



SBSTTA-20

Montreal, Canada, 25 - 30 April 2016

Agenda Item 10 of the provisional agenda

Protected areas and ecosystem restoration

Thank you, Madam Chair,

On behalf of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, we want to contribute to the issue of Protected Areas and Biodiversity.

As indigenous peoples, since immemorial time, we have been contributing to the conservation of biodiversity, through our traditional practices within our ancestral territories. However, in many cases, we have had negative experiences, where in order to contribute to the conservation, protected areas have been imposed in our territories, without taking into account our free, prior and informed consent, putting in risk our traditional practices and our ways of life.

As indigenous peoples we share the concern about environmental degradation at a global level and we want to help to reduce the existing threats on ecosystems and biodiversity. However, it must be taken into account that, as indigenous peoples, we have our own areas of conservation and our own way of managing our traditional territories, and the result of these practices is the wealth of ecosystems and biodiversity in indigenous territories.

Therefore, Indigenous peoples have knowledge on how to restore degraded ecosystems and we want to put these knowledge at the service of the parties, so that, together we can build a better future for the next generations.

In order to ensure the conservation of biodiversity in protected areas and to restore ecosystems, the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities is essential in all the initiatives and activities to be undertaken within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

We are concerned that in the proposed recommendations there are no references related to the indigenous people's contributions.

Therefore, we recommend the following:

- a. To recognize the contribution of biodiversity conservation systems in natural areas and the restoration of ecosystems of indigenous peoples and local communities.
- b. Support all conservation initiatives by indigenous peoples and local communities with necessary resources to strengthen their traditional practices for the conservation of biodiversity and restoration of ecosystems within their ancestral territories.

We reiterate our readiness to contribute with the parties to seek mechanisms that will ensure the conservation of the biodiversity and ecosystem restoration.

Thank you.



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Thank you Chair, I am a member of the local communities' network from Zimbabwe representing the Chibememe Earth Healing Association. I'm speaking on behalf of those local communities. I'm addressing agenda Item 10 on protected areas and ecosystem restoration.

We welcome document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/12 protected areas and ecosystem restoration and thanks the Secretariat for preparing the document.

We recognize that ecosystem restoration contributes to the achievement of Aichi Targets and in particular the achievement of Aichi Target 11 on protected areas. Local Communities have for millennia lived with nature; conserving it through *using traditional knowledge (TK) and customary laws*. It is our belief that any efforts to restore nature through mechanisms such as protected areas should respect and recognize TK, community protocols and local customary institutions. There is need to respect and recognise Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities since they are the custodians of territories and ecosystems.

We firmly believe that the land and biodiversity that needs to be protected, conserved and restored do not exist in a vacuum. Most of these are located in lands and territories of Indigenous Peoples and Local communities. It is with this in mind that we call for recognition of customary tenure, ownership and management of protected areas instead of adopting an expansion approach of PAs into indigenous peoples' and local communities' lands, territories and waters. We believe expanding PAs without safeguarding the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities over their lands, territories and waters is not in keeping within the spirit of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the CBD's Articles 10(c) and 8(j).

In the proposed recommendation to COP13, we recognise that there is a gap in that there are no direct recommendations that address Indigenous peoples and local communities' concerns. Therefore we recommend the following new text:

3(bis) – Encourages Parties to strengthen legal, policy, technical and other forms of recognition and support for Indigenous peoples and local communities' customary lands and resource management, conservation and restoration efforts.

5(bis) – request the Parties, secretariat and relevant organisations to support community based initiatives on ecosystem restoration in the context of the CBD's Plan of Action on Customary Sustainable Use.

7(bis) – Request the Parties to ensure that Equitable protected area governance and management systems are put in place (including community conserved areas and joint management).



We welcome the idea of a short-term action plan on ecosystem restoration and the guideline for integrating biodiversity into ecosystem as described in the Annex of the document. However, we emphasise following points:

1. the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in key elements of the Action Plan;
2. Incorporation of customary governance and the principle of subsidiarity and devolution of power in Section B of the Guidelines.
3. Respect and build on customary rules and institutions in Section B of the Guidelines.
4. Recognise spiritual and cultural values in accounting processes of natural habitats.

We will submit the substantive details on the Annex in writing to the Secretariat.

I thank you.