OCT. 16th 2013 (32)
AM SESSION · 16/10
13:04

Draft Philippine Statement on Strategic Goal C

The Philippines appreciates the Secretariat in coming up with UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/2/Add.3 and fully agrees with its observations on protected areas, extinction of known threatened species and the importance of small holder farmers in maintaining and sustaining agricultural genetic diversity.

As early as 1992, Republic Act 7586 or the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act provides the legal framework for the establishment and management of protected areas in the Philippines. On its 19th year, the NIPAS Act was amended, and presently, there are seventy-one (71) support policies issued by the DENR including the approved Revised Internal Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the NIPAS Act. The IRR was amended for the greater participation of local government units, and other stakeholders such as indigenous peoples and local communities in the decision-making processes, and to the establishment and planning of management zones. Consequently, the protected areas are administered by these various stakeholders through the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB). As of December 2012 there are one hundred seventy-seven (177) protected areas with organized/appointed Management Boards.

By June 2013, there are two hundred forty (240) protected areas in the Philippines covering 5.45 million hectares, 29 of which are marine protected areas. In recognition of the importance of the biological diversity of the Philippines, several protected areas have been designated as World Heritage Sites, Ramsar Sites, Transboundary Protected Areas, ASEAN Heritage Parks.

The Philippines continues to expand and strengthen the terrestrial protected area (PA) system by developing new PA models and building capacity for effective management of the system. The expanded PA system will have comprehensive ecological coverage and strong links to local communities and indigenous lands in the surrounding landscape, through the integration of new conservation areas.

Gaps and further needs of the Philippines relate to the bio-geographic representation of the Philippine protected area (PA) system. Given the enormous biological diversity of the Philippines, which is related to its tortuous topography and geological history, the ranges of endemic species are scattered throughout the archipelago, often in small patches corresponding with mountain peaks or mountain ranges. Because of the high biodiversity of the Philippines per unit area, the size of the system should reflect a higher proportion of the country's total area to ensure adequate coverage. This makes designing a biogeographically representative PA system a particularly challenging task. The Philippines needs scientific and technical tools so that all PA boundaries fall 100% within Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

There continue to be huge gaps in coverage and representativeness of the terrestrial PA system in the Philippines. A capacity assessment for protected area management undertaken in 2003 identified systemic, institutional and individual weaknesses in capacity that must be overcome to improve PA system management effectiveness. There is a continuing need to improve the capacity to provide sufficient support systems to the field management and implementing units so that they may have the tools, skills and competence to carry out their responsibilities in PA management. Another major barrier for PAs involve inadequate systems for financial planning, budgetary management and revenue generation for PA system management.

As to Aichi Target 12, the Philippines agrees with the observation in Paragraph 42 as it needs further tools to support species recovery and conservation programme; as well as Paragraph 45 relating to the need to develop assessment methodologies for those species not currently reflected in Red Lists, such as fungi and invertebrates, and then use that information to develop recovery plans. The Philippines also need tools for the gathering of information on the threat status of species at population levels.

At this juncture, the Philippines, with the help of its partners in conservation, conducted a Biodiversity Resource Assessment that led to the identification of two new species of frogs in Leyte, Mindanao, Philippines only this year. The biodiversity resource assessment also recorded a total of 229 floral species, 31 of which are unique to the Philippines; and 212 terrestrial vertebrates species, comprising 112 species of birds (41 species are unique to Philippines; 11 of which are threatened to extinction), 36 species of mammals (17 species are unique to the Philippines) and 64 species of amphibians and reptiles (more than half of which are found only in the Philippines).

As to Aichi Target No. 13, the Philippines agrees the observation in Paragraphs 63, 69, and 86. Indeed, we owe much of our agricultural genetic diversity to our small holder farmers, also known as small holder peasants, pastoralists or local communities, as well as indigenous peoples. The genetic diversity nurtured by small holder farming families for the people's benefit, however, are continuously threatened with biotechnology products such as Genetic Use Restriction Technologies or GURTs despite the CBD moratorium, as well as intellectual property rights.

The Philippines agree with Paragraph 83 of the document and confirm that market pressures indeed reduce genetic diversity and small farming families. We wish to recall the Programme of Work on Agricultural Biodiversity adopted in COP Decision 5/V and COP Decision IX/1. The Philippines believes that there is need for more decisiveness in implementing previous decisions on agricultural biodiversity as to proprietary rights, GURTS moratorium, reviewing trade policies, and fully involving small farming families and indigenous peoples, as well as in implementing the Addis Ababa Principles so that Aichi Target 13 can be fully achieved.