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Submissions are welcome from all civil society groups.

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Don't let Wall Street occupy the ecosystems

Opening Statement of the CBD Alliance

We would first like to support the statement of the Indigenous and Local Communities and in particular agree that their knowledge systems are central to the issues before the CBD.

We have come to this SBSTTA to contribute views from Civil Society on the important agenda items you have before you. Through our CBD Alliance, we have discussed and debated these issues in some depth in preparation for this meeting, for example with reference to the comprehensive capacity building strategy of the Global Taxonomy Initiative. We will, at the appropriate times in each agenda item present these to you individually and collectively, if you and your co-chairs will permit. We will welcome the support of Parties for the points we will make.

We have three concerns that we would especially wish to draw to your attention:

1. We would urge you to **ensure that SBSTTA retains an inclusive definition of Science and Technology**, which recognises the sciences, technologies and knowledge systems developed and used by all actors concerned with sustaining life on Earth. We recommend therefore that para 2 of the recommendations include reference to the time-tested knowledge of indigenous and local communities. and have wording to provide to the Chairs. It is also important to recognise that the SBSTTA cannot and should not separate politics from science, technology and knowledge systems. It is artificial and misleading to separate science from its political, economic and cultural contexts. This is a space in the UN system where these issues are debated and prepared for wider consideration and resolution in the COP.

2. We welcome the Rio+20 process and work towards improved environmental governance and anticipate that this SBSTTA will strengthen our work in the Biodiversity Convention. We recommend the **Civil Society Mechanism** adopted in the new UN Committee on World Food Security as a model for improved collaboration in the CBD and Rio+20.

3. We are further concerned about some proposals for the **'Green Economy'** will lead to the commodification of nature and biodiversity, will destroy local communities and undermine the work of this Convention. Governments have not done what they committed to do in 1992 and the proposed 'Green Economy' cannot disguise these failures. There is little to assure us that the control will be retained by democratic intergovernmental processes – and in relation to Biodiversity that means this esteemed Convention. We draw to your attention that the document concerning 'innovative financial mechanisms' was not accepted at COP10 in Nagoya. Market mechanisms are no substitute for rights-based legal protection. Financial institutions that have failed miserably to even manage housing mortgages should not be allowed to play in the garden!

We are here to provide our best and considered advice. We are committed to see a successful outcome of this meeting. We call on everyone here to learn from what is happening outside this conference hall and ensure that nothing that is agreed here will allow Wall St to Occupy the ecosystems of the world.

Recognizing indigenous taxonomic knowledge

Statement on behalf of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB)

Capacity-building is a priority for Indigenous Peoples and the strengthening of our capacity leads towards the implementation of the Convention and its various programmes of work like this one on the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI).

The IIFB feels that all knowledge systems, including scientific knowledge systems, are culturally structured and that there are potential dangers in extracting information from one system, and applying it in another. We additionally feel that it is important to develop a holistic understanding of those systems, so as to understand the context of the information they hold.

Indigenous knowledge exists as inseparable parts of complex cultural systems. Frequently, when scientists have attempted to incorporate indigenous knowledge into their baseline research, the result has been reporting that has not sufficiently captured the complexity of meaning within interview data or observations taken out of their cultural and historical context.

The IIFB would like to propose the following draft recommendation:

Recognizing the holistic views and management of ecosystems including indigenous taxonomic knowledge and the free prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples.

COP 9 Decision IX/22 and the programme of work of the GTI supports working with indigenous communities and identifying indigenous taxonomic knowledge in line with national law and applicable international obligations relating to prior and informed consent.

The IIFB would also like to submit additional changes to draft recommendations 2 and 5 to include indigenous peoples and local communities and knowledge holders of indigenous and traditional taxonomic knowledge in the actions of the GTI Capacity-building Strategy, organizing workshops, and developing a practical learning kit. [...]

Pet Industry Liability to Address Invasive Species?

Nathan Herscher (IFAN)

Animals introduced as pets, bait or as food sometimes escape or are purposefully released from captivity. Sometimes, species become ‘invasive’ – meaning they cause economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health.

Classifying the invasive species issue as anything less than a global catastrophe would be a dramatic understatement. Global economic loss from “pest species” has been estimated to near USD\$ 1.5 trillion per year. And in most cases, the release of pet animals into the wild results in cruel and inhumane death. Invasive species are also one of the greatest threats to biodiversity. To address the threats to biodiversity, the CBD’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 set a target of identifying and prioritizing invasive species and pathways, controlling or eradicating priority species and enacting measures to prevent new introductions and establishments.

Today the pet industry association hosted a side-event where they presented their own ‘solutions’ to the invasive species problem. Much like coal, steel, oil and other damaging but lucrative industries, the pet industry association attempted a thorough greenwash. The gist of the presentation was that business interests unfairly take the rap for irresponsible or uneducated owners. The industry has published a number of posters, websites, and other items asking people not to release pet animals into the wild. My personal favorite? A plastic bag covered with text, with one line asking people not to release animals into the wild. The plastic bag is not recyclable. It’s great that industry is doing something to address the problem, but it is not nearly enough.

One problem we have in addressing the problem is that identifying individuals who actually introduce animals into non-native ecosystems is extremely difficult. Therefore, governments can not recover costs or impose any kind of liability on those individuals. For now, invasive species mitigation falls on governments and individual taxpayers. Instead, we should consider imposing liability on the deep pockets, those businesses and associations that support the trade in species that become invasive – transport companies, wholesalers, and retailers. This will provide an incentive for business to apply the precautionary principle and prevent further invasive species introductions.