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Submissions *are welcome from all civil society groups.*
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Applying the Precautionary Approach to GM fish

CBAN, Friends of the Earth U.S., Econexus, Federation of German Scientists, Centre for Food Safety & the International Centre for Technology Assessment.

We would like to raise our concerns about the impact that emerging technologies may have on inland water biodiversity.

In particular we would like to raise the issue of genetically modified fish and other transgenic aquatic animals. The floor may be aware of genetically modified Atlantic salmon nearing final approval in the U.S. for human consumption – without a proper and comprehensive environmental risk assessment. Escaped genetically modified fish could have major impacts on inland water biodiversity and wild fish populations. Parties may be aware that genetically modified tilapia and other important fish species are also being developed. Additionally, genetically modified fish may become a new invasive species. The raising and commercialization of genetically modified fish, and other transgenic aquatic organisms near or on inland waters should not be permitted at this time.

With your permission I will read out our two recommendations and submit the text to the Secretariat.

Urges Parties, in accordance with the precautionary principle and target 7 of the strategic plan, to ensure that transgenic fish and other transgenic aquatic organisms and their eggs are not intentionally or unintentionally released into the environment or approved for commercial use until there is an adequate scientific basis on which to justify such activities and due consideration is given to the associated risks for biological diversity, including the risks to inland fresh water ecosystems, customary uses of the water by local and indigenous communities and the potential for aquatic living modified organisms to become invasive alien species. Any research on such organisms must be contained and undertaken within a facility, installation or other physical structure that effectively prevent their contact with, and their impact on the external environment.

GM salmon in Panama.
GM salmon was imported from Canada into Panama as 'contained use'.
http://www.laestrella.com.pa/mensual/2010/01/22/contenido/195214.asp

Request the Secretariat to compile and synthesize information, subject to the availability of financial resources, on the impacts that the rearing of transgenic fish and other transgenic aquatic organisms may have on biodiversity, including the risks to inland fresh water ecosystems, customary uses of the water and its native organisms by local and indigenous communities and the potential for the commercial rearing of genetically engineered fish and other aquatic organisms to lead to the introduction of invasive alien species.

We hope that these recommendations can find support from delegations.

Invasive Alien Species

Intervention by the IIFB

The International Indigenous Biodiversity Forum welcomed reports found in Official Documents 15/6, 15/7 and Information Document 15/Inf/1 that describe the status of knowledge of this agenda item.

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities acknowledge the work done under the international instruments and share concerns of the global community of the impact of invasive alien species. We know that these species "are one of the major threats to sustainable development, on a par with global warming and the destruction of life-support systems. These aliens come in the form of plants, animals and microbes that have been introduced into an area from other parts of the world, and have been able to displace indigenous species."

The devastating effects of introduced species have been recorded in history and we must learn from these lessons. Indigenous peoples have often suffered first-hand the effects of introduced biological elements. For example, "The viruses carrying smallpox and measles spread from Europe into the Western Hemisphere shortly following European colonisation." Indigenous Peoples there had no resistance to these organisms and many thousands of people died on contact. In some cases, entire tribal nations, and the traditional knowledges carried over many thousands of years, were lost.

Although the specific subject matter at hand now is slightly different in that we are talking about regulatory gaps concerning the impacts of invasive plants, animals and microbes, the reality of existing threats to our cultures and ways of life as a result of the accidental or intentional release of these organisms and the disruptions of ecosystems, including the lands, waters, air and energy systems remains.

In this regard, we suggest an addition to Recommendation 10:

> 10. Further requests the Executive Secretary, with the further inputs of the experts, members of the AHTEG, and in collaboration with the members of the Liaison Group and with the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, to prepare proposals for more detailed guidance for Parties on the drafting and implementation of national measures to address the specific gap associated with the introduction of alien animal species as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food, in order to complete the tasks set out in the annex to decision X/38;

Finally IIFB could like to add a recommendation under Recommendation 12 to read as

> (c); The Executive Secretary to explore methodologies of creating awareness, education and information on invasive alien species to a wider audience including Indigenous Peoples and local communities, the public and other stakeholders.

We believe this will help us all to have a better understanding and contribution to the management of problems of invasive alien species.

Don't Flush GISP Down the Toilet!

Pat Mooney (ETC Group)

As psychologists always say, pet's bring out the best in us. So, it's not surprising that Tuesday's working group and sitde event discussions on exotic pets (the muzzled "invasive species" agenda) was mostly a feel-good moment where many European governments took the lead in calling for the precautionary principle and received warm support from most other parties with the notable exceptions of Brazil and Argentina who were clearly riding another horse.

Industry seemed to side with Brazil and Argentina and told governments that the problem wasn't biopiracy or environmentally-destructive treating it was that consumers have to be educated not to flush their little pets down the toilet. It's all really just a misunderstanding that can be resolved with warning signs and posters. As charming as it is to have industry arguing for labeling - and, as interesting as it is to contemplate extending the labeling of invasive exotic pets to other invasive species like GM maize and GM soybeans, Europe needs to back up its precautionary approach with the money needed to make it work. It is as much absurd as it is tragic that the *Global Invasive Species Program* (GISP) lacks the funding it requires to continue its excellent work. The absurdity is compounded because GISP is being penalized for providing exactly the kind of responsible scientific reports that some governments - especially those in Europe - have been demanding of the SBSTTA.

Mohala i ka wai ka maka o ka pua

Unfolded by the water are the faces of the flowers

Malia Nobrega (IIFB)

Mohala i ka wai ka maka o ka pua. This olelo noeau or wise proverb of my people, Kanaka Maoli, the indigenous people of Hawai`i says that flowers thrive where there is water, as thriving people are found where living conditions are good.

In my mother tongue, wai is water, waiwai means values or wealth, and kanawai is the law. It is no coincidence that, in an island community like mines, both wealth and the law were and continue to be defined by fresh water.

Continuous mauka to makai (from the mountains to the ocean) stream flow provided critical fresh water for drinking, supported traditional agriculture and aquaculture, recharged ground water supplies, and sustained productive estuaries and fisheries by both bringing nutrients from the uplands to the sea and providing a travel corridor so that native stream animals could migrate between the streams and ocean and complete their life cycles. For Kanaka Maoli, appropriately managing fresh water resources was a true kuleana: both a privilege and a responsibility.

Water was also revered as a physical manifestation of Kane, one of the Hawaiian pantheon's four principal akua (gods, ancestors). In fact, many Polynesian cultures recognize Kane as a central deity and believe that Kane and Kanaloa (another principal akua associated with the ocean) traveled to Hawai‘i from Tahiti. Traditional mo‘olelo (stories or history) explain that Kane brought forth fresh water from the earth and traveled throughout the archipelago with Kanaloa creating springs and streams, many of which continue to flow today. "Fresh water as a life-giver was not to the Hawaiians merely a physical element; it had a spiritual connotation." Due to this significance, in ancient times, water could not be commodified or reduced to physical ownership. Instead, ali‘i (leaders) managed water as a resource for the benefit of the community as a whole.

The International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) proposes the following recommendations to SBSTTA under the agenda item Inland Waters

1. Recognizes the role of women as key stakeholders in sustaining family well-being and water related ecosystem services, as well as the knowledge of indigenous women related to water, as key components of the programme of work on inland waters.
2. Recognizes that indigenous peoples and local communities maintain a very close, holistic, cultural and spiritual relationship with essential elements in nature, particularly the water cycle that is demonstrated in many indigenous languages.
3. Recognizes that based on their traditional knowledge, indigenous peoples and local communities maintain water management system rules such as customary rules, moral codes, ethical norms, and specific sanctions that help to promote sustainability.
4. Urges Parties and other Governments to develop indicators relating to inland waters and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, in collaboration with the IIFB Working Group on Indicators.

Some examples of these indicators are included in document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/15/8. For example equitable access to potable water, the proportion of indigenous peoples and local communities with legal protection of their water rights, the number of national water policies and management plans that include or reflect traditional knowledge, customary rules and regulations, and/or the number of water programmes and projects completed using the Akwe:Kon Guidelines.

The ahupua`a, the basic self-sustaining ecosystem, extended elements of Hawaiian spirituality into the natural landscape. Amidst a belief system that emphasized the interrelationship of elements and beings, the ahupua`a contained those interrelationships in the activities of daily and seasonal life.

Each ahupua`a contained all the resources needed to sustain it's ecosystem, from fish and salt, to fertile land for farming various crops, to forests and bogs found in the uplands. Villagers from the seaside traded fish for other food items or for wood to build canoes and houses. Specialized knowledge and resources were also shared with one another through chants, songs, and stories.

Geoengineering

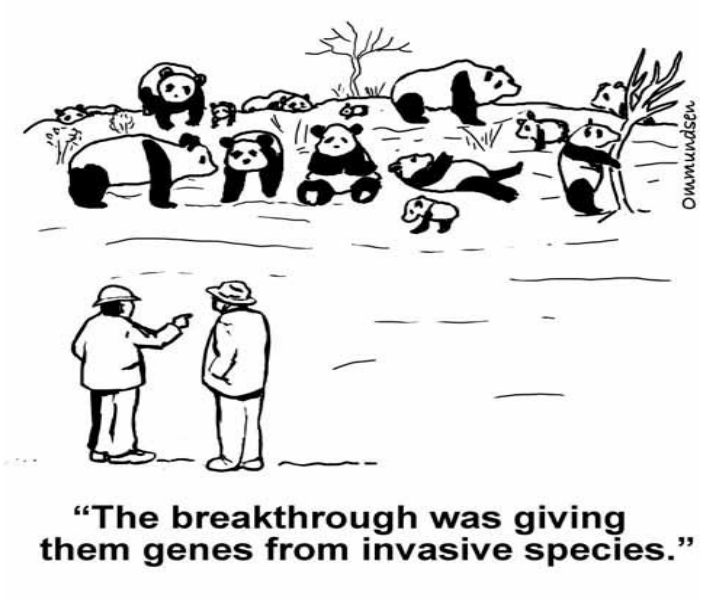
Update on an emerging paper

Diana Bronson (ETC Group)

At a side event organized by the Secretariat on geo-engineering yesterday, David Cooper provided an outline of the Secretariat's draft synthesis of the impacts of geoengineering on biodiversity. Hard copies of the draft paper were also distributed, and it should be on the CBD website by the end of the week.

The initial comment period by experts will be for one month and then a new draft will be sent to parties for input prior to SBSTTA 16.

Cooper underlined the need for input from local communities, indigenous peoples, civil society groups and South governments, especially concerning the social, economic and cultural impacts of these technologies. He also announced that a new expert meeting to discuss the paper has been convened for January 5-7, once again in London.



Peter Ommundsen, http://capewest.ca/cartoons.html

Several commentators expressed their concern about the undue influence the UK seemed to be having on the process - especially given the controversial public funding for geoengineering, the role of the Royal Society, and recently postponed experiments. Others insisted on the importance of getting the views from the communities who actually have an in-depth understanding of the environments they live in and can sometimes anticipate the impacts more accurately than far-away experts. Clearly, balancing the scientific synthesis with broader views will be a major challenge.

Geoengineering covers a suite of technologies that seek to intentionally manipulate the Earth's systems at a massive scale and a moratorium on such activities was adopted at COP 10.

First geoengineering project announced

A year ago during COP10 in Nagoya, geo-engineering sounded like some wild dreams in some distant future. About 9 months later the first geoengineering project was announced in the UK. What in 2010 seemed to be a far fetched "new and emerging issue", now becomes a matter that needs urgent attention.

In a 'field test', British scientist are planning to recreate an artificial volcano to inject particles into the stratosphere and with the aim to cool the planet.
The project is currently delayed until April 2011.

For more details read John Vidal's article:
http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/aug/31/pipe-balloon-water-sky-climate-experiment

"The difference between a new and emerging issue and an old one that affects biodiversity now is sometimes only the time between one SBSTTA and the next." - *Pat Mooney (ETC Group)*

Potential Impacts of Synthetic Biology on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

Submission to the SBSTTA 16 as New & Emerging Issue (http://www.cbd.int/emerging/)

by *The International Civil Society Working Group on Synthetic Biology,* October 2011

http://www.cbd.int/doc/emerging-issues/Int-Civil-Soc-WG-Synthetic-Biology-2011-013-en.pdf