



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, 29 May 2008

Environmental Challenges in the DRC

Presented by UNEP



José Endundo Bononge, Minister of Environment, Nature Conservation, Water and Forests, DRC, said that the DRC continues to face formidable developmental challenges that also threaten the habitat of great apes and other keystone species.

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Ian Redmond, Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP), noted that the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has the greatest diversity of great apes in the world, and highlighted the need for conservation strategies that reflect the transboundary nature of migratory patterns. He cautioned that although 15% of the DRC has been protected, the ecological function of its forests requires the maintenance of its keystone species, including great apes. Melanie Virtue, GRASP, announced that the Spanish Ministry of Environment has recently provided US\$360 000 in funding for GRASP's efforts in the DRC.

José Endundo Bononge, Minister of Environment, Nature Conservation, Water and Forests, DRC, described the impact that the influx of four million refugees has had following the Rwandan conflict in 1994. He said that we are now entering a period of relative stability which is improving conditions for the conservation of great apes.

Robert Hepworth, Convention on Migratory Species, drew attention to the recent signing of the first legally binding agreement on gorilla conservation, which will enter into force on 5 June 2008, ratified by the Central African Republic, the DRC, the Republic of Congo, Nigeria, and Rwanda. He described some of the specific provisions of the agreement, including: habitat protection; anti-poaching efforts; local compensation for conservation; and human/gorilla conflict management.

Marcos Silva, CITES, emphasized that any conservation efforts must be based on accurate information, and described the Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme. He said that in the DRC's five UNESCO sites, 73% of elephants killed were due to poaching. He described the challenges associated with poaching, including: poor enforcement capacity; the wildlife and bushmeat trade; and mining, which has increased access to habitats.

Kishore Rao, UNESCO, said that many world heritage sites in the DRC are at risk due to armed conflict, and described efforts to improve the situation, including making this a political priority. He noted that rebel groups have recently allowed conservation officers to resume patrolling in national parks.

Ian Swingland, OBE, noted how the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), University of Kent, has encouraged multi-disciplinary conservation research. He said that a robust legal system and adequate enforcement is a pre-requisite to investment in conservation in the DRC.

Participants discussed the risks associated with China potentially receiving permission to trade in ivory at the next CITES COP, and the issue of UN peacekeepers being involved in trafficking ivory and bushmeat.

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Biodiversity and Climate Change Adaptation

Presented by the CBD

Jaime Webb, CBD, introducing climate change adaptation within the CBD, noted that biodiversity contributes to adaptation: by providing safety for species; protection from natural disasters; and biodiversity-based livelihoods. She outlined the activities within the CBD facilitating adaptation, including: the protection of ecosystems; maintenance and restoration of ecosystem services; creation of biodiversity refuges and buffer zones; and the creation of networks of protected areas.

Lorenz Petersen, GTZ, on national action plans (NAPs), noted a number of flaws in actions plans at the national and sub-national levels, including: the lack of capacity and processes; overly-ambitious planning processes; lack of involvement of high-level leadership; and an inability to meaningfully engage stakeholders in planning. He suggested that future efforts must balance implementation and planning, take NAPs seriously, and give more thought to governance issues.

Olga Pilifosova, UNFCCC, outlining the activities on adaptation and mitigation under the Nairobi Work Programme (NWP), highlighted that the NWP proceeds along two tracks, namely implementation of activities and knowledge gathering. She stressed that the overarching goals of both tracks are capacity building and technology transfer. She underscored the objectives of the NWP are to assist all parties, in particular small island and developing states and vulnerable least developed countries, in improving understanding of impacts and making informed decisions.

William Ehlers, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), stated that the GEF has a strategic priority fund for adaptation actions that carry global environmental benefits. He stressed that projects assisted by this fund must show how adaptation planning and practices can be translated into projects with practical benefits. He noted that the fund was open to all parties of the UNFCCC.



Olga Pilifosova, UNFCCC, outlining the Bali Action Plan, noted that its areas of focus include: international cooperation to support planning and implementation; risk management and reduction; financial needs assessment and economic diversification.

More information:

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Protecting the Pacific High Seas Enclaves

Presented by Greenpeace International

Seni Nabou, Greenpeace, explained the importance of Pacific fisheries to propagating fish stocks and to local livelihoods, and underscored the dangers to both posed by overfishing. She called on the CBD to adopt the criteria and steps for marine areas in need of protection in open ocean waters and deep sea habitats, and urged the UN General Assembly to ensure that high seas marine reserves are respected by all countries.

Albon Ishoda, Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority, praised the recent third implementing agreement by parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA), a regional agreement between eight Pacific island states to ban foreign fishing boats from four high seas pockets adjacent to their exclusive economic zones. It also bans the use of aggregating devices that corale fish using sonar, and requires boats to carry observers. The PNA, he explained, hope to encourage the Tuna Commission to promote this approach more widely.

Joeli Veitayaki, University of the South Pacific, welcomed the measures by PNA and called on others to support them. Turning to the islands' customary stewardship practices, he highlighted that islanders own their fishing grounds, have an intimate knowledge of the sea and revere local protocol. He explained that contemporary challenges include the erosion of customary law, overexploitation of local marine resources and lack of enforcement capacity. Among means to address these, he raised the Micronesian challenge and the Coral Triangle Initiative.



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Indigenous Entrepreneurship and Biological Diversity

Presented by AVEDA

Ahmed Djoghla, CBD, recognized the increasing engagement of business with indigenous and local communities and welcomed the further development of this alliance. He invited AVEDA to be the first company to sign up to The Green Wave being coordinated by the CBD to contribute to the Billion Tree Campaign. AVEDA representative, David Hircock, signed onto The Green Wave.

David Hircock, AVEDA, underscored that AVEDA is involved in business, not charity, but that their business model is founded on the quality of the environment and of the product. He argued that indigenous people do not need capacity building, but that it is business that needs to learn how to better engage local and indigenous people.

John Brebner, S & D Aroma, explained that his company's role is to connect the knowledge of local and indigenous peoples and the associated products with the market.

Parbat Gurung, Himalayan Biotrade, thanked AVEDA for working with his community because of the ameliorative effects of the partnership.

Tashka Yawanawa, Yawana People Organization, sang a traditional song and stated that the partnership between his people and the private sector is helping his community remain intact and protect the environment.

Pamela Kraft, Tribal Link, announced the beginning of an indigenous entrepreneurship programme, and praised the Equator Initiative's work in this area.



David Hircock, AVEDA, signed onto The Green Wave being coordinated by the CBD to contribute to the Billion Tree Campaign.

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Integrating Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity into Strategies of the Financial Sector

Presented by the BMU and KFW Bankengruppe

Ladislav Miko, European Commission, on the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity (TEEB) noted that the study, separated into two phases, was a global study to analyze the economic benefits of biodiversity including the costs of loss and failure to act in conserving biodiversity. He stressed that initial difficulties included the complexity of the study and that the science for biodiversity is less developed than the science for climate change.

Pavan Sukhdev, Deutsche Bank, noted that income flows can be generated for local communities through biodiversity regeneration. Outlining the economic impacts of biodiversity loss, he noted that the cost of policy inaction will lead to a decrease in welfare, equivalent to a six percent decrease of the OECD baseline GDP per annum. He noted three cases where ecosystem values were being captured, including the Panama Canal where shipping companies had paid to regenerate forests in order to decrease high insurance premiums caused by possible fresh water loss.

Olaf Weber, KFW, noted that KFW's investment decisions are geared to follow the German government's national sustainability strategy, including their national biodiversity strategy. He underscored that projects funded contribute to biodiversity and climate change issues by addressing issues such as rural poverty, development and energy efficiency. Stressing that the risks of biodiversity conservation also present rewards, he noted biodiversity offsets as a method to ensure that there is no net loss of biodiversity during the implementation of development projects.

In the ensuing debate, participants discussed topics including: methodologies of the TEEB; influencing policy decision using economic valuations of biodiversity; the costs and the valuation of action and inaction, and valuing cultural and social aspects of biodiversity.



Heidi Wittmer, Helmholtz Centre - UFZ, noted that while biodiversity integration is a double edged sword: any economic values determined for biodiversity are a lower boundary.

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The Future of GEF's Biodiversity Program

Presented by the GEF Secretariat

Monique Barbut, GEF, stressed the need to elaborate an innovative strategy and argued that a global governance mechanism is a necessary condition for market tools to function properly.

Gustavo Fonseca, GEF, explained that the CBD mandate has been incorporated into the current GEF strategy through the funding of: sustainable protected area (PA) systems; mainstreaming biodiversity; safeguarding biodiversity; and access and benefit sharing. He noted that a number of systemic threats continue to endanger biodiversity, including: land use change; climate change; the side effects of biofuels and agro-energy production; and the collapse of fisheries.

Michael Stocking, Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) of the GEF, on the scientific vision for GEF-5, emphasized the need to: expand PA coverage; improve linkages between PAs and development assistance; mainstream interventions; and increase synergies between different areas of the biodiversity agenda.

Joanna Durbin, Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance, on reviewing the costs of conservation and priority action, reported that the estimate of the total financial needs for PA management is US\$10 billion per annum, while the shortfalls amount to US\$3 billion a year. She argued that although proactive action is cost efficient, benefits are not always perceived as attractive by decision makers.

Song Xiaozhi, China Biodiversity Partnership Framework (CBPF), noted that cooperation and coordination is still a problem at the local level, and explained that the partnership will include national and international partners to ensure a critical mass of support and activities to halt the loss of biodiversity in China.

Ravi Sharma, CBD, on trends of official development assistance, noted that funding for biodiversity has been increasing between 2000 and 2006, and added that 55% of the total was provided by Japan and the EU. He also noted that while "policy and administration" accounted for 52% of the total biodiversity spending, only 17% goes into "biodiversity conservation."

Participants discussed programmatic approaches for the identification of priority areas and the need to reduce transaction costs related to accessing Small Grant Program funds.



Michael Stocking, STAP-GEF, argued that the GEF-5 will need to prove its delivery of global environmental benefits.

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Signing Ceremony of the Countdown 2010 Declaration

Presented by IUCN

Hilde Crevits, Flemish Minister for Public Works, Environment, Nature and Energy, thanked the German Minister of the Environment and IUCN for welcoming the Flemish community into the Countdown 2010 partnership. She stressed that the 2010 Target is ambitious and will require collaboration from all stakeholders as well as public participation. She also stressed that people from her region have supported forest conservation projects in developing countries through the GEF and bilateral projects.

Ignace Schops, Hoge Kempen National Park, emphasized that biodiversity loss has negative consequences, and that nature conservation and biodiversity can go hand in hand with society and the economy. He concluded by encouraging everyone to "think globally, act locally and change personally."

Julia Marton-Lefèvre, IUCN, was presented with a prize from Hilde Crevits. She noted that awareness of biodiversity has improved dramatically since 1992, and said she was pleased with the attention being devoted to these issues.

Jan Stevens, Province of Limburg, stressed that Limburg has a tradition of strong biodiversity policies and noted that the engagement of municipalities in protecting biodiversity has been very successful, with all 44 municipalities "adopting" a local endangered species.



Hilde Crevits, Flemish Minister for Public Works, Environment, Nature and Energy, signed on to the Countdown 2010 partnership.

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