

About Strategic Visions and Mops

By Simone Lovera, Friends of the Earth International

There is a strong concern amongst NGOs that the Convention is currently embarking upon a major exercise of mopping the floor while the tap is still running. The tap being the current model of corporate-led globalization that, as flagged by the statement of the NGO caucus during the plenary debate and several NGO statements thereafter, is forming a major obstacle to the effective implementation of the Convention. Small countries like Sri Lanka and Bolivia, that wisely decided that they did not have the capacity to deal with the risks of GMOs and thus put a moratorium on their introduction, were ruthlessly forced by the US, the WTO, the Argentine Agro-industry to postpone these bans. In an internal memo the government of Bolivia admitted that it was indeed the threat of a potential trade conflict with Argentina and the US that formed the main reason for postponing this environmental measure.

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Happily, other countries, including the equally small country of Croatia and the European Union, did heroically stand up to the trade and biotechnology lobby. In fact, in a response to the trade threats by the US, the Croatian government diplomatically responded that they were aware of the concerns of the US, but that they chose to align themselves with the far more strict European legislation on GMOs.

Meanwhile, the threats coming from the results of the Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization in November last year are even bigger. The US proposal to establish WTO rules "to ensure that processes covering trade in products through new technologies are transparent, predictable and timely", is nothing else than an attempt to formalize the above-mentioned tactics of preventing countries to apply the Precautionary Principle in GMO trade, thus seriously undermining both the sovereignty of these countries and the Cartagena Protocol. Attempts to include "protection of biodiversity and landscape" as an environmental service sector bound by the commitments of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) might lead to a situation where biodiversity and landscape management would become market-oriented services sector, thereby reducing local communities and Indigenous Peoples' and governments' control over their own

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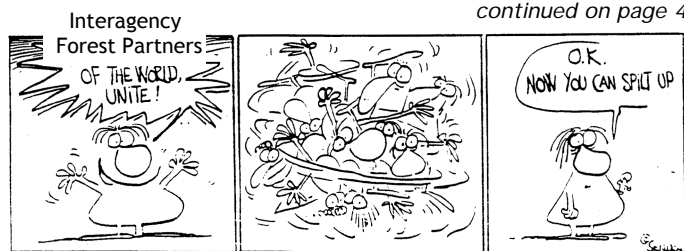
It is currently being published by the NGO community around the Sixth Conference of Parties of the Biodiversity Convention meeting in the Hague, Netherlands, coordinated by Environment Liaison Centre International.

The opinions, commentaries, and articles printed in ECO are the sole opinion of the individual authors or organisations, unless otherwise expressed.

Editors: Barbara Gemmill, Ashish Kothari, Kennedy Orwa, Samuel Waweru, Jessica Dempsey

All representatives of NGOs are welcome to join the NGO coordination meetings, every morning 9-10am, Carel Willink Hall.

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Collaborative Partnership on Forests?

Bringing the CBD Home: Resisting Industrial Forestry in One Papua New Guinea Community

As delegates are listening to arguments that industrial forestry is needed for development, and that illegal logging in primary forests has no relevance to the programme of work of the convention, we feel that the debate may be enriched by listening to the story of Mr. Otto Odaiyalo, of Papua New Guinea, who is attending COP6 as the first member of his community to ever visit Europe.

Mr. Otto Odaiyalo's community lives near the Kiunga-Aimabak Road Project, which was featured in a Greenpeace side event on Monday, "Partners in Crime". The Kiunga-Aiambak Road Project is a highly controversial and destructive logging operation located in previously intact rainforests in Papua New Guinea's remote Western Province. It was originally presented as a 'development project' to further the region's economy, but it soon became clear that it was no such thing. In fact, it was nothing but a ploy for a Malaysian-owned logging company to gain access to valuable timber stocks legally owned by Papua New Guinea's indigenous forest-dwelling communities.

Interview with Otto Odaiyalo, by Jessica Dempsey.

Jessica: Otto can you tell me a bit about your home?

Otto: My home is the Fogomaiyu Village in the Mont Bosavi region, which is located in the South Western province on the border of southern highlands and western provinces of Papua New Guinea (PNG). It is right in the centre of Papua New Guinea. It is very remote – there is no road access, no schools, no health centres, and it is one week's walk from the nearest World Wildlife Fund office. The Mont Bosavi region contains 8 different tribal groups, with 5 different languages. The area contains 30 scattered villages around the base of Mont Bosavi, with approximately 8,000 – 10,000 people. It is a very special place, with about 800,000 hectares of primary forest, which belongs to the people who live there, under customary ancestral rights.



The Walulu regional dance group from Mr. Otto Odaiyalo's community enters a dance area in the forest

J: Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your work?

O: I am actually a school teacher by trade, I received a formal education in Tari, a village in Southern Highlands province of PNG, where I was taken by missionaries when I was young.

There I learned to read and write. The missionaries always told me that I had to go back and help my village in any way possible, a promise I have kept. In 1993, I went back home. At that time, the communities of Bosavi wanted to access basic services like health and schools. The PNG government told the communities that if they wanted services like that, they had to make agreements with forest companies who will provide those services for access to their forests. The Bosavi communities decided to explore options for development with a company called YeungsGroup Enterprises, out of Hong Kong. The company offered us 10% equity from the proposed project.

J: And what was the response from your community and others in the Bosavi?

O: We rejected the project. The share from the project was not enough for access to our forests – we were not prepared to sell our forests for cheap, as it is our supermarket – it sustains us. Instead, communities formed an organization KORA – which stands for Kosuo 'Orogo Resource Holders Association. The purpose of this organization is to protect our resources and develop them in a way that will provide for maximum benefits to all the people in the Bosavi region. We want some development or change, but we want to do it the 'Bosavi Way'. In 1998, with technical support from organizations like ICRAF (Individual and Community Rights Advocacy Forum – PNG), Greenpeace, The Environmental Law Centre of PNG, and WWF, we incorporated as an organization and organized some exposure tours.

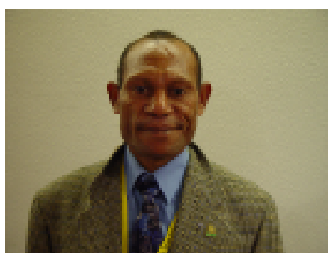
J: What exactly are these exposure tours?

O: On these tours, Bosavi people (25 men, women, and youth) toured PNG to visit communities who had signed agreements with logging companies. We wanted to see what the impacts of these agreements had been for the forests and for the people that live there.

J: What did these tours reveal?

O: We found that industrial logging was actually bringing these people into poverty – they were losing traditional knowledge, skills, and their livelihoods as the forest was cleared away. They had lost power and control over their land and their lives to the companies. The outsiders did not bring "development", they brought poverty and dispossession. These culture of these people was eroding along with their ability to sustain themselves. The Bosavi people who went on these tours adamantly opposed this kind of development – they opposed this kind of life. While the Bosavi still want to bring education and health to their communities, it must be based on their own culture. They know that the forest is the root of their lives, and they need to protect it and use it in a sustainable way.

J: In your opinion Otto, what is causing the destruction of forest and communities like those visited on the exposure tours?



Mr. Otto Odaiyalo

O: When the companies come with contracts and agreements, the people, most of whom are illiterate, are unable to understand agreements and the offers being made, which are generally far under the value of the forests. The people do not have the capacity to make informed decisions – and are used by the companies. They are helped by the PNG state, who tell communities that they must make agreements like this to gain the services they want. So, communities sign the agreements. The only people to really benefit from these agreements are the elites, the elites of the communities, the companies, and the PNG state. All this while mothers and children suffer.

J: What has been the Bosavi and the KORA approach to resisting these types of agreements?

O: The logging companies are moving closer, and their offers are tempting. What KORA does is education and capacity building for people in the Bosavi, so that people can make informed decisions about their forests. Local volunteers travel around and tell people about their constitutional rights and the deals being offered. We also discuss gender issues within communities to ensure women have a voice in the decision making. We aim to empower people to make informed decisions about their futures, and the future of their forest and cultural diversity.

J: How long have you been involved in this work?

O: 9 years, all on a voluntary basis.

J: Can you tell me, and the readers, what kind of support you are seeking for the Bosavi at COP 6?

O: What we need is NGO or others (governments, industry) to help find long-term partner(s) who are able to support our em-

powerment and capacity building work at KORA, and perhaps collaborate on a type of environmentally, culturally, and socially friendly development so we can have the services we want. We have much to offer the world – our forests are still intact, our culture continues to be rooted in the forest. We want to maintain these, but also have access to the things we *choose* to take from the outside world. To do this, we require resources – we are seeking partnerships to help us develop and implement a plan for long term, sustainable development. My people are standing firm to the offers of the logging company. We also need international NGOs and other countries to educate the bureaucrats of PNG – to tell them that their development policies, legislation, and strategies are not supporting the types of changes people want to see in their communities. We want community-based approaches, not industrial – we want continuous support that will not erode the forests or the communities that depend on them. In one campaign, I told the provincial authorities, we want teachers, not loggers! Without education, we cannot defend our rights.

J: A final question: Is it true that you are the 1st person in the Bosavi to visit Europe?

O: Yes.

J: What do you think about it, and the COP?

O: Ohhhh, I'm really confused – I come from a tiny village, with the trees. I feel a bit lost. But this is also learning experience, I can see how it all works, all the lobbying. But I can't fully express how overwhelmed I feel!

KORA: Kosuo'Orogo Resource Holders Association, Inc.
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Climate change & the CBD

Joy Hyvarinen, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

Ten years after adoption, the CBD is still struggling to find its role. During this time, high-speed loss of biological diversity has continued. In addition, the scientific understanding of climate change, an issue the CBD has only started to address, and the magnitude of the threat it poses, has become much clearer.

Climate change threatens livelihoods and national economies all over the world. Many of the countries that are most vulnerable, such as low-lying coastal states and small islands, are also the least equipped to adapt. Climate change poses a huge challenge for the CBD, but it also provides an opportunity for the CBD to assert its role - if parties are willing.

The impacts of measures to respond to climate change have drawn particular attention. For example, the possibility of monoculture 'Kyoto Protocol forests', which may be used as - temporary, unreliable - CO₂ sinks. Parties need to realise that the implications of climate change are much wider: in addition to direct impacts, such as inundation of mangroves by sea-level rise, climate change is expected to change ecosystems on a large scale.

For example, montane ecosystems are already showing signs consistent with expected climate change. Species tend to move upwards and towards the poles as climate change advances. High up on mountains, some of these species will have nowhere to move. Ecosystem compositions are likely to change elsewhere too. Some species will be able to move with the changing climate, but others will not, or will move at a much slower pace. Threatened species are at particular risk as habitats fragment. An important consequence is that the whole approach to areas managed for the maintenance of biodiversity ('protected areas') needs to be adjusted.

As far as the CBD is concerned, parties need to wake up to the fact that climate change means the rules of the game are no longer the same as they were ten years ago.

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biological resources.

The Doha declaration also mandates the WTO to cover all non-agricultural products, which implies that forest products and genetic resources might soon be made subject to trade liberalization commitments. Meanwhile, negotiations on the controversial Article 27.3(b) of the agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights continue. The Doha mandate to negotiate "a clear understanding in the interim that patents inconsistent with Article 15 of the CBD shall not be granted" might look promising. But unfortunately, the "usual suspects", have succeeded to stall the negotiations on this issue. Countries hostile to Article 15 of the CBD have argued that the above negotiations were not mandated at all. The same fate overcame the proposals of developing countries to amend the above-mentioned article of TRIPS to take account of the CBD and recently concluded International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources. Moreover, it should be taken into account that these negotiations will take place practically without CBD involvement, as the US have successfully blocked CBD access to the WTO discussions on TRIPS.

In order to address the problematic relationship between the WTO and Multilateral Environmental Agreements, the CBD in particular, the Doha declaration also states that the relationship will be negotiated in the coming period, leading up to the next Ministerial round. From a legal point of view this is extremely odd: you give me access to your textile market, and I'll respect the CBD? Surely, the relationship needs clarification, but that shouldn't be an issue for bargaining. In fact, the WTO always has encouraged that measures for the protection of the environment should be negotiated within MEAs such as the CBD. Why then is New Zealand being forced to make their policy on invasive alien species more lenient, where the COP has decided that invasives pose a serious threat? In New Zealand's case, it is not allowed to apply the precautionary principle to the introduction of alien species. Instead, an EIA has to be carried out, which shows unequivocally that damage will be done, before measures can be taken. It is however, extremely difficult to make an accurate prediction of the effect that alien species will have in an ecosystem that is new to them.

These obstacles and of course the overall economic model that is imposed by the WTO upon countries makes it virtually impossible to effectively implement the CBD. One fundamental element of this economic model is export agriculture, a highly questionable model of industrial, export-oriented farming, which has led to increased food insecurity and hunger, dramatic loss of genetic diversity, and devastating unemployment in millions of farming communities around the world. It also forms by far the main cause of deforestation world-wide, and thus the main cause of the destruction of the most important ecosystem in the world from a species diversity perspective.

And meanwhile, the COP continues to discuss where to buy new mops...

STUMP of the DAY AWARD:
was given to *Malaysia* for
announcing from the floor its
complete opposition to the CBD
addressing forests- home to more
than half the world's terrestrial
biodiversity, and for saying that the
objectives of the convention, for
conservation, sustainable use and
equitable sharing of benefits are not
holistic enough framework to
address forest management.

The CAPTAIN HOOK AWARDS For
Biopiracy, and COG AWARDS for opposing
Biopiracy will be presented on Thursday,
April 11 at 1:00 on the central landing of
the stairs between the ground floor and the
first floor, by the Coalition against
Biopiracy; come and see who wins Most
Offensive, Greediest, Most Dangerous,
Worst International Convention, Worst
Excuse, Worst Corporate Offender, Worst
Anti-Food Security, as well as: Best
People's Defense, Best Legal Defense,
Best Whistleblower, Best National Defense,
Best (we can get) International Treaty.