

## Canada undermining rights of indigenous and local communities

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A contact group set up on Tuesday produced a streamlined version of the draft PoW. While still serving as a comprehensive approach to the implementation of the CBD on islands, the refined version is more focused on island needs and requirements. The contact group added an important target dealing with the maintenance of the capacity of ecosystems to deliver goods and services and support livelihoods, local food security and health care. On the negative side, a priority action (column 2 in the draft table) on the protection of linguistic diversity was moved to supporting action (still to be decided where) and the request of indigenous representatives to add a priority action containing reference to prior informed consent in relation to the establishment of gene banks was refused. During the discussion in Working Group 1, a representative of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity asked SBSTTA to refer the PoW to the Working Group on Art. 8(j) and to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for them to review the PoW and provide comments.

**The biggest threat to indigenous and local communities, however, came from Canada.** One of the principal activities in restructuring the PoW was to edit the Timeframe and Global Targets (column 1 in the table) by replacing them with the exact text approved at COP7 (Annex II to Decision VII/30 - Strategic Plan: Future Evaluation of Progress). Accordingly, target 15 read: *'By 2010, protect traditional knowledge, innovations and practices and the rights of indigenous and local communities over their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, including their rights to benefit-sharing'* (combining Target 9.1 and 9.2 of the provisional Framework for Goals and Targets in Decision VII/30).

The contact group developed Priority Action 15.1 addressing the protection of traditional knowledge and 15.2 addressing the rights of indigenous and local communities, which read: *'Develop and implement legislation for the respect and protection of indigenous rights over their traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, including their rights to benefit-sharing'*.

When the PoW came up for discussion in Working Group 1 on Thursday afternoon, with less than one hour available to go through the whole draft, most of the time was taken up by Canada attacking not only Priority Action 15.2 but even target 15. Canada suggested new text to replace 15.2 (text dealing with participation in benefit-sharing), and then wanted the language of Target 15 changed, removing any reference to rights of indigenous and local communities. Several delegations responded that Target 15 should not be changed as this is based on text already approved by COP 7. Concerning Priority Action 15.2, however, some delegations did agree to Canada's text, assuming that Canada would accept retaining Target 15 if they agreed to change action 15.2. *Canada, however, insisted on changing Target 15.* When it became obvious that many delegations would not accept this, the delegate from Canada asked that a paragraph be added in the resolution asking the next COP to revise Targets 9.1 and 9.2 in the Provisional Framework for Goals and Targets.

The working session was adjourned with Targets 14 and 15 in brackets and the issue will continue to be discussed on Friday morning. Indigenous and local communities, NGOs and several delegations were dismayed and appalled by Canada's insistence to remove language on the rights of indigenous and local communities already approved by COP7.

### **??Should we trust Canada's word on indigenous peoples??**

Many Indigenous Peoples in Canada continue to live life on the margins. Research conducted by the Government of Canada itself found community well-being (CWB) in First Nations communities to be consistently and considerably lower than well-being in non-First Nations communities. Specifically:

- In 1991, CWB in First Nations (FN) communities was .58, compared to .77 for non (with 1.0 the highest possible score);
- In 1996, the CWB in FN communities was 0.62 and .77 in non; and
- In 2001, the CWB in FN communities was .65 and .80 in non.

(Source: O'Sullivan, E. and M. McHardy. 2004 The Community Well-Being (CWB) Index: Disparity in Well-Being Between First Nations and Other Canadian Communities Over Time. Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

**Trust them to do the right thing in terms of protecting the rights of indigenous people? Probably not a good idea...especially if you are an indigenous person!**

# GTI@ the CBD: A Middle Eastern perspective

e. j. sattout - initiative for biodiversity studies, lebanon

Governments have acknowledged the existence of a "taxonomic impediment" to the sound management of biodiversity through the CBD. After 10 years, international communities at the WSSD requested government and international organizations to recognize the essential role of taxonomy and its contribution to sustainable development at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Taxonomy Workshop. During this event, the worldwide communities underpinned the need to support taxonomic institutions to rapidly document the biodiversity which forms the basis of sustainable human livelihoods, and to promote the necessary linkages between taxonomic centres and civil society and asked to build adequate capacity in all regions for taxonomy to play this essential role.

**...Another decade...Demands and initiatives are numerous but there is an urgent need to act!**

Are we running out of time to document worldwide biodiversity? It was stated recently that the rate of biodiversity loss will vary between 15% and 37% over the next 50 years. Is the evolution of our minds following the same curve as the loss of biodiversity? Or are we finally conscious of earth needs at the last minute?

## ***What's on the agenda of SBSTTA 10?***

The agenda is set to assess the implementation of the programme of work of the GTI and to discuss the outline of the GTI guide. Guidelines and mechanisms for monitoring progress of the programme of work of the GTI were prepared, and are being presented for discussion and consideration. Delegates will be defining for each activity a rationale, expected outputs, a timetable, actors, mechanisms, financial, human resources and other capacity requirements.

During the past decade, international communities were working through the CBD on "conceptualization", defining methodologies and innovating approaches for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. The taxonomic initiative seems to be following the same path where international communities are going through same exercises of assessing programme of work and developing strategic plans and guides. The five operational objectives will need another decade before action plans are implemented to remediate the gap in taxonomy, especially in developing countries...

*Success is not guaranteed when countries with different cultures are addressed with standardized approaches; instead the implementation of programmes should pinpoint to the diversity in culture and social perspectives and conceptualize process accordingly.*

## ***A point of view from the Middle East***

Many initiatives in the Middle East have been undertaken to develop checklists of flora and fauna and to update those of defined ecosystems. In most cases, this information remains exclusive to the initiating bodies. Much of the effort invested in such initiatives are lost when information and / or experiences are not shared and do not come to serve national goals and causes. This is especially problematic given that taxonomists are rare and have become "critically endangered" in our region. It is quite obvious that a gap remains in effective networking between various taxonomists and especially mainstreaming their efforts in national conservation policies and plans. Furthermore, there is an absence of a common national, sub-regional and regional vision. This vision is necessary in order to respond to the demands of government bodies about the conservation and sustainable management policies of specific species, ecosystems, important areas and the natural world as a whole.

However, to mainstream biodiversity identification and assessment studies in conservation policy programmes and plans there must be an innovative mechanism to interlink researchers, politicians and businessmen. This is not only difficult but could be a barrier ... inter-linkage is needed between researchers themselves, politicians and businessmen... especially in the Orient where networks between communities are deeply intercepted. This seems to be the case not only in Middle Eastern countries but also in the developed countries. An initiative to build bridges between fragmented multifaceted communities was concretized during the last conference held last month in Paris. The conference Biodiversity, Science and Governance gathered politicians and scientists from all over the world to popularize and to concretize scientific efforts in effective policy programmes.

**This could be finding an Oasis in a desert for our region!**

The minor participation of "concerned" delegates from Middle Eastern countries in these international events and CBD events is keeping them in the shadows, and reduces the possibility of reflecting the real situation of governments, research institutions and planners. The lack of participation is resulting in **a loss of potential learning from others**; though seeking "oriental solutions" to remediate gaps in taxonomy and to mainstream related plans in national plans and policies.

# Interminable Terminator

hope shand – etc. group

The Chair's text on Terminator/GURTs delivered to Working Group 1 on Thursday morning looked like a dream come true for the multinational seed industry. The text opened the door to field-testing and commercialization of genetic seed sterilization – including “capacity building, particularly for developing countries... for, the use of GURTs...” The disgraceful text explicitly mentioned the importance of observing “field experiments” on GURTs, and asked for the private sector's cooperation in researching GURTs. Given that SBSTTA10 is crawling with biotech industry representatives, the appalling text is not surprising.

Canada was only one member of the drafting group [which included Canada, EC, Peru, Tanzania, and the Philippines], but the Chair's text strongly reflects the Canadian government's pro-Terminator position as revealed earlier this week in a leaked document. During debate in Working Group 1, Peru objected to parts of the draft which included text that was not agreed upon by the Chair's drafting group.

Thankfully, disaster was averted in Working Group 1 by interventions from Norway, Sweden, Austria, EC, Cuba, Peru and Liberia, on behalf of the African Group.

The good news is that, after the very worst text was deleted, the draft reaffirms Decision V.5, section III [which includes the weak, *de facto* moratorium on Terminator]. Also, the Working Group on 8(j) will have an important opportunity to review the AHTEG Report on GURTs in March 2006 and make recommendations to COP8.

The bad news is that the text allows for the issue of Terminator to be re-examined and re-studied interminably. SBSTTA10 continues to dilly-dally and delay decisions on Terminator. In the meantime, the industry is moving full speed ahead to bring sterile seeds to farmers' fields.

**You are cordially invited to a discussion with:**

**PERCY SCHMEISER**

**on**

**TERMINATOR TECHNOLOGY (GURTS)**

Family farmer from Saskatchewan, Canada, Percy Schmeiser was sued by Monsanto when his farm was contaminated with genetically modified canola. Monsanto claimed that he owed them money because their patented crops were on his land. He fought Monsanto all the way to the Canadian Supreme Court. Percy will be talking about what Terminator Technology means for farmers and global food security.

**TIME: 12:15 Friday**

**PLACE: Foyer (ground floor)**

## Africa's Protected Areas face \$300 million annual funding shortfall

birdlife international

**7 February 2005, Nairobi, Kenya** – US\$300 million per year is the estimated cost of managing and protecting Africa's 1,200 plus existing Protected Areas. This is the conclusion of a recent global gathering of Protected Area managers and experts.

Meeting in Nairobi from 1–2 February 2005, the discussions were organised by BirdLife International and the African Protected Areas Initiative (APAI). Participants made it clear that Protected Areas in Africa form part of the mosaic of land-use that must be managed for the health of the region, and argued that they are essential ingredients for achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

All Africa faces a daunting challenge to reconcile the sustainable management of its natural resources with pressing development needs. But it is widely acknowledged that biodiversity has a direct link to poverty, human health and well-being and a wide range of biological resources provide food, medicine and alternative sources of income for rural communities.

In this complex landscape, the role of Protected Areas in development is insufficiently recognised and the threats these areas face are compounded by inadequate allocation of financial resources in national budgets.

More critically, the global benefits that Africa's Protected Areas provide have not so far attracted adequate funding from the international community: a more than threefold increase in spending is probably required. And this money is well spent. The long-term benefits derived from these areas could double these inputs and significantly increase the survival for global biodiversity.

In Madagascar, for example, experts at the workshop pointed out that studies have shown that for every one US\$ invested in conserving that country's extraordinarily rich biodiversity, two US\$ have been generated for sustainable development.

Dr Hazell Shokellu Thompson, Head of BirdLife International's Africa Secretariat commented: "Although on paper many of our region's best wildlife areas appear to be protected, the reality is that they are severely underfunded. Now that a group of African colleagues have identified this staggering shortfall of \$300 million per year for managing existing networks, conservationists and governments can work together to ensure the continued prosperity of these vital natural treasures. And we can make sure that the network expands to truly reflect Africa's biodiversity for the future of its citizens."

# High time for The High Seas - the Wild, Wild West of the Oceans

nathalie rey – greenpeace

When a nuclear powered submarine owned by a leading world power crashes into a huge undersea mountain that didn't appear on any maps, you have to wonder how much we really know about the deep, dark depths of our planet's oceans. Incredibly, there are more maps of the moon than there are of the deep seabed. George Bush wants to increase NASA's budget by US\$1 billion for his mission to find life on Mars (which has a total cost of about US\$12 billion) when we have not yet discovered the extent of life in our own oceans – and the US nuclear sub that crashed into a seamount last month provides even more evidence of just how little we know.

For most of the high seas, very little is known about the extent or number of species that inhabit the deep dark depths of the oceans. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of seamount ecosystems occur across the world's oceans, yet less than 50 have been comprehensively studied. However, it is clear from available research that there are vast numbers of species in these ecosystems that we know absolutely nothing about – there are some that have yet to be discovered. So we certainly don't know what role they play within ocean ecosystems.

Currently there are a relatively small number of ships, flagged to a dozen or so wealthy, mainly OECD countries that are destroying high seas biodiversity that could potentially offer insights into disease processes and their cures, and even provide answers to questions about the origins of life on our planet. Bottom trawling has been identified as one of the most destructive fishing practices by the international community, including over 1000 deep-sea scientists who released a statement at the CBD COP 7 outlining their concern over this issue. Bottom trawlers drag large nets fitted with heavy chains and steel plates across the ocean floor, scooping up everything in their path. They effectively strip mine these areas, destroying their inhabitants even before scientists have had the opportunity to understand and explain their roles in our planet's functioning.

Once again, a small group of 'haves' are the first to unsustainably exploit global biodiversity. This time, however, they are profiting from the largest single area that is recognised as the common heritage of humankind: the High Seas. In so doing, they are destroying deep-sea biological diversity that is as yet unknown and unexplored.

Ten years ago, the focus of oceans policy negotiators was on ways to regulate activities and secure sovereignty over waters adjacent to coastal states. Today areas "beyond national jurisdiction" are starting to receive more attention in the political arena, and it is being recognised that the protection of the high seas is currently a huge gap in the global representative protected area system. Greenpeace as part of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition and a number of countries have been calling for a United Nations General Assembly moratorium on high seas bottom trawling. This temporary ban would provide the space to gather information about these deep-sea ecosystems, and to then use it to inform the policy making process to ensure that the deep sea does not follow the path of the world's other fisheries.

In upcoming CBD meetings (Ad Hoc Working Group on Protected Areas in June and SBSTTA 11), countries will be considering high seas marine protected areas as well as the conservation and sustainable use of deep seabed genetic resources beyond national jurisdiction. CBD Parties must send a strong signal to the UNGA underlining the call in Decision VII/5 for states and the United Nations to take measures to protect deep sea biodiversity, and supporting the call for a moratorium on high seas bottom trawling as a step towards improving oceans governance, thereby enabling scientists to further explore this weird and wonderful underwater world before its biodiversity has been destroyed.

It is high time that the high seas received more attention, and that countries take their responsibilities as the current stewards of this global commons seriously. The High Seas accounts for over 2/3 of the world's seas and oceans, and biodiversity in these regions is as much under threat as within areas of national jurisdiction. To not recognise this would effectively ignore the fact that High Seas marine areas make up an integral part of the world's oceans and that as a recognised part of the global commons, require comprehensive joint-action by states to conserve and protect its biodiversity.

