



Rio Conventions Pavilion Bulletin

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RIO CONVENTIONS PAVILION HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2012

The Rio Conventions Pavilion (RCP) convened on Monday for the Sixth Land Day. The event included an opening session and keynote speech by Vandana Shiva, Founder, Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology, and panel sessions on: playing a win-win game - the implications of drylands restoration for meeting the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; measuring the true economic value of land; and biodiversity as an enabler of sustainable agriculture - alternative production models to bridge the gap between agriculture, food and land policies.



Vandana Shiva (right), Founder, Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology, greets participants after her keynote speech.

OPENING OF SESSION AND KEYNOTE

UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja welcomed participants, calling for constructive debate going beyond “comfort zones” to provide new win-win solutions. He noted that 50 % of the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets involve land degradation and emphasized synergies between achieving CBD biodiversity targets and the ten-year strategy of the UNCCD to move towards a land degradation neutral world. He underscored the need to restore land for ecosystems and communities and stressed focusing on soil improvement first, utilizing traditional knowledge and applying holistic management approaches.

CBD Executive Secretary Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias recalled the importance of soil conservation to achieving food security, enhancing livelihoods and eradicating poverty. Emphasizing “win-win” opportunities, he said strengthening partnerships is essential to successfully mainstreaming biodiversity into a broader sustainable development agenda.

BMS Rathore, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, India, commended cooperation between the UNCCD and CBD, as well as their partnership with IUCN. He underscored addressing the issue of land degradation is crucial to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. He said that drylands issues affect large numbers of people and impact biodiversity. Stressing developing countries’ focus on poverty, he commended UNCCD’s ten year strategy addressing: living conditions of affected people; conditions of affected ecosystems; and global benefits.

Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Director General, IUCN, argued that when land is sustainably managed there are clear benefits for biodiversity conservation and livelihoods. She noted successful

cases of land conservation, including in India, Senegal and Tanzania, and emphasized IUCN’s commitment to treat nature “as a solution.” She said reversing land degradation is a “tough sell,” but is key for improving food security. She observed that biodiversity conservation is the way to start combating land degradation.

Vandana Shiva, Founder, Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology, emphasized the challenge of removing barriers to soil rejuvenation, ecological farming and sustainable land management (SLM). She said science is being distorted by vested interests and competitive market rationales. Shiva stressed industrial monoculture agriculture causes entropy and pollution, and increases ecological footprints.

She underscored organic farming increases soil nutrition, protects biodiversity and yields higher income for farmers. Responding to questions, Shiva described synthetic biology as reductionist, and called for humility and humanity when dealing with biodiversity conservation. She noted trade and commodification of natural resources fails to account for the multi-functionality of ecosystems.

PLAYING A WIN-WIN GAME: WHAT IS THE IMPLICATION OF DRYLANDS LAND RESTORATION FOR MEETING THE AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS

Moderator Sasha Alexander, Society for Ecological Restoration, introduced the panel. Sakhile Koketso, CBD Secretariat, provided an overview of the main Aichi Biodiversity Targets relating to land management. She noted the Strategic Plan is not just an implement of the CBD, but is applicable to all UN agencies and stakeholders.

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Sakhile Koketso, CBD Secretariat

Koketso recalled that one of the reasons the 2010 targets were not achieved was the failure to address underlying causes of biodiversity loss, especially unsustainable consumption patterns. She highlighted the importance of women and local farmers in promoting biological diversity and encouraged the recognition of traditional knowledge as a pathway towards ensuring food security.

Mary Rowen, USAID, reported USAID spends US\$ 200 million a year on biodiversity conservation, using a threats-based approach focusing on integrated programmes with positive impacts in high biodiversity areas. Emphasizing a biodiversity focus for drylands and land restoration, she highlighted USAID's work on community-based natural resource management.

Rowen noted this type of management involves devolution of property rights and land tenure, and integrated programming that addresses economic, ecological and financial sustainability. She also discussed landscape approaches, which increase resilience for humans and wildlife, and diversification of economic opportunities to adapt to climate variation.

Jones Muleso Kharika, Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), South Africa, discussed the achievements and prospects of the Development Bank of Southern Africa's Drylands Fund



Jones Muleso Kharika, DEA, South Africa

in South Africa. He stressed the importance of partnerships and bottom-up approaches in order to address land degradation and poverty alleviation. He emphasized the inclusion of civil society and private sector as critical to accomplishing UNCCD's goals in South Africa and called for more focus on communities and measurable impacts.

Pablo Manzano, IUCN, noted achieving sustainable development targets requires: adjusting national accounting; eliminating harmful subsidies; and fostering sustainable production and consumption. He stressed that human activity should allow for ecosystem connectivity, especially on drylands, and for the prevention of species decline and extinction.

Manzano noted the potential of drylands and open lands to increase carbon stocks through increasing biodiversity, for which he recommended employing genetic diversity of domestic plants and animals, and protecting traditional knowledge. He observed markets are a source of resource mobilization.

During discussion, Axel Paulsch, Institute for Biodiversity, presented the "SLM" programme, which is a decision support system to inform drylands decision making. He



L-R: Sakhile Koketso, CBD Secretariat; Jones Muleso Kharika, DEA, South Africa; Mary Rowen, USAID; Moderator Sasha Alexander, Society for Ecological Restoration; and Pablo Manzano, IUCN.



Pablo Manzano, IUCN

noted an ongoing project in the Tarim River basin, China, and highlighted the potential of academic research to inform policy-making.

Responding to audience questions, panelists emphasized the importance of partnerships, that address national priorities, and policy harmonization on the ground in order to efficiently employ aid resources.

HOW DO WE MEASURE THE TRUE ECONOMIC VALUE OF LAND

Johannes Förster, Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research, introduced the panel. Rejoice Mabudafhasi, Deputy Minister for Water and Environmental Affairs, South Africa, presented a cost benefit analysis of the global environmental crisis, suggesting global efforts and partnerships are needed. She called for adequate funding of the UNCCD.

Mabudafhasi said an integrated approach to sustainable development is needed, addressing: economic opportunities; population growth; food security; water quality and access; over exploitation of natural resources; and ecosystem degradation. Observing “women are custodians of the environment,” she noted South Africa engages women and local communities’ in ecosystem monitoring and data collection, such as through training in water quality testing.

Mark Schauer, Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Secretariat, noted ELD is a global initiative focusing on national economic costs of inaction to prevent land degradation. He emphasized the need for a framework capable of providing a common language between science and the private sector. Schauer highlighted the lack of awareness and current data as key challenges for decision makers. Noting the importance of the private sector, he stressed the need to showcase good investment opportunities for combating land degradation.



A participant at the Rio Conventions Pavilion.

Simone Quatrini, The Global Mechanism, presented challenges faced by the ELD initiative, which aims at: comparing the costs of land degradation to the costs of adopting SLM practices; building capacity and improving data access for developing countries; and developing tools for policymakers to empower sustainable land use decision making. He discussed progress made by interdisciplinary working groups on: estimating the total economic value of the costs of, and social loss from, land degradation; accounting for trade-offs between populations; and valuing ecosystem services.

Jones Muleso Kharika, DEA, South Africa, stressed that understanding the costs of inaction is fundamental for addressing the problem of land degradation. He emphasized that, with updated information, policies can be more adequately implemented and underscored the need to focus on national priorities. He suggested that “sticks” are not necessarily the best solution for developing countries, particularly in the event of natural disasters.

During discussions, Quatrini called for involving youth groups in the consultation process of the ELD initiative. On quantifying ecosystem values, he explained the intention is to provide qualifiers to the discussions and improve dialogues with ministers of finance and the private sector.

Quatrini stressed valuation is different from privatization, “it is trying to express the real economic value of land and ecosystems, including all different valuation aspects.” Kharika said, ecosystems are not only diverse, but are functional, and urged attention to complex environmental, social and cultural interactions.

BIODIVERSITY AS AN ENABLER OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE: HOW CAN ALTERNATIVE PRODUCTION MODELS BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND LAND POLICIES

Moderator Jan McAlpine, Director, UN Forum on Forests (UNFF), introduced the session. Noting its relationship with the UN, Rami Abu Salam, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), explained that IFAD is scaling up “multiple win” approaches for sustainable agriculture intensification, focusing on the value of natural assets. He highlighted opportunities to drive green growth and the need to leverage climate finance. He also emphasized the importance of projects involving irrigation to reduce crop loss, which impacts livelihoods.

Mathew John, International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM), explained how livelihoods



Mathew John, IFOAM

benefit from, and food security and nutritional value are increased by, sustainable utilization of biodiversity. Sharing experiences from Kurumbas and Irulas in India, he highlighted local communities’ ability to sustain themselves without monetization, but through traditional practices and cultural rituals. He stressed community-based agriculture

requires adequate land rights and respect for traditional seed bank preservation practices. He emphasized organic agriculture is based on four principles: health; ecology; fairness; and care.



L-R: Pernilla Malmer, Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University, Sweden; Mathew John, IFOAM; Rami Abu Salam, IFAD; Moderator Jan McAlpine, Director, UNFF; and James Aronson, Centre d'Ecologie Fonctionnelle et Evolutive, France.

Pernilla Malmer, Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University, Sweden, discussed resilience and agricultural biodiversity governance. She stressed the importance of these topics, due to the increasing complexity of the relationships between people and nature. Noting the central role of humans in driving ecological change, she underscored the need to facilitate self-organization in an uncertain world, and combine different sources of knowledge in order to guarantee social-ecological resilience. She emphasized cultural and biological diversity are equally important.

James Aronson, Centre d'Ecologie Fonctionnelle et Evolutive, France, presented "restoring natural capital" thinking as: the missing tool for achieving zero net land degradation; a link between the three Rio Conventions; and a way to overcome the false dichotomy that suggests conservation investment excludes investment in economic development. He emphasized that ecological restoration is about improving relationships between nature and culture. Aronson highlighted a case in South Africa's Drakensberg mountain region, where the restoration of natural capital involves local communities and financial support from the water sector.



James Aronson, Centre d'Ecologie Fonctionnelle et Evolutive, France

In discussion, Moderator McAlpine recalled that the benefits of restoration are not antagonistic to development. Malmer emphasized the creation of networks of experts as one potential solution to showcase the benefits of restoration investments. John highlighted the need to remove pressures from the communities by including them in the process.

Salam noted the challenges in developing projects that can address many issues at once, and said this should not be expected. Aronson argued that the real problem is not commodification of ecosystems, but the lack of mechanisms capable of valuing them. He underscored initiatives in Brazil and South Africa as beneficial cases of public-private partnerships.

In closing, Sergio Zelaya, UNCCD Secretariat, moderated a discussion between Land Day's session moderators. Zelaya noted that the panel discussions emphasized commonalities between the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets and UNCCD objectives.

Alexander said clear consensus has emerged on the need for ecological restoration and said engaging communities and NGOs, and accounting for landscape multi-functionality are key. He commended Brazil, Colombia, India and South Africa as regional leaders in ecological restoration.

Förster underscored Deputy Minister Mabudafhasi's message that while the issue of land degradation is critical to the survival of local communities in South Africa, they are also part of the solution, contributing a wealth of knowledge. McAlpine emphasized the idea of seeds, saying that if the seeds of land conservation are planted in the right place and cared for, they will germinate and grow.

Gnacadjia highlighted the need to get investments in land degradation solutions "right." He reemphasized the high costs of land degradation and the risks of inaction, calling for the protection of "precious areas." In conclusion, he welcomed constructive discussions at the Sixth Land Day.



Moderator Jan McAlpine, Director, UNFF