Opposing views and progress: mid-conference update from COP11

Title
The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is a political treaty, signed in 1992, that aims to develop strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and for sustainable development. The 11th Conference of Parties (COP) for CBD, currently taking place in Hyderabad, India is into its second week of negotiations. The agenda is vast and includes more then a dozen topics, ranging from island conservation to business engagement in conserving biodiversity. Papers on many of these topics are still being hotly debated as negotations advance draft resolutions to be put before the conference for adoption later this week.

Aiming for action The tone of this COP is very strong on the need to strengthen the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodversity 2011-2020, agreed in Nagoya at COP10. National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are the major mechanisms through which countries can internalise the Plan and define national targets. There is growing consensus on the need for more investments, both in terms of human capacity and financial resources, in order to effectively develop and implement these national plans. The fundamental need to mainstream biodiversity, which means integrating biodiversity issues into other sectors, such as energy and mining, fisheries and agriculture, is increasingly gaining recognition. The Executive Secretary of the Convention in his various appearances has repeatedly called on countries to work on integration and on communicating the benefits of biodiversity across all sectors.

Consensus reached on EBSAs After long and difficult negotiations, today Parties reached consensus concerning recognition of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) in the open oceans and deep seas; and the transmission of information on these sites (as described in a series of workshops) to the United Nations.

Intense negotiations continue However, there is not yet consensus across several remaining critical topics. Mobilising resources for the implementation of the Strategic Plan, and the application of safeguards for biodiversity with regards to REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) are still locking the agenda, with intense negotiations taking place here in Hyderabad. *Opposing views* The Strategy for Resource Mobilisation was approved 4 years ago and not much progress has been made, including the setting of financial targets to implement the Strategic Plan of the Convention. There are two extremely opposing views over the table at the moment and skepticism on a positive result is increasing. Developing countries are calling for the commitment of developed countries to financially support implementation of the Convention and ask for a target to be agreed. They defend that a failure of doing so will put the credibility of the Convention to the test. They call for action on the ground and not for more processes to be put in place. A moratorium of the Strategic Plan is even being debated if additional funds are not committed. Developed countries, on the other hand, argue that more robust information is needed on the countries? funding needs and current expenses in order for a decision on target setting to be made.

On REDD+ there is fundamental disagreement on the role of the CBD in providing advice for the application of safeguards for REDD+, and for measuring the potential impacts of REDD on biodiversity. Some parties believe that such decisions lie firmly within the UNFCCC and the mandate for CBD to work on this has been surpassed by decisions taken within the climate change convention (UNFCCC COPs) over the last two years in Cancun and Durban. However, trying to prevent the CBD from providing such advice- and having a strong handle on if and how biodiversity is being negatively impacted by such actions -is not acceptable to many Parties who believe a minimum requirement of CBD is being able to monitor and assess the contributions and potential impacts of REDD+ in achieving CBD objectives. Today the High Level Segment of the COP starts, with some hope that the ministers and Heads of States present over the coming days and final hours will shape and agree with their delegations here in India a more positive way forward.