



Challenges for biodiversity conservation in the context of the CBD

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Prologue



Important to remember that unlike UNFCCC in 1992 the biodiversity conservation international institutional landscape was already occupied by a range of existing mechanisms:

- 1946 ICRW
- 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
- 1972 World Heritage Convention (UNESCO)
CITES
- 1982 CMS

Plus UNESCO programme on Man and The Biosphere - and later Global Geoparks

Also Important -

- In genesis the CBD was driven by conservation focused governments and achieved near-universal signature, if not later ratification, thus differing from the “rag-tag” membership of the other biodiversity-related conventions
 - But as more (global south) countries joined CBD discussion focused on sustainable use and benefit sharing, alongside conservation
- So, the conservation context of the CBD must be viewed through the lens of links with sustainable use and benefit sharing - *And the lens of ILK an important, if slow-developing, aspect of the CBD.*



The convention set off in style in 1994 in Nassau, Bahamas; and met annually with SBSTTA meetings until 1997 when exhaustion set in & it moved to a biannual schedule, keeping 2 SBSTTA meetings



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The ENB view..

“Despite the over-burdened agenda, many delegates and NGOs felt that decisions reached at this COP have laid the groundwork for moving on with the business of biodiversity conservation.

Notwithstanding some of the problems and setbacks, most delegates demonstrated the political will **to move forward into the implementation phase.**”

A few months ago, almost 30 years on....

"Countries need a substantial increase in resources, as was clearly recognized by COP 15, both in Goal D and Target 19 of the Framework itself, and in related decisions on resource mobilization and on the financial mechanism... I am happy to say, with the ratification and launch of the new GEF GBF Fund, ***we are moving from agreement to action.***"

-- David Cooper, Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

The ENB view..

“There was disappointment among NGOs and indigenous groups that indigenous issues have been deferred in the medium-term work programme until 1996. Despite passing reference in the COP’s statement to the CSD, many felt that such a delay was inappropriate, especially given the very concrete references to the importance of benefit-sharing with indigenous groups and local communities in the Convention itself. “

The ENB view..

“There is continuing disagreement over the need for *an ecosystem approach to biodiversity conservation*.

Several countries have maintained that biodiversity loss (conservation) must be addressed within the larger context of forests, agricultural production and fisheries management.”

COP 1 decision -

1/8-17 17. The Conference of the Parties invites the Commission on Sustainable Development to: ...

- (b) Consider the biodiversity issue in the light of the three interrelated objectives of the Convention;
- (c) Approach the subject of biodiversity as a multisectoral issue which is relevant to virtually all of its concerns;
- (d) Urge Governments to recognize the mutually supportive relationship between biodiversity and sustainable development;

The early discussions:

- It was agreed that several issues were always on the early COP agendas. These includes consideration of Ecosystem themes; developing an Ecosystem Approach; consideration of ILK and Access & benefits issues, and (what now seems like a C20th curiosity) a global taxonomy initiative.
- The first theme was marine and coastal biodiversity, and this gave a foretaste of what were to become highs and lows of conservation discussions in the CBD.



Marine & Coastal Biodiversity



Following an airing at the convention's first SBSTTA meeting, held at UNESCO HQ, where the science, technical and technological experts were outnumbered by policy wonks and legal “experts” by about 5:1, a surprisingly useful document outlining challenges and direction for marine and coastal biodiversity conservation was developed at COP 2, held in Jakarta (thus the Jakarta Mandate)

Marine & Coastal Biodiversity



It was “surprisingly useful” because it emphasised the conservation challenges but did not demur from including the crucial issues of sustainable use of marine resources, especially fisheries (here FAO representation was significant and useful).

Looking back, it was (& remains) not only the first such document, but also has a direct lineage to the recently agreed BBNNJ agreement, and the genesis of subsequent work on Marine Protected Areas and Marine spatial planning.

Other Early Starters

- Forests and Inland Waters were also early themes, and both have also returned over many years as new ideas blossomed, or new demands emerged.
- Forests discussions are always tense and tend to accentuate the political rather than scientific. Parallel development of UNFF and activities in FAO also show institutional rivalry, not always in a good light.
- Inland Waters also has special features. The term seems to annoy Freshwater biodiversity experts who push the line that Freshwater is so special it deserves pride of place, and tried unsuccessfully to argue this for the K-M GBF, which retains the term inland waters



Other Early Starters

- But Inland waters (and indeed some of marine and coastal) are very much the “kitchen” of the Ramsar convention.
- So, very early on, an MoU was signed between the secretariats of CBD and Ramsar to “outsource” CBDs inland waters work to Ramsar.
- Like all good idea this has had varied success but overall, the “joint work programme” has been helpful. Similar arrangements for CMS less so.
- Other mechanisms of cross-co-operation are also used – the BLG being the most significant. <https://www.cbd.int/blg/>



The Malawi Principles – but you can't call them that...



- For me, the most significant step in the first decade was adoption of the 12 principles of the Ecosystem Approach by COP4 in 1998
- These principles are the core of the Ecosystem Approach, further embellished at COP 7 in 2004
- COP4 agreed these should be the foundational principles of the convention, covering all three objectives.
- IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management promulgated the EA for a decade, And yet they never seemed to grab attention – until last December when at the last minute they found their way into the K-M GBF.

<https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-04/information/cop-04-inf-09-en.pdf>

Links to other ideas

- The ecosystem approach is a framework, not a method;
- The 12 principles act as a guide which when used together ensure sustainability;
- Other approaches often meet or fulfil all the ecosystem approach's principles and conform to its values – e.g. **UNESCO Biosphere Reserves.**





The ecosystem approach in action

- No single way of implementation – dependant on local, regional, national and global conditions
- Links to EU policies such as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Green Infrastructure



Protected Areas

- Remembering the initial drive for CBD was expansion of global PA networks what was happening?
- Answer – not a lot, except at the edges in ecosystem themes.
- Then in 2003 the IUCN held its 5th World Parks Congress. The meeting as with the previous 4 had a focus on PA expansion, but a new stream on linkage in the landscape/seascape appeared, including the need for better involvement of First Nations.
 - COP 7 Decision VII/28;3. *Also welcomes* the outputs of the Vth IUCN World Parks Congress, in particular the message from the Congress to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and its contribution to the programme of work on protected areas;



Protected Areas

- Decision VII/28;8. Adopts the programme of work on protected areas annexed to the present decision with the objective of the establishment and maintenance by 2010 for terrestrial and by 2012 for marine areas of comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas that collectively, inter alia through a global network, contribute to achieving the three objectives of the Convention and the 2010 target to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss
 - <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-07/cop-07-dec-28-en>.



These issues seem set to dominate the international agenda for the next decade or so...

Yet within CBD some inconsistencies between over-emphasis on protected areas and not enough on the Ecosystem Approach..

Also, some diversion with, for example, a *Strategy for Global Plant Conservation* which has many of these issues as subsets.

The Millennium Goals

- Largely missed Biodiversity completely.
- MDG 7 on Environmental sustainability added “*a reduction in the rate of loss of biodiversity*” as 7.6 in 2006
- But spawned the “2010 targets” that were supposedly the definitive way to halt biodiversity loss.
- “countdown to 2010”
- And not to forget the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment...*





Comments from 2010 UNGA meeting..

Support was expressed in that regard for REDD REDD+..... Biodiversity, food security and climate change must be tackled together, and there should be greater cohesion between the activities of the CBD, the UNFF and the UNFCCC.

...biodiversity loss caused by climate change should be addressed through the UNFCCC....



Comments from 2010 UNGA meeting..

- ✓ the Aichi (2020) Targets must be both ambitious and realistic, and include concrete, measurable indicators;
- ✓ important to improve the science-policy interface perhaps through the establishment of the *proposed intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES)*.

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Meanwhile, at a retreat in Switzerland in late 2010 representatives of the Ramsar, CITES, CMS, World Heritage Convention and the CBD secretariats agreed that:

“the Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2020 to be adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the CBD, should serve as a common framework for action and financing over the next ten years.”





Weasal words from the retreat...

“States are sovereign and determine their own international commitments, and the national activities they wish to prioritize. Equally, *each convention’s COP is sovereign and therefore determines its own strategies*. Decisions about these matters will properly vary from country to country and convention to convention, but the strategy for biodiversity adopted at (Nagoya) should provide a framework that is relevant to all of them.”

Aichi

- Following the failure of 2010, additional bitter as 2010 was the international year, the Convention plunged into a new decadal strategy with goals and targets. Named Aichi Targets, after the prefecture where the COP was held it was alas, yet another failure.
- The effects of this failure were worse in some ways than the 2010 targets as there was much hope.
- OECM's made an appearance, as did a revision of the GSPC...

COP 10 MOP 5

いのちの共生を、未来へ
Life in Harmony, into the future



G20 Environment Ministers , Bali 2022

- We will step up efforts to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, including through Nature-based Solutions and Ecosystem-based Approaches, support climate mitigation and adaptation;
- enhance environmental conservation and protection, sustainable use and restoration, responding to natural disasters,
- reduce ecosystem degradation, enhance ecosystem services; and
- address issues affecting the marine and coastal environment.



G7 leaders compact

- we adopt the G7 2030 Nature Compact in support of the global mission to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.
- First, we commit to champion ambitious and effective global biodiversity targets, including conserving or protecting at least 30 per cent of global land and at least 30 per cent of the global ocean by 2030.
- Second, we will support the transition to sustainable management and use of natural resources.
- Third, we will work intensively towards increasing investment in the protection, conservation and restoration of nature,
- Finally, we will prioritise strengthened accountability and implementation mechanisms of Multilateral Environmental Agreements to which we are parties.



K-M GBF

- Finally accepted at COP15 after gruelling journey.
- Larger number of goals and targets than previous 2 iterations.
- Most interesting:
 - 20. *This framework is to be implemented based on the ecosystem approach of the Convention.*
- Will it work?
-



The Future...

- Coming back to implementation....

Comments in 2018 from a long-serving delegate of a European member of the CBD:

- “we had a very heavy SBSTTA, since we are now also dealing with issues that relate to the Protocols (Biosafety and ABS). Next COP will also be a joint COP of the CBD, Cartagena Protocol and Nagoya Protocol. It's a mess!!! and we hardly talk about biodiversity conservation. It is all Biosafety, Synthetic Biology, Genetic Sequence Information.
- Any new decisions? Not really. *We are now citing all the decisions that we already have and that were never implemented. This already fills enough pages to make a good decision.*”



So prove the pundits
wrong – show that
implementation can
happen and happen
fast enough to make a
difference....



Thank you for your attention!

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