



Biodiversity for ACP rural development

17th Brussels Development Briefing
10th March 2010

On 10th March 2010, CTA and other partners convened the 17th 'Brussels Development Briefing' - part of a series of bimonthly Development Briefings on ACP-EU rural development issues. 106 participants gathered in Brussels to discuss the role biodiversity plays in ACP rural development.

Partners in the Briefings:

- CTA
- European Commission
- ACP Group and ACP Secretariat
- Concord
- Media

Introducing the 17th Brussels Development Briefing, Walter Kennes from the DG Development at the European Commission (EC), remarked the timeliness of the event recalling that 2010 was declared the International Year of Biodiversity. Mr. Kennes draw attention on the link between the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Biodiversity, especially the MDG7, often neglected in the political dialogue. Underlying some ideas presented in the Report "Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity", he warned on the low productivity of ecosystems affecting rural poor developing populations who are highly-depend on them. Therefore, there is a strong link between MDG7 (ensure environmental sustainability) and MDG1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger), but biodiversity is also directly bonding with climate change which has a considerable impact on ecosystems. Regarding the three core objectives of the Convention on Biodiversity - the conservation, the sustainable use and the equitable sharing of the benefits - the last one needs a particular attention and a closer link to the agricultural agenda. Mr.



Kennes drew attention on the value and sharing of ecosystems services and referred to the communication from the EC on the "Options for the EU vision and target for biodiversity beyond 2010" which emphasizes access and benefit sharing of ecosystems services as a contribution to food security.

Ibrahim Khadar, manager at CTA, recalled the mandate of the CTA - knowledge sharing with the view to improving rural livelihoods - and informed the public on the various CTA programmes covering biodiversity such as - "Science and Technology Innovation Strategies" launched in 2005. Furthermore, he referred to the partnerships between the CTA and several actors in organizing events on related topics such as underutilized plant species or indigenous medicinal plants. He mentioned further the partnership between CTA and FARA on agricultural biodiversity and the upcoming special issue in CTA's Spore magazine on biodiversity.

Linking Biodiversity and Rural Development

Panel 1 discussed the links between biodiversity, agriculture and poverty reduction.

Dr. Damon Stanwell-Smith from the UNEP - World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) in the UK, gave an overview on some of the lessons learnt in the process of gathering information in view of meeting the 2020 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership. Insisting on a clear definition of biodiversity, he underscored that one of the overarching challenges was the issue of communicating the value of biodiversity and making sure that it is well understood. Mr. Stanwell-Smith recalled the 2010 target set up in the 2002 Convention on Biodiversity being that of achieving a significant reduction of the current trends of biodiversity loss. Even though, in his opinion, the target will fail to be achieved, Mr. Stanwell-Smith remarked the galvanizing support in mainstreaming biodiversity since



2002 and underscored the efforts that have been made in the ways of assessing Ecosystem Services and increasing the Economic value of ecosystem services. Regarding the timeline of 2010 Biodiversity target, he pointed out the gap between the period of decision towards achieving the target on Biodiversity (2002-2006) compared to the time of action (2007-2010), which contributed to raising overall challenges. He underlined that over 40 organizations have been involved in the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership in order to track biodiversity trends. In terms of results, the 28 different measures that the CBD had mandate to report on show that the state of biodiversity indicators are generally falling, while the pressure and the response measures are increasing. As a result, the benefits (ecosystems services) are decreasing and therefore the target will not be met. However, the lessons learned out of these indicators have shown the experts the way forward for the future. One of the 3 pillars is looking at the relations between global and national processes for reporting on biodiversity in 45 countries in the regions and has as objective informing national decision making.

Dr. Emile Frison, Director General of Bioversity International recalled that 70% of the earth-surface is represented by agro-ecosystems, which include



biodiversity allowing survival and development of human beings. He reminded further that the number of people suffering from hunger is increasing in the developing world, which affects dramatically the achievement of the MDGs. Furthermore, Dr. Frison put an emphasis on the issue of malnutrition affecting not only

underweight people but also overweight population mostly in developing countries. The quality of food in relation to the lack of micronutrients result in the so called hidden food, touching more than two billion people worldwide and is contributing additionally to spreading diseases among poor people. Dr. Frison insisted on the fact that agricultural biodiversity is the major sustainable contributor to maintaining a balanced diet and therefore promoting local agricultural biodiversity is the key solution for balanced diets and health. He presented some of the benefits and challenges of bringing forward the neglected species – indigenous, locally adapted and environmentally friendly – which at present are abandoned by specialists and ignored by policy makers. The example of a project supported by Bioversity International, the local NGOs and the Ministry of Health in Kenya regarding the promotion of nutrient content for leafy vegetables and targeting all aspects of the value chain, from seed production to distribution in the supermarkets, showed that education and information of consumers contributed to changing diets and increased sales by 1100% in two years. Finally, Dr. Frison made reference to climate change threatening agricultural biodiversity, pointing out that adapting to climate change will also require a much more nuanced use of agricultural biodiversity. Moreover, although agriculture needs to be intensified in order to respond to growing demands, it is imperative to take into account agricultural biodiversity in the production systems which will provide a greater stability and resilience essential to face the higher frequency of extreme climatic events.

Prof. René Boot from Tropenbos International gave an overview of the links between forest certification and biodiversity conservation. He recalled that in the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1990 the international community expressed great concern about the loss of biodiversity and deforestation which drove the emergence of forest certification.

Since the introduction of forest certification until 2008, more than 300 million hectares of forests have been certified, although less than 20 million hectares are in the tropics. The majority of tropical forests were certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Prof. Boot added that at the origin of forest certification was the reduction of biodiversity loss and questioned further the effectiveness of the certification measures. In order to respond to that Mr. Boot gave definitions of both biodiversity and logging and explained that the intensity of logging has a direct impact on biodiversity and vice versa. Regarding the impact of



logging on the individual bird species, results from the studies undertaken by Tropenbos International show that the diversity of bird species decline where massive logging is being done. On whether forest certification works for biodiversity, it is difficult to provide a clear answer as there is a lack of data from non-certified forests and studies available are not correlated. However, good forest management practices in forest certification appear to benefit biodiversity in managed forests. Therefore promoting and regulating good forest management will help conserve biodiversity and the EU Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) action plan is a vital step towards good forest management.

Mr. Jonathan Ensor from Practical Action referred in his presentation to the challenges and multiple benefits of agricultural biodiversity. Highlighting the serious impacts of climate change, he emphasized the two significant challenges from the point of view of agriculture and rural development – addressing those impacts and the significant contribution that agriculture makes to GHG –. The question raised by Mr. Ensor was on the possibility of the 1.5 billion small-scale agricultural producers worldwide to address the challenges of climate change in the context of agriculture and rural development.

Regarding the first challenge, Mr. Jonathan Ensor gave some statistics concerning the great emissions that agriculture underpins globally - 15% of all anthropogenic GHG, 1-2% of the total human energy production accounts for the production of fertilizers, 50% of agricultural emissions come from land use change driven by industrial production methods -, adding that all statistics rely on the predominant industrial model of agriculture. By contrast, biodiverse agriculture relies on a specific knowledge, responding to the ecology of the local environment and maximizes fertility in a particular ecological location, enhancing the soil to capture and store the carbon. The second challenge comes from the unpredictable relationship between food production and weather in a particular location as the changes in temperature and rainfall are very hard to predict. Mr. Ensor underscored again agricultural biodiversity as having the capacity to respond to climatic changes, by strengthening resilience through crop diversity and building soil organic matter. The skills and the local capacity of farmers to make productive use of agricultural biodiversity represent a crucial aspect. Three means to ensure and support biodiverse agriculture were mentioned: supporting farmers to build knowledge and secure control over resources, ensure multiple locally adapted and controlled solutions and focusing on the increases in the long-term sustainable production. In his conclusion, Mr. Ensor stressed five good reasons to support biodiverse agriculture as follows: building resilience of livelihoods and agro-ecosystems; supporting adaptive capacity; reducing fossil fuel based inputs and locking carbon below ground; replenishing the natural resources that production depends on; and producing spectacular yield increases in marginal environments.



The debate of panel 1 chaired by Mr. Joseph Kalders, from the Belgium Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development, started to discuss about the risk that MDG

7, on environmental sustainability is likely to fail. Panelists talked about the economic evaluation in relation to the ecological footprint. It was underlined that regarding ecosystem services, it is hard to apply an economic evaluation in this field, and so far there is no direct connection. Panelist brought into discussion the fact that exploiting the complementarity of diversity in



production systems lead to have better nutrition and greater re-productivity. The topic of deforestation and the land use management was also discussed by the audience, in

particular the relevance to have a land use planning in order to have a sound sustainable forest and land management. For this reason, it is necessary to provide an incentive for local population to manage land and forest resources through several instruments as the land tenure policy. Panelist also discussed about the need for public sector to invest more on biodiversity agriculture alternative model as does the private sector.

Including Biodiversity in Development Strategies

Panel 2 reviewed the needed policies, strategies and actions looking at policy options to include biodiversity and strengthen its link to agriculture and rural development in the development strategies and in the post-2010 instruments.

Honorable Blondeau Talatala, from the National Assembly in Cameroun and coordinator of UNGC-REPADER, focused his presentation on the alliances between community management and national policies to tackle biodiversity conservation in Cameroun. He talked about the two legal instruments for the implementation of forestry policy introduced in Cameroon in 1994 and in



1995. The first one deals with the concept of community forest and enables village communities to be involved in the management of the local resources surrounding them. Hon. Talatala explained that in Cameroon there are two different types of forest areas: permanent forests

and non permanent forests which are less restricted in terms of biodiversity management rules and conditions. He talked then about the presence of community forests in Cameroon which covers about 5.000 ha area maximum and is managed by the community that preserves it and sells the resources to meet the needs of the local population. Because it is a new concept, it is necessary that local population fully understands and has the ownership of this process. Moreover, it can resolve the problem of biodiversity management of non-permanent species. The creation of the community forest involves various steps: raising awareness, creating a legal entity, organizing consultation meetings and training workshops. An important step of this process is the management plan and the local development plan which are going to be validated by the State at the end of the process. The management plan covers a period of 25 years, while the local development plan is the plan where the revenues are coming from and the State has to ensure that these revenues are going indeed to help the

community to reduce poverty and to meet basic needs. Hon. Talatala gave also an overview of the added value that forests community can bring to local development. The revenues generated are considered as public funds and totally tax free in the case of a forest managed by the community itself and used for community projects. He concluded by highlighting the contribution of a forest community to the biodiversity conservation, as it represents a tool for the sustainable management of the non-permanent forest domain, on a basis of a simple validated management plan and a sustainable exploitation of forestry resources.

Mrs. Fay Alison Best represented the ACP Civil Society Forum and shared the work of the Barbados Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (BANGO), which main aim is to advocate CSO's involvement in the development and governance of Barbadian society. She focused her presentation on the traditional economic dependency that CARIFORUM countries have on local agriculture crops such as sugar, bananas and rice. The damages resulting from hurricanes and floods over the past ten years, added further pressure on those nations to redirect their economy in different services sectors such as financial and investment services, international



and offshore business, information and communication technologies. Mrs. Best stressed the impact of environmental degradation on tourism, which for Barbados and Antigua represents 60% of their national revenues. In this context, tour operators have started seeking a certificate of

sound environmental management for destination resorts, within the framework of the Green Globe certification. In the manufacturing sector, the Barbados Manufacturing Association (BMA) believes that the Barbados government needs to adopt a domestic policy to regard trade and environment jointly which would eventually lead to manufacturers to taking a hard look at the areas of their business which have a negative environmental impact. The desired outcome would be that businesses adopt environmental management systems that have long term benefits, including reduced cost for waste management and distribution and a framework for continued improvement of environmental management and performance. Mrs. Best stressed that the key factor is agriculture. In 2001, the government of Barbados launched a number of measures to bring together agriculture and biodiversity management. The first step was the set up an Agricultural Development Fund to support projects and programmes designed to improve and develop agriculture including sugar production, the cotton industry, livestock, fisheries and horticulture. The global economic crisis brought the government and civil society together in their efforts to encourage agriculture on a commercial and residential scale.

Mr. Simon Le Grand from DG Development (EC) focused his presentation of the integration of biodiversity in development co-operation. The policy response adopted by the EC includes the Sustainable Development Strategy that recognizes the global importance of biodiversity, the European Consensus for Development (adopted in 2005) which gives the opportunity to select

environment and natural resources as focal sectors, the EU Biodiversity Action Plan which is a part of the European Environmental Biodiversity strategy and the EU Environment Integration strategy which will be adopted by 2011 and includes the sustainable management of natural resources. Mr. Le Grand shared with the audience the relevance of biodiversity in the EU environment integration plan and a general approach that environmental considerations should be systematically incorporated in the preparation of all strategic plans and programmes of the EU development co-operation. He described then the specific instruments to address environmental programmes such as the thematic programme on environment and natural resources (ENRTP).



Mr. Le Grand also highlighted the fact that among the financial instruments the most important is the geographical cooperation that includes for each country /region a country support strategy paper where environment and biodiversity can be included. These instruments, including the European Development Fund (EDF), allow allocations at global, national and regional level. Some examples of the ENRTP are the biological corridor between Cuba, Haiti and Dominican Republic and the Central Africa World Heritage Forest Initiative, which looks at how to better protect biodiversity and a more sustainable use of biodiversity. In his conclusions, he stressed the EC new strategy to address biodiversity, which promotes a better understanding of the true economic value and the benefits arising from biodiversity services and aims at making a better use of economic incentives through market-based instruments. In this context, guidelines on environment integration have been adopted by the Commission in December 2009, which give standards for the preparation of Country Environmental Profiles and Environmental assessments.

Mr. Jean-Claude Jacques, Head of the IUCN Representation to the EU, started his presentation talking about the role of the IUCN, which provides through its thematic commissions scientific expertise on biodiversity issues. He highlighted the importance of biodiversity in the ACP countries due to the fact that all plants and animals used in agriculture are derived from wild species and agriculture could not survive without key ecosystem services such as the soil fertility, the pollination and the essential role of water. He also referred to the status of



biodiversity in particular to the threatened species: all around the world the total number of species are between 8-14 millions, from that only 1.8 million are described and among them only 45.000 are assessed, while 17.000 (38%) are considered to be in

danger. Looking at the status of the ecosystems, he stressed that 60% of ecosystem services are degraded, and that the regions facing the greatest challenges in achieving the MDGs coincide with regions facing the greatest problems of ecosystem degradation. Furthermore, the total economic value associated with managing ecosystems sustainably is often higher than the value associated with conversion. To conclude, he stressed the relevance to keep diversity as a key element

of stability. Ecosystems can only be stable and durable if they are diverse and this can be done for instance by putting in place a network of protected areas and corridors ensuring the protection of a minimum amount of environment, including 10% of major ecosystems and 80% of species, keeping all critical ecosystem services (water, wood, pollination). On agriculture, this can be done by diversifying the resilience to environment. Key features include the development of land use planning and the decentralisation of the biodiversity management to local communities. Mr. Jacques also stressed the gap between commitment and implementation of biodiversity at the EU level as shown by the lack of funding biodiversity.

The debate of panel 2 chaired by Mrs. Sally Nicholson, EU Senior Policy from WWF, focused mainly on three topics: the decentralisation of biodiversity management by local communities, the insufficient financial instruments devoted to biodiversity, and the role of community forests such as on deforestation. Because it is a quite recent concept (started in 1999 in Cameroon, that to date involves around 100 forest communities), at the moment there are no exhaustive evaluation of the impact of the community forests on deforestation. But it has to be said that community forest have been created in non-permanent forestry areas where there were no constraints for biodiversity, therefore they constitute indeed an important element to combat deforestation. The audience discussed then about the contribution of the revenues generated by the forest communities and whether it is sure that they fully contribute to the development of local communities. On this issue it was responded that these revenues are managed by the State and its local representatives in the forests through the local development plan which ensure that these revenues are effectively used for the local communities. Questions were raised on the opportunity to have an EU initiative on biodiversity. Panelists underlined the fact that now climate change is on the top of priorities at European level and that it is necessary to include biodiversity in the climate change dialogue. The inadequate EU funding to biodiversity was seen as a major problem, especially due to the fact that the EU financial regulation requires to work within the framework of budget support, using the country system strategy. However, under the call for proposals there are options of re-granting small funding amounts and other instruments like the Non-State Actors programme and food security programme which can be used to identify extra funds for biodiversity and its management by local organisations.

Further information on the web

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<http://brusselsbriefings.net/>

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