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## “Protected areas”: A view from the other Half of the Earth

*Souparna Lahiri, All Indian Forum of Forest Movements*

Let us start with a sad reality: One cannot protect an area against climate change. The only way to do that is to effectively mitigate climate change itself. Sadly humanity is still failing to do that, so the terms “protected area” is almost a contradiction in terminis anno 2018. We can, and must, use ecosystem-based approaches to adapt to climate change, but most ecosystems will not be able to adapt themselves to a 2 degrees Celsius global warming scenario, no matter how much we pretend to “protect” them.

Despite this reality, governments, and the CBD Secretariat and Bureau, continue to enthusiastically embrace Aichi target 11 as the cornerstone of the Convention. Aichi target 11 has featured high on the agenda of practically each SBSTTA meeting since 2010, while SBSTTA has hardly paid any attention to the other targets. Last week, The Guardian supported a call by 49 scientists, including E.O. Wilson, to set Half the Earth aside for biodiversity conservation. That sounds lovely, but what if you are unlucky to live in the other half of the Earth? In an urban slum, a genetically modified soy plantation, or an endless eucalyptus plantation?

Of course, Aichi Target 11 is an attractive target for governments as it is relatively easy to declare an area which has already been effectively conserved by the communities inhabiting that area as “protected”. Sadly, the consequences of such a move are not always beneficial to the Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and women, who have been conserving the area until then. While there is increasing evidence that Indigenous Peoples’ traditional lands and territories hold highly preserved ecosystems and biodiversity, the important role played by Indigenous Peoples as environmental guardians still fails to gain due recognition. Parties to the CBD have agreed that the establishment, management and monitoring of protected areas should take place with the full and effective participation of, and full respect for the rights of, Indigenous Peoples. But, as pointed out by the UN

Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, “The establishment of national parks and conservation areas has resulted in serious and systemic violations of Indigenous Peoples’ rights through expropriation of their traditional lands and territories, forced displacement and killings of their community members, non-recognition of their authorities, denial of access to livelihood activities and spiritual sites and subsequent loss of their culture.”

SBSTTA 22 will discuss the voluntary guidance on governance and equity of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures and governance is at the heart of this. Governance arrangements have to be socially inclusive, respectful of rights, and effective in delivering conservation and sustainable livelihood outcomes for Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women, and society at large. Indigenous Peoples and traditional local communities, as rights-holders, have the right to provide or withhold free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) for any activities that affect them and their territories, including any conservation-related measures and designations.

The Community Conservation Resilience Initiative has recommended that COP should review and adapt the policy, legal and regulatory framework for protected and conserved areas in line with decision X/31 and XIII/2 to incentivize and legally recognize different governance types and fully respect the customary and formal access and governance rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and/or women in this respect.”

It also urges Parties to adopt appropriate procedures and policy and legislative mechanisms to recognize and accommodate customary tenure and governance systems in protected and conserved areas and associated rights, including territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women, especially in situations of overlap with protected and conserved areas. customary practices and customary sustainable use, in line with the Plan of Action on Customary Sustainable Use.

## OECS: A FREE LUNCH?

*The ICCA Consortium*

SBSTTA-22 marks significant progress towards appropriate recognition and support of contributions to conservation from area-based measures that are not protected areas. These “other effective area-based conservation measures”— OECSs for short — may not have been “designated, regulated or managed” for conservation, but do achieve conservation outcomes. They are **conserved areas**. And many of them comprise territories and areas governed, managed and conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, which we refer to as “ICCs—territories of life”.

OECSs *de facto* contribute to governments’ efforts to attain the Aichi Targets, and in particular Target 11, including elements of coverage, connectivity, representativeness, and equity.

As governments draw a variety of benefits from such area-based measures — from ecological functions to image, funding and even sustainable development at large — it would be appropriate and fair to respond with reciprocal action, including by recognizing the efforts and value of the legitimate OECS governance authorities and enhancing the “security” of their OECS biodiversity outcomes in the long term.

We would like to propose that this be done in at least two ways:

1. Recognizing and supporting the legitimate OECS governance authorities — in particular by providing stronger security of tenure to the Indigenous Peoples and local communities custodians of ICCs — territories of life;
2. Preventing threats — in particular by providing policy frameworks and regulations that protect OECSs from undesired extractive concessions in the years to come.

We welcome the proposed **voluntary guidelines** on OECSs and protected areas, which reflects an evolving understanding of critical issues and concerns. We encourage Parties to strengthen the guidance, including by enhancing its recognition of, and support for, legitimate OECS governance authorities, particularly Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The guidance should also better articulate the governments’ commitment to long-term security of the OECSs’ governance status and value for conservation. A government that “counts” OECSs today as part of its rightful celebration of advances towards Aichi Target 11 should secure, and sustainably support, the stated will of the custodians of the conserved areas.

For further information you can visit: [www.iccaconsortium.org](http://www.iccaconsortium.org)

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**Submissions** are welcome from all civil society  
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## **Ref. Not alarmed yet? Action is needed now!**

Dear SBSTTA delegates,

Many of you may remember the CBD COP 10 in Nagoya, 2010. It was a conference which was truly a success, after tough negotiations, three key documents were finally agreed: the Nagoya Protocol which finally operationalized the CBD's third goal on access and benefit sharing, an agreement on how to increase biodiversity-related funding and an overall strategic plan on how to achieve the CBD's overall goal of halting biodiversity loss by 2020.

*Now, 8 years later, where are we?* The Nagoya Protocol has meanwhile entered into force and been ratified by 107 parties, but it is in dire threat of being bypassed and undermined by new technologies such as digital sequence information that many parties feel does not fall under the Protocol. Finance has been upscaled, but is still nowhere near to matching the needs. And the CBD strategic plan's mission and 18 of its 20 targets will not be met by 2020, unless parties really increase their efforts substantially.

Although it is even more evident after GBO-4 and reflected in the background documentation for SBSTTA 22 (CBD/SBSTTA/22/5), recommendations to be adopted seem to simply acknowledge this situation but without adopting any concrete actions. Is this really all we have to say about it? Shouldn't we be absolutely alarmed and concerned about this new document that once more confirms our failure in halting the loss of biodiversity? And shouldn't we all request and urge parties to increase their efforts to achieve more Aichi targets? Shouldn't we ask the Executive Secretary to go out well beyond our green silo so the concerns get on to other people?

At the European preparatory conference in Vilnius earlier this month, negotiators did just that. NGOs and party representatives drafted language to take these points on board. This report is available among the SBSTTA documents in the "other" section (2<sup>nd</sup> document there). Surprisingly, there was no controversy among government and NGO delegates on adding these key paragraphs into the draft COP recommendation :

- Being deeply concerned that, despite many positive actions by Parties, most of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets are not on track to be achieved by 2020 which, in turn, will jeopardize the achievement of the Mission of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Urges Parties and invites other Governments to undertake urgent action by 2020 on those Aichi Biodiversity Targets, or elements within targets, for which progress needs to be accelerated to meet the Aichi Biodiversity Targets including making use of the possible options annexed to this Decision;
- Requests the Executive Secretary to communicate, through the UN system, the High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development, and other multi-lateral environmental agreements, that the achievement of the Mission of the Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals is at risk and, therefore, urgent action by Parties is required to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Of course adding this language alone will not per se make things happen. True progress can only be achieved by implementation through each of the 196 member parties, nationally. But certainly this can help to nudge them to do it. So please, give yourself a hand and nudge your countries by strengthening the language as suggested. Mother Earth will say thank you.

*Pro Natura - Friends of the Earth Switzerland*

## Gene Drive Organism Cards: Gotta catch 'em all!

We mostly hear the hype that gene drives will be used in health and conservation, but the real the money and energy behind gene drives comes from agribusiness and military. The “gene drive organisms” that are produced will be spreading irreversibly across fields, borders and species. It's up to delegates at SBSTTA 22 to save No More Minnie, Goodbye Kitty, and Bee Subordinate by stopping gene drives from being released into the wild. Keep an eye out for collectable Gene Drive Organism cards and try to get a full set (before they are extinct!).



For more information: [www.synbiowatch.org/genedrives](http://www.synbiowatch.org/genedrives)

### Fostering Community Conservation

There is a growing global concern that mainstream conservation measures have tended to marginalize the communities and Indigenous Peoples who have lived within forest and other ecosystems for millennia. However, a slow shift of thinking by recognizing that Indigenous Peoples and communities must become partners in conservation whose territorial rights have to be ensured.

Alongside SBSTA22, the Global Forest Coalition will hold its' second Fostering Community Conservation Conference from 4 to 8 July in Montreal. The conference brings together a large number of communities and actors from around the world dedicated to conserving our forests and biodiversity. The conference is a follow-up on a similar event which took place in 2015 in Durban.

The conference will take place close to the venue of the CBD meetings, at Concordia University's Grey Nuns Residence, 1190 rue Guy, in the centre of Montreal, unceded Indigenous territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation, known as the Mohawks, which has historically been a place of meeting and exchanges between nations.

You can access the program at: <https://globalforestcoalition.org/fccc-2018/programme/>