

Road blocks are up, environmentalists not responsible Kevin Scott and Tamara Stark

There are some road blocks impeding the adoption of the forest plan, and surprisingly, there isn't a deadlock in sight. While the work plan has so far (fortunately) been adopted as is, certain countries are blocking the language of the chapeaux. Some openly, like Bolivia, Argentina and Brazil, and others orchestrating resistance from behind the scenes

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(hint: starts with a C and ends with an A, eh). One major sticking point is whether the plan should "prioritize or not prioritize". Within this debate, the need to prioritize primary forests have been given a large amount of air time. Interventions against the prioritization of primary forests have provided far ranging (ir)rationales from "All forests are ecologically significant" to "Primary will mean that sustainable use will be ignored" to "Developing countries without primary forests will lose funding" and "Priority setting should remain on national levels". This is all incorrect! Forest NGOs continue to refute these arguments, reiterating reports coming out of SBSTTA and the Ad Hoc working groups which state that the protection of primary forests is a sure way to conserve biodiversity. And focussing on these biologically diverse forests does not necessarily exclude focus on other ecologically sensitive forests. And wording has been tabled through the Friends of the Chair that will de-link prioritizing from GEF support, soothing developing country concerns.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Side Event by Global Forest Coalition- FERN,
Monday 15 April 6:30-7:45 pm

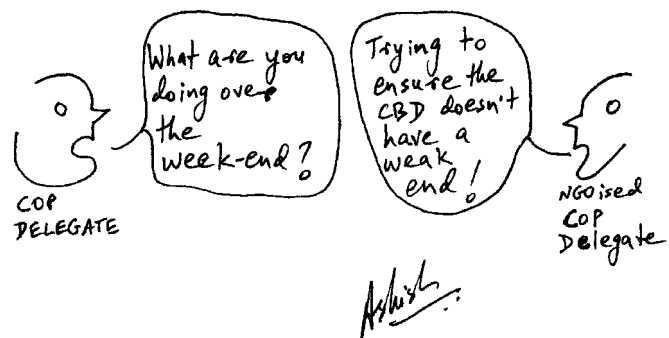
KAREL WILLINK Room: "Have CBD forest-related commitments been implemented? A Global Independent Report (21 countries)."

PARTY after hours at the CBD

Friday 12 April, 20:00-02:00. NGOs are inviting all delegates at COP6 to come, relax and dance the night away, at the Pulchri Studio, Lange Voorhout 15, den Hague

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

Target setting has also been a sticking point within forests as they are deemed unreasonable and politically unviable. But without targets, we lose a key part of an effective, and *action oriented* CBD. We have observed the power of international targets and timetables over the past decade, under the Montreal protocol. Illegal logging too has been contentious and sensitive, and it seems as though an clarification of the term might be necessary. Further, while illegal logging may not directly impact certain countries, it is still, very much, an international issue. Both the North and the South need to work with specific targets to stop illegal logging and the *consumption of illegally logged products*. Political positions understood, we need to ask: without some bold action on the loss of primary forests and attending biodiversity, what is the point of the CBD? These issues are going to be discussed in the next 24 hours and it is critical that these issues are resolved. Lastly, NGOs are quizzical over another strange UFO found playing a large part in forest negotiations. We must ask: Why is the US delegation participating in the Friends of the Chair when they have been no friend to the CBD?



Bringing the CBD Home: Making a NBSAP for a Billion People

Ashish Kothari

How do you make a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) for one billion people, consisting of 4635 ethnic communities, 325 languages, and occupations ranging from ancient hunter-gatherers to modern computer geeks?

You don't. That is to say, you don't make one action plan. What you do is to urge diverse communities, political constituencies, and ecologically distinct regions to make their own plans...and then put them together into a national plan that tries to encompass the diversity.

This, in a nutshell, describes India's NBSAP process. Funded by the GEF through UNDP, the Indian Government's Ministry of Environment and Forests is attempting what must be the most ambitious environment and development planning exercise ever attempted in India. And arguably the largest NBSAP exercise in the world. But what makes the exercise really stand out, is that the entire process is being coordinated by a national NGO, Kalpavriksh, which has set up a Technical and Policy Core Group (TPCG) for the day-to-day planning, monitoring, and synthesising of the process. The Ministry plays a key facilitating role, and takes the financial decisions, but leaves technical functioning and decision-making to the TPCG. Administrative coordination is handled by a corporate sector entity, the Biotech Consortium India Ltd.

Some highlights of the process, which began in early 2000 and is slated to end in early 2003:

- Focus on conservation, sustainable use, and equity in use of biological resources, with two bottom lines: ecological security, and people's livelihood security
- Linkage of biodiversity with cultural life and people's livelihoods
- 74 action plans being prepared at local, state, inter-state (ecoregional), and thematic levels; 30 additional thematic reviews being prepared by experts
- Final national action plan to build on all of above (but the above plans to remain independently implementable)

- Participation of all relevant sectors: farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous/tribal people, scientists, academics, students, government officials, NGOs, corporate sector, artists, political leaders; stress on use of local languages to maximise participation
- Stress on cross-cutting issues, including gender and social equity, people's empowerment, integrity of critical ecosystems and threatened species, and sectoral integration
- Integrating earlier processes, including National Forest Action Plan, Wildlife Action Plan, Environmental Action Programme, and others
- Full transparency, with all minutes, documents, drafts being available to the public
- Over 2000 people involved in central way; and over 50,000 in substantial way through workshops, public hearings, *yatras* ("pilgrimages"), festivals, and consultations.

By no means has all gone well with the process. Women's participation has been poorer than desired. Many state governments, and many ministries in the federal government, have been lukewarm in responding. Involvement of the corporate sector, the armed forces, and some other constituencies has been inadequate. And as the process winds to a close, it will face several serious challenges. Not least of this is the difficulty of reconciling a multitude of voices, priorities, data, and opinions into a coherent national plan. Then there is the issue of implementation, which will require a "buy-in" by key sectors of government and civil society, changes in perverse policies and development processes that continue to cause large-scale biodiversity loss, and appropriate technical and financial resources. The hope is that the large-scale participation will generate a momentum that will be hard to resist, a network that will continue to press for such changes. We'll let you know at COP7 whether this hope is realised!

(For more details, please contact the Indian delegation at the COP, or Ashish Kothari or Bansuri Taneja of Kalpavriksh at the NGO room; or visit <http://sdnp.delhi.nic.in/nbsap>)

Biodiversity Festivals: Celebrating Life

One of the interesting innovations in the Indian NBSAP process is that of *biodiversity festivals*. Organised in several parts of the country, these are occasions for people to come together around seed and fruit/vegetable diversity exhibits, cultural programmes and rituals linked to nature, posters, games, traditional recipes available on the spot, and many, many other ways of celebrating diversity. In the Western Ghats (a global biodiversity hotspot), one such festival brought together villagers and townspeople together with exhibits and exchange of mango, jackfruit, bamboo, tropical forest tree saplings, medicinal plants, spices, and other elements of biodiversity, adorned with relevant art, craft, and music. This is now being followed up with a horticultural diversity festival. Another festival in the drier zone of central India took 10 bullock-carts, laden with traditional grains and recipes, through 62 villages. In each village, an agro-biodiversity action plan was made, and all were put together into a plan that emphasised women's livelihoods, indigenous seed diversity, food security through public distribution systems, and organic farming. Here and elsewhere, people have decided to make this an annual feature, living well past the NBSAP process.



La Sexta Conferencia de las Partes en relación con los bosques

para Ricardo Carrere, Movimiento Mundial Por Los Bosques Tropicales

La Sexta Conferencia de las Partes del Convenio sobre Diversidad Biológica (CDB) se realizará en abril en La Haya. Se espera mucho de esta conferencia en relación con los bosques, porque ese es el tema principal que se tratará en la reunión. Además, la base para la negociación es el proyecto de programa de trabajo elaborado en noviembre pasado por el organismo científico de la CBD (SBSTTA, por su sigla en inglés), al que valoramos positivamente (ver Boletín 52 del WRM) porque apunta en la dirección correcta, al incluir temas como los derechos de los pobladores locales, participación, distribución equitativa de beneficios, uso sustentable, generación de capacidad y muchos otros temas pertinentes.

Habiendo dicho lo anterior, resulta igualmente importante analizar el contexto mundial en el que se realiza la conferencia, para poder comprender las dificultades existentes en materia de acciones concretas para abordar el drama actual al que se enfrentan los bosques y los pueblos que los habitan.

El primer tema que se debe destacar es que la mayor parte de las causas subyacentes de la destrucción de los bosques, están siendo de hecho promovidas por otros procesos y organismos intergubernamentales como la Organización Mundial del Comercio, el Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI) y el Banco Mundial. A pesar de la evidencia científica que muestra el vínculo directo existente entre el creciente consumo y comercio internacional y la destrucción de los bosques, esas instituciones insisten en promover aún más el comercio internacional. A pesar de la amplia evidencia que vincula los programas de ajuste estructural con la deforestación, el FMI y el Banco Mundial siguen imponiendo la misma receta a los países ricos en bosques del Sur. A pesar de saber a ciencia cierta que la apertura de carreteras es el primer paso para la degradación y destrucción de los bosques, el Banco Mundial y los bancos de "desarrollo" regionales (BID, BAfD, BAD) continúan otorgando préstamos para seguir construyendo carreteras en áreas de bosques.

El segundo tema que hay que destacar es que las causas directas de la pérdida y degradación de los bosques son ampliamente conocidas. Todo el mundo sabe que el maderero, la minería, la explotación de petróleo y gas, las represas hidroeléctricas, las plantaciones para madera, celulosa y aceite de palma, la cría de camarón, la agricultura y la ganadería a gran escala orientadas a la exportación, son todas causas de la destrucción de los bosques. A pesar de eso, el modelo económico dominante está forzando a los países del sur ricos en bosques y pobres en dinero a abrir sus economías a las inversiones de las corporaciones transnacionales precisamente en esas actividades. El resultado es más degradación y pérdida de bosques.

Además, los bosques se enfrentan a otra amenaza todavía más peligrosa: el cambio climático. Incluso si mañana todos los gobiernos se pusieran de acuerdo para no cortar más árboles, los bosques podrían desaparecer, o cambiar en forma radical, a menos que se tomen medidas para detener y revertir el calentamiento global. Este tema es tan conocido como las causas subyacentes y directas de la deforestación que mencionáramos anteriormente. Pero el organismo creado para tratar estos temas (el Convenio sobre Cambio Climático) ha mostrado claramente la falta de voluntad de los principales contaminadores del norte (encabezados por EE.UU.) de comprometerse a lograr reducciones reales y sustanciales en las emisiones de combustibles fósiles. Y lo que es aún peor, la "solución" acordada es plantar millones de hectáreas de monocultivos de árboles en el sur para que actúen como basureros de carbono (llamados eufemísticamente "sumideros de carbono"), acrecentando así la pérdida de biodiversidad.

Para empeorar las cosas, la industria de la biotecnología ya ingresó en el negocio de los árboles y está manipulando genes para hacer que los árboles crezcan más rápido, para que sean más resistentes a los herbicidas, para disminuir el contenido de lignina en la madera para aumentar así la rentabilidad de la industria de la celulosa. Aunque significa una clara amenaza para la biodiversidad de los bosques, la biotecnología todavía actúa con casi total libertad (ver artículo en la sección "general" del boletín).

Por último, también es necesario destacar el completo fracaso del Foro de las Naciones Unidas sobre Bosques (ver artículo en la sección "general" del boletín) en garantizar la instrumentación de las propuestas para la acción acordadas por el Panel Intergubernamental y el Foro sobre Bosques (IPF e IFF, por sus siglas en inglés) para instrumentar soluciones a la crisis de los bosques.

Ése es el escenario más amplio en el que el proceso de la CDB está inmerso. Esas y no la falta de conocimiento, son las dificultades. El desafío para la CDB es asumir el liderazgo para lograr que los gobiernos (tanto del sur como del norte), las corporaciones y los organismos y procesos internacionales y multilaterales, y otros actores pertinentes reviertan el modelo actual de destrucción social y ambiental de los bosques.

Si los delegados gubernamentales en la CDB están dispuestos a asumir ese compromiso y a aprobar un plan de acción creíble para proteger la biodiversidad de los bosques, por cierto que pueden contar con nosotros, las ONG y las organizaciones de pueblos indígenas para brindar nuestro apoyo a su instrumentación.

Cooperation between the conventions – a myth?

Peter Herkenrath
BirdLife International

It has been said too often, but it is still reality: there is much overlap between the working areas of environmental conventions, and there is a lack of cooperation. Well, cooperation with other conventions is an agenda item of every COP, and the CBD Secretariat has signed Memorandi of Understanding with a number of other conventions. But does that lead to real cooperation? There are encouraging examples, like, amongst others, the joint work plan between the CBD and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands which is up for its third renewal at this COP. What about the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)? The CMS, which has gained momentum over the past years, is concerned with an important aspect of biodiversity, specifically referred to in the CBD. Cooperation should be close and effective, one would expect. But, after many years of discussion, it is only this CBD COP which for the first time has a draft joint work programme on its table and which will – hopefully – acknowledge the CMS as the lead partner for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory species.

Let's have a look at the national level, where the conventions are to be implemented. A particularly sad example for the lack of synergies is provided by the CBD and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Both are addressing, amongst others, natural resources management in drylands. Both are being implemented through national programmes. Only very few, if any, countries have developed their National Action Programmes (NAPs) under the UNCCD in collaboration with the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and vice versa. One reason is that often different ministries are in charge for the two conventions. It seems these ministries often don't talk to each other. How can COP 6 help to improve this unfortunate situation? Some steps have been taken to improve the cooperation between the secretariats of the CBD and the UNCCD. This is encouraging. But we also need a clear sign of the COP that synergies at the national level are at the core of an effective implementation of environmental agreements, in the light of SBSTTA 7's recommendation that NBSAPs and NAPs 'be linked and integrated'. There are some countries developing joint implementation mechanisms between the CBD, the UNCCD and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The experience from such approaches needs to be made available for other countries. It is national governments who will benefit from such synergies, through more efficient work. And not to forget: local people who often through their management of drylands support the joint implementation of a range of conventions, deserve recognition and a more supportive environment.

STUMP of the DAY AWARD:

was given to *Argentina* for its outrageous proposal to delete five paragraphs of text involving a government moratorium on Terminator technology (GURTS).

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Agricultural Biodiversity and the International Seed Treaty

Patrick Mulvany, based on the CSO statement presented 10 April, endorsed by ANDES, Berne Declaration, ETC Group (formerly RAFI), GRAIN, GAIA, GEN, IATP, IPBN, ITDG, SEARICE, Kalpavriksh

The security of several crops and forages is now one step closer with the long-awaited conclusion of negotiations of this International Seed Treaty. The crop and forage seeds which are covered are important not only to produce the food we eat but also form part of the world's agricultural biodiversity and sustain agricultural landscapes. Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture sustain the lives and livelihoods and ecosystems of the majority of the world's population especially marginalised communities.

The security is far from complete, however. Civil Society organisations have worked for more than 20 years to get to this point, but it is only a first step in securing **all** genetic resources for food and agriculture - ensuring their sustainable use, conservation and continued open access by farmers, herders and fisherfolk, free of intellectual property rights restrictions.

We urge the COP to put continued pressure on the Treaty's Governing Body to address the outstanding issues on intellectual property rights, relationship with the WTO especially TRIPs, material transfer agreements, financing, and strengthening the international implementation of Farmers' Rights.

The Treaty recognises Farmers' Rights to save, exchange and sell seeds but subordinates these to National Laws some of which are restrictive through recognition of patents and other IPRs on plant genetic resources. Other laws, such as the African Union Model Law on Community Rights does not subordinate Farmers' Rights but recognises them as inalienable.

Taking our inspiration from the preambular comment in your Convention:

"...that it is vital to anticipate, prevent and attack the causes of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity at source"

Agricultural biodiversity is in such a perilous state. Losses of more than 90% of crop varieties from farmers' fields in the past century are accelerating as the globalisation of trade, consumer cultures and patenting bites deeper.

Civil Society joins with others to call on the COP to underscore the importance of this Treaty, perhaps by making it the basis of a separately identifiable Decision.

Throughout these negotiations we have taken a consistent position in opposition to Intellectual Property Rights on genetic resources, and will continue to do so in defence of farmers and farming communities.

We would urge countries to make especial efforts to sign the Treaty before the World Food Summit: five years later in June this year and to ratify it by mid 2003. The issues this Treaty deals with are fundamental to food security and the environment, but discussions need to continue in the political space created in the Governing Body to ensure that these resources are secured in the public domain in perpetuity.