

Beyond a Silo Mindset

Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) should use an ecosystem- and human rights-based approach that combines conservation with sustainability

In the context of fisheries, soon after the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was signed at the 1992 Earth Summit, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries drew attention to how effective fisheries-management measures can successfully contribute to the conservation of aquatic biodiversity, as well as to the protection of the interests of subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries.

The 2014 fisheries instrument—the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines)—went a step further and observed how the health of aquatic ecosystems and associated biodiversity was a fundamental basis for the livelihoods of small-scale fishers and fishworkers. The SSF Guidelines upheld responsible and sustainable use of marine, coastal and inland biodiversity within a human-rights framework, and of ensuring the benefits of resource management reaching small-scale fishing communities. The SSF Guidelines saw community-based, collaborative, concurrent or co-operative fisheries management with the participation of small-scale, artisanal fishing communities, and their traditional knowledge and secure tenure rights, as effective mechanisms to bolster livelihoods while conserving biodiversity.

The area-based approach of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)—developed as a strategic plan for implementing CBD and its protocols over the period 2022-30—recognizes sustainable fisheries management, and one of its targets seeks to ensure that 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water and coastal and marine areas, especially of particular importance for biodiversity, are effectively conserved and managed through protected areas (PAs), and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). The PAs and OECMs are to ensure that any sustainable use in these areas recognize and respect the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and is consistent with conservation outcomes. Further, full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decisionmaking, and access to justice are to be ensured, especially of IPLCs. The KMGBF targets are thus couched in a human-rights language and CBD Parties may therefore report how their conservation initiatives uphold a human-rights-based approach. Conversely, National Plans of Action-SSF Guidelines may be urged to pay

attention to meeting key KMGBF targets for protecting the health of aquatic ecosystems and associated biodiversity towards safeguarding sustainable livelihoods of small-scale fishers and fishworkers. In other words, in the context of aquatic biodiversity, duties for sustainable use of conservation regimes are to be interlocked into duties toward conservation of sustainable use regimes.

Considering that many biodiversity administrations at the national and subnational levels are top-down structures, mostly invested in conservation and wary of sustainable use, they need to be brought to speed about the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) of Parties like Australia, Canada and Japan that recognize IPLC participation in decisionmaking for the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic biodiversity.

The categorization of coastal and marine protected areas

in Japan, which is inclusive of common fishery right areas and coastal fisheries resource development areas, offers an excellent example to other Parties to move away from a conventional, zero-sum approach to the conservation and sustainable use of marine, coastal and inland biodiversity, to focus on conservation outcomes of sustainable-use regimes in a consultative, collaborative, participatory and integrated manner.

Similarly, recognizing voluntary efforts at resource management, introducing government schemes

to improve the fisheries-management skills of people, and moving away from price-oriented consumption to sustainability-oriented consumption are innovative ideas that need further attention. The example of satoumi, where Japanese fishers have been conserving biodiversity through voluntary joint management, as well as examples of collaborative initiatives to restore seagrass beds, to remove marine litter, and to conserve rich fishing grounds through the maintenance of upstream forest areas with support from fishers and other interested parties are noteworthy.

The CBD secretariat, in collaboration with relevant UN agencies and civil society organizations, is encouraged to collect and disseminate such examples to lure Parties out of a silo mindset and to confidently apply a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to simultaneously engage with conservation and sustainable use of aquatic biodiversity in an integrated and collaborative manner. Good practices culled out of NBSAPs as well as civil society reportage may be translated into all UN languages. 🐟

