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FORUM

Put Nature at the Center of the Food Crisis Debate

By Georgina Peard, IUCN's Programme Officer for Conservation and Poverty Reduction

The Declaration on World Food Security, adopted in Rome on June 5, fell short of showing the political will needed to address the underlying causes of the current food crisis. Although the declaration, adopted by 180 countries, mentioned the role of biodiversity in ensuring the world has sufficient food, it did not place enough emphasis on it. The declaration expressed no commitment to stop the causes of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation that are affecting food production systems.

Biodiversity and the role that nature plays in ensuring food production, such as providing clean water and healthy soil for crops, must be given more recognition. These issues should be central to all discussions on food security, not just a footnote among other problems. We share the concerns expressed by many countries on the weakness of the Declaration's text. The Declaration came at the end of a three-day High Level Conference on Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy, organized by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP), and Biodiversity International.

The High Level Conference attracted 43 Heads of State; an overwhelming turn-out, clearly demonstrating the level of concern over the global food crisis. Billions of dollars were pledged to fight world hunger. The final declaration was a commitment from governments to urgently alleviate the suffering caused by the current crisis through direct food aid and support for agricultural production and trade, as well as measures to secure food for all in the longer term. While a consensus was eventually reached on the declaration after lengthy debate, a number of countries, in particular Venezuela, Argentina and Cuba, voiced their dismay and anger over the weakness of the text, and the lack of political will of nations to truly face up to the powerful forces negatively influencing food prices and markets and thus contributing to increased hunger in the world. They were referring to the omission of text on the distorting impact of agricultural subsidies and large, rich monopolies in Europe and North America on food markets, the use of grains for fuel, the models of production and consumption of the developed world and their impacts on climate change, and the impacts of commodity speculation on food prices.

Impacts on the ground

The impacts of climate change are expected to hit hardest some of the most vulnerable and food insecure parts of the globe, such as Sub-Saharan Africa. Some of the expected impacts are changes in agricultural productivity and shifts in growing seasons, increased floods and droughts, decreased water quality and availability, and the propagation of crop and animal pests and diseases. Many of these impacts are already being felt.

Philippe Kiriro, of the East African Farmers Federation, said farmers saw this coming. He noted how farmers are already incurring losses, seeing rivers dry up and soils exposed to erosion. Yet nobody pays for these losses; the smallholder farmers of Africa have no social support system when their crops fail or livestock die.

Mr. Kiriro's plea is for partnership and dialogue in policy formulation and implementation. The farmers of East Africa, as in all other regions, know their land and have strong opinions on food production. With rapid changes occurring in the climate, however, they are seeking clear and honest information on the risks and opportunities, as well as the financial and technical support available to help them engage fully in the debate and in developing and implementing sustainable adaptation strategies. Listening to the wisdom of the farmers themselves is essential.

Natural ecosystems, plant and animal biodiversity increase resilience to changing environmental conditions and stresses caused by climate change. It is essential to maintain and restore diversity in our agricultural systems, and in particular to include indigenous and locally adapted plant and animal diversity.

Although the voices of the farmers and various non-governmental organisations present in Rome for the High Level Conference were mostly excluded from the deliberations of government officials, their messages from the sidelines were clear. They want to be included in the dialogue. They want clear, honest information on the risks and opportunities of issues such as biofuels, climate change, genetically modified organisms, and other biotechnology. Most importantly, they want to see a shift away from large multinational companies controlling world food production and markets, to policies that support national smallholder farmers in accessing land and producing food locally.

The Rome meeting came some 12 years after the World Food Summit in 1996 when the world's leaders committed to halving the number of hungry people in the world by 2015. Radically off course to meet this objective and faced with the current food crisis and threats of climate change, the commitments of the Rome Declaration of Food Security must now lead to action on the ground.

IUCN is currently developing its strategy and response to the global food crisis. It recognizes that the conservation community has a key role to play in raising awareness for the services provided by ecosystems and supporting farmers, communities and governments to maintain healthy ecosystems for food security.

For the IUCN press release, please see

http://cms.iucn.org/news_events/index.cfm?uNewsID=1082

Further Information on the IUCN Conservation for Poverty Reduction Initiative is available at http://cms.iucn.org/about/work/initiatives/sp_cprihome/index.cfm

Further information on the Conference on World Food Security can be found at <http://www.fao.org/foodclimate/hlc-home/en/>

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POLICY & RESEARCH

Transparent Business? The Performance of Oil and Gas Companies

Revenue transparency is still a good will operation of oil and gas companies, therefore proactive forerunners may lead the way for best practices. The "2008 Report on Revenue Transparency of Oil and Gas Companies" from Transparency International (TI), the first publication of the Promoting Revenue Transparency (PRT) Project, takes a step towards a more coherent and deeper analysis of revenue transparency disclosure in the fight against corruption. The PRT Project is complementary to, yet distinct from the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI): it supports EITI criteria, but also encourages companies and governments to go beyond payment disclosure and implementing anti-corruption policies and practices, revenue management and expenditure, contract transparency, accounting practices and regulatory issues.

The report relies exclusively on public information to evaluate 42 leading oil and gas companies in 21 countries in their revenue transparency policies, management systems and performance. Revenue transparency refers to three corporate actions: payments to host governments, operations and corporate anti-corruption programmes. On this basis, TI differentiates between high, middle and low corporate performers. The report concludes that revenue transparency is not yet a common practice in the oil and gas industry. The disclosure of revenue payments however is key to implementing stronger accountability mechanisms to monitor the use of natural resource wealth. Regulations and diverse reporting formats have an impact on company revenue transparency.

TI therefore recommends a proactive reporting of revenues on a country-by-country basis by oil and gas companies, mandatory reporting, the introduction of legislation mandating revenue transparency for all companies by producing countries, and harmonized reporting in an accessible format. The PRT Project will also publish an "Oil and Gas Host Governments Report", an "Oil and Gas Home Governments Report" and a "Mining Report" by 2010. (*Meike Westerkamp*)

The paper and further information about the PRT Project can be accessed at http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/promoting_revenue_transparency

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Conflicting Development Priorities in Brazil

The challenge of balancing economic development and conservation is particular daunting in the Amazon region. While Brazil comprises the world's largest rain forest reserve, it is also the world's largest producer of ethanol from sugar cane, and the second largest producer of soybeans. Conflicts between the different interest groups - indigenous people, environmentalists, farmers, private sector and the government - seem to be inevitable. Contentious issues include nature reserves, public mega-projects such as dams, and the rapid development of biofuel production.

The controversy over the demarcation of an indigenous reserve in the state of Roraima, for example, has recently resulted into violent conflict, leaving ten indigenous people

wounded after being shot at by estate workers. The conflict arose because the area is partly occupied by rice-growing estate owners, who resist leaving the land. Although the entire area was declared a reserve, which means that non-indigenous farmers must leave, it is meanwhile fragmented and reduced in size to allow rice farmers to stay where they are. Tensions increased when the military commander of the country's Amazon region called the demarcation of indigenous land in the border region a threat to national sovereignty.

Environmental Minister Marina Silva, who resigned from her post in May, defended the demarcation of indigenous land and called for a "civilised view" on the conflict. However, her resignation also highlights the conflicts within the government. "The environmental area was given no priority. She got tired of the thankless struggle." explained Denise Hamu, secretary general of WWF in Brazil. German Chancellor Merkel, who signed an agreement on biofuels with President Lula da Silva the day after, called it a "warning sign". Overall, the resignation of Marina Silva, a renowned defender of the Amazon rain forests, reinforces the perception that President Lula is more concerned with economic growth and development than with implementing the government's environmental agenda. (*Christiane Roettger*)

The following links provide further information on the topic
IPS News Service <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=42297>

BBC News <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7399715.stm>

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A Water Festival in Times of Crises

"Water and Sustainable Development" is the topic of EXPO 2008 in Saragossa, which opened 12th of June. The exhibition claims to be the biggest water festival on earth. Over 100 countries and organizations are participating in the forum that intends to raise awareness on the importance of water as a precious resource and to encourage visitors to handle it responsibly. The EXPO 2008 could not have been better timed. Spain currently encounters its most severe drought since it began keeping records more than 60 years ago. Already fresh water levels in most national reservoirs are down by at least 50 percent, even though the expected summer heat has yet to come. The situation has worsened over the last months, especially in the region of Catalonia and its capital Barcelona. Public fountains and beach showers are shut down and citizens are no longer allowed to use water hoses or fill their swimming pools. But despite all efforts, the available amount of water is still not enough to satisfy the basic needs of Barcelona's population. In an unprecedented move, officials have therefore decided to use gigantic tankships to bring fresh water from France into the city.

But this will be no more than a drop in the bucket. In order to meet the long-term demand for fresh water, authorities have considered different options. Some of them are highly controversial, such as the idea of building a pipeline that would supply the city with fresh water from rivers located far away from Barcelona itself. Tensions between different regions and interest groups about a fair distribution of the scarce resource are already growing. It remains to be seen if the EXPO inspires decision makers to implement measures for a more sustainable water management. The exhibition will showcase a number of examples until mid-September. (*Jöran Altenberg*)

For further information, please see EXPO Saragossa 2008

http://www.expozaragoza2008.es/Home/seccion=3&idioma=en_GB.do

Speech of president Zapatero at the Expo opening (in Spanish)

<http://www.la-moncloa.es/Presidente/Intervenciones/Discursos/prdi20080613.htm>

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Towards a "Climate Proofing" of Development Cooperation

After a year of publishing scenarios on the security implications of climate change at a global scale, the focus has shifted to the local and regional level. At last ministries and agencies in the arena of development cooperation are heading towards a "climate proofing" of their development cooperation programmes. This means that the impacts of climate change should be taken into account during the design and implementation of projects to ensure that these are resilient in the face of future climate change. Doing so, projects should enable local communities to adapt to the local and regional challenges of climate change and to improve the political, economic and social stability of a country.

To this end, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned the International Institute on Sustainable Development (IISD) to outline potential futures for two Western African countries, namely Ghana and Burkina Faso. IISD identified a number of issues that domestic authorities and external actors should take into account when designing development programs. In the case of Ghana, for example, the authors point out the need to consider the division of water between energy in the south and agriculture in the north. In addition, economic stability may be challenged if cocoa production becomes less viable. Regarding Burkina Faso, IISD stressed the future relationship between pastoral and agricultural communities in the light of increased land degradation. There may also be a need to manage potential migration movements both regionally and to urban areas.

It remains to be seen to what extent these country studies will in fact guide the designing of development programmes. However, the need to assess the climate sensitivity of such programmes is especially high in already conflict-prone countries. This is one of the results of the recently published report "Climate Change and Security. Challenges for German Development Cooperation", which was prepared by Adelphi Consult on behalf of the German Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ). (*Dennis Tänzler*)

For the IISD report "Assessing the security implications of climate change for West Africa", please see http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2008/security_implications_west_africa.pdf

For the report "Climate Change and Security. Challenges for German Development Cooperation", please see

<http://www.gtz.de/de/dokumente/gtz2008-en-climate-change-security.pdf>

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CONFERENCE REPORTS

Water Unites - New Perspectives for Cooperation and Security

Approaches to water conflict prevention, especially in the Central Asia region, were at the heart of the conference "Water Unites – New Perspectives for Cooperation and Security", which took place on April 1 at the Berlin Foreign Office. In his opening remarks, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier made clear that "Central Asia is a real case-study in the problems posed – particularly with regard to drinking water – experiencing a combination of water shortages, overexploitation of resources and environmental degradation. [...] So water can and must – in Central Asia especially – become a reason to intensify regional cooperation." As cornerstones of a Central Asia Water Initiative, he named among others the transfer and facilitation of knowledge and expertise, a better network of water professionals, as well as support for cross-border water management.

Further contributions of the UNECE's Secretary General but also the Central Asia representative, among others, highlighted the complexities of this challenge. Different sectors such as energy, economy, agriculture, environment, and social policy are affected. This becomes apparent in the central question of how a possible balance between interests in hydropower generation and agricultural irrigation could be achieved. Regional environmental migration due to drought and salinisation of agricultural lands was also brought into the discussion. In terms of solutions, the importance of regional cooperation as well as the cooperation between the EU and Central Asia was emphasized. This applies to the implementation of measures toward efficient water and energy use. Support will also be needed for strengthening legislation, institutional capacity building, and training for professionals. The follow up meeting this fall will promote specific projects. This "Central Asia Water Initiative" will not only contribute to the implementation of the EU Central Asia strategy but also support the work of regionally active international organizations. (*Anja Wittich*)

Further information on the conference and the Central Asia Water Initiative as well as the speech of Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier can be found (in German) at <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2008/080401-WasserinitiativeZentralasien.html>

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A Dialogue Series on Climate Change and Conflict Prevention

The 21st century will experience a considerable number of conflicts closely interlinked with climate change. This became clear during the conference on "Conflict Prevention and Climate Change" that took place in Brussels on 24 April. According to those presenting, the consequences of climate change will affect all parts of the world. With the conference the Madariaga Foundation started a two-year project on applied conflict prevention, which relates to the report on "Climate Change and International Security", presented by Javier Solana, high representative of the EU and the European Commission a month before (see ECC Newsletter from April 2008).

Even though the direct implications of climate change on conflict are still partly unclear, the conference's main objective was to establish a policy dialogue on climate change and security within the EU. In this regard it was highly successful. A great number of government officials, the United Nations, World Bank, EU, OSCE, OECD and the League of Arab Nations as well as the OAS participated in the conference. This broad attendance highlights a growing awareness among countries and international organizations about the security implications of climate change.

However, it also became clear that when it comes to concrete action, many questions remain unaddressed. The funding of necessary adaptation measures in particular, is becoming increasingly important. To this end, several approaches have been brought into the discussions by the World Bank. At the same time, the states that are most affected by climate change possess little capacity to even assess potential risks adequately. Against this background, the exchange of information on concrete activities regarding climate change and security in Africa is highly necessary. However, as most states and organizations are still in the process of formulating concrete policies, outcomes remain minor. Therefore continuing this policy dialogue in the coming year is important. (*Achim Maas*)

Comprehensive information on the conference will soon be available at http://www.madariaga.org/template_news.asp?nws_id=60

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Despite Some Progress: Biodiversity Endangered

Biodiversity underpins the supply of ecosystem services, including food, freshwater, timber, climate regulation, or protection from natural hazards. A significant reduction of biodiversity loss - the key target of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) - is out of reach due to the ineffective implementation of the CBD. As human populations directly depend on those services provided by biodiversity, its current loss not only destabilizes ecosystems and weakens their ability to deal with stresses such as pollution and climate change, it also threatens the functioning of society and increases the risk of human conflict. Last but not least biodiversity loss will have adverse consequences to the world economy, as a report on the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) outlines. This report was published during the 9th Conference of Parties (COP9) of the CBD in Bonn - a meeting where 191 countries and nearly 7000 participants discussed ways to stop the trend of biodiversity loss.

The COP9 set up the Life Web Initiative, which aims at building partnerships to improve funding of protected areas. Progress has also been made "[...] on the long neglected need for High Seas Marine protected areas, on the recommitment to planning conservation at a broad landscape level and on strengthening the links to the climate convention", said Gordon Shepherd, WWF International's Director of Global Policy. Delegates also agreed on a firm process toward the establishment of international rules on access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of benefits from their use. Although the conference failed to adopt clear targets, timelines and restrictions on issues such as financing or illegal logging, it has undertaken efforts to move the conservation agenda forward over the next two years. However, greater ambition and mainstreaming of biodiversity in an

integrated approach is needed to ensure that the next COP in Japan will deliver results better suited to the size and importance of the problem. (*Christiane Roettger*)

The official website of the event is available at <http://www.cbd.int/cop9/>

The main communication platform of NGO and civil society community on the COP9 can be found at http://www.biodiv-network.de/front_content.php

The following website provides an overview on the positions of the WWF on the COP9 http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/what_we_do/policy/policy_and_events/cbd/cbd_cop_9/index.cfm

Information on "The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity" report is available at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/economics/index_en.htm

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming events are also regularly published at <http://www.ecc-platform.org/>.

"Building Sustainable Futures. Enacting Peace and Development" in Leuven, Belgium (15-19 July)

Every two years, members of the International Peace Research Association meet at a global conference to assess conflict and peace building in the world, discuss state-of-the-art peace research, plan future research, and influence the practice and decision-making of violence prevention and peace building. This year, the overall theme draws attention to the non-synergetic interaction between economic development, environmental change and conflict management efforts in the 21st century.

Further information on the conference can be found at <http://www.ipra2008.org/registration/index.php>

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"Energy Security and Climate Change: Issues, Strategies, and Options (ESCC 2008)" in Bangkok (6-8 August)

Organized by the Energy Field of Studies and the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) and the Regional Energy Resource Information Center (RERIC), this event will cover technical, economic, social and political dimensions of energy security. Issues of climate change, such as monitoring, modelling, impact assessment, mitigation schemes, and regional and national mitigation strategies will also be included. The event hopes to initiate and stimulate international discussions, resulting in useful findings and recommendations for all energy stakeholders.

Further information on the conference can be found at <http://www.serd.ait.ac.th/escc/>

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"Systemic Peacebuilding: Enhancing Effectiveness and Impact in Crisis Management and Prevention, Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding" in London (26-28 August)

This event is one of the new three-day Executive Leadership Programs (ELP) jointly designed by the Department of Peace Operations of PATRIR and the International Peace and Development Training Centre. ELPs are highly effective forums, bringing together senior policy makers, political leadership, and representatives of governmental and inter-governmental organizations with analysis, experts and practitioners working on the ground to improve effective policy and practice on key issues in peacebuilding, human security, conflict transformation and crisis prevention and management.

Further information on the event is available at <http://www.patrir.ro/training>

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"11th International Riversymposium" in Brisbane, Australia (1-4 September)

The global future of rivers is threatened by too little or too much water. The 11th International Riversymposium will explore the challenges associated with the increased incidence of flooding and drought expected with climate change. It will address the following questions: What changes can we anticipate? How can we adapt? Key areas to be covered include climate change and rivers, drought management and planning, water management with drying dams as well as flood mitigation and maintaining ecological values.

Further information is available at <http://www.riversymposium.com/>

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IN BRIEF

News on the Black Sea, Oil Thirsty China, The Risks of Mining in Africa, and A Long Climate Road from Bali to Poznan

The World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) in collaboration with the Heinrich Böll Foundation recently published a report titled "**Greening the Black Sea Synergy**". The paper discusses the environmental impact of mass industrial development, uncontrolled infrastructure expansion, overexploitation of resources such as oil and gas and the consequences of climate change on the region. It concludes with a number of detailed recommendations. The report is available at

http://www.panda.org/news_facts/publications/index.cfm?uNewsID=136721

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The report "**China's Thirst for Oil**" published by the International Crisis Group (ICG) analyzes the implications of China's growing energy needs. It addresses the country's prominent role in international markets, its influence on other countries' energy security and on global and regional stability in general. The report also elaborates on a number of recommendations in this regard and can be downloaded at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5478&l=1>

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The current issue of the African Analyst Quarterly deals with "**Mining in Africa**". The journal explores opportunities and risks connected to what it calls the continent's most promising industry. The topics range from "Mining and Conservation" to "Mining and Healthcare". It also provides a case study from the DRC and discusses China's competitive advantage in the African mining sector. The free online journal is available at <http://www.africananalystquarterly.com/Framework/index.asp>

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The Institute for Environmental Security (IES) published the conference report entitled "**Climate Change, Security and Sustainable Development**". The conference called "From Bali to Poznan: New Issues, New Challenges" was held last December in Brussels and dealt with the impact of climate change on international security and sustainable development. The report is available online at <http://www.envirosecurity.org/activities/diplomacy/gfsp/climate/>

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