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## Ambitious Targets on Habitats *and* Forests are Needed

Günter Mitlacher, WWF, Head of Delegation

**There is no doubt the discussions of the Strategic Plan are intense (and the temperature in the negotiation room doesn't help matters either). They are especially intense in relation to Strategic Goal B: Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use, including on the crucial Target 5 – dealing with natural habitats.**

The original text in the Secretariat-prepared paper read: 'By 2020, the loss and degradation of forests and other natural habitats is halved'. More ambitious than the Secretariat text, thankfully some parties brought forward proposals for text such as 'significant reduction' and even 'bring the rate of loss to zero'.

The options discussed by contact group are:

By 2020, the rate of loss and degradation, and [fragmentation] of natural habitats including native forests and forests of high biodiversity value is [at least halved] [significantly reduced] [brought close to zero (EU)]

There is also the Mexican proposal on the table:

By 2020, the rate of loss and degradation, and [fragmentation] of natural habitats is [at least halved] [brought close to zero (EU)]

### WWF proposal

We propose to keep the overall target on natural habitats, but be ambitious:

**By 2020, the rate of loss, degradation and fragmentation of natural habitats is brought to zero.**

Further, WWF proposes a specific *sub-target on forests*, in order to reflect the value of forests and the need for dramatic reduction of deforestation.

**By 2020, gross deforestation is reduced by 75% and in particular deforestation of primary/native forests and forests of high biodiversity value is reduced to zero.**

A sub-target on forests is of utmost importance due to ongoing deforestation, on-going at an alarming rate of 13 million ha per year with dire consequences to global climate, biodiversity loss, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The sub-target covers all types of forests, including seminatural forests and forest with significant biodiversity that should be protected from deforestation. Therefore *gross* deforestation should be reduced by 75%. Achieving this target alongside enhanced conservation, sustainable management of forests and through socially and environmentally sound afforestation and reforestation programmes, will bring us to zero net deforestation by 2020. The second part of the sentence refers particularly to the most threatened native/primary forests, as the deforestation of these forests must be brought to zero.

## Biodiversity Technology Initiative?

Ricarda Steinbrecher (Federation of German Scientists)

*Comments based on the Submission of the Federation of German Scientists (re UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/3/10 section V, the "Suggested Way Ahead")*

**We regard that any technology should profit from a timely assessment of its specific and wider impacts. The combination of technology and of technology assessment is the basis for an adequate technology need assessment by Parties.**

Hence, the transfer of technologies and the transfer of the ability to assess them should go hand in hand. This requires the inclusion of organisations whose expertise resides in technology assessment and technology needs assessment. The capacity to undertake technology assessment needs to be an integral part to the establishment and work of the Biodiversity Technology Initiative or indeed any technology transfer program.

As this Initiative is explored within the context of the CBD, and to ensure that country specific needs are met, the 'technology need assessments' under this initiative should be clearly Party driven.

At present (para 48), interim arrangements are being explored. Thus any implementation activities should be avoided that imply or require stable structures that cannot and should not be interim in nature. However, an interim arrangement could very well make a contribution by assessing existing or proposed implementation activities.

# Reflections on the Engagement of Business CRP

Jessica Dempsey and Helena Paul, Econexus

## Balance, balance, balance

Looking at the preambular paragraphs for the Business Engagement (WG-RI/3/CRP.1), one gets the sense that businesses are really young, energetic graduates with under-utilized capacities, just waiting for the right tools or incentives so they can unleash good upon the world: “*Emphasizing* the interest and capacities of private enterprises”, or “*Recognizing* the importance of drawing on the capacities of business and private enterprise”. This may be the case – but surely these preambular paragraphs should also recognize that the interests and capacities of private enterprises – despite the proliferating conferences on business and biodiversity – often *run counter* to the objectives of the Convention.

We recommend some balance in the preamble, to replace the current third preambular paragraph (which reads ‘*Realizing* the need to incorporate biodiversity concerns into existing and emerging private-sector initiatives and operations’) with one that reads:

*Recognizing* that the daily activities of business and industry have major impacts on biodiversity and the need to align private-sector initiatives and operations with the three objectives of the Convention,

The phrase ‘the daily activities of business and industry have major impacts on biodiversity’ is direct from COP Decision VIII/17.

## Change, Change, Change

Actually changing business practices is incredibly difficult work, work often conducted by Indigenous Peoples, local communities and civil society organizations who expose the misdemeanours and destructive, and sometimes illegal practices of the private sector. For example, in response to complaints and campaigning of Indonesian Indigenous Peoples organizations, Indonesian NGOs and International NGOs, in August 2009 the IFC and World Bank suspended finance for the palm oil sector because it had violated its own due diligence and performance standards, allowing financial considerations to override social and environmental concerns.

There is a small note of the role of civil society in holding the private sector to account in the tenth preambular paragraph that currently reads ‘*Noting* the potential role of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, scientific organizations, and other stakeholders, in influencing business practices and in facilitating a modification of consumer behaviour as well as of societal expectations’. While it is nice to be noted, Parties should not only “note” the “potential” role of civil society, but rather (our suggested wording):

Recognize the role of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Civil Society Organizations, and other stakeholders in influencing business practices and in facilitating a modification of consumer behaviour as well as of societal expectations’

## Governance, Governance, Governance

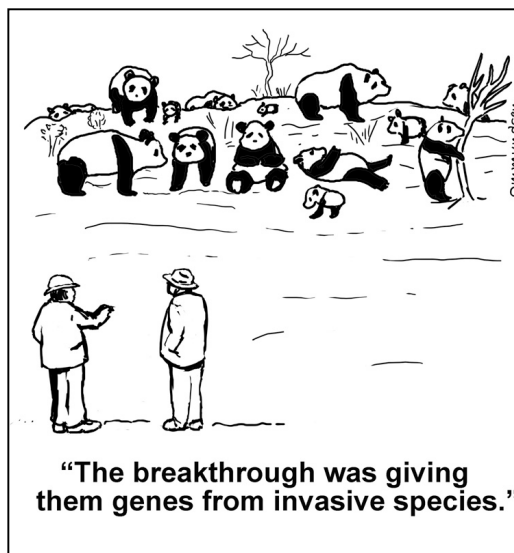
The current Deepwater Horizon scandal in the Gulf of Mexico – widely considered a governance failure - should remind all Parties of the critical importance of strong government regulation and oversight. As such, we recommend that Para 1(a) read (additions are underlined):

(a) To promote a public-policy environment by measures such as clear regulatory and administrative frameworks, clear rules on environmental liability, incentive measures for halting the drivers of biodiversity loss, development of criteria and assessment strategies for engagement that enables reliable, long-term private-sector engagement and the mainstreaming of biodiversity into corporate strategies and decision-making in a manner that contributes to the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention;

Similar text can be added to Para 1(f)

(f) To develop, and report on, national activities that promote and facilitate the mainstreaming of biodiversity by business, such as through regulation, improved compliance, development of criteria and assessment strategies for engagement, appropriate incentive measures, national biodiversity strategies and action plans as well as national reports;

Finally, a major limitation of engaging with businesses is that it is difficult, and usually impossible, to get companies to agree to independent evaluations and reporting of their operations. Companies are often un-transparent with information about impacts on biological diversity. Going back to the oil catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico, with the growing negative effects on biodiversity and human health, BP (a member of the Global Compact) is refusing to reveal some of the “alternative” chemical ingredients it is using in the oil spill dispersants it is pouring into the Gulf of Mexico, claiming it is “confidential business information.” This is why engaging with business must also involve ongoing *pressure* for transparency, something that can probably not be achieved without clear governmental regulations and on-going oversight.



# The United Nations Decade of Biodiversity 2011-2020

*KASHIWAGI Minoru, Japan Civil Network for the CBD/Ramsar Network Japan*

At the afternoon plenary of the first day of WGRI-3 the Japanese government proposed a recommendation to the COP10 on “2011-2020: UN Decade of Biodiversity” on behalf of the COP Bureau. Japan Civil Network for the Convention on Biological Diversity (JCN-CBD), together with the signatories of Joint NGO statement on the CBD’s Proposed Post-2010 Strategic Plan, welcomes the Japanese government to propose the draft recommendation the United Nations Decade of Biodiversity 2011-2020. The idea was initially raised by NGOs in one of the one-year-pre-COP10 meetings held in Japan in September 2009.

The New Strategic Plan of the Convention 2011–2020 needs to be implemented by all the Parties, non-Parties, UN agencies and stakeholders in order to be effective and avoid the tipping point of biodiversity. We need a framework beyond the Convention itself. For this reason, JCN-CBD took the task of promoting this UN Decade as JCN-CBD as a whole. We have had many meetings with the government and the CBD Secretariat. There must have been a lot of obstacles to our government if we consider the length of time and the number of meetings we had with the government. We celebrate the efforts and the challenging decision of our government who is going to take the COP presidency for the coming two years, which coincides the initial and crucial period of the prospective UN Decade.

The UN Decade of Biodiversity is significant in many ways including below:

- To Biodiversity: It is important to take concrete actions intensively, not only over a short time. Programmed action in consort with all global agencies and organisations toward biodiversity through a period of 10 years will surely yield a concrete result.
- To the Convention of Biological Diversity: the decision at the United Nations General Assembly will enable a system that supports such integrated implementation with the help of all the other agencies and facilities related to UN besides CBD.
- To other Conventions related to Global Environment: Focus on biodiversity will benefit other biodiversity

related conventions especially to those related to species and habitat, namely Conventions on Migratory Species, on International Trade on Species, and on Wetlands because their target relates to conservation of biodiversity.

- To the Global Climate Change: Climate change impacts greatly on biodiversity. The impact of climate change is reduced through biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and sustainable use. Consistent and integrated effort on biodiversity is critical for addressing global climate change.
- To CBD parties and UN members: With the decision of the United Nations, the Parties, especially developing countries, would be able to prioritise during the coming decade their policy for the three objectives of the Convention with the help of all UN member countries of UN and other agencies and facilities including UNEP, UNDP, GEF, World Bank, or Asian Development Bank - just to list a few.
- To NGOs and ILCs: NGOs and ILCs engaged in biodiversity would receive endorsement on their activities to implement the Convention in a global scale. It will also be a chance to start continuous activities for communication, education, participation and awareness with a view to implement in a period of 10 years.

However, the most important thing is implementation of the Strategy by all Parties, countries, stakeholders, and sectors with a scope of activities during the Decade. JCN-CBD has decided to start an initiative for working with Parties and the Secretariat in support of this framework. It is called an “NGO Initiative for the UN Decade of Biodiversity”. The Initiative invites NGOs, nationally and internationally, to sign and join in the commitment in the implementation of the strategic plan from their own accord in the framework of the United Nations for the coming years. JCN-CBD hopes to present a list of organisation to the High Level Meeting of UN General Assembly in 22 September and to the COP10 in October to show the support of NGOs to the Decade.

## World Wetland Network Launches World Wetland Awards for COP10

World Wetland Network is a long-awaited network of civil society and non-governmental organisations working on the local wetland sites. Launched in 2008 at the COP10 to the Ramsar Convention, the Award is the first project of the network. It is aimed to promote wise use and conservation of biodiversity in wetlands. Awards for three wetland sites for each continent are nominated by electronic voting of the members. The awards are for wetlands with good management, improved management and with management of adverse impact: namely blue globe, green globe and grey globe awards. You may check the information on the award and on WWN itself at: <http://www.worldwetnet.org/>

## Is your own 2020 target linked to the CBD’s 2020 target?

IUCN Japan Committee (IUCN-J) is promoting an awareness raising campaign called “Let’s Origami COP10 project”. Given the official logo for COP10 is designed of Origami, Japanese traditional art, this project aims to give people an opportunity to make Origami, and take a moment to think about their own vision for 2020 as well as its relation to biodiversity. Many origami and messages from the participants of SBSTTA/WGRI are collected and displayed at the hallway of UNEP. These messages are also presented at the project homepage ( [www.cop10-origami.com/en](http://www.cop10-origami.com/en)) together with the messages from people all around the world. Origami will be also presented at the COP10 venue in Nagoya

# Notes from the WGRI

## Kudos

To the co-chairs of the financial resources contact group, who have been welcoming to civil society and Indigenous input, despite the time crunch. Also to the EU for needing coordination time and thus getting us out of the financial resources group before our brains were completely pickled!

## Complaints

To one particular chair in the Strategic Plan contact group who did not give the Indigenous Forum nor NGOs the chance to make what were likely very short (and helpful) text suggestions.

## Scientific Study on Biodiversity Offsets and Ecological Integrity

Proponents of biodiversity offsets often reference one of the oldest regulatory offset markets, the wetland mitigation banking market in the United States, a kind of biodiversity offset.

In 2008, the Worldwatch Institute's State of the World reported:

So far the studies on the quality of the wetlands created as compensation are mixed. In one study conducted in Ohio, scientists looked at the 12 oldest of the state's 25 wetland mitigation banks. Although these had been studied and monitored by the Army Corps and EPA [Environmental Protection Agency], the study found that many were not up to standard when checked against stringent scientific criteria. Indeed, against these measurements only three banks scored in the "successful category," while five passed in some areas and failed in others. The remaining four failed nearly every assessment, **functioning more like shallow dead pools than wetlands. More disturbing, none of the government agencies charged with oversight were taking the bank managers to task for this fact** (p 29).

## Study on Biodiversity Offsets and the Probability of Biodiversity

Proponents of biodiversity offset programs often argue that inadequacies or enforcement failures (such as those some wetland banking schemes) can be fixed through improved policy or legal frameworks. But a recent academic, peer-reviewed study in Conservation Letters (2009, 149–157) argues that even improved policy frameworks **"do not address the political and administrative causes of inadequate review"** (p 152).

In support of their argument, the authors (Walker et al) say:

Viable trading requires simple, measurable, and interchangeable commodities, but the currencies, restrictions, and oversight needed to protect complex, difficult-to-measure, and non-interchangeable resources like biodiversity **are costly and intractable** (p 149).

The authors make two arguments against biodiversity offsets, based upon evidence in the public policy literature.

The first is that governmental, private sector, or regulatory officials will tend to **"resist and relax safeguards to facilitate exchanges and resource development"** (p 149). In other words, offsets often work as a perverse incentive to biodiversity adverse development.

The second argument they make is that **"trading is more vulnerable than pure administrative mechanisms to institutional dynamics that undermine environmental protection"** (p 149). This is because trading actually reinforces and strengthens the entrenched *interests in favor of developments*. They argue that despite the best rules or intentions:

Delivery of no net loss or net gain through biodiversity trading is thus administratively improbable and technically unrealistic. Their proliferation without credible solutions **suggests biodiversity offset programs are successful "symbolic policies," potentially obscuring biodiversity loss and dissipating impetus for action** (p 149).

