

## Biodiversity

# Only four years left to 2010!

## A joint NGO statement at the recent Convention on Biological Diversity meet called for the involvement of indigenous/local communities

**A**s Parties to the CBD, you did yourselves proud by framing a historic Programme of Work on Protected Areas. Civil society across the world saw this as a potentially powerful tool to meet the global goals of halting biodiversity loss on land by 2010, and at sea by 2012.

We acknowledge the progress made in implementing the Programme of Work. Several countries, NGOs, and indigenous/local community organizations have achieved considerable success on many fronts. We also acknowledge the work done by the Expert group on Protected Areas, just before COP8, to design a more specific Evaluation Matrix.

However, we are concerned that in general, progress with implementation of this Programme of Work appears to be painfully slow. Our concern is both on substantive and procedural matters.

On substance, we flag the following key issues:

1. The world's biodiversity continues to face threats from unsustainable land and water use activities, including inside many protected areas. In particular, we are alarmed at the continuing spread of commercial plantations and monocultures, unregulated commercial fisheries, extractive industries, illegal and unsustainable logging and related trade, uncontrolled tourism, and in general the still-unsustainable patterns of 'development' and consumption. There is little sign of governments moving towards meeting the target laid out in Activity 1.5.5 of the Programme of Work.
2. In particular, we would highlight the need for urgent action to safeguard relatively large intact forests from illegal and unsustainable logging and extractive industry, and deep-sea biodiversity from the impacts of high-seas bottom-trawling and industrial fishing. A representative network of protected areas of such ecosystems is urgently needed.
3. Very few countries appear to be moving towards the larger landscape and seascape level planning that is required under Activity 1.2.2, as protected area management remains an isolated, usually very weak part of the overall decision-making apparatus of government.
4. Issues of governance, equity, and participation, as laid out in Activities 2.1.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, and 2.2.3, remain weakly developed in most countries. The paradigm shift that the Programme of Work represented, in terms of democratizing protected area design and management, is yet to find a place in the relevant legislation of most countries. On the contrary, in many countries indigenous peoples and local communities continue to face dispossession by protected areas. Local people still pay heavy costs, while the tourism industry and global society receives substantial benefits. This trend is exacerbated by the widespread privatization of protected areas over which indigenous and local communities

have customary or traditional rights.

5. In particular, very few countries have moved to recognize indigenous and community conserved areas, though the Programme of Work explicitly requires this.

Equally of concern are problems of process. In particular, we flag the following:

1. Most countries don't seem to have thought it important enough to report back on their national level progress, with only 15 having responded to the Secretariat's questionnaire and 50 having provided some information in their National Reports. We note that the lack of financial and other implementation support from donor countries is also a factor in this.
2. The failure to provide funding to hold the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on PAS (AHWGPA), scheduled for late 2005, is indicative of the lack of interest shown in this Programme of Work.
3. In general, funding commitments remain woefully inadequate.

Given the above concerns, we urge parties to the CBD to commit to:

- Rescheduling, well within 2006, the aborted 2nd meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on PAS; and making Element 2 a major focus at this meeting;
- Adopting an Evaluation Matrix that requires very specific reporting on progress of implementation, including in it the question of how protected areas are meeting the socio-economic and equity needs of indigenous peoples and local communities (also in line with the Elaborated Programme of Work On Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity, under Decision VII/5 (COP7, Kuala Lumpur, 2004), that stresses that this programme of work aims to make a direct contribution to poverty alleviation, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals). Specific revisions of the draft Evaluation Matrix are appended to this statement.
- Preparing, through participatory processes that fully and meaningfully involve indigenous/local communities and NGOs, their national reports on

progress of implementation of the PA POW, especially with regard to the 2006 activity targets; and sending these reports to the Secretariat before the 2nd meeting of the AHWGPA.

- Finishing full transparent and participatory reviews on key measures needed to comply with the Programme of Work, and initiating substantive actions on each of these measures.
- Exchanging key lessons from successes and failures in achieving the various targets of the PA POW, bilaterally and through the CBD mechanisms.
- International Institute of Environment and Development
- Kalpavriksh, India
- Pastoralist Integrated Support Programme, Kenya
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, United Kingdom
- Social Equity in Environmental Decisions, United Kingdom
- The Nature Conservancy
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- WWF

The donor community too needs to realize that a renewed focus on protected areas, using the paradigm of the CBD PA POW, would help address not only conservation but also livelihood, poverty, and sustainability issues. The PA POW needs political commitment, skills and capacity, but it also needs funds, which are currently sorely lacking.

In turn, we in civil society commit to taking the actions we can, to help implement the Programme of Work.

We thank you for your attention.

[Delivered by Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh, on behalf of the undersigned alphabetically listed NGOs, and several other NGOs, gathered at COP8]

- Association of Private Nature Reserves of Minas Gerais, Brazil
- CARE International
- Equitable Tourism Options (EQUATIONS), India
- Fauna and Flora International
- International Collective in Support of Fishworkers
- Global Forest Coalition
- Global Justice Ecology Project, USA
- Greenpeace International

The Joint NGO Statement on Protected Areas was presented to the 8th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 8) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Curitiba, Brazil on 23 March 2006