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The Great Contradictions in the Zero Draft

by Simone Lovera, Global Forest Coalition

The zero draft of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework looks like a wonderful document at first sight, but when one looks closer one notices a couple of quite disturbing contradictions. To begin with, there is the Great Contradiction between the ambitious overall goals that are being proposed for ecosystems, species and genes, and the rather unambitious and ambiguous action targets that are proposed for the actual tools and measures to generate these successes. From a scientific point, things simply do not add up.

There is also the Great Contradiction between the ambition to foster a rights-based approach in the theory of, and the rather meager treatment of rights-holders and their rights in the draft itself. The rights of women, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and youth all seem to come as an afterthought in the zero draft rather than being recognized as a cornerstone of biodiversity policy. Adding insult to injury is the sudden reappearance of the concept of "strict conservation" in the zero draft, a 19th century approach to biodiversity conservation that has been responsible for an estimated 130 million conservation refugees over time. Going back to 'strict conservation' is going back to zero indeed from a rights-based approaches perspective, and it is actually quite astonishing the co-chairs are ignoring 28 years of CBD decisions, and numerous UN and IUCN resolutions by re-introducing this concept.

There is the Great Contradiction between the pretense of taking a science-based approach and the incorporation of the "net" approach in the document, even though there

is no scientific evidence for the assumption that one could simply compensate one species with another species, or one ecosystem for another ecosystem for that matter. Unless one wants to treat biodiversity as a Nature-based Solution for any commercial problems businesses might face, of course, but then we are talking about an entirely different kind of science.

And last but not least, there is the Great Contradiction in resource mobilization. Sure, developed countries have an obligation under the CBD to provide new and additional resources to support developing countries with implementing their biodiversity strategies. But as long as these resource flows are dwarfed by the massive perverse incentives and direct investments developed and developing countries are making into biodiversity destruction, it actually does not make so much sense to invest in biodiversity conservation. As explained above, one cannot compensate one species that goes extinct due to a destructive road (or belt...) project with an entirely different species conserved in an entirely different part of the country. It has to be recognized that the redirection of perverse incentives and the divestment from projects and schemes that cause biodiversity harm are a *sine qua non* for resource mobilization.

It is to be hoped the experts who gather in Rome this week will detect these contradictions and redesign the zero draft into a genuinely coherent strategy. For only a strategy that is internally coherent can provide a firm basis for a whole-of-government approach to biodiversity conservation and restoration.

Agricultural Biodiversity - key to an effective post-2020 framework

by Patrick Mulvany, IPC for Food Sovereignty

For more than 20 years the CBD has negotiated vital Decisions on the Agricultural Biodiversity that feeds the world and covers the majority of terrestrial ecosystems. These Decisions include the 1996 Landmark Dec III/11 and IV/6, V/5, VI/5, VII/3, VIII/23, IX/1, X/34, among many more. In these 8 Decisions alone, there are some 156 Operational elements of which 82 are currently 'Active'. These elements are the product of thousands of hours of negotiations and must continue to be implemented post-2020. In the draft Global Biodiversity Framework, Target 8, for example, will need explicit references to these Decisions.

As if Parties needed reminding, Agricultural Biodiversity encompasses the heterogeneous genetic resources, species diversity and the biodiverse agro-ecosystems and their functions that, in the hands of the world's majority, and mostly smaller-scale, food producers, support productive, climate-resilient and biodiversity-conserving agro-ecological food

systems, developed in the framework of food sovereignty. These Indigenous Peoples, peasant producers, pastoralists, fishers, forest dwellers, urban gardeners and more, have the knowledge, innovations and practices - their tried and tested technologies - which can provide not only nutritious local foods but could also reverse the biodiversity crisis when out-scaled across the Earth's managed-ecosystems - and would also mitigate climate change.

In developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, Parties should be mindful of the imperative of explicitly including references to implementing prior CBD Decisions on Agricultural Biodiversity and the key operational elements contained in these that will enhance above and below ground biodiversity at inter- and intra- varietal and species levels within production i.e. in-field, in-garden, in-pasture, in-forest, in-waters, as well as within wider associated terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

In order to ensure the CBD continues to work, post-2020, towards fulfilling its three Objectives (CBD Article 1), it must enforce binding agreements that will support the Rights, and extend the practices, of these biodiversity-sustaining food providers, who know how to enhance the heterogeneity of agricultural biodiversity within agro-ecological production and surrounding ecosystems. Thereby, a significant contribution to reversing the global biodiversity crisis will be realized.

Do`s and Dont`s

Collective document - Civil Society (Excerpt)

1. Have a strong principle base foundation

Recognize the principles on which the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and its implementation shall be based: the precautionary principle, respect for human rights and indigenous rights, a gender and intergenerational perspective, justice and equity, benefit sharing, respect for all knowledge systems, and the recognition of the intrinsic value of nature. Make sure polluters are held responsible for the damage they cause, both towards nature and affected communities. Ensure the GBF complies with the founding principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Rio Conventions overall.

2. Make sure we live within planetary boundaries

Define the limits of production and consumption that depend on, and extraction of sectors, and propose biodiversity consistent ways to do so. resources that destroy, biodiversity. Ensure targets add up to living well and equitably within those limits. Make sure the Convention's objective of sustainable use of biodiversity gets honored.

3. Include a rights based approach

Protect environmental defenders, as well as the ecosystems they defend. Ensure Human Rights are not violated in the implementation of any biodiversity measures. Recognize that Biodiversity loss undermines people's ability to enjoy many human rights, including human health and a healthy environment. Make ecocide punishable, and recognize the right of ecosystems not to be destroyed. Guarantee, protect, and amplify the rights of Indigenous peoples and Local Communities, providing the enabling conditions to protect their territories, ecosystems and biodiversity, and ensure equitable distribution of the benefits of natural resources. A rights-based approach should under no circumstances imply rights of corporations or individuals to exploit or consume resources unsustainably.

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