

Mr. Chairman, Executive Secretary, Your Excellencies,

Oct 15, Statement of the CBD Alliance, Plenary session at the High Level Segment - COP12.

My name is Choony Kim, I represent the Korean Civil Society Network on the CBD, and am a board member of the CBD Alliance, which is the formal network of civil society organisations engaged in the discussions on the CBD and biodiversity related issues. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share some of the concerns and recommendations of civil society at this occasion.

The CBD need to pay more attention to areas that are not protected areas but transboundary areas with rich biodiversity, such as the Demilitarized Zone on the Korean Peninsular. The DMZ has had a unique ecosystem and is a temperate forest without human intervention for more than 60 years. Setting a conservation strategy for the DMZ will contribute to achieve the Aichi target 11 that improves status of the biodiversity by 2020 at least 17 percent of terrestrial and inland water and 10 percent of coastal and marine areas. Further, as Korean Prime minister Chung, Hongwon said on his opening statement, it play a very positive role in easing tension and regaining mutual trust between the two Koreas.

There are several examples of successful mainstreaming at the national level. They are the presidential priority on peatland conservation in Belarus, adoption and implementation on guidelines for mining and biodiversity by the Mining ministry of South Africa, and a presidential priority in Belarus and having the mining ministry adopt and implement guidelines for mining and biodiversity in South Africa, decision to save Garorim bay taken by the Korean ministry of environment. Biodiversity and genetic resources are critically important, yet we continue to destroy it everywhere around the world. For example, Mountain Kariwang in Kangwon province, a “forest genetic resource reserve” 50km away from the Alpensia, is being devastated for only three days downhill ski in line with the so called “environmentally sustainable Winter Olympic games” initiated by International Olympic Committee (IOC) and International Ski Federation (FIS). We cannot continue to sacrifice biodiversity to big projects. Instead of cutting down 500 years old native forest trees, our actions to save the forest should be taken by international community. It greatly contributes to mainstreaming biodiversity not only domestically but also globally.

Civil society from around the world is deeply concerned to note the deplorable state of biodiversity conservation. This was dramatically shown by the recent publication of the Living Planet Report- which showed us that we are not on track to implement most of the Aichi targets.

Biodiversity and genetic resources are critically important to the survival of humanity, yet we continue to destroy it all around the world with projects to

expand big infrastructure like large dams, roads, mining, and large-scale monocultures for bioenergy and feedstock production. Policies to protect biodiversity are bound to fail if consumption and production patterns, and economic models, are not changed. These megaprojects are based upon the needs created by unsustainable consumption patterns that are often associated with increasingly unhealthy lifestyles and diets. We have to ensure transformative change in the system itself.

As is well-known, one of the main causes of biodiversity loss is the ever advancing frontiers of agro-industry, through the promotion of large-scale monocultures and intensive livestock. These use agrochemicals that kill pollinators and birds, while eliminating agricultural biodiversity and contaminating natural varieties with genetically modified ones. Agriculture needs to be a standing item on the agenda of the COP, also to generate effective support to the real food producers of this world; women, small-scale farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk and indigenous peoples, who also play a central role in plant and animal genetic resources conservation.

Instead of supporting corporate-driven and risky technologies, we should act to prevent damage to biodiversity wherever we can. That is precisely why the Precautionary Principle is at the heart of this Convention. However, some parties are unwilling to take it seriously.

Specifically, a precautionary approach should be applied to synthetic biology, which will have grave impacts on biodiversity and traditional livelihoods in many developing countries. It is already expanding globally, without any global or national public oversight or regulation, without capacity to perform adequate risk assessments, without consultation or information to affected peoples and countries. The establishment of an international framework for the regulation of synthetic biology should be approved at this COP.

Other dangerous technologies like genetically engineered trees will inevitably and irreversibly lead to GE trees invading and contaminating native ecosystems. The CBD COP-9 decision calling for application of the Precautionary Approach regarding transgenic trees must be applied. For civil society, the push for GE trees is unacceptable, for example, in Brazil.

Your excellencies,

The CBD is a binding treaty but there is a big gap in compliance with the legally binding commitments of the Convention, and its Strategic Plan. Even key institutions of the Convention itself sometimes fail to implement existing decisions. Worse still, issues seem to disappear from national and international agendas. Such is the case for agriculture, forests, and biofuels. These work programs and decisions should be standing items on the agenda of CBD COPs. What we need is implementation.

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are the principal instrument to implement decisions taken at the COP at national level. History has learned that only those NBSAPs that had a real process of broad rightsholder and stakeholder involvement were successful in their implementation. It is therefore of utter importance that when developing NBSAPs, parties dialogue with all rightsholders and stakeholders, and mainstream biodiversity concerns in all the sectors of the country.

Your excellencies,

The decisions that will be taken here at COP12 should not only have a central place in the Pyeongchang Roadmap, but also in the Gangwon Declaration, as this is essential for the integration of biodiversity into sustainable development and the enhancement of the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Financial resources are key for implementation and economic incentives should be realigned in line with Aichi target 3. However, discussions here at Pyeongchang on resource mobilization have been stranded. Major differences on issues have still not even been discussed.

Most Northern countries are walking away from their legal CBD commitments to provide funding, as established in Article 20 of the Convention. They are now shifting the burden to the South and its peoples in the name of domestic resources mobilization. Parties must reiterate their commitments from Hyderabad, and show progress on the agreed doubling of international financial flows to developing countries by 2015.

We question the intent to raise funds through innovative financial mechanisms, promoting market and private sector interests, which will lead to the financialisation and commodification of nature. We cannot put a price on nature.

Biodiversity offsetting is a controversial proposal, which has inherent dangers such as promoting destruction without the guarantee that lasting solutions will provide a real compensation. Extinction is forever. The precautionary approach must be applied. We also warn against the undermining of rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women through this kind of policy.

There are growing conflicts of interest within the Convention: private funding is replacing public funding, and with it come private interests. We urge the CBD Secretariat and Parties to fully disclose all information regarding funding and input for biodiversity-related policy processes. Perverse incentives must also be tackled

Your excellencies,

During the last few days, the attention of delegates was drawn to the issue of the impact of radioactive radiation on biodiversity. We would recommend the CBD to make an official study of the impacts of nuclear radiation on biodiversity, and then take the necessary steps according to the outcome of such a study.

Your excellencies,

‘Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities’ are paramount to the implementation of the convention. In line with international human rights agreements the terminology ‘indigenous peoples’ as well as their Free Prior and Informed Consent should be adhered to.

Indigenous and community actions have since millennia played a fundamental role in biodiversity conservation. Indigenous Peoples’ and Community Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCAs), can significantly contribute to the implementation of the Pyeongchang Roadmap, the Aichi targets and the Strategic Plan, provided they are recognized in an appropriate and effective manner. Also, women’s rights, roles, needs and aspirations should be mainstreamed in all biodiversity-related decision making, as indicated by the decision adopted here at this COP.

Your excellencies,

Forest ecosystems are estimated to represent up to 80 to 90% of terrestrial biodiversity, yet forest policies seems to have shifted away from the CBD to other forums. The implementation of the CBD’s Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity has lost momentum. There is more to forests than REDD+ and capturing carbon, we need to conserve forest ecosystems in a holistic, integrated, non-market-based, manner.

This convention needs to address the drivers of forest loss and determine policies to enhance the enforcement of forest and human rights laws and agreements. Parties need to build on the many positive policy recommendations that already exist and implement them on the ground.

Marine and coastal biological diversity is greatly endangered, despite being a long enduring priority program in the CBD. Issues such as the impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity of anthropogenic underwater noise and ocean acidification, and the destruction of coral reefs must be addressed urgently. In the discussion on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs), forthcoming decisions must be consistent with earlier CBD commitments.

Lastly, biodiversity is at the heart of sustainable development. However, we should also place sustainable development at the heart of biodiversity policy. We strongly support the Chennai Guidance for Implementation of the

Integration of Biodiversity and Poverty Eradication in this respect, as well as the Plan of Action on customary sustainable use of biological diversity and the other outcomes of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Article 8(j). We call upon the Parties to the CBD to give an explicit mandate to the Secretary General to ensure these important COP12 outcomes are used as a basis for the further work on the post-2015 development agenda, including in particular the framework of indicators that is still to be developed to assess implementation of the proposed Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

We would like to raise one last question: after all the beautiful words and promises we hear at the convention center: what will be the next concrete steps you will take to really protect biodiversity, once back in your countries? We call on you to ensure the central involvement of civil society and indigenous peoples, local communities and women, because we have so much to contribute to this task.