

COP 7: Get ready for Microsoft Word “track changes”!

jessica dempsey • rosario oritz • elci

Protected areas, technology transfer and mountain biodiversity will be at the center of the discussions and decisions at COP 7. These are complicated and multi-faceted issues surely to result in many late night, masculinist contests of ‘brute’ strength (otherwise known as word-smithing; or sneaking out of real commitments with recommendations for more studies and assessments). However, with the 2010 goal looming, there is hope that those elusive “targets and timelines” will actually materialize.

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ECO has been published by the NGO (non-governmental organisation) community at most Conferences of Parties of the International Environmental Conventions. It is currently being published by the NGO community around the seventh Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 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.

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But, as many are painfully aware, these targets and timelines are useless without the resources to back them up. This convention is built on a foundation of wealth transfer – we cannot expect the so-called third world to conserve biodiversity as the gluttonous world (aka “developed” countries) continues on its path of excessive consumption and biodiversity plunder. Even The World Parks Congress noted the “that while the last decade has seen a massive growth in the number and extent of protected areas, funding has only increased modestly, and as much as \$25 billion additional annual support is now required to establish and maintain a comprehensive, effective system of protected areas.”

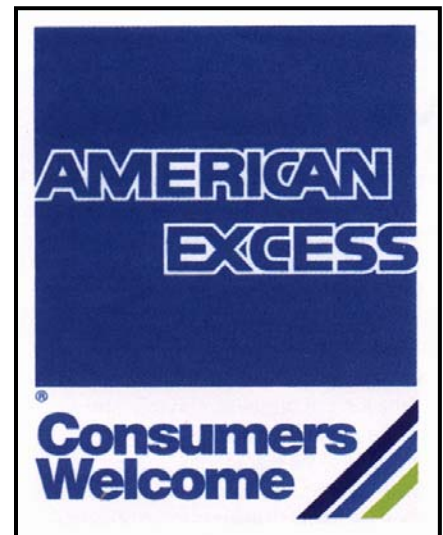
Then again, surely the most important challenge facing implementation of the Protected Areas Programme of Work is not the availability of resources (though of course this is important), but of making such conservation much more broad-based, community-controlled, decentralised, and integrated with basic livelihood issues. Indeed if we can achieve this, maybe the total resources needed will not be so great. A solid step towards this will be adopting strong language in Section 2 of the PoW, particularly around prior informed consent and indigenous and local communities rights. One also has to wonder how much biodiversity could be conserved through a comprehensive Programme of Work on over-consumption. Although we all know which non-Party (you know, where over-consuming is a patriotic act), would fiercely resist any such talk!

COP 7 will also discuss the proposed regime on access and benefit sharing, Article 8 (j) and biosafety – the first MOP of the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol will finally convene. In fact, the three items on the agenda for the ministerial segment (Feb 18th-19th) shed some light on core decisions to be made at COP 7: 1) Role of scientific assessment for decision making in biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use; 2) Technology Transfer in biodiversity, biotechnology and biosafety; and 3) International Regime on Access and Benefit Sharing. These issues impact the entire scope of work under CBD. But these are not just ideas ephemerally projected on the screen in Microsoft Word track changes mode – they are about correcting real instances of outright biopiracy, dispossession, species extinction and poverty.

Decisions to be made on technology transfer and the international regime on access and benefit

sharing concern the development of products and benefits derived from the sustainable use of genetic resources but they are also tightly linked with the the pharmaceutical, seed and agro-business transnationals companies drive to promote genetic engineering technologies under the protection of the developed countries current patent system. At stake are important questions such as: which products will be developed and which, such as GURTs, should not; who makes the assessments and who decides; who controls and for whose benefit? Who does *and* should have access to technologies necessary for fair and equitable biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, in accordance with the Precautionary Principle? How can technology transfer protocols protect against biopiracy and yet facilitate transfers between communities unrestricted by IPR regimes?

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Mountain Biodiversity: What's so special about it?

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I n i t i a t i v e f o r B i o d i v e r s i t y S t u d i e s i n t h e A r i d R e g i o n s

Recognizing the serious consequences that the loss of mountain resources might bring to the world's biological diversity and food security, the United Nations declared 2002 the international Year of Mountains in order to raise awareness and elicit action on this issue. The conference of the parties at its fourth meeting selected mountain biodiversity as one of the three themes for in-depth consideration at COP7. The eighth meeting of the SBSTTA, held in Montreal, considered mountain biological diversity a main theme among many others. Many initiatives and forums have been launched among these are the Mountain Partnership initiated by the United Nations Environment Programme and the government of Switzerland at WSSD, the Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment (GMBA) a global research network and IUCN's Mountain Initiative

Mountain biodiversity is a more recent 'specialized field of biodiversity', along with its new guidelines, recommendations, budgets... Finally, the vulnerability of mountain ecosystems has been recognized and 'awarded' a 'status'. The inherent nature of these highlands in terms of inaccessibility, and extreme environmental conditions has led to a relative control of human intervention. In the best of situations only sporadic human settlements have dwelled in remote mountainous areas and have relied mostly on agro-pastoral systems, complemented with high dependence on biodiversity for their subsistence. In the more extreme cases mountainous lands were fully exploited by agriculture and terraces have become part of the natural landscape.

Biodiversity conservation in mountainous areas presents many challenges: mountains have offered both refuge and inspiration to many minorities be they religious, cultural, ideological or racial. The uniqueness of mountain biodiversity is also reflected in people inhabiting these mountains and the conservation of such fragile ecosystems and endemic species is only possible if it equally addresses the future of threatened cultures, philosophies, lifestyles, religions, and ethnic groups. Mountains hold the memory of many ancient civilizations of the world.

On a more global level, mountains cover about 25% of the Earth's surface and are home to about 12% of the human population. More than 50% of the world's population depends directly or indirectly on mountain resources, services and goods, such as water supply, amenity services, rangelands, etc. These ecosystems and geographical features are home to many species that have become extinct in lowlands due to human activities agricultural practices and they are providing various amenity services.

The mountain biodiversity is threatened by the loss of biological, spiritual, cultural, social and economical value. These are the water towers of the world and their high peaks harbor much of our endemic species. The relationship between human and its environment will be disrupted if biodiversity conservation takes precedent and it would be very difficult to reconnect these historic ties. Conservation options cannot exclude mountain cultures and cannot ignore the needs of these societies. Do we want to convince mountain communities to migrate away from these threatened habitats? or to change their modest needs and transform them into consumer societies? or keep them 'ignorant' of the 'riches' of modern societies?

Decisions are taken in the hundreds, meetings are held every year and yet we are far from being able to conserve all these resources. How do we prioritize when spiritual, cultural, and social values are equally important to biological ones? Do we have these abilities as conservation researchers to address all these issues? The task is great and challenging but in this era of communication maybe it would be **useful to write and read a bit less and instead act and feel more. There must be a solution to all this other than compiling lists of decisions, legal jargon and documents that will never reach mountain dwellers.** As we write this contribution somewhere high in a mountain top the last individual of a species might have been destroyed, and a group of youngsters might have left their village to settle in a major city because they don't see the value of their traditional home, while we are here comfortably working in our offices, preaching to the converted.

... "track changes" continued from pg 1

Parties must ask themselves: how can the proposed international regime on access and benefit sharing of genetic resources work for the benefit of local communities and Indigenous peoples? Certainly, components must include recognition of indigenous and local communities as rights holders over their Traditional Knowledge and the biodiversity within their territories, and their right to on-going prior informed consent in regard to accessing to genetic resources.

Sometimes the decisions taken at meetings of the CBD seem like they exist on a parallel line to the violences that characterize life in the 21st century; the local and the global levels never connect or connect only when the impact is felt by the weakest members of society. In fact, the local and the global also seem to exist in parallel dimensions, if relations between the CBD and the UNFCCC (climate change convention) are any indication. A recent international study, led by Chris Thomas at England's University of Leeds, reports that climate change could wipe out a quarter of all species of plants and animals on Earth by 2050 in one of the biggest mass extinctions since the dinosaurs. Well, perhaps in 2050 the connections will be more clear (but the opportunity to act will have been lost)!

We are at the turning point between this global agreement on 'what to do' and the reality on the ground at the national and local level where words (should) become action. Will governments accept the Akwé:Kon guidelines, which are meant to guide cultural, environmental and social impact assessment of developments on sacred sites, land and water of indigenous and local communities? Will the proposed work program on protected areas respect the rights, needs and role of the people living in those areas, or will it become an additional tool to marginalize them? Will the biosafety protocol actually result in biosafety? Will prior informed consent and rights actually be enacted effectively within national legislation? Or will the ideas and words projected on the screen in Microsoft Word track changes mode remain disconnected from the violences that the CBD is meant to correct?

Relations with Other Agreements – Peril or Promise???

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With such a broad ambit, arguably all life on Earth, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has a daunting mission, and consequently needs all the help it can get from other international institutions and processes. Over the past few years, the CBD has been very efficient in generating joint work programmes and activities with such bodies as the Ramsar Convention, the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Migratory Species and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. These collaborative efforts, including joint use of funding resources under the Global Environment Facility, have become a defining example of promoting mutually beneficial synergies at the intergovernmental level.

However, when other international institutions run counter to the CBD's objectives, the Conference of Parties (COP) and governments have to work doubly hard to redress any wrongs to biodiversity and relevant policy measures. The agenda item on cooperation with other agreements at COP-7 presents two possible threats (or opportunities – depending on how they are viewed) to biodiversity in general, and the integrity of the CBD's core objectives more specifically. These are relations with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Biodiversity and Trade: Throughout its history, the CBD process has struggled with trade-related concerns and efforts to subordinate the CBD's rules to the international trade regime, particularly in areas of biosafety, access to genetic resources, traditional knowledge and intellectual property rights. While negotiations on the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety set a standard for mutual supportiveness and non-subordination, deliberations under the WTO stemming from the Doha Ministerial Declaration threaten to undermine these achievements and to *de facto* assert the WTO's authority over intergovernmental environmental processes. More specifically Paragraph 31(i) of the Doha Mandate calls for negotiations on the relation between WTO rules and specific trade obligations set out in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). In the CBD context, these could include provisions in the Biosafety Protocol and potentially COP decisions on incentives, invasive species and/or access and benefit sharing. The WTO's discussions will focus on obligations agreed to between Parties to the MEA, and explicitly exclude the question of how an MEA's trade obligations might impact non-parties to that agreement.

This framework addresses the aspect of the WTO-MEA relationship that requires the least clarification – the legal relationship between independent, multilateral treaties. MEAs, like the WTO, are sets of international commitments to which Parties bind themselves by virtue of their ratification. The Doha Mandate essentially and incorrectly asserts that the WTO has jurisdiction over the negotiation and implementation of other agreements that have coeval status under long-standing and well-recognized principles of international law. It is doubtful that WTO members would tolerate such external scrutiny, let alone binding MEA negotiations, on trade rules that impact the environment. The best possible outcome for the WTO discussions would be to reaffirm the mutual supportiveness of trade and environmental rules, and to avoid prescriptive decisions on the topic.

At COP-7, CBD Parties should:

- Restate the mutual supportiveness of and absence of hierarchy between trade and environmental rules; and
- Propose that such trade-environment issues be addressed within a neutral arena such as under the joint auspices of the UN Environment Programme and the UN Conference on Trade and Development, or jointly seek an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice.

Biodiversity and Climate Change: The other significant intergovernmental challenge facing the CBD stems from recent decisions under the UNFCCC regarding afforestation and deforestation projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). While CBD SBSTA-9 addressed the issue of climate change and biodiversity, it generally failed to set forth a proactive vision of how the CBD should address the range of threats presented to critical ecosystems or provide guidance on forest-related activities under the UNFCCC. Particular threats to biodiversity within the UNFCCC's recent decision on LULUCF include:

- a general acceptance of monocultural tree plantations, including those using genetically modified species;
- no restrictions on environmentally and/or socially destructive projects (negative impacts deemed "significant" by project planners simply require an assessment); and
- minimal participation of local stakeholders and indigenous peoples in the design of and decisions over projects (involvement is limited to "commenting").

At COP-7, CBD Parties should:

- Acknowledge that the UNFCCC process will not address the range of biodiversity concerns related to climate change;
- Integrate relevant aspects of climate change impacts and adaptation strategies into the CBD's ecosystem work programmes and relevant cross-cutting themes;
- Endorse the use of CBD guidelines for environmental impacts assessments in the design and implementation of CDM projects; and
- Initiate a process to develop biodiversity-friendly guidance for forestry projects and other adaptation activities under the UNFCCC.

The fact that the UNFCCC process, and a now predictable handful of developed countries, resisted stronger safeguards to ensure synergies between climate sequestration and biodiversity conservation, means that the CBD will have to work doubly hard to: 1) counter any negative impacts from CDM projects; and 2) adapt to the ongoing impacts of climate change from continued high levels of fossil fuel emissions (permitted by the questionable notion of "offsetting" credits from these forestry projects).

An International Regime on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing?

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The third objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is: *the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and technologies, and by appropriate funding.*

Several articles in the Convention aim to support this goal, most specifically Article 15 on 'Access to Genetic Resources'. At COP 5, the Parties established the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing (Working Group) with the mandate to develop guidelines and other approaches to the various elements relevant to access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing (ABS) (decision V/26 A).

The first meeting of the Working Group was held in October 2001. Participants developed the draft Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising out of their Utilization. The Guidelines were adopted, with some amendments, at COP 6 in April 2002 (decision VI/24). As their name suggests, the Bonn Guidelines are meant to serve as a point of reference for policy, legislative and contractual matters related to ABS. In essence, they elaborate on the key provisions in the CBD on ABS, particularly those addressing mutually agreed terms and prior informed consent.

The Bonn Guidelines and the need to strengthen international cooperation on ABS were agreed actions in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. Chapter IV of the Plan of Implementation addresses the protection and management of the natural resource base of economic and social development. In particular, paragraph 44 focuses on biodiversity, and subsection (n) encourages the implementation and further development of the Guidelines. Subsection (o) calls for action to "[n]egotiate within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, bearing in mind the Bonn Guidelines, an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources".

The Working Group held its second meeting in December 2003. Included on the agenda was discussion of other approaches to ABS "including consideration of the process, nature, scope, elements and modalities of an international regime." In the final report from the meeting, the Working Group recognized a "clear need" for an international regime on ABS. It adopted a recommendation that the Parties at COP 7 mandate the Working Group to elaborate and negotiate an international regime on ABS. The recommendation did not, however, include an agreed-upon time frame for these negotiations. There was also little agreement in the final recommendations on what the process, nature, scope, elements and modalities of an international regime should include. The Parties to the CBD must therefore decide at COP 7 whether to mandate the

Working Group to negotiate an international regime on ABS. If they do decide that the negotiations should begin, they must also set the terms of reference on which the Working Group would proceed.

Ongoing legal research and gap analysis undertaken by the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law suggests that the Parties at COP 7 should give the green light to negotiations on an international regime on ABS. This regime should be a combination of voluntary and legally binding mechanisms which should seek to fill existing the gaps in the international legal system relating to ABS issues. The existing combination of the CBD, the Bonn Guidelines as well as other national, regional, international and non-governmental measures falls short of the third objective in the CBD. In particular, legal analysis of the existing instruments suggests four main areas of focus for an international regime.

The first gap is the link between ABS, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The international regime could build on existing examples of ABS that have already tied access to conservation and sustainable use. For new instruments to be effective, there is a need to explore in more detail the types of measures that encourage conservation through access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing.

The second gap relates to international ways to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The objectives in Article 1 of the CBD mention technology transfer and Article 16 lays out quite lengthy provisions on the subject, but according to many developing countries, the promise and the potential of technology transfer remains largely unfulfilled. As part of designing an effective international regime, there is a need to go further in elaborating this means of benefit-sharing. An international regime could provide ways to resolve the technology transfer gap in the existing ABS framework to the benefit of developing countries.

It could also relate to the first objective discussed above by helping to make the connection between access to genetic resources and the conservation and sustainable use of these resources. A clearer concept of fair and equitable benefit-sharing could also serve to better define the obligations on user parties to help develop, implement, and comply with measures on ABS. Disclosure or certificate of origin requirements in national patent laws, such as those implemented by Norway, Germany and Costa Rica, may be one part of these obligations. This type of measure is important for deterring biopiracy but it has not proved to be sufficient in overcoming the difficulties countries face in forming effective access laws.

The third gap relates to provisions to ensure adequate participation of indigenous peoples in ABS regimes, and the need to ensure that their priorities are taken into account. Possible elements in an international regime include the need for collective community prior informed consent rather than just individual or national consent, and the requirement that this consent be ongoing in access to genetic resources activities.

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ACCESO A LOS RECURSOS GENÉTICOS: ¿A FAVOR DE QUIEN Y PARA QUÉ?

isaac rojas • COECO Ceiba - amigos de la tierra costa rica

Los documentos que sirvieron de base a las discusiones sobre acceso a los recursos genéticos y la distribución justa y equitativa de los beneficios derivados llevadas a cabo en diciembre del 2003 así como las principales conclusiones de esa reunión que serán vistas en la COP 7, nos hacen pensar que el régimen internacional sobre acceso que se plantea no difiere en mucho a la situación actual por lo siguiente:

- **La utilización de términos, definiciones y/o glosarios, según proceda:** se discute si es conveniente un glosario y/o definiciones así como el proceso de redacción de ese glosario y/o definiciones para términos como acceso a recursos genéticos, participación en los beneficios, comercialización, derivados, proveedor, usuario, parte interesada, colección ex-situ y carácter voluntario. Estos conceptos son claves en cualquier régimen de acceso ya que por ejemplo, en la definición de acceso podrían eliminarse algunas actividades o darle características distintas para contar con menores requisitos. En lo referido a parte interesada si por ejemplo se sostiene que es quien solicita el acceso —que es un derecho personalísimo y por lo tanto intransferible— se eliminaría el negocio de la transferencia de permisos de acceso que existe en la actualidad y se facilitaría un mejor control sobre la tan mentada distribución justa y equitativa de los beneficios derivados de ese acceso. Similares consecuencias puede tener la definición de proveedor o usuario. Es decir, a través de estas definiciones, se definiría un modelo específico de acceso a los recursos genéticos. Si bien, es cierto estos aspectos no se definirán en Kuala Lumpur dado que se recomienda realizar una recopilación de definiciones de estos conceptos para ser discutidos en la siguiente Conferencia de las Partes, una consulta como esta, debe responder a criterios de amplia participación, información, justicia y equidad ya que en la mayoría de las oportunidades, las consultas son respondidas únicamente por los respectivos gobiernos sin mayor proceso de participación.

- **Otros enfoques conforme se establece en la decisión VI/24 B:** se recomienda realizar un proceso similar al del punto anterior. Estos enfoques adicionales se ven como complementarios a las Directrices de Bonn y como herramientas que pudieran ayudar a las Partes, y otros actores interesados, en la aplicación de las disposiciones sobre el acceso a los recursos genéticos y la participación en los beneficios del Convenio. Estos enfoques adicionales se refiere a marcos jurídicos regionales (como el del Pacto Andino, un proyecto centroamericano, asiático y africano); otros internacionales (Tratado de la FAO por ejemplo) así como algunas directrices voluntarias provenientes de sujetos interesados en contar con el acceso tales como jardines botánicos y otras empresas privadas. Todos estos enfoques adicionales, lejos de cuestionar los derechos intelectuales sobre formas de vida contenidos en convenios de la Organización Mundial del Comercio (OMC), los legitiman.

Un aspecto importante es la discusión en torno al certificado internacional de origen, un instrumento por medio del cual se busca enunciar siempre de donde provienen los recursos genéticos o el conocimiento tradicional que se accesa y que incluya además el consentimiento previamente informado. Se discute sobre si este certificado, puede constituirse en un requisito para el patentamiento y por lo tanto se supedita a las normas del Acuerdo sobre Derechos de Propiedad Intelectual relacionados al Comercio (ADPIC) de la OMC. Bajo esta propuesta, habría que indicar siempre el origen de por ejemplo, el conocimiento tradicional más su caracterización haciendo público así detalles que pueden ser sagrados para determinados pueblos indígenas. Bajo esta premisa, se favorece la cosificación del conocimiento tradicional así como de la diversidad biológica: todo giraría en torno al patentamiento que es al final de cuentas, el aspecto central de la industria que busca el acceso ya que según su discurso, no invierten si no se les garantiza los derechos monopólicos a través de los derechos de propiedad intelectual. Es un asunto de control de los recursos genéticos. De esta forma, aspectos que podrían constituirse en herramientas para la promoción de la participación en la toma de decisiones, se convierten en meros requisitos de la patentabilidad.

- **Medidas, incluido el examen de su viabilidad, aplicación en la práctica, factibilidad y costos, para apoyar el cumplimiento del consentimiento fundamentado previo de la Parte Contratante que proporciona dichos recursos y de las condiciones mutuamente acordadas con arreglo a las que se concedió el acceso en las Partes Contratantes con usuarios de recursos genéticos bajo su jurisdicción:** el consentimiento previamente informado, ha sido vendido como un instrumento que asegura que cualquier permiso de acceso que se brinde, se otorgue una vez se informe al proveedor del recurso. Se dice que pone en vigencia los derechos a la información y a la participación en la toma de decisiones sin embargo, se le supedita a derechos de propiedad intelectual y no se hace referencia a mecanismos existentes como la consulta del artículo 6 del Convenio 169 de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo y otros aspectos de fondo que posee este Convenio. El consentimiento previamente informado es un aspecto que necesita de mayor discusión sobretodo de parte de los pueblos indígenas y comunidades locales, quienes si lo aceptan, deben conceptualizarlo según sus prácticas culturales. En el documento respectivo, sentimos que este procedimiento se debilita al sugerir, que este se convierta en un requisito para el patentamiento tal y como fue expuesto cuando nos referimos al certificado de origen. ¿A favor de quien se está si un instrumento del que se dice puede permitir la participación informada de comunidades locales o pueblos indígenas se supedita a diversos criterios como los económicos?

- **Las necesidades de creación de capacidades de los países para aplicar las Directrices:** que hace énfasis en políticas y legislación nacionales, medidas para los usuarios, ciencia y tecnología y mejor participación de los interesados. Por medio de los puntos anteriores se facilita el acceso sin tomar en cuenta los aspectos apuntados en los primeros párrafos de este documento.

Contar con un régimen internacional o continuar con la situación actual (negociaciones bilaterales) no es el aspecto central que deba debatirse. Las discusiones deben enfocarse en cual es el fundamento de ambos y qué es lo que se persigue. Un régimen internacional, o el mantenimiento de la situación actual, que contengan aspectos como los mencionados, son contrarios a la sustentabilidad y se convierten en herramientas para el crecimiento de la injusticia, la inequidad y el aumento de la deuda ecológica. Un régimen como este, seguiría impulsando la biopiratería, actividad que se caracteriza por violentar los derechos colectivos que pueblos indígenas y comunidades locales poseen sobre la diversidad biológica. Además la biopiratería facilita la apropiación de los recursos de la diversidad biológica y el conocimiento tradicional, ya sea a través de la utilización de patentes o de otros mecanismos de apropiación.

GURTs

h o p e s h a n d • e t c .

GURTs or Terminator seed technology is one of the critical issues that will be debated at the Seventh Conference of the Parties (COP7) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, February 9-20, 2004. **What is Genetic Use Restriction Technology (GURTs)?** Genetic use restriction technology is a very broad term that refers to the use of an external chemical inducer to control the expression of a plants' genetic trait. This could include the trait for sterility, or any other trait such as colour, ripening, cold tolerance, etc. **T-GURT** refers to the restriction of a *specific trait* in a plant. **V-GURT** refers to restriction of *the entire variety* by engineering plants that render sterile seeds. It is popularly known as Terminator seeds, genetic seed sterilization, or technology protection system. **What is Terminator?** Terminator technology (or V-GURTs) refers to plants have been genetically modified to render sterile seeds. For the past six years, Terminator has been widely condemned as an immoral application of genetic engineering. The Director General of FAO, the President of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, and Maurice Strong, past Secretary General of UNCED, are among those individuals and institutions that have publicly disavowed the technology.

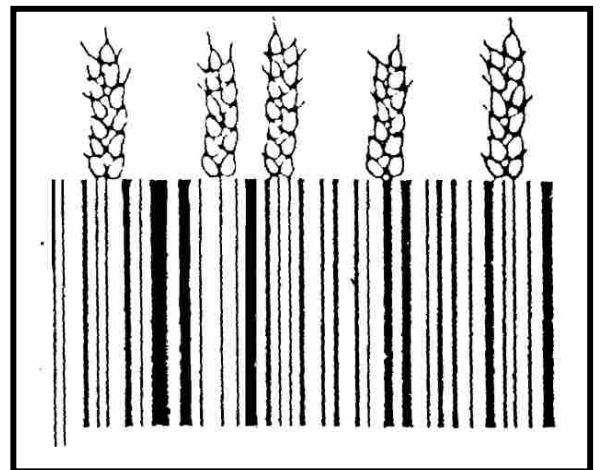
Why was it developed? The technology was developed by the multinational seed/agrochemical industry and the US government as a biological mechanism to prevent farmers from re-using their harvested seed, and to maximize seed industry profits. Over three-quarters of the world's farmers, primarily poor farmers in the developing world, depend on farm-saved seed as their primary seed source. If commercialized, Terminator seeds will force dependence on external seed sources and it will extinguish the age-old practice of farmer selection and breeding.

Genetic seed sterilization is a threat to world food security because it is a technology that offers the potential to restrict the food producing capacity of farmers.

Who holds patents on Terminator? The US government and Delta & Pine Land, the world's largest cotton seed company, jointly hold three patents on Terminator technology. Syngenta, DuPont, BASF and Monsanto are among the other multinational companies that have won patents on genetic seed sterilization. Some governments mistakenly assume that the seed industry has abandoned its quest to commercialize Terminator seeds in response to widespread public protest. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Agrochemical giant Syngenta applied for its most recent US patent on Terminator technology in August 2003. A recent paper authored by representatives of Monsanto and Delta & Pine Land for the International Seed Federation claims that Terminator seed will benefit farmers everywhere:

*"The International Seed Federation (ISF) believes that GURTs have the potential to benefit farmers and others in all size, economic and geographical areas...the potential effects of the GURTs may be beneficial to small farmers and quite positive for the environment and biodiversity"*¹

What do GURTs/Terminator seeds have to do with biosafety? The seed industry is now waging an aggressive "greenwashing" campaign to promote Terminator technology as a biosafety tool for containing unwanted gene flow from genetically modified (GM) plants. They argue that engineered sterility offers a built-in safety feature for GM plants because if genes from a Terminator crop cross-pollinate with related plants nearby, the seed produced from unwanted pollination will be sterile – it will not germinate. There is growing evidence that escaped genes from GM plants are causing genetic contamination and posing threats to agricultural biodiversity and the livelihoods of farmers – especially in Third World centers of crop genetic diversity. Recent studies have confirmed that DNA from genetically modified maize has contaminated traditional maize grown by indigenous farmers in Mexico. The very companies whose GM seeds are causing unwanted contamination are now insisting that society must accept their new and untested technology to contain genetic pollution. This is twisted and dangerous logic. If GM seeds are unsafe they should not be used. If they have polluted Third World centers of genetic diversity, the clean-up costs should rest with the companies.



If Terminator wins commercial acceptance under the guise of biosafety, seed sterility will be incorporated in all genetically engineered plants. That's because seed sterility is the ultimate monopoly-maker. Terminator offers a much stronger monopoly than patents; unlike patents, there's no expiration date, no exemption for plant breeders, and no need for lawyers.

¹ Harry B. Collins and Roger W. Krueger, "Potential Impact of GURTs on Smallholder Farmers, Indigenous & Local Communities and Farmers Rights: The Benefits of GURTs," p. 1. Paper made available to the CBD's Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on the Impact of GURTs on Smallholder Farmers, Indigenous People and Local Communities, February 19-21, 2003, the official position paper of the International Seed Federation. The ISF position paper on GURTs (February, 2003) is available at: http://www.etcgroup.org/documents/collins_kruegerISF.pdf
A more recent ISF position paper on GURTs is available: <http://www.seedquest.com/News/releases/2003/july/6168.htm>

What impact will Terminator seeds have on resource-poor farmers? Genetically modified Terminator seeds are not relevant to the needs of resource-poor farmers; but that doesn't mean poor farmers won't find Terminator seeds in their fields if they are commercialized. A recent study on Terminator conducted by Wageningen University for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warns that: "Serious seed security risk can be expected for those already seed insecure poor farmers who are not able to save their own seed for the next season. Risk of crop losses due to absent viability exist when poor farmers access the grain market for their seed (in many cases 20% of farmers), often at a late moment."



If imported grain contains Terminator genes and farmers unknowingly plant it as seed, it would not germinate. Similarly, farmers who depend on humanitarian food aid risk devastating crop loss if they unknowingly use food aid containing Terminator genes as seed.

Recommendations for COP7: Over the past six years, the CBD and FAO have prudently requested that studies be conducted and experts convened to examine the potential impacts of GURTs/Terminator. Despite the completion of numerous studies, a few Parties and governments are now requesting that COP7 call for *additional studies* on GURTs – a tactic that is designed to delay further action and debate on genetic seed sterilization.

Unless COP7 recommends that Parties take steps to prevent the commercial introduction of Terminator seeds, it will be too late – they will be commercialized within a few years.

COP7 must unambiguously advise the international community that genetic seed sterility is a dangerous, anti-farmer technology that threatens biodiversity, poor farmers and global food security. In line with the precautionary approach, COP7 should recommend that Parties develop national regulatory frameworks to prohibit the introduction and commercial sale of any genetic use restriction technology

...."International Regime" continued from pg 4

Finally, an international regime can create new means for monitoring ABS agreements, settling disputes which might arise, and providing appropriate international remedies in cases of non-compliance. To be effective, the remedies in an international regime could include facilitated access that will help level the playing field between the users and suppliers of genetic resources.

If an international regime on ABS is to be consistent with the sustainable development objectives of the CBD, it should focus on the linkages between biodiversity-related law and policy at the national, regional and international levels. An international ABS regime that will effectively fill the gaps of the existing ABS legal and policy frameworks can make a significant contribution to achieving this goal. The Parties at COP 7 in Kuala Lumpur would do well to remember these gaps as they decide the future of access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing. *The CISDL coordinates an international legal research and capacity building project related to ABS issues. For a more detailed examination of these issues, visit www.cisd.org and download the legal brief on 'Global Access, Local Benefits'*

Report from the third Working Group on Article 8(j) of the CBD

boris romaguer • ambioterra

The main issues discussed at the CBD's third 8(j) meeting on indigenous and local communities (ILC) issues were:

1. Integration of the work programme on article 8(j) into the thematic areas of the CBD
2. Progress in the implementation on the 8(j) work programme
3. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
4. Genetic Use Restriction Technology (GURT) E.g. Terminator and Traitor Technology
5. *Sui generis* (without precedent within western law) systems for the protection of indigenous knowledge, innovations and practices
6. Enhanced participatory and communication mechanisms for ILC
7. Impact assessments of projects to take place on sacred sites, land and water of ILC
8. Composite report on knowledge, innovations and practices of ILC
9. Technological transfer and cooperation

Of these issues, two of particularly high environmental relevance were: GURTs and Impact Assessment.

GURTs

An expert group, composed of representatives from governments, IGO, NGOs and industry, had prepared a critical report on GURTs in preparation for SBSTTA-9. Overall, this report identified more disadvantages than advantages associated with such technology. At this meeting, several developing countries and NGOs supported this report highlighting that GURTs will pose serious threats to indigenous livelihoods. Brazil then introduced a lengthy proposal calling for, *inter alia*, further research to assess the potential risks of GURTs, including field testing. The attempt by Brazil to discreetly reintroduce field testing of GURTs was however not overlooked. The EU, Switzerland, Namibia, Uganda and other Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPO) immediately opposed the proposal. The usual pro-GMO countries such as Argentina and the USA questioned the validity of the report and hoped it would be quickly dismissed as it was at SBSTTA-9. The traditional allies of ILC with respect to GURTs, such as the EU, were unwilling to open negotiations on GURTs and were content to have decision V/5 on the partial moratorium of its field testing prevail. The EU argued that decision V/5 had sufficiently strong language to prevent field testing before COP-8.

Just like at SBSTTA-9, the opportunity to recommend immediate action on GURTs at this 8(j) meeting was lost. While the entire report will be transmitted to COP-7 to be in turn retransmitted to SBSTTA-10, the socio-economic impacts of GURTs will be considered at the fourth 8(j) meeting. Thus, concrete measures on GURTs will be taken, at the earliest, during COP-8. This 8(j) meeting only recommended to COP-7 to increase capacity-building of ILC so they can better participate in the decision-making process on whether they want GURTs or not. Apparently, after the ILC have repeatedly rejected GURTs, governments still want to give ILC another chance to accept the technology by allowing them to be indoctrinated on the benefits of GURT via "capacity building programmes" by "relevant organizations". To make matters even more ridiculous, this meeting also invited ILC to reread and provide comments on the

8(j)-related recommendations of the expert group, the very recommendations they participated in elaborating!

Impact assessment

Another important item was the draft recommendations and guidelines on cultural, environmental and social impact assessment of development projects that take place on sacred sites, land and water of ILC. The latter was eventually named the Akwé:Kon guidelines. Some IPOs pushed for the guidelines to be binding but this proposal was immediately turned down by Argentina, Canada, Kenya and Bahamas. And so the Akwé: Kon guidelines on impact assessment remain a voluntary draft.

Attempts to undermine customary law and inherent land treaties in the report were unsuccessful and the final text still contains relatively progressive language such as "National Environmental Impact Assessment legislation [...] should respect existing inherent land and treaty rights as well as legally-established rights of ILC." Elements that were particularly progressive were: the inclusion of these guidelines into national EIA legislation; promoting community participation and transparency; information exchange; providing adequate capacity and funding; and supporting communities in formulating their own development and conservation plans, including a strategic EIA.

Conclusion

The GURT issue is being tossed like a hot potato from one body to another of the CBD machinery, each meeting recommending that it be dealt with at another meeting. ENGOs will find it increasingly difficult to convince delegates to forbid field testing of GURTs. Brazil, which was traditionally very critical of GMOs, serve as an example of the increasing push to test GURTs. Nonetheless, ENGOs should push for the CBD to take a firm stance against GURTs before COP-8. On impact assessment, granted that they are still not legally binding and remain draft voluntary guidelines, the progressive elements agreed at this 8(j) meeting must not be lost at COP-7.

Other issues of probable contention at COP-7 will be: 1) whether the voluntary funding mechanism to facilitate participation of ILC to CBD meetings are to be directed exclusively to ILC from developing countries or to ILC in general; 2) reference to other indigenous fora such as the Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the International Labour Organization (ILO); 3) the role of national and international law as well as recognition of customary law in 8(j) recommendations.

On all these issues, ENGOs should closely collaborate with IPOs at COP-7. Indeed, ENGOs could greatly benefit from the IPOs' excellent cohesion, organization, preparedness and lobbying skills. Just don't forget to ask IPOs permission to share strategies with them well in advance. Bo@internet.uqam.ca

L'Approche Ecosystémique pourra-t-elle réduire la pauvreté en Afrique?

dr. laurent ntahuga

Ces derniers temps, il a souvent été question de l'Approche Ecosystémique (AE), qui représente une méthodologie de gestion des ressources naturelles mise en avant aujourd'hui par la Convention sur la Diversité Biologique (CDB). Cette nouvelle voie de la réalisation des objectifs de la CDB est également dénommée "Principes de Malawi" en mémoire du lieu où les 12 règles furent conçues et couchées sur papier.

Dans tous les cas, la question majeure pour la région Afrique est de savoir si l'AE apportera quelque chose dans la lutte engagée sur le continent pour réduire la pauvreté, ou s'il s'agit tout simplement du fruit de cogitations savantes conçues et diffusées par les scientifiques de la conservation, qui ne mènera nulle part. En effet, si l'AE est une manière détournée de la gestion policière des ressources de la biodiversité légalement protégées ou non, comme cela s'est vu par le passé, à ce moment-là, la Société Civile engagée dans la question de la gestion durable de l'Environnement devrait tout faire pour la refuser.

Depuis le Sommet Mondial sur le Développement Durable de Johannesburg ainsi que le 5e Congrès Mondial de l'UICN sur les Parcs de Durban, les deux événements ayant eu lieu respectivement en août/septembre 2002 et septembre 2003 en Afrique du Sud, il est devenu clair que:

- la gestion durable des aires protégées doit passer par les gens dans toutes leurs catégories: décideurs, agents intermédiaires, communautés locales et indigènes, ...
- la gestion des ressources naturelles ne peut pas se limiter seulement aux aires légalement mises en défends mais bien plutôt partout où elles se trouvent,
- les ressources de la biodiversité ne seront durablement préservées que si elles contribuent réellement à la réduction de la pauvreté des populations rurales partout au monde et en Afrique particulièrement, où le phénomène de la pauvreté ne fait que s'accroître.

Un regard critique sur les 12 principes de l'AE montre bien que les soucis des deux réunions mondiales, qui d'ailleurs avaient déjà été exprimés en juin 1992 à Rio de Janeiro (Brésil) lors de la CNUED (Conférence des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement et le Développement) à travers le fameux Agenda 21, sont la clé de voûte de l'AE. Ainsi, sur les 12 principes, 6 sont en rapport immédiat avec l'homme en tant que gestionnaire mais aussi en sa position d'utilisateur et de bénéficiaire de la diversité biologique, source majeure de son bien-être socio-économique.

Les 6 principes auxquels je fais allusion sont les suivants:

Principe no 1: Les objectifs de la gestion de la terre, de l'eau et des ressources vivantes relèvent du choix des sociétés humaines.

Principe no 2: La gestion devrait être décentralisée jusqu'au niveau approprié le plus bas.

Principe no 4: Reconnaisant les gains potentiels de la gestion, il y a d'habitude un besoin de comprendre et de gérer l'écosystème dans le contexte économique. Ainsi, tout programme de gestion d'écosystème devrait:

- a. réduire les distorsions commerciales qui ont des effets négatifs sur la diversité biologique;
- b. aligner les avantages propres à promouvoir la conservation et l'utilisation durable de la biodiversité;
- c. apprécier les coûts et bénéfices d'un écosystème donné par rapport à lui-même.

Principe no 5: La conservation de la structure et du fonctionnement d'un écosystème, dans le but d'en maintenir les services, devrait représenter un objectif prioritaire de l'AE.

Principe no 10: L'Approche Ecosystémique devrait rechercher l'équilibre approprié entre, et l'intégration de la conservation et de l'utilisation durable de la diversité biologique.

Principe no 12: L'Approche Ecosystémique devrait intégrer tous les secteurs concernés de la société et des disciplines scientifiques.

Ces 6 règles, une fois appliquées efficacement, devraient contribuer à créer progressivement un contexte de gestion des ressources biologiques favorable à la réduction des différents phénomènes et extériorisations de la pauvreté de nos populations mondiales et spécifiquement Africaines, où ils semblent avoir pris racine.

Ce que nous demandons à la septième Conférence des Parties de la CDB de Kuala Lumpur est d'officialiser l'AE en adoptant ses recommandations élaborées par la SBSTTA 9 (9th Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice) de Montréal en Novembre 2003 et qui ont été acceptées par les Délégués alors présents sans trop de discussions probablement parce que cette nouvelle approche, de nature à consolider la réalisation des 3 objectifs de la CDB de manière équilibrée, venait à point nommé.

L'espoir que nous portons dans nos cœurs et esprits est que, si l'AE est entendue, comprise et mise en application par toutes les personnes chargées de la conservation, et acceptée par les populations des divers continents, non seulement la perte fulgurante en diversité biologique et génétique, dont nous sommes aujourd'hui à la fois témoins et acteurs, sera mise au ralenti voire stoppée, mais aussi la pauvreté si dure à subir et à voir autour de soi sera efficacement combattue en Afrique et ailleurs.

On the way to Kuala Lumpur: Where will protected areas go?

peter herkenrath • birdlife international

The preamble to the CBD says 'that the fundamental requirement for the conservation of biological diversity is the *in-situ* conservation of ecosystems and natural habitats'. Article 8 on *in-situ- conservation* prominently lists the establishment of a system of protected areas as a prime responsibility for Parties to the Convention. It is therefore surprising that COP 7 will be the first COP dealing with protected areas as an agenda item of its own. This article looks at some of the crucial issues of the CBD's protected area debate.

In November 2003, the 9th meeting of the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), meeting in Montréal, Canada, discussed a programme of work (PoW) on protected areas. SBSTTA had before it a first draft from the meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Protected Areas (June 2003, Sweden) and concrete suggestions from the World Parks Congress (September 2003, South Africa). Under intense time pressure, SBSTTA did not manage to agree on the full text of the PoW, but only on a frame, consisting of four programme elements with goals and targets. The introduction and the activities by Parties and the Executive Secretary remain in square brackets and will be discussed at COP 7. SBSTTA also agreed on a number of recommendations, mainly to the COP, accompanying the PoW.

The elements of the PoW, as agreed on by SBSTTA, provide the chance for a comprehensive PoW, addressing all the big issues surrounding protected areas (PAs). Programme element 1 covers the planning, establishment and management of PA systems and sites. National and regional PA systems should be integrated in a global network which contributes to the CBD and World Summit on Sustainable Development target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, and also to the Millennium Development Goals. PAs should be integrated in broader land- and seascapes. Programme element 2 addresses governance, participation, equity and benefit-sharing and it is here where language on the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities was watered down during a SBSTTA contact group. Programme element 3 covers enabling activities, such as a positive policy and socio-economic environment, technology transfer and capacity-building. Finally, programme element 4 establishes mechanisms for standards, assessment of PA effectiveness, and monitoring of PAs.

At SBSTTA, with technical and scientific staff dominating many government delegations, there was wide agreement on such a comprehensive PoW. It would be no surprise if at the COP, with its rather political agenda, attempts will be made to reduce the PoW to a few things that governments are doing already. *It is of utmost importance that civil society representatives insist on the following major conditions to keep supporting the proposed PoW: Firstly, the standard of the current draft should not be watered down. Secondly, the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities need to be strengthened. Thirdly, the far-reaching recommendations from SBSTTA 8 on marine and coastal protected areas need to be integrated. And fourthly, developed countries and donor agencies need to commit to substantial and long-term funding for PAs, while in-country sources of funding need to be systematically explored, including addressing the major influence of corruption on the effectiveness of protected areas.*

At SBSTTA 9, a consortium of international NGOs – BirdLife International, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Society, WWF and World Resources Institute – launched a pledge of substantial support to a strong PoW on PAs. This was warmly welcomed especially by many developing country delegations. This pledge will be further developed for the COP and will hopefully stimulate adequate commitments by the donor community. Without a major increase in support to *in-situ* conservation, local communities and park managers will not be able to sustain the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. It is the achievement of the 2010 target which is at stake.

Editor's Note: Peter has now left Birdlife for a post with UNEP. He will continue working on biodiversity files for UNEP, and the NGO community wishes Peter well on his new job within the intergovernmental community. He will be missed!



Indigenous Peoples and the Protected Areas Programme of Work

forest peoples programme • T E B T E B B A

Governments and scientists met in Montreal from November 10-14, 2003 to prepare background documents and draft decisions recommended for adoption at the forthcoming 7th Conference of the parties to the CBD, to be held from February 9-20, 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The main goals of the Indigenous caucus were to build on the outcomes of the 5th World Parks Congress and get strong language on Indigenous Peoples' rights and prior informed consent, acknowledgement of the value of a rights-based approach in protected area planning and management in particular, and conservation activities in general, prohibition on involuntary resettlement of Indigenous Peoples from protected areas, prohibition of large-scale extractive industries in protected areas and inclusion of social and human rights indicators in the monitoring and reporting systems for the Convention. As usual, gains and setbacks were experienced. On the positive side, several notable achievements were made.

the positive

The structure of the draft work programme on protected areas was amended to include an additional programme element on "Governance, Participation, Equity and Benefit Sharing". There was no time to discuss the activities of the Parties under this new work programme, so the activities of the Parties and Secretariat in the work programme will be fully up for negotiation at COP 7. As they stand, some of the draft activities are potentially useful and stem largely from the Durban Action Plan and Recommendations. For example, under Programme Element 2.0 on Governance, participation, equity and benefit sharing activities 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 promote indigenous protected areas and community protected areas, while activity 2.2.3 affirms that protected areas have to be established and managed: "with the prior informed consent and in full compliance with the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities" [see COP7 document UNEP/CBD/COP/7/4, pp. 46-47]. This important language will need to be defended in Kuala Lumpur as some governments at SBSTTA-9 were already indicating that they plan to weaken these elements in the work programme. At the same time, some of the language under Programme Element 2.0 is muddled and need to be strengthened and made more precise.

the negative

The final draft SBSTTA text on protected areas does not feature any prohibition on forced resettlement nor does it propose a moratorium on damaging large-scale activities in protected areas (industrial logging, mining, mineral and oil exploration etc.). There were no recommendations on the need for indicators on human rights incorporated in the draft documentation. Canada, Australia and New Zealand, among other Governments, managed to undermine and seriously dilute useful language on Indigenous Peoples' rights in the draft decisions of the COP on protected areas. As it stands, the SBSTTA language at paragraph 6(s) for COP decisions on Protected Areas (UNEP/CBD/COP/7/4, p. 36) reads: "Recalling the obligations of Parties to Indigenous and local communities in accordance with article 8j of the Convention and [national legislation] and noting that the establishment and management of protected areas required particular attention. [Respect for land tenure, prior informed consent and Indigenous territorial rights, where applicable, are critical in this regard]."

Indigenous participants at SBSTTA-9 intervened at the end of the meeting to complain about the loss of meaningful language on indigenous peoples rights and this was recorded in the formal report of the SBSTTA meeting as follows:

"The representative of the Tebtebba Foundation, stated that the purpose of paragraph 6(s) of the draft recommendation, namely to recognize the rights of indigenous and local communities, appeared to have been lost and the text should be amended to reflect the language in the goals and targets contained in Goal 2.2. She requested that the report reflect the fact that the language of paragraph 6(s) as it stood was *unacceptable* to indigenous peoples" [UNEP/CBD/COP/7/4, p. 15, para. 74 – emphasis added]

There is still resistance to any language on rights or rights-based approaches; preference is given to the terms "needs" and "participatory approaches" instead. Social targets for the expansion and consolidation of national and regional protected areas systems remain limited in the draft decisions and work programme on protected areas and efforts will be needed at COP7 to try and strengthen and clarify social targets in the work programme. The current social target within the draft PA work programme makes no sense and needs to be rectified (see Goal 2.2). Any promotion of expansion of protected areas under the auspices of the CBD and GEF without due consideration and prior resolution of Indigenous Peoples' rights issues, creates a high risk of yet more top-down conservation projects and imposed parks.

Protected Areas, Funding and the Millennium Development Goals

joy hyvarinen • royal society for the protection of birds

The current proposal that Article 8(m) be considered as one of several outstanding issues by an Ad hoc Technical Experts Group or Working Group after COP7 is a delaying tactic. Donor country governments must come to Kuala Lumpur ready to make at least initial commitments. Article 8(m), which states that parties are to cooperate in providing financial and other support for in-situ conservation, particularly to developing countries, is a 'lost' Article, which has not been the subject of any action under the CBD.

The draft work programme on protected areas before COP7 has many good elements. However, many issues are unresolved. *In a major failure, the question of funding has not been addressed.* There is an urgent need to increase the level of funding from developed to developing countries under the CBD. The World Parks Congress in Durban (September 2003) confirmed the shift to a new paradigm for protected areas, which recognises the importance of local communities and the key role of indigenous peoples. The RSPB believes that the policy of expecting poor people to forego benefits that they would otherwise realise is not morally defensible, nor does it provide a realistic means of delivering international commitments. *The current low level of international funding means that the costs of conservation are not shouldered as a shared burden, but are carried by what are often the poorest communities and those least able to bear the costs.* A radical rethink is required, to find ways of both supporting poor communities and conserving biodiversity.

Conservation groups should play a role in taking forward action on protected areas under the CBD, including providing some funding, but it is Contracting Party governments that have legal commitments. As several studies show, the scale of funding required demands fulfilment of inter-governmental commitments.

The importance of COP7 for the Millennium Development Goals, the new international development framework, seems not to be fully appreciated. One of the key indicators that will measure progress towards the 'environmental' Millennium Development Goal is 'land area protected to maintain biological diversity'. Through this protected areas indicator, the international community is expecting progress on protected areas in developing countries. One of the key principles of the Millennium Development Goals is that developing countries will receive international donor support for their efforts to achieve the Goals. COP7 needs to act to ensure that the 'Global Partnership for Development', as set out in one of the Goals, is put in practice for protected areas.

The CBD remains a mega-convention that has not fulfilled its potential. The RSPB remains concerned about the long-term prospects of the CBD. Protected areas, an international benefit-sharing régime and the Millennium Development Goals are mission-critical for the CBD - the outcome of COP7 on these issues will be extremely important.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NGO Forum • 8 Feb 2004 • 1-6 pm • Grand Pacific Hotel

The NGO Forum is co-organised by the MENGOS (Malaysian Environmental NGOs) and Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI). This session will introduce first timers to the COP process and key issues, give an overview of what will happen, and do some preliminary planning and organizing for NGO lobby activities. We will also be giving out relevant documents from the CBD secretariat.

MENGO Welcome Reception • Feb 8 2004 • 7-9 pm • Dynasty Hotel

The MENGO Welcome Reception will be held at the pool side at the Dynasty Hotel from 7-9 pm (located next to Grand Pacific Hotel).