

## A Death Foretold...

Stop all the clocks, cut off the COP phone,  
Prevent the polar bear from playing with a juicy bone,  
Silence the piano bar and with muffled drum,  
Bring out the 8J coffin, let the mourners come.

Let the arctic tern circle over dark melting ice,  
Scribble on a US dollar, the message 8J Is Dead  
Put radio collars round the necks of the white peace doves,  
Let the UN security wear black cotton gloves.

She was our North, our South, our East and West,  
Our working group, our Sunday rest,  
Our noon, our midnight, our talk, our song,  
We thought that love would last forever: we were wrong.

Our stars are not wanted now: put out every one,  
Retire all decisions and consolidate to one,  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,  
Pour away the ocean and burn down the wood,  
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

Stop all the clocks, cut off the COP phone,  
The Convention for Life is Dead and Done.

*Dr. N. D. Bracket & Prof. I. M. Awesome  
[with generous thanks to W. H. Auden]  
Further details found on page 2*



# Will the German COP be the Death of 8(j)?

*Anonymous*

Maybe, but we are not there yet.

Everybody knows that the once mighty \$USD can be *the* key consideration at a COP. The budget committee is where big decisions are taken. No money: no action. This committee has been in contact group since day two and cut off from wider planet COP. The core budget cannot withstand the financial demands for myriad Working Groups, expert groups, and other meetings. More pointedly, the call for three ABS Working Groups may place the single 8(j) Working Group meeting in jeopardy.

## **Is this political?**

Of course: the desire of developing countries for a strong ABS international regime to implement the third objective of the Convention is perfectly understandable. However, this should not be at the expense of the 8(j) Working Group. While some

Parties would prefer to leave 8(j) trailing in the dust of ABS, and that is the reality we confront, in practice an ABS regime that lacks the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities will not be fair, equitable or workable. At the moment it would seem that the COP decisions calling for collaboration between the Working Groups on ABS and 8(j) are not worth the paper they are written on. Maybe COP should stop messing about, retire all decisions and consolidate to one. It would make the handbook lighter and that is of course a vital consideration.

## **Isn't there unanimous support by Parties for the 8(j) WG?**

Yes and no. The opening statements from Parties and regional groups publicly set out widespread support for the continuation of the 8(j) WG. That rhetoric needs to be translated into real money in the budget committee. At the

same time, some Parties involved in ABS need to start acting in good faith and let the 8(j) WG do its actual work as mandated by COP.

## **What will happen if the 8(j) WG no longer exists?**

Article 8(j) is the first point of contact with the Convention for indigenous peoples and local communities. The Convention should be proud of that achievement. It is time that the German Presidency wakes up to that and persuades Parties to put the money in. Gut the programme of work and kill the Working Group and you will send a strong signal to indigenous peoples and local communities: you don't matter. The Convention for Life will become a dead thing. We respectfully invite the COP President, Parties and the budget committee to think about that.

# Sustainable Consumption and Production

*Gebremedhine Birgea - ECO Consumers' Association of Ethiopia (ECOYM) & African Biodiversity Network (ABN)*

Consumer demand is often cited as a key driver of biodiversity loss. For instance we hear that genetically modified organisms, agrofuels, and other monocultures are being promoted to meet ever-growing consumer demand.

The idea of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) has been around for some time and parties have agreed to promote and implement it accordingly. However, both theoretical understanding and practical implementation has developed slowly. We think COP9 participants should be reminded again of SCP's significance.

## *What is Sustainable Consumption?*

The need to combat unsustainable consumption patterns received crucial international attention at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Chapter 4 of Agenda 21, adopted at the Conference, deals explicitly with "Changing consumption patterns" and presents strategies for achieving the goals, particularly with a focus on developing national policies and strategies to encourage changes in such patterns.

Most people assume sustainable consumption is about consuming less. But this is not the whole story. It includes meeting the needs of present and future generations for goods and services in ways that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. Sustainable consumption is about consuming differently, consuming efficiently, and having an improved quality of life. It also means sharing between the rich and the poor.

Responsibility for sustainable consumption is shared by all sectors of society, including informed consumers, government, CSOs, business, labour organizations and others. Consumer and environmental organizations are expected to play particularly important roles. Informed consumers have an essential role in promoting consumption that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, including through the power of their purchasing decisions. Empowered consumers can influence the development and implementation of sustainable consumption policies.

Responsible consumption is integral to sustainable consumption since responsible consumers often demand that their rights be respected; including the right to 'consume better,' that is, in a more ethical, ecological or socially responsible way. If responsible consumers are unhappy with the results they can, through their purchasing power, force business to respect the principles of environmental protection and biodiversity conservation.

Given the centrality of consumption to the environmental problematic, it would be good for consumer groups to be given due consideration and space in important events like COP9, so they can shoulder their responsibility and be part of needed solutions. Finally we call upon all participants at COP9 to promote and practice sustainable production and consumption if we are to conserve our biodiversity and protect our environment.

*Sources:* CI & UNEP, 2004. Tracking Progress: Implementing sustainable consumption policies; UNCTAD, 2001. UN Guideline on Consumer Protection; UNECOSOC, 2003. Managing globalization: selected cross-cutting issues: Sustainable consumption and production

# Tourism and Biodiversity

## Bringing Integrity Back to the CBD Talks

Alison Johnston - International Support Centre for Sustainable Tourism

In 1998 tourism landed on the CBD's agenda with VIP status. It was the only industry included in the CBD - framed as a solution to biodiversity loss. Amid the early hoopla over Article 8(j), concerning traditional knowledge, few asked what this meant for Indigenous Peoples living in biodiversity rich areas targeted for 'eco' tourism.

Germany, flanked by the giant travel company TUI, has driven the CBD campaign to sanitize mega tourism. It branded tourism as a financial incentive for biodiversity conservation: a remedy for the 'cash starved' local communities often blamed for our world biodiversity crisis. This has diverted attention away from the real underlying issues, such as the tourist lifestyle and the consumptive ethos driving it: an ethos with profound colonialist resonances. Responsible questions about tourism have been squelched. The perverse result is a U.N.-backed industry claiming to alleviate poverty, whose profit formulas actually rely on it.

A decade of CBD talks on 'sustainable' tourism has, in fact, facilitated the opposite. The 'eco' tourism industry is targeting fragile cultural landscapes and biodiversity refuges worldwide, creating ever more tenuous situations for Indigenous Peoples. The rates of culture loss, habitat degradation, species decline, climate change and 'protected' areas degradation directly caused by 'eco' tourism are not just severe, but accelerating. The situation has worsened, not improved, since tourism landed on the CBD agenda in 1998.

Currently, tourism still has VIP status within the CBD. What do we mean by VIP? Very ill-

conceived Planning. Vastly Illegitimate Process. The 'Guidelines on Tourism & Biodiversity' that Germany is parading (and which the CBD Secretariat continues to shelter and showcase) have no substance relative to cultural sustainability. They were formulated without empathy for affected communities, or due diligence toward Indigenous Peoples' rights, cultural protocols and governance systems. They serve to commercialize the very cultures and cultural landscapes that the CBD ostensibly protects. This is not an ethical product for the Secretariat to market, or for any Party to 'implement'.

The CBD Secretariat must remember its obligation to be an impartial facilitator. Endorsing tourism, and advancing *growth* policy disguised as 'guidelines', is hardly benign or neutral. This merely encourages today's financiers to invest in

further biodiversity loss - via business models that circumvent full prior informed consent, capitalize on land rights violations, and undermine customary practices. U.N. support for these destructive patterns of development is unacceptable.

It is time for the CBD Parties and Secretariat to revisit their roles and responsibilities. There has been no meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in the CBD's standard setting for tourism. There were no customary authorities from key areas involved, even though most famous 'eco' tourism destinations worldwide are Indigenous ancestral lands, many being sacred sites. Instead, pro business voices have been courted, and namesake Indigenous 'representatives' have been recruited (without their prior *informed* consent) in order for the Secretariat to save face.

The Other Coast By Adrian Raeside



Under international law, the CBD Parties and Secretariat are obliged to accommodate Indigenous Peoples' self determination, and thus their cultural protocols for representation. In 2009 the Indigenous Peoples Leadership Gathering on Tourism will take place. It will offer guidance on sustainable tourism's *raison d'être*: protecting the sacred. This guidance must be heeded. Any future standards for the tourism industry must be developed through a just process -- one fully welcoming the cultural and cross-cultural insights vital to protecting cultural diversity and our shared biosphere.

ECO is published by the civil society community at many International Environmental Convention negotiations. It is currently being published at the ninth Conference of the Parties (COP-9) to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Bonn, Germany coordinated by the CBD Alliance. The opinions, commentaries, and articles printed in ECO are the sole opinion of the individual authors or organisations, unless otherwise expressed. **SUBMISSIONS:** Welcome from all civil society groups. Email to [jkrowe@ucsc.edu](mailto:jkrowe@ucsc.edu) and [jdempsey@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:jdempsey@interchange.ubc.ca) ECO thanks Project "COP 9 preparation" supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation with funds of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Swedbio, and Hivos-Oxfam Novib Biodiversity Fund.



The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

# Notes from the COP

## Japan making waves

(again?)

Stefan Krug - Greenpeace

Just when efforts to mobilize more money for biodiversity conservation are deadlocked, Japan, the current G8-presidency and host/presidency of the CBD in 2010, is undermining attempts to step up a financing initiative for protected areas by the G8 summit this July in...Japan.

Yesterday evening, in a last minute attempt in the contact group on Protected areas, Japan - with UK support - wanted "immediately" to get deleted in a paragraph inviting G8-Parties to start a financing initiative for biodiversity protection. According to delegate sources, Japan had sent letters before COP 9 to several countries urging them not to the G-8 financing initiative. The contact group on PA will negotiate this and other still outstanding paragraphs today.

The para 13 reads as follows.

"Invites G8 countries at their next summit to consider initiating, as a matter of urgency, a financial initiative for biodiversity conservation taking into account the Bonn message on finance and biodiversity to facilitate achieving the 2010 biodiversity target."

## EU relents on ABS, but deadlock remains

The lead negotiator of the Like Minded Mega Diverse Countries (LMMC), Prof. Gurdial Singh Nijar, called on the G77, China, and the African Group, to come together and discuss their next steps on the on-going negotiations for the International Regime on ABS. He sought some pensive pause due to the difficulties developing countries are facing in clarifying the roadmap leading to the International Regime's adoption in Nagoya 2010.

In essence, the Megadiverse Group asked for more time -- until 3 pm today (Monday) -- when they will make

their positions known, including that of the G77, China, and the African Group.

This impasse was sparked by the EU's insistence on Saturday that the Technical Experts Group be asked to explore "international access standards" -- a position rejected by the Megadiverse Group.

The EU stated first thing Sunday morning, in the Informal Consultation Group, that they are flexible on this issue, apparently sensing that their insistence on "international access standards" might scuttle their plans to establish the Technical Experts Group.

The Megadiverse Group, however, would have none of that and want to first see the results of discussions on the draft decision on ABS before making a decision on whether to resume discussions on the Technical Experts Group.

The Informal Consultative Group's discussions on Sunday were difficult since developed countries simply repeated old positions on the issue of ABS.

The developing countries, led by the Megadiverse Group, want a clear indication *now* whether there will be binding provisions on the International Regime on ABS and whether they can begin submitting written submissions that will become the legal provisions of the said international instrument.

Countries like New Zealand, Australia, Japan and Canada are uncomfortable with such a direction, preferring the process to go on but with no clarity on whether a *binding* international instrument can be achieved.

## Outside the Maritim: food prices hike in spite of record production levels

International prices for most agricultural commodities have started declining, but

they are unlikely to return to their previously low levels. They are close to 50 percent more than last year (FAO [Food Outlook](#), May 2008).

The food import bill of the Low Income Food Deficit Countries (LIFDCs) is expected to reach US\$169 billion in 2008, 40 percent more than in 2007. By the end of 2008 their annual food import load could cost four times more than 2000 levels (FAO News Release, May 22, 2008).

Cereal production, however, is expected to increase by 3,8 percent in 2008, and reach record levels in 2008. (FAO [Food Outlook](#), May 2008)

Yet in Somalia the number of people needing assistance increased by more than 40 percent since January of this year. The increase is due to the 600 000 urban poor who are struggling to meet their household food needs in the face of rapidly increasing food and basic commodity prices (FAO News Release, May 19, 2008).

Food riots have erupted in countries all along the equator. In Haiti, protesters chanting "We're hungry" forced the prime minister to resign; 24 people were killed in riots in Cameroon; Egypt's president ordered the army to start baking bread; the Philippines made hoarding rice punishable by life imprisonment. (Economist, April 17, 2008). Clearly there is a disconnect when food production (i.e. cereals) is increasing, and food prices too....

## Error in Friday's ECO

There was an inaccuracy in Friday's ECO on the back page. The Secretariat to the CBD is not "proposing to offer 220000 USD to business to enhance the participation of corporate interests" as written in the article; rather it is *Parties* who are considering a decision (found originally on p. 144 of the draft decisions COP/9/1/Add.2, revised now in COP/9/WG.2/CRP.9) that has budgetary implications approximated at 220,000 USD (in the original document) earmarked for engagement of businesses in the implementation of the Convention. ECO apologizes for any misunderstandings this may have caused.

