

CBCGDF's Recommendations on Selected Issues for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

Background:

The Secretary-General of China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation (CBCGDF) Dr. Zhou Jinfeng will be attending a Thematic Workshop on Area-based Conservation Measures for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework on 1-3 December 2019 in Montreal, Canada, organized by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Area-based conservation measures, including protected areas, other effective area-based conservation measures, indigenous community-managed areas, conservancies, outcomes of spatial planning and other land/sea use planning and management forms are considered by many CBD stakeholders as important elements to address conservation, sustainable use as well as equitable benefit-sharing objectives of the Convention, bearing in mind that all ecosystems need management strategies to secure biodiversity. Many conceptual approaches, initiatives, and specific proposals have emerged in recent years as the CBD community started the post-2020 preparatory process.

In view of this interest and of the growing activities of many stakeholders outside the formal post-2020 preparatory process of the Convention (CBD), which are meant to influence this process at various stages, the Co-Chairs of the Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the Secretariat of the Convention are organizing a thematic workshop on this topic of area-based conservation measures. This will enable experts from Parties to the Convention to have an initial informal dialogue, including with stakeholders on various aspects of area-based conservation measures and their place in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. This workshop is one of the thematic meetings presented to and approved by the Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework at its first meeting.

In this context, on the occasion of CBCGDF's attending this Workshop, a Statement has been released by CBCGDF. The key messages are as follows:

The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is a unique framework built to truly tackle the imperative state of our nature's emergency. CBCGDF is, however, presenting some useful recommendations that would be significant for inclusion in the agendas of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

CBCGDF recommends the idea of a “Human-based Solution” (HbS). As we all know, the environmental challenges the world face today such as biodiversity losses and climate crisis are all caused by anthropogenic activities. To fix the problems, we humans have to step up to provide solutions to the problem which is why we are proposing the Human-based Solution be included in the Agenda of Post-2020 Framework. The Human-based Solution is a fundamental solution to the World's ecological and environmental issues. A person's change can influence other people, enterprises, institutions, governments, and other social units to make changes as well.

In view of the recent “Oriental storks starving” issue, CBCGDF proposes a third party participatory approach involving local indigenous people or conservation organizations to actively monitor and survey protected areas from time to time reporting any unusual activities in the area to authorities which welcomes the idea of the CBD/SBSTTA/22/L.2 Annex II Voluntary Guidance On Effective Governance Models For Management Of Protected Areas, Including Equity, Taking Into Account Work Being Undertaken Under Article 8(J).

CBCGDF recommends the idea of the "People's Participation Approach" through the “China Conservation Area” (CCAfa) system. This system is a community based innovative protected areas program aimed at bio-bridging fragmented habitats, endangered species protection and advanced sustainable livelihood of the people. CBCGDF’s experiences have shown that communities and indigenous people can play a very effective role in conservation. CCAfa can effectively complement the current shortage and vacancy of local civil protection forces, and form a set of fast, convenient and effective protection mechanisms. At the same time, it effectively integrates into the existing and mature nature reserve system.

CBCGDF recommends the idea of combating illegal wildlife trade to the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework Action Agenda. Wildlife poaching and illegal trade are rampant inside or outside of the national protected areas that completely goes against the Aichi Biodiversity Targets item 12. The CBD/SBSTTA/22/L.2 Annex I.II (Voluntary Guidance) suggests steps for enhancing and supporting integration into the landscape, seascapes, and sectors, as well as secondly steps for enhancing and supporting the mainstreaming of protected areas other effective area-based conservation measures across sectors. In view of the growing status of the illegal wildlife trade, CBCGDF recommends that “Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade” should be included as part of the steps in enhancing and supporting the mainstreaming of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures across sectors.

The detailed recommendations from CBCGDF to the Parties on CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to amend and strengthen the contents of the Agenda are as follows:

1. Human-based Solution (HbS):

Ecological and environmental problems including climate change are resulted from human activities and only when humans begin to change can they help solve the problems. A person's own change can affect also affect other people, enterprises, institutions, governments, and other social units to make changes. This is why CBCGDF welcomes the idea of a "Human-based Solution Approach" to be included in the CBD Post 2020 Agenda. HbS is a fundamental solution to the problem of the ecological environment. It can be used as a conceptual guide or action plan to solve the problems of plastic waste, loss of biodiversity, Protected Area Monitoring, and global warming. HbS is good for itself which is conducive to human society's response to the environmental crisis and sustainable development. For example, "I" just eat less meat, use less disposable cutlery, drive less, use more public transportation, and buy fewer clothes and so on. This single action is a huge contribution to global climate change and the global biodiversity crisis. Secondly, HbS is good for business and society. Just recently I went to a coffee shop (COSTA) in Shanghai, China and asked for a cup of coffee to my amazement, I was provided the option of paper cup usage and when asked about using my own cup gave me an affirmative response. Due to the increasing demand from consumers to employ the use of reusable that companies today are now willing to respect the green consumption right of consumers and start offering green options to customers. This shows that the demands of the "I" as an individual generates a great impetus to the enterprise. With the positive benefit involved with this approach, we intend to encourage everyone to take up the challenge and act towards providing solutions to global environmental issues.

2. Lessons are drawn from the Recent Oriental Stork Starving Issue

The City of Tianjin is known for its Nature reserve and Protected areas for migratory bird's protection. 3 Protected areas namely Beidagong, Qilihai, and the Caofeidian Nature reserve are situated around this region which is home to migratory birds and due to the recent changes to the environment caused by human activities, the habitat is not so habitable for these bird species. The Case of Oriental stork caught the attention of the CBCGDF which made us the question "What happens after a protected area is build and is it all about building boundaries and buffer zones?"

Oriental stork popularly known to winter around the Tianjin protected area was recently faced with the issue of starvation. On arrival at one of the wetlands (Beidagang), the water was too deep to find food so they flew to a neighboring protected area (Caofedian Nature Reserve) for food but all to no avail. Caofedian Nature reserve which until recently has been experiencing degradation as a result of continued human activities because part of the land was rented to farmers and local fishermen to build ponds. This action has left the migratory birds who stop over during winter for food in a devastating state. The core area is 3504ha with a buffer area of 1503ha. CBCGDF volunteers ran a patrol around this wetland to survey the state of the reserve and based on their observation, they found that the buffer zone is basically located on the left side of the highway and the right side belongs to the experimental area. Oil fields and fishponds construction were located all around this region including factory buildings these are all unsuitable factors the migratory birds. It was also found that although the protected area was surrounded by barbed wire, the boundary monument and other gates were left unattended. The gates are open and can be encountered from time to time by fishermen who used 80-90% of the area for fishpond with only a small piece of the original wetland left. These actions have resulted in a lack of food which has become a fatal problem for Oriental stork. According to Mr. Wang the director of the China Conservation Area for Oriental stork who said that the significant changes in the habitat coupled with the sudden cold weather of an important “gas station” have left this bird facing hunger. Mr. Wang worried about this bird stressed that if they stay in large numbers, they will face two problems one is food and the other is poaching.

Due to the help of the CBCGDF’s volunteer’s actions, the protection site was supplemented with food for this bird to help them restore their physical strength and 6 rescue stations installed to help the birds.

All of these actions made us wonder what happens to our protected area after being established by the government and what measures are taken to maintain it. This is the reason why the CBCGDF is suggesting that a third party participating involving local indigenous people or conservation organizations like the CBCGDF to actively monitor and survey the protected area from time to time reporting any unusual activities in the area which welcomes the CBD/SBSTTA/22/L.2 Annex Ii Voluntary Guidance On Effective Governance Models For Management Of Protected Areas, Including Equity, Taking Into Account Work Being Undertaken Under Article 8(J)

3. People’s Participation Approach – China Conservation Area for species at somewhere (CCAfa)

CBCGDF recommends the idea of people's participation approach through the China Conservation Area (CCAfa) system. The System refers to the protection and support of volunteers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local communities to protect biodiversity, natural environment, natural resources, and humanities, with the actions from the people as the core and where the protection of the natural resources being urgently needed as the primary location, in order to implement specific in-situ protection. It is also a platform for sharing the protection stories and experiences of the people and society. It promotes the mutual assistance and the exchange and sharing of protection forces of the whole society.

CCAfa can effectively complement the current shortage and vacancy of local civil protection forces, and form a set of fast, convenient and effective protection mechanisms. At the same time, it effectively integrates into the existing and mature nature reserve system. This community based innovative protected Area program aimed at bio-bridging fragmented habitat, endangered species protection and advanced sustainable livelihood of the people. Our experiences show that communities and indigenous people can play a very effective role in conservation.

The first CCAfa was established in April 2016 to protect endangered migratory Great Bustards in China's Henan Province. And presently this program has since grown to over 130 established nationwide and has proven to be effective in fully mobilizing and rallying the government and the indigenous people to jointly contribute to the cause of protecting species and their habitats. Different from the government established a protected area, the CCAfa takes a bottom-up approach mainly dependent upon the participation of the people (volunteers). In April 2016, local wildlife volunteers from Changyuan, Henan Province came to our Beijing-based organization and stated the efforts and challenges from protecting one of the endangered bird species Great Bustard from the poachers and poisoners. I was very touched and encouraged by the great efforts made by the local residents and citizen scientists, and I decided to support them to incorporate all strengths to protect biodiversity. That is what led to the origination of CCAfa. Also, CBCGDF as part of the effort of the conservation of Great Bustard, a concerted action plan for the conservation of Great Bustard has been approved by the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals during the 12th Convention of Parties (CMS COP12) in October 2017. As an innovative Protected Area approach introduced by the CBCGDF, CCAfa has a wide coverage, with protected objects include but not limit to dozens of endangered fauna and flora species, migratory birds, dark sky, ancient trees, cultural relics and historical heritages, coral reefs, etc. CCAfa takes a holistic approach towards conservation include but not limited to

establish a partnership with local communities, grassroots NGOs, local governments, private sector, and other stakeholders.

4. Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade

CBCGDF recommends the idea of combating illegal wildlife trade to the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework action agenda. Wildlife poaching and illegal trade are rampant inside or outside of the national protected areas which completely goes against the Aichi Biodiversity Target 12. This proves that wildlife poaching and illegal trade are extremely holding up us against achieving Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Anti-poaching and combating illegal trade can be the tipping points of pushing biodiversity conservation to a different level as these reflect most of the relationship between wildlife and human. While protected areas and legislation are static solutions, addressing issues like wildlife poaching and illegal trade are the "dynamic" ones. At present, Aichi Targets is far from enough in combating illegal wildlife trade. According to Analysts, illegal trade on wildlife is the fourth biggest illegal trade at about \$20 billion annually. Therefore, these two areas should be paid more attention, otherwise, dramatic population and range will decline globally which we cannot afford. Take endangered species Pangolin for example. It's reported that China and Vietnam are the major destinations for traded wildlife, and between 2010 and 2015, at least 120 tons of whole Pangolins, parts, and scales were confiscated by law enforcement. From 2004-2014 over 1 million Pangolins were traded. It is estimated that a Pangolin is killed every 5 minutes. Even with numerous protected areas and national wildlife protection laws worldwide, the sad reality is that the population of pangolins is declining dramatically and already on the brinks of extinction. So, where's the problem? Later, we were shocked by the fact that official wildlife rescue system was not transparent; data were missing; our information disclosure requests were dismissed or manipulated; tens of dozens of confiscated pangolins to Guangxi's official Wildlife Rescue Center were transported to a steel company, a breeding farm in a TCM city, and to some other trading companies, etc. While, at the same time, illegal wildlife trading in black-markets is still rampant - CBCGDF volunteers went to southern China's provinces to do an undercover investigation and found in many places' pangolins were still on restaurant's menu secretly.

The CBD/SBSTTA/22/L.2 Annex I.II (Voluntary Guidance) Suggested steps for enhancing and supporting integration into the landscape, seascapes, and sectors and secondly steps for enhancing and supporting the mainstreaming of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures across sectors. Based on the issues of illegal wildlife trade increasing growth, we are however suggesting that fighting illegal wildlife trade should be included as part of the steps in enhancing and supporting the mainstreaming of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures across sectors.

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