brian Nkandu, CABI Africa, stated that Africa is facing a threat of unprecedented proportions from IAS.

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The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: Farmers' Rights

Presented by the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, GTZ and the Norwegian Development Fund

Regine Andersen, Fridtjof Nansen Institute, introduced the topic of implementing farmers' rights in practice. Stressing the importance of farmers' rights, she called for a minimum definition of the term and noted the launch of the Farmers' Rights website as a comprehensive source of information.

Eduardo Aguilar, Centro para la Promoción, la Investigación y el Desarrollo Rural y Social, on behalf of Eduardo Rojas, farmer, Costa Rica, highlighted the Costa Rican experiences of implementing farmers' rights and developing seed protocols. Pratap Shrestha, Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development, presented a number of successful participatory plant breeding projects in Nepal, and emphasized that these are effective means of implementing farmers' rights and conserving indigenous knowledge.

Wilhelmina Pelegrina, Searice, outlined experiences in Bhutan, the Philippines and Vietnam. She noted that benefit sharing mechanisms under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture should take note of the current contributions of farmers as plant breeders and conservers of biodiversity.

Participants discussed: how to scale up experiences; definitions of farmers' rights; the application of definitions to other areas affecting farmers such as livestock, land and water; benefit sharing, lodging of patents for seeds and the implications this has for farmers; and the effect of intellectual property laws on farmers' rights and seed trade.



Bell Batta Torheim, Development Fund, Norway, noted that farmers' rights are integral to the community although there were many challenges in implementing them.

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Bridging the Gap between the Rio Conventions: Field Experience from West and Central Africa

Presented by the Regional Network for the Synergy between the CBD, UNCCD, and UNFCCC in West and Central Africa

Theodore Mayaka, Centre of Environment and Development Studies in Cameroon, elaborating on the Regional Network for Synergy between the CBD, UNCCD and the UNFCCC in West and Central Africa (RNSCC), noted that it is a regional network that focuses on being a broker between the Rio Conventions (CBD, UNCCD and the UNFCCC) and grass roots communities. He highlighted that they achieve this through collecting and disseminating information. He stated that the RNSCC holds seminars, workshops and training courses on an annual basis for its network members, so as to bridge the “science-society” gap, share experiences and gain additional skills. Mayaka noted that over the course of RNSCC’s history, it has: funded 30 projects; increased its membership to 15 members from nine countries within the region; and broadened its scope to include not only the CBD and UNCCD (as was originally mandated) but also the UNFCCC.

On the projects undertaken by the Network, Mayaka stressed that project proposals have to: include aspects of the focal conventions; be conducted over a one year time frame; be at the grass roots level; and address poverty alleviation and gender balances. He noted that many projects have also focused on awareness raising, research and training, biodiversity conservation, desertification and sustainable natural resource use.

Paul Loth, Leiden University, noting that the funding obtained by the RNSCC was used to achieve synergies through grass roots level projects, highlighted that inputs and materials were provided to fund the projects of network members.

He summarized three completed projects undertaken in Mali, Niger and Benin, highlighting in each case that species and biodiversity were being threatened by unsustainable resource use and invasive species. Loth reported that the projects were successful in reversing this trend by: engaging in local capacity building; awareness raising through education programmes and radio campaigns; and forming local committees to carry out and monitor the required work.

Loth, discussing the success and effectiveness of the RNSCC, noted that this was largely due to the collaboration of network partners and the synergies present between themselves and with the conventions. He also stated that all projects had been assessed to determine what, in particular, had added value and that the variables assessed included: species protection; protected area management; awareness raising; sustainable use of natural resources; and environmental protection.

In the ensuing discussion, participants tackled issues such as: the conventions considered by the RNSCC; how mitigation efforts could also be seen as adaptation measures under different conventions; the scope of membership and the project submission process of the RNSCC; methods used to disseminate information; and work on the preservation of the African Elephant. Mayaka highlighted that because the African Elephant is an umbrella species, its protection ensures the conservation of a wide range of biodiversity. He also stressed that they were currently raising funds to carry out a regional project on the species along four trans-frontier corridors.



Theodore Mayaka, Centre of Environment and Development Studies in Cameroon, highlighted that RNSCC activities were focused on allowing members to share experiences and make full use of available knowledge.



Paul Loth, Leiden University, gave an overview of three successfully completed projects that had been funded by RNSCC.

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Countdown 2010 Partners Assembly

Presented by Countdown 2010 and IUCN

Sebastian Winkler, IUCN, Head of Countdown 2010, welcomed participants to the meeting and explained how Countdown 2010 Partners have integrated the 2010 biodiversity targets into the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) framework. He emphasized the importance of engaging all relevant sectors in this process, including local and regional authorities, business and the scientific community.

Federico Cinquepalmi, Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea, Italy, proposed questions for the consideration of participants, including the issues of future actions to be taken after 2010, and the identification of future targets.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the CBD, emphasized the need to do business differently, and the current levels of agricultural biodiversity loss that we are facing. He reminded that less than two years remain to meet the biodiversity target. He explained that the way forward is not only for parties to adopt appropriate policies, but also to have all stakeholders involved in their implementation. He asked all sister agencies to focus on biodiversity for 2010 and invited the 2010 Partnership to assist CBD parties to fulfil the Nagoya biodiversity targets, as well as post-Nagoya biodiversity targets.

Pavan Sukhdev, Study Leader of the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), presenting on "Biodiversity Loss: from Costs to Benefits," noted that the general decline of biodiversity is the result of business as usual. He stressed that markets alone cannot provide a solution, and added that although they allocate resources efficiently, they need appropriate institutional infrastructure, incentives, financing and governance. He also explained that the problem of capturing conservation values is that they do not reflect real money flows and urged the reconsideration of subsidies to reflect future priorities. He argued that natural capital is a scarce commodity and noted a strong correlation between capital wealth and meat consumption, which shows that the consumer footprint may be massive. He acknowledged that economics can still play an important role, but said that there is a need to start looking at natural capital especially when considering our consumption patterns. Finally, Sukhdev stressed that to make poverty history we must "make biodiversity the future," and added that where benefits are local, biodiversity conservation is easier.

Several participants made short presentations explaining how their organizations, including private sector organizations and local administrations, are contributing to meet the Countdown 2010 target. Several speakers noted that some European-wide policies, such as agricultural policies and subsidies, have a huge impact on biodiversity and should be constantly reassessed.

Thematic Work Groups

The meeting then broke out into four working groups (WG), which focused on the following topics: business and biodiversity; 2010 readiness assessment: measuring progress towards the 2010 target; local and regional authorities; and countdown 2010 in the European and international policy setting – towards 2010 and beyond. In the afternoon, the outcomes and recommendations from working groups discussions were reported back to plenary.

On business and biodiversity, Frank Vorhies, Earthmind, highlighted the potential role of environmental social responsibility schemes, including the development of international biodiversity standards for



Luis Almeida Capão, Cascais Natura, Portugal, received first prize for the organization's contribution to meeting the Countdown 2010 target.



Ingvild Kalland, Norway, made a presentation on the Nordic Project, which received second prize for its contribution to the 2010 target.



Ben Delbaere, European Centre for Nature Conservation

financing development projects. He emphasized the importance of integrating biodiversity and business at the landscape level, and local “biodiversity caps” to prevent loss and enable offsets. On reforming fiscal and regulatory regimes for biodiversity, he suggested: restructuring tax and subsidy systems to support biodiversity; selling and marketing biodiversity; simplifying biodiversity language and messages for business; raising awareness of biodiversity opportunities among chief executives; and raising the appeal of biodiversity among consumers. Finally he highlighted the importance of: multi-stakeholder discussions and networking; sharing information on best practices among partners; building business-NGOs partnerships; and developing business and biodiversity targets beyond 2010.

On the 2010 Readiness Assessment, Neeraj Khera, TERI University, India, focused on indicators and on how to assist countries to assess their progress towards the 2010 targets. She expressed concern regarding the insufficient availability of updated baseline data and noted that assessments should focus on habitat and ecosystem monitoring rather than species monitoring only. She stressed the need to make better predictions on current trends and to elaborate methodologies to interpret indicators, which should “tell us a story about where we stand and how to move forward.” She reported that the underlying assumption is that this information will lead to policy change, whereas such change is largely driven by other factors. Participants agreed that science-based information is necessary, but may not be sufficient in and of itself to drive change towards desired biodiversity outcomes.

On local and regional authorities, Monica Zimmermann, ICLEI Local Government for Sustainability, and Elisa Calcaterra, IUCN, presented ideas to support the 2010 target, including: the need to develop more organized communication tools, campaigns and awareness raising activities; new approaches to share success stories; increased cooperation of local government and business; the communication of convincing arguments, facts and figures on ecosystems services, which must be relevant at the local level; and the need for “ambassadors for biodiversity” within local administrations.

On Countdown in the European Policy Setting – Towards 2010 and Beyond, Ladislav Miko, European Commission, Liz Redford, Planta Europa, and Sue Collins, Butterfly Conservation, raised the questions of how more urgency can be injected into the process of delivering the 2010 target, and what additional steps are needed to secure the adoption of a post-2010 target at the high level. They found that there is a need to: improve stakeholder collaboration, increase publicity and address the business world; link the biodiversity target to other accepted targets like climate change; use easily understood language; use mass media; and clearly demonstrate the value of biodiversity. They also focused on additional steps to bring politicians to agree on similar targets post-2010, including: using COP 10 to report on what is being done and to create a follow-up process; linking food security and the provision of basic resources with biodiversity conservation; and asking relevant groups to formulate their biodiversity targets so as to create a sense of ownership.

Concluding Remarks

At the end of the day, participants were presented with prizes in recognition of their work, which has contributed to conserving biodiversity. The event concluded with a presentation by Ignace Schops, winner of the 2008 Goldman Environmental Prize, who stressed that the countdown initiative is a good occasion to ask oneself critical questions about personal behaviours and their impacts on biodiversity.



Ladislav Miko, European Commission, facilitated the working group discussion on “Countdown in the European policy setting - towards 2010 and beyond”



Neeraj Khera, TERI University, India, provided a comprehensive overview of the current indicator and monitoring process towards the 2010 target at the global level.

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Certificates of Origin, Source, Legal Provenance and Compliance

Presented by: United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies

Tony Gross, United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS), introduced a report by the UNU-IAS which addresses the search for a practical, feasible and cost-effective system for certifying compliance with prior informed consent (PIC) and mutually agreed terms (MAT), entitled "Certificates of Clarity or Confusion."

Brendan Tobin, Irish Centre for Human Rights, recalled that the 6th meeting of the *Ad hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) called for the elaboration of an internationally recognized certificate, with a view to it being included in an international regime on ABS. He outlined the different types of certificates that have been proposed, noting that many commonalities exist between them. Concerning the frequently cited objection that a system of certification may be impractical or unfeasible, he noted that documentation is standard procedure for transfers of genetic resources, and provide incentives such as legal certainty. He proposed ways in which the system could be designed to be cost-effective and deal with the critical issue of pre-CBD collections.

Tobin highlighted the importance of user measures and dispute settlement mechanisms; and set out useful areas for future research, including surveys of the documentation practices of industry and *ex-situ* collections. In addition, he called for funding to be made available for pilot projects to be established to test the practicability of a certification system. He concluded by clarifying the report's two key findings, namely: the creation of an internationally recognized certificate system can play a role in facilitating access to genetic resources while protecting the interests of both provider country and resource users; and the development of such a system, coupled with measures to ensure transaction transparency and accountability, together with measures to address dispute resolution, would represent significant progress in developing functional elements of any future international ABS regime.

Geoff Burton, UNU-IAS, spoke to the report's findings, making the case for a certification system to be simple. In this regard, he noted that the components of a certificate closely resemble those of an access permit and that advances in electronic verification would further simplify a certification scheme, providing transparency and legal certainty. He used guidelines developed by botanical gardens to transfer genetic material in a CBD-compliant manner to exemplify the utility and effectiveness of a certification system. He also highlighted the need to clarify the definition of derivatives, considering the potential ramifications for the future regulation of the biotechnology industry.

Participants made a number of comments, including: an industry representative suggested that future groups of technical experts include industry representatives; and a representative from a botanical garden argued against institutions' ability to "sanitize" their collections.



Brendan Tobin, Irish Centre for Human Rights, said that the idea of a certificate of origin/source/legal provenance/compliance is "a market tool to control a market use."



Geoff Burton, United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies, argued that the consideration of certificates should reflect the old mathematical adage: "simplicity leads to elegance, elegance leads to truth."

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