

the costs by a factor of at least 5:1. McKinsey recently completed an analysis of the economics of 30 per cent. The authors found that increasing protected areas to 30 per cent would safeguard 30 million jobs in ecotourism and sustainable fisheries, create 650,000 new jobs in conservation management and support 500 billion US dollars of GDP in ecotourism and sustainable fisheries.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought home the global importance of one of the most critical services that healthy natural areas offer to humanity: a protection shield against the outbreak of new diseases. The IPBES *#PandemicsReport* looking at the links between pandemic risk and nature describes how the spill-over of new pathogens to humans can be reduced. Recommended measures included the conservation of protected areas and implementing policies limiting unsustainable exploitation of areas high in biodiversity. Another paper published in October 2020 found that effective and equitably managed networks of protected areas “can and should be part of the response to reduce the risk of future zoonotic pandemics”.

The compelling scientific and economic arguments for “30 by 30” have prompted international NGOs as well as a growing number of CBD parties to publicly commit their support of “30 by 30”. In a joint declaration international environmental NGOs, including Conservation International, WWF, The Nature Conservancy, BirdLife International, the Wildlife Conservation Society and others, are calling for “the effective protection and conservation of at least 30 per cent of both land and sea by 2030, including through protected areas and indigenous and community-led approaches”. At the intergovernmental level, more than

60 countries from across the globe have joined the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for Nature and People. The HAC champions a global deal for nature and people with the central goal of protecting at least 30 per cent of the world’s land and oceans by 2030.

Let’s talk about “how”

In a nutshell, for the supporters of “30 by 30”, the key question is not anymore “whether or not” but “how” it needs to be adopted. Among key aspects currently discussed in the CBD negotiations to address the “how” are qualitative, financial and social and human rights questions. Qualitative features need to ensure the prioritisation of areas most important for biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and reducing the risks of further zoonotic diseases. New sites have to be connected, integrated into the wider landscape and managed effectively to deliver their expected benefits for nature and people. Closely related to management effectiveness are financial aspects. Sustainable financing is the biggest challenge of ensuring management effectiveness, in particular in countries of the Global South. Recent estimates assume that managing an extended network of protected areas effectively, sustaining their delivery of biodiversity and ecosystem services benefits, including significant economic and financial contributions, will cost around 140 billion US dollars annually.

Social and human rights aspects are intrinsically connected to the question on priority geographical areas for “30 by 30”. There are approximately 476 million Indigenous People world-wide. Although they make up only six per cent of the global population, Indigenous Peoples inhabit approximately 85 per cent of

the areas proposed for biodiversity conservation. IPLCs conservation institutions and local governance regimes have been effective in preventing habitat loss, often more successful than traditional conservation approaches (for example the establishment of purely government-managed conservation areas without involving IPLCs and without these benefiting from possible monetary and non-monetary values). Expanding recognition of IPLC land tenure rights must be seen as an effective, moral and affordable solution for protecting our world and preventing rights violations that have plagued many traditional conservation strategies. Thus, the target of conserving at least 30 per cent of the planet’s land and oceans must explicitly underscore the need to protect Indigenous Peoples’ rights, ensuring free, prior and informed consent and alignment with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (see following contribution by Friedrich Wulf).

It has never been more urgent to switch to a transformative path to solve the multiple intertwined crises that put our common future at risk, and it seems evident that the adoption of the “30 by 30” target is an important step which we must take now.

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Why a 30 per cent blanket target on protected areas is not enough

By Friedrich Wulf

While the voices for a global “30 by 30” target are getting stronger, so are those raising concerns and asking questions. What do we mean by ‘protected areas’? Where should those protected areas come from? If it is true that these would cause ‘limited human impacts’, does this not increase the pressure on the remaining 70 per cent? And what does the designation of protected areas mean for the people who live there? Most areas are populated, however sparsely, and people depend on them for their livelihoods.

The last question certainly is of highest concern. For many, the quest for increasing their protected area networks relies on the conventional model, that of governance by government (via agencies and services at various levels, as is often the case for protected areas), implemented in some regions in an exclusionary manner which in practice involves or at least tolerates the use of coercion or even violence. People are being mistreated or killed and driven off their land which they previously used to nourish themselves, thereby being dispossessed

and driven into hunger and malnutrition. The model case quoted for this is the USA’s Yellowstone National Park, founded in 1872, after the establishment of which over three hundred native Americans were killed and several thousands displaced. According to a recent report of the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), a global coalition of more than 150 rightsholder organisations and their allies, between 1.65 billion and 1.87 billion Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) live in important biodiversity conservation areas, 363 million of

whom inhabit existing protected areas – this illustrates the potential dimension of the issue.

Aspiration and reality – experience from four continents

Example 1: Central Africa

A study published by Rainforest Foundation UK (RFUK) in 2016 looked at the impacts of setting up 34 protected areas in Central Africa (Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon and the Republic of the Congo) on biodiversity and local inhabitants. It found that while poaching persisted and elephant, bongo, gorilla and chimpanzee populations were further declining, the creation of at least 26 of these 34 reserves resulted in partial or complete relocation or displacement, without any compensation, of local indigenous and farming communities present in the area prior to park establishment. Contrary to claims, there is no consultation or participation. Eco-guards hired by the organisations running the site do not shrink from brutal violence in enforcing their policies, and governments do not intervene. There is huge distrust on both sides, who consider each other as enemies and mutually ignore each other's situation. In some cases, people's deprivation of their traditional sources of food made it necessary for the World Food Programme to step in and help them. In another case, pygmy people were driven off their land and now are forced to live in a dreary camp and earn their living by poaching – just the opposite of what is intended.

This has led Civil Society organisations in the DRC to develop a position paper with demands for the global biodiversity framework. With regard to draft target 2 on protected areas, they highlight the need to prioritise community-conserved areas before conventional, government-run protected areas, to respect the principle of free prior and informed consent (FPIC) and to identify the possible consequences of a 30 per cent target on the subsistence of IPLCs and to evaluate their impact to compensate for the actions tolerated or made by states.

If solutions following these criteria are found, this would enable the local people to continue foraging in the forests, thereby reducing the pressure on biodiversity in areas outside. This is a key argument for establishing non-exclusive protected areas which has also been voiced by others. In addition, one could hold that the creation of protected areas will be much less of



Adivasi in a village in the Indian Federal State of Jharkhand fighting for their land rights.

Photos: Jörg Böhling

a burden on food production than land-grabbing activities for other countries' agrocommodities because protected areas often are established in regions which are less suitable for farming, e.g. mountainous regions, wetlands or areas with poor soils.

Example 2: India

India is home to 104 million 'Adivasi' or first inhabitants. Wherever biodiversity was protected, nurtured and used by them, it was taken over by colonial governments as a source of commercial revenue, and the alienation of IPLCs has been continued by post-independence governments too. IPLCs are treated as encroachers in nearly all of the forest areas in the country protected by law as Reserve Forests and Protected Forests, constituting about 21 per cent of India's area. Five per cent of the country is protected area run in an exclusive manner without involving the historical custodians of biodiversity.

Example 3: Brazil

In Brazil, Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities have advanced in creating indigenous lands as a category in the constitution. The government is obliged to demarcate these as well as extractive reserves (RESEX) for communities to remain in the forest and survive from non-timber forest products like oils, latex, etc., a result of social activist Chico Mendes' struggle in the 1980s. They face many challenges, but it is an important step forward.

There is consensus that Indigenous Territories (around 25–30 per cent of the Amazon) ensure forest protection as well as or even better than protected areas like national parks without people. And it is not just that the In-

igenous People depend on their territories, it is precisely their intrinsic (non-western) relation with nature which fosters sustainability within their habitat. These protected areas or Indigenous Territories close to the agricultural frontier often look like an oasis in the middle of destruction. However, they are increasingly under threat by the advance of destructive sectors (agribusiness, logging, mining and oil industries) who want to make profits from the forest areas, with the current Bolsonaro administration ensuring their impunity. This destruction is exacerbated by the complete lack of public policies to promote different uses of forests under control of the communities. A "30 by 30" target based on exclusive protection could be an incentive to halt the demarcation of indigenous lands, while still unthreatened lands could be declared exclusive protected areas involving eviction of the Indigenous People there.

Example 4: Europe

The situation in Europe is different. Protected areas, as diverse as they may be, usually are not exclusive, although rejection of protected areas by local people and public decision-makers in general is not uncommon. Other effective conservation measures including Indigenous and community conserved areas (ICCAs) are getting more recognition in the European Union, too. However, despite diverse subsidies being available to landowners, there still are numerous implementation gaps in protected areas, and many species continue to be threatened. Experts agree that a much bigger effort from Member States would be needed to achieve good management of all areas than merely extending the protected area network from the current 25.7 to 30 per cent.



Indigenous Territories in the Brazilian Amazon are increasingly under threat by the advance of sectors seeking to make a profit in the forest areas.

So what can be done?

A “30 by 30” protected area target is seen both as a necessity to save the world’s biodiversity (see previous contribution by Georg Schwede) as well as a threat to human rights and biodiversity inside and outside of protected areas. While for some this leads to the issue of not setting a percentage target on protected areas, others, such as the Rights and Resources initiative, suggest the problems raised can be resolved by adapting the global target to ensure that respect for local people’s land rights be a prerequisite for any new conserved area. Either way, the following must be addressed:

- Any site designation and management process must be the result of an equitable, inclusive and fair process with the consent of local rightsholders and consultation with other people concerned, based on a thorough prior impact assessment.
- All four types of governance of conserved areas need to be included in the future target: by government (i.e. classical protected areas), by various actors together, by private actors and by IPLCs.
- Areas governed and managed by IPLCs offer a huge contribution to conserving nature. They include community forests and ‘territories of life’ (also known as IC-CAs) in biodiversity-rich areas. In order to be fully counted towards any “30 by 30” target, they should be properly recognised and supported by state governments, in particular by securing governance and tenure for their custodians.
- The management of all protected areas must be closely monitored, not only in terms of efficiency, but very importantly regarding full compliance with all human

rights, including those laid down in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). If there is a protected area target in the new global biodiversity framework, it needs to be monitored through a headline indicator on compliance with human rights. Headline indicators are indicators required from all countries to monitor implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, according to current draft proposals. Areas which cannot demonstrate that they comply should not be counted towards a protected area target.

- A globally agreed target needs to come with teeth to enforce it, such as a grievance mechanism which enables rightsholders and IPLCs to demand justice in case their rights are disregarded. The Global Assessment Report by the IPBES sees justice and inclusion in conservation as a key leverage point for a transformation towards sustainability.

These demands are not new but are deeply rooted in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In 2000, it embraced the ecosystem approach, a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. The Programme of Work on protected areas (POWPA), in its element 2, has set detailed targets to promote equity and benefit-sharing and enhance and secure involvement of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders in governing protected areas. An encouraging step in this direction currently has been announced by the US government, although the USA is not a member of the CBD. The “America the beautiful” initiative aims to reach its “30

by 30” target by redefining what constitutes “conserved” land, to make that new definition distinct from, and more comprehensive than, “protected” land, to respect the rights and sovereignty of tribes, and to position local communities and tribal nations as the primary actors to reach that target.

As this article shows, equity and various forms of governance for protected and conserved areas are key for a new “30 by 30” target. But they are not the only aspects that need to be clearly addressed in the new CBD target on protected areas. All the elements contained in the still valid Aichi target 11 need to be reflected in the new one as well:

- Representativeness is crucial to ensure that areas of particular importance for biodiversity are included and not just the “easiest to get” areas.
- The areas need to be effectively managed, so that they deliver the conservation outcomes for which they were designated.
- The areas need to be well-connected, so that species populations are not isolated.

It is to be hoped that the new global biodiversity framework will take heed of this advice and the concerns currently voiced at the CBD-related meetings, and that the target on protected areas includes all these elements so that it serves both nature and people. Finally, protected areas are only one element of the CBD and the global biodiversity framework, which must respect the rights of IPLCs throughout (including in target 20) and also address biodiversity loss outside of protected areas, through sustainable use and by reducing the pressure created by the drivers of biodiversity loss.

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