

Capacity building and involvement for biodiversity

By LU Wanlin

Abstract: The 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) on December 19, 2022 in Montreal. During the Conference, Working Groups received many opinions on biodiversity and ecosystem from different countries. Among those opinions, capacity building for traditional knowledge caught many attention, as it could raise local people's awareness of biodiversity and promote the quality of biodiversity conservation, especially in many developing and least developed countries.

Key words: Biodiversity conservation, COP15, capacity building, traditional knowledge

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Informed by the belief that human beings share the “urgent task of making peace with nature”, the second phase of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) opened in Montreal, Canada, on 6 December 2022.

The failure to fully met the goals set at COP10 in Nagoya Japan in 2010 marked a significant lapse in biodiversity protection. The worsening climate change issue also poses increased threats to preserving biodiversity since these two issues are closely connected. Based on the effort the world made during the first phase of COP-15 in Kunming, China, in October 2021, the second phase aimed to speed up negotiation and move towards renewing the global biodiversity framework (GBF).

Conservation of biodiversity cannot be solely achieved by a few countries. Instead, a globally concerted effort needs to be made. Yet, to make a tangible difference and duly cope with the extent and pace of biodiversity loss facing us all today, we should not only rely on ambitious goals: the actual ability of every country - especially the many developing and least developed ones - should be of primary concern. However, it is difficult to balance costs and benefits, especially in a “public goods” context where



consequent “free riding” and “business as usual” approaches still represent a dangerous mainstream.

Thus, in the second phase of COP15, how to design the GBF based on access and benefit-sharing (ABS), and engaging with different parties and individuals become the major challenges. As has been stated by participants like the African Group and Costa Rica, for LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (GRULAC), adequate financial support, technological transfer, timely communication, and capacity building are needed.

Based on these ideas, Working Groups gathered to review the draft decision and formed contact groups to make draft decisions on various aspects including mechanisms for planning, monitoring, resources mobilization, risk assessment, and risk management under the Cartagena Protocol.

The Working Group II reviewed a series of issues and topics under biodiversity protection. Among these, in the second work program of the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES) opinions were received from different countries. India’s stance aiming at including traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) caught my attention.

India’s opinion greatly fits into the idea of involving a range of different stakeholders in biodiversity protection. Especially in developing countries, local people usually hold traditional knowledge that is all too often overlooked or underestimated. Thus, a pro-poor vision of biodiversity protection is necessary. Paying attention to local knowledge and people not only promotes the quality of biodiversity protection but also improves the local’s know-how. It is an important way to build up developing countries’ capacity. This issue was further supported by countries such as the UK, Bolivia, Mexico, and Guatemala in the draft decision on Article 8(j) (traditional knowledge) on the development of a new work program.

Besides IPLCs, the overall issue of capacity building issue was further discussed. Although delegates failed to fully meet the consensus, they agreed to provide training for different



actors. It is a good sign to the world that more concrete actions can be taken for capacity-building and to mobilize resources.

Combined with the attention to IPLCs and capacity-building action, developing and least-developed countries can improve their capability and participate in biodiversity protection. It is worth observing that reaching an agreement does not mean actions can be concretely implemented. But achieving at least a certain level of consensus may represent a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel.

About the “GAD-CBCGDF Sustainability Leadership Platform”

The “GAD-CBCGDF Sustainability Leadership Platform” is an exclusive cooperation scheme between Beijing Normal University-Hong Kong Baptist University United International College (UIC)’s Globalisation and Development (GAD) Programme and China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation (CBCGDF), aimed at increasing GAD students’ opportunities for research on, active engagement in and exposure to nationally and internationally relevant initiatives concerning various aspects of sustainable development - from poverty alleviation to circular economy, from natural resource management to global environmental governance, from UNSDG promotion to Green Belt and Road Initiative.



