



Briefing Note for High Level Segment – COP 12

Theme: Biodiversity for sustainable development

Date: October 15-16, 2014

**Venue: Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea
(as of 15 September 2014)**

Introduction

The timing of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-12) is opportune. COP-12 will provide a mid-term review of progress towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets on the basis of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-4). According to the GBO-4, the current progress is not sufficient to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets for 2020, and additional actions are required to keep on track. In this context, the High Level Segment – COP 12 (HLS) will provide a stage to deliver a high-level message to urge the global community to make further efforts for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

In addition, the HLS will coincide with the ongoing discussions in the United Nations General Assembly to elaborate on the post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals (SDGs). This will provide an opportunity for the HLS to highlight the importance of integrating biodiversity into the post-2015 agenda and the SDGs.

The HLS will take place for two days during the period of COP 12. Under the theme of biodiversity for sustainable development, the HLS is classified in five sub-themes. A provisional programme and concept notes for the sub-themes are enclosed with this briefing note.

Expected outcomes

One of the main outcomes of the HLS will be the Gangwon Declaration on biodiversity for sustainable development. The declaration will highlight why biodiversity is essential for sustainable development and why development pathways must ensure that the life support system underpinned by biodiversity is maintained. It will also highlight how the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets can contribute to the post-2015 development agenda.

The HLS allows for an exchange of experiences from countries on how the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity contributes to sustainable development, and in particular to food and water security, sustainable growth, and adaptation to global change, including climate change. These experiences, and the lessons arising from the discussion, will be captured in the Chair's Summary report presented by the COP president.

The HLS provides an opportunity for a renewed high-level commitment of ministers and other participants to ensure that all necessary efforts will be deployed in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. In addition, the HLS also provides an opportunity to share national efforts and initiatives on biodiversity with the global community.



Concept Note for High Level Segment – COP 12

Session I: Integrating Biodiversity into the Sustainable Development Agenda at National and International levels

Panel Discussion 1: Integrating Biodiversity into the Sustainable Development Goals and Post-2015 Agenda

Date: October 15, 2014

Venue: Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea

Background

Biodiversity, or the variety of life on Earth, is a critical foundation of our planet's life support systems, and contributes directly to human well-being in many ways. Biodiversity provides us with basic goods such as food, fibre, fuel, and medicine. It underpins ecosystem functions and the provision of benefits and services to people such as water purification and supply, pollination, regulation of pests and diseases, soil nutrient cycling and fertility. Biodiversity enhances ecosystem resilience and contributes to the ability to respond to unpredictable global changes and natural disasters; while also acting as a reservoir for the genetic diversity which is essential for the adaptation of species and ecosystems to meet current and future challenges. In addition, biodiversity is valued for cultural, spiritual, and religious reasons, and provides opportunities for research and education.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted in 2000, and the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were set out with a deadline of 2015. One of the goals is to ensure environmental sustainability including a target for a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss. However, the Millennium Development Goals Report 2014 indicated that many species are declining in population and distribution and facing the threat of extinction, which means further efforts for the conservation of biodiversity are essential for the post 2015 period.

The United Nations Open Working Group (OWG) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposed a set of 17 goals at its thirteenth session in July 2014. Three of the goals are closely related to biodiversity and ecosystems: Goal 12 on sustainable consumption and production, Goal 14 on oceans, seas and marine resources, and Goal 15 on terrestrial biodiversity. It will be important to ensure that biodiversity and ecosystems are effectively integrated in the post-2015 agenda and beyond.



Questions for Consideration

1. What are the lessons that have been learned at the national level in mainstreaming environmental considerations into development and poverty eradication policies as a result of the MDGs process that could help to support a focus on the role of biodiversity in the discussions on the post-2015 agenda?
2. What can the UN do to improve mainstreaming of biodiversity within its system as it turns to implementing the SDGs and post-2015 agenda?
3. What types of new and existing partnerships can play a role in helping to ensure that biodiversity is considered as a key element in the implementation of the SDGs and post-2015 agenda?
4. How can the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as its Parties and partners, support the work of the UN General Assembly in the implementation of the SDGs and post-2015 outcomes?
5. How can we enhance measurement and monitoring of the contributions that biodiversity and ecosystems are making to the achievement of the SDGs?"

Session Structure

Session I will be a three-hour session and comprise two discussions of 80 minutes with a 10-minute break after each discussion. Total of eight panellists will be at the podium during the session (two co-chairs, two discussants, four presenters).

Each discussion will be led by a co-chair, a discussant, and two presenters. Following the moderation by the co-chair, the discussion will commence with two presentations by the presenters, and each presentation will be limited to 10 minutes. Following the presentations, the discussant will make comments on the policy implications raised for no more than 10 minutes. The floor will then be opened to comments from the participants.



Concept Note for High Level Segment – COP 12

Session I: Integrating Biodiversity into the Sustainable Development Agenda at National and International levels

Panel Discussion 2: Integrating NBSAPs into National and Local Development and Poverty Eradication Strategies and Planning Processes

Date: October 15, 2014

Venue: Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea

Background

Despite the critical importance of biodiversity, national and local strategies and planning processes on issues such as development and poverty eradication are often conducted sectorally and don't fully take into account the value of biodiversity. Biodiversity mainstreaming is understood as the integration of biodiversity, ecosystems and the services they provide into both cross-sectoral plans (such as sustainable development, poverty eradication, climate change adaptation/ mitigation, trade and international cooperation), as well as into sector-specific plans (such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, mining, energy, tourism, transport and others). The mainstreaming of biodiversity in this way implies changes in development models, strategies and paradigms.

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are the principal instruments for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at the national level as stated in Article 6 of the Convention. They lay down how a given country intends to fulfill the objectives of the Convention in light of its specific national circumstances. In the process of elaborating their NBSAPs, contracting Parties have to think about how best to address the threats to their biodiversity. NBSAPs are living instruments that evolve over time and should be revised on a constant basis as new knowledge on conservation, sustainable use and the status of biodiversity is gained.

With the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 20 Aichi Targets, the Parties to the CBD underlined the importance of meaningful NBSAPs and set themselves 2015 as the deadline to “develop, adopt as a policy instrument, and commence implementing an effective, participatory and updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan” (Aichi Target 17). An important element brought forward by Target 17 is the fact that Parties have not only to revise and update their NBSAP but also adopt them as policy instruments, meaning that they have to be incorporated and integrated into national government planning instruments so that they are implemented alongside other national policies and priorities. In this regard, Target 17 is intended to “mainstream” biodiversity into all national sectors, including the economic planning sector. Nevertheless, integrating NBSAPs into the various relevant decision-making and sectoral planning processes can be challenging.



Work within the UN General Assembly on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the post-2015 agenda is expected to result in a new international framework for sustainable development, with poverty eradication being a priority. Considering the interdependence between the global agenda and national policies, it will be important to ensure that the NBSAPs are effectively linked to implementation of the SDGs and this framework.

Questions for Consideration

1. What specific provisions would be helpful to include in NBSAPs to address the linkages between biodiversity, ecosystems and poverty eradication issues?
2. Can you share any successful experiences related to the mainstreaming of biodiversity at the national level, including in national accounting systems and in planning processes?
3. Can you share any experiences about mainstreaming biodiversity into planning at the sub-national level, including through participatory approaches and engagement with indigenous and local communities?
4. What should be the role of the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the integration of NBSAPs into national development and poverty eradication strategies?
5. What provisions would you like to see included in poverty eradication strategies to best reflect biodiversity concerns?
6. How can the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as its Parties and partners, support the needs of countries to close gaps in capacity and training on the integration of NBSAPs into national development and poverty eradication strategies?

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Concept Note for High Level Segment – COP 12

Session II : Biodiversity, Climate Change, and Creative Economy

Panel Discussion 3: Nature-based Solutions to Global Challenges

Date: October 16, 2014

Venue: Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea

Background

While we are becoming more aware of the negative impacts of climate change and natural disasters on the environment and human livelihoods, there is also ample evidence that natural ecosystems, when they are well managed, can buffer the effects of climate change and disasters. Management for increased ecosystem resilience, such as restoration, is a good strategy to increase the likelihood of buffering of extreme weather events and other disasters.

The restoration of degraded habitats represents an opportunity both to improve ecosystem resilience and to increase carbon sequestration. In 2010, according to some estimates, two thirds of the planet's ecosystems could be considered degraded. The global potential for forest landscape restoration alone is estimated to be in the order of 1 billion hectares, or about 25 per cent of the current global forest area. Therefore, there is a large potential for the increased use of restoration.

There are several studies that show how much effective nature-based solutions are. Planting and protecting nearly 12,000 hectares of mangroves in Viet Nam cost just over USD 1 million but saved annual expenditures on dyke maintenance of USD 7 million. A report published by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) suggests that the tsunami of 26 December 2004 caused less damage in the areas where natural barriers were present, such as mangroves, coral reefs or coastal vegetation. It is also estimated that peat bogs in Sri Lanka have about USD 5 million worth of flood-buffering service per year.

Nature can play a big role as a buffer against natural disasters. It is time to pay close attention to the potential and effectiveness of nature-based solutions which can, at the same time, contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services.



Questions for Consideration

1. Are we doing enough to promote nature-based solutions for many of our global problems? What should we do differently? Can we further improve the international frameworks to highlight nature as a solution?
2. What is the potential for return on investment in nature-based solutions to global problems? How is the progress of the strategies that donors currently use to invest in nature-based solutions?
3. Has business fully embraced nature-based solutions to global problems? If not, how can we help to move business in this direction?
4. How can the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as its Parties and partners, support the needs of countries to close gaps in capacity and training on issues related to nature-based solutions (ecosystem resilience, restoration, disaster risk reduction, etc.)?

Session Structure

Session II will be a three-hour session and comprise two discussions of 80 minutes with a 10-minute break after each discussion. Total of eight panellists will be at the podium during the session (two co-chairs, two discussants, four presenters).

Each discussion will be led by a co-chair, a discussant, and two presenters. Following the moderation by the co-chair, the discussion will commence with two presentations by the presenters, and each presentation will be limited to 10 minutes. Following the presentations, the discussant will make comments on the policy implications raised for no more than 10 minutes. The floor will then be opened to comments from the participants.



Concept Note for High Level Segment – COP 12

Session II : Biodiversity, Climate Change, and Creative Economy

Panel Discussion 4: Biodiversity and Creative Economy

Date: October 16, 2014

Venue: Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea

Background

The “creative economy” may be understood as an integrated system of creation, production and distribution of goods and services that use creative ideas (or intellectual capacity). The notion is so broad that it embraces the entire domain of research and development (R&D). From the perspective of biodiversity, the creative economy is the one that utilizes creative ideas such as biodiversity knowledge as primary inputs for potentially generating sustainable development. Nature is the repository of development, since the imitation of nature was the first step of traditional knowledge. History demonstrated that the innovative developments come from the creative ideas based on traditional wisdom learnt from biodiversity.

The creative economy encompasses the notion of a green economy that focuses more directly on environmentally friendly technologies and valuation of natural capital, low carbon technologies, resource efficiency and social inclusivity. Since the financial crisis of 2008, the creative economy has greatly outperformed other economic sectors. There is potential for developing countries to leapfrog the developed world through a focus on creative economy and the development of green economies.

A green economy is one in which growth in income and employment is driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and ensure sustainable supply chains. An example of the creative and green economy approach is the removal of deforestation from commodity supply chains, which prevents the loss of biodiversity and ecosystems. These investments need to be catalyzed and supported by targeted public expenditure, policy reforms and regulation, enforcement and monitoring, integrated land use strategies, and consumer awareness campaigns. This development path should maintain, enhance and, where necessary, rebuild natural capital as a critical economic asset and source of public benefits, especially for the poor people who depend on nature for their livelihoods and security.

In recent years, a number of UN agencies have embraced and contributed to the development and promotion of creative and green economy discussions, including UNEP, UNCTAD, UNDP and UNESCO, in addition to the Rio +20, UN Conference on Sustainable Development . However, the creation and strengthening of enabling mechanisms for the promotion of creative and green economies needs special attention, and will require the incorporation of biodiversity and ecosystem services into national accounting, reform of economic incentives and promotion of innovative financial mechanisms, among other measures.



Questions for consideration

1. Although several countries have embraced creative/green economy principles, many incentives still support traditional economic models and GDP continues to be the main indicator of economic health. How can we upscale efforts to promote creative/green economic principles and successes?
2. What are the best approaches and examples of creative/green economy principles that can be replicated by others?
3. What is the role of business in driving the development of the creative/green economy? How can we ensure that the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit that characterizes the for-profit sector is harnessed as we develop new models?
4. How can public policies promote a creative economy?
5. How can the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as its Parties and partners, support the needs of countries in promoting the concepts of creative/green economy?

Session Structure

Session II will be a three-hour session and comprise two discussions of 80 minutes with a 10-minute break after each discussion. Total of eight panellists will be at the podium during the session (two co-chairs, two discussants, four presenters).

Each discussion will be led by a co-chair, a discussant, and two presenters. Following the moderation by the co-chair, the discussion will commence with two presentations by the presenters, and each presentation will be limited to 10 minutes. Following the presentations, the discussant will make comments on the policy implications raised for no more than 10 minutes. The floor will then be opened to comments from the participants.



Concept Note for High Level Segment – COP 12

Luncheon Session: Peace and Biodiversity

Date: October 16, 2014

Venue: Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea

Background

Biodiversity can be difficult to maintain in the absence of peace. Conflict can result in many direct impacts on biodiversity including habitat destruction, local species extinction, pollution, poaching and deforestation, to name but a few. After a conflict ends, biodiversity may require a long time to recover.

At the same time, the protection of nature and the cooperative conservation of shared natural resources can be a powerful force for peace. Transboundary conservation (conservation across borders) has often been designed to promote cooperation and peace. So-called “Peace Parks” are a form of transboundary conservation and have the promotion of peace and cooperation as one of their objectives. The first example is the establishment of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park in 1932, declared through an international treaty between Canada and the USA to commemorate the peace and goodwill the two nations share. Today, there are numerous examples of peace parks from every continent, with a high concentration in Southern Africa.

The Korean demilitarized zone or DMZ is a strip of land running across the Korean Peninsula that serves as a buffer zone between the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). It is the most heavily militarized border in the world. Yet, because the area has been depopulated, it is also a haven for wildlife. The DMZ and the surrounding area contain 106 of the world's most endangered species of birds, mammals, insects and reptiles. It carries a huge potential for promotion of peace through cooperation on transboundary protected areas (TBPAs).

Work to establish and strengthen international networks and collaboration on TBPAs across national boundaries is also a goal of the CBD in accordance with COP Decision VII/28, the Programme of Work on Protected Areas. The CBD community can play a role to promote the new partnerships for the Peace and Biodiversity.



Questions for Consideration

1. How can we strengthen the linkages between biodiversity and peace, especially the concepts of transboundary conservation and Peace Parks in the context of international instruments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program?
2. Are there examples or lessons learned from your own country of the ways in which biodiversity conservation has helped to promote peace, either with neighboring States or within your own country?
3. What are conditions that peace can contribute to an increase in biodiversity as well as conservation of biodiversity can be an effective force for peace?
4. How can international institutions and civil society provide better support to the concept of Peace Parks?
5. How can the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as its Parties and partners, support the needs of countries to close gaps on issues related to biodiversity and peace?

Session Structure

The Luncheon Session will be a roundtable discussion session of three hours and will be led by a moderator and speakers. The session will begin with presentations by the speakers. Each presentation is limited to 15 minutes. After the presentations, the discussion among the participants will be followed. Luncheon will be served during the session.