



UN BIODIVERSITY
CONFERENCE
COP13-COPMOP8-COPMOP2
CANCUN, MEXICO 2016
MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY FOR WELL-BEING



Protected Areas

Protected areas are the cornerstones of biodiversity conservation and for maintaining natural and cultural heritage. As highlighted by the Hawai'i Commitments, adopted by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) members at the World Conservation Congress in September 2016, "Connected systems of protected areas, whether on land or sea, when effectively managed and governed, provide sanctuary for biodiversity and generate an extraordinary range of benefits for people. Ecosystem Services from these protected areas contribute to human health and wellbeing." While protecting ecosystems essential for life, protected areas also support human livelihoods and aspirations. Nearly half of the world's population is directly dependent on protected areas for its livelihood, and many of the most vulnerable people depend directly on protected areas to fulfil their daily subsistence needs.

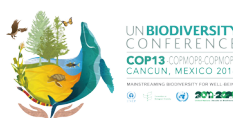
The programme of work on protected areas (PoWPA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is the most comprehensive global plan of action, the defining blueprint for protected areas. Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 (protected areas) of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 not only encompasses the scope but also expands the vision of the PoWPA. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also recognizes the crucial role of protected areas as a key strategy for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development (e.g. Sustainable Development Goals 14 and 15). The 2014 evaluation of the status of progress in the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Targets presented in the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook indicated that many elements of Target 11 could be achieved by 2020. Recognising the critical and important role of protected areas not only for biodiversity conservation but also for securing ecosystem goods and services for achieving sustainable development, and in the face of increasing human and climate change pressures on Earth's resources, the effective implementation of the protected areas' agenda and the achievement of Target 11 will be crucial.

Key messages

- The Protected Planet Report 2016 indicates that the world's protected areas cover at least 14.7% of the world's extent of ecosystems, about 10.2% of coastal and marine areas under national jurisdiction, and 4.12% of the global ocean. Considering just few national priority actions, developed by countries following six CBD regional capacity building workshops, would add over 500,000 km²; PIFs of GEF projects (in GEF-5 cycle), 241,926 km²; and the extent of Indigenous Peoples' and Local Community (ICCA) conserved territories and areas, another 2 million km² to terrestrial protected areas.
- Out of 821 terrestrial (excluding Antarctic lands) and 232 marine ecological regions, 481 and 84, respectively, have protected area coverage of 10% or more. Nearly 20% of Key Biodiversity Areas are completely protected. Of 12,532 Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) and 585 Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites, 2539 and 114 respectively have complete protection (>98% coverage by protected areas) as assessed by the World Database on Protected Areas in 2016. Following the regional workshops, most countries have indicated this element among their priority actions.
- As of January 2015, the Global Database on Protected Areas Management Effectiveness reported that some 17.5% of countries have implemented management effectiveness evaluations in at least 60% of their protected areas. Following the regional workshops, over 230 priority actions have been identified by countries under this element of the target.
- National priority actions developed by countries also include elements related to integration into various sectors and wider land and seascapes, strategies, development plans, policies, laws; appropriate governance and



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equity framework, connectivity and corridors, and regional cooperation for transboundary biodiversity conservation, among others, to generate substantial benefits at the global, national, but most especially, at the local community level.

- In general, mapping the proposed new protected areas following the regional workshops, information from ICCAs, GEF projects vis-a-vis ecoregions and areas important for biodiversity, coverage of these elements would be increased significantly and they could be reached by or before the target date, provided the implementation of those actions takes place in a concerted and coherent manner collectively by all.
- The analysis of the priority actions submitted by countries reveal that when implemented they not only contribute to achieve elements of Target 11, but due to multiple benefits and linkages of protected areas, they will also contribute to other Aichi Biodiversity Targets, (e.g. 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20 directly, and 1, 2, 19 indirectly); SDGs targets (e.g. 14.5, 15.1, 15.2, 15.5, 15.8 directly, and 1.2, 12.2, 15.7, 15.8 indirectly); adaptation and resilience to climate change and Article 5.1 of the Paris agreement; as well as to the synergistic implementation of the requirements of other MEAs, including UNESCO-MAB, UNESCO-WH, RAMSAR, CMS.
- Assessing the full range of value of services, and the socio-economic and environmental benefits arising from protected areas can strengthen political and stakeholder support, and enhance biodiversity financing through allocation of government budget and major development organizations. It is now widely understood that the benefits of establishing protected areas far exceed the costs.
- Welcoming indigenous peoples and local communities into shared governance structures and management, and accounting for gender perspectives, can help ensure that protected areas respect and integrate traditional knowledge and encourage the full participation of communities, among others.

Work of the Convention on Biological Diversity

The term “protected area” is defined in Article 2 of the Convention as “a geographically defined area, which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives”. Adopted in 2004, the programme of work on protected areas enshrines development of participatory, ecologically representative and effectively managed national and regional systems of protected areas. Using baseline data/information dossiers prepared for each country and numerous preparatory communications with partners and country representatives the Secretariat held six regional capacity building workshops during 2015-2016 to secure submissions of questionnaires, status matrices, and national priority actions (road maps) to be undertaken in the next five years. The twentieth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 20) and the first meeting of Subsidiary Body on Implementation looked at the implementation of Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 12 (threatened species). SBSTTA 20 recommended, among others, that the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, while welcoming the continued progress towards the achievement of Target 11 and acknowledging regional capacity building workshops and related activities, invites Parties to undertake concerted efforts to implement actions identified in NBSAPs and other relevant strategies and, address any gaps identified through the regional capacity building workshops on achieving Targets 11 and 12. The complete results from the analysis of the information from the workshops will be presented to COP 13. The next phase of this important strategy is to develop the capacity of Parties to make the implementation of their road map a reality.

Important links

Important Links

Convention on Biological Diversity: www.cbd.int/
Aichi Biodiversity Targets: www.cbd.int/sp/targets/
Global Biodiversity Outlook 4: www.cbd.int/gbo4/
Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA): www.cbd.int/protected/

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