

## On Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework

### **1. To encourage OECMs to Mainstream Biodiversity conservation.**

In 2010, the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 10/CBD) adopted the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as part of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Target 11 calls for “at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas” to be conserved by way of “well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures” (OECMs). No doubt that officially established protected areas play a critical role in conservation, yet more attention should be attached to OECMs in the next biodiversity decade. Connectivity is the core for other effective conservation measures.

In the post-2020 plan, I believe that the influence and status of OECMs should be carried on and also greatly emphasized. The OECMs is and will be an impactful approach to supplement the existing national protected areas all over the world. Our experiences show that communities and indigenous people can play a very effective role in conservation.

China Conservation Area for something at somewhere (CCAfa) is exactly one of the typical cases for OECMs. 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 the origin of the 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 historic heritages, coral reefs, etc. It takes a holistic approach towards conservation include but not limit to: establish partnership with local communities, grassroot NGOs, local governments, private sector and other stakeholders. For the past 2 years, the CCAfa has been proved working very well as a supplementary protected area mechanism to China's existing national protected areas system. As of now, more than 100 CCAfas were established nationwide to fully mobilize and rally the government and folk efforts to jointly contribute to the cause of protecting biological diversity among many others.

## **2. Encourage the general public to volunteer in conservation.**

To effectively mainstream biodiversity conservation, it's very important to mobilize joint efforts from general public. I would like to introduce an example how effective it could be. To protect fast-losing Yangtze River's once rich biodiversity, we have established an Oppose Electro-fishing Union. Founded in March 2017, the CBCGDF OEFU now have 12,000 volunteers who constantly and voluntarily patrols along the river banks to safeguard freshwater ecosystem. The total patrol mileage exceeded 120,000 kilometers. A total of more than 3,300 illegal electro fishing personnel was arrested, and more than 2,800 sets of electro fishing equipment and more than 4,700 illegal nets were seized. The relevant departments of many cities were successfully assisted. The rampant situation of illegal fishers has been hit to a high degree. Every time illegal fishing was discovered, they reported to local fishery authorities for law enforcement, which filled out the loophole of understaffed management authorities. Those volunteers are fishing lovers. They hate electro-fishing and other unsustainable fishing ways. That's why they're very enthusiastic to protect the Rivers' ecosystem passionately. And as the network is growing, they gain more and more satisfied because they can see the results of their patrols, which bring them intrinsic and spontaneous joy. Every one of them also becomes "teachers" to their communities and organizations on significance of a healthy water ecosystem, and to promote public participation in the undertakings.

## **3. Anti-poaching and illegal wildlife trade (IWT) need to be highlighted in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.**

At present Aichi target is far from enough in Illegal Wildlife Trading (IWT). According to analysts, wildlife trade 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 Pangolins 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 - our CBCGDF volunteers went to southern China's provinces to do undercover investigation and found in many places pangolins were still on restaurant's

menu secretly...

Wildlife poaching and IWT are rampant inside or outside of the national protected areas. This proves that wildlife poaching and IWT are extremely holding up us against achieving Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Anti-poaching and combating illegal wildlife 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 the static solutions, addressing issues like wildlife poaching and illegal wildlife trade are the “dynamic” ones.

#### **4. Say NO to inappropriate wildlife release.**

In some countries with Buddhism tradition, merit wildlife release is a big challenge to conservation. Nowadays, there have been several organized cases that in the name of religion and merit, release captive wild animals back to the wild. This is now arguably the strongest and non-negligible driving force to make the illegal wildlife trade even more rampant than before.

In China, merit releases of captive wild animals are performed in Buddhist rituals, which produces a lucrative market. But today such inappropriate ceremonial releases of birds and other wildlife may be harming their lives rather than saving them. Before a bird can be freed, it has to be captured — often just after having been released by someone else. The result is the denuding of wild populations and a vast recycling of mistreated animals, most of which are likely to die on one of their ersatz flights to freedom. As if that were not bad enough, the dead, disease-ridden animals are then sold in food markets. For example, in some southern provinces, such practices are performed on a daily basis - usually rotate with one day release terrestrial species, followed by freshwater species the next day. People pay money to them, and they order wild species, later organize ceremonies to release them. There're numerous news reports on the harm brought by such practices, including invasive alien species, killing of wildlife, troubling local people, etc.

That's why CBCGDF started an initiative along with famous Buddhist Master Hsing Yun in April 2016: 'Say NO to inappropriate wildlife release'. The monk criticized current wild-life release practices in the name of "Merit" is actually murders, because improper release means killing innocent animals instead of saving them.

#### **5. Encourage Youth to conservation in the next biodiversity decade.**

Youth play a crucial role in contributing to biodiversity conservation, environmental protection and green development. Our experience shows that this method is very effective, but it is still not paid enough attention. So I hope to be able to mainstream biodiversity among young people in the post-2020 agenda. For example, my organisation have established a global Green Great network to encourage colleague students and campus students' groups

to work together to save our planet. In primary schools, we also have many children to advocate the significance of environment protection. We regularly introduce biodiversity conservation topics for them to learn, to debate, and to care about. Through our observation, once they understand, they will take actions immediately, and they can also influence their families and friends.

## **6. Include “Eco-civilization” as a core value**

Unlike the era of industrial civilization, humanity has entered a new era which can be called "Ecological civilization" or "Eco-civilization", requiring people to thoroughly change their production and lifestyle and to live in a more biodiversity-friendly way. Self-centered lifestyle should be replaced by a new perspective of "eco-concerned" value. I believe the concept of Eco-civilization should be regarded as a core value and embodied in the next decade Framework.

Best regards,

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