
Section 1. Introduction

CITES and community-based conservation: The need for constructive engagement

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In many developing countries of the southern hemisphere, a large proportion of their often considerable biodiversity is located outside of protected areas (PAs) where it shares space and resources with rural people. In fact, about 1.4 billion of the world's extremely poor people live in such areas (<http://www.ifad.org/pub/ar.htm>), particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia where they often depend upon species of wild animals and plants for their survival (Roe *et al.* 2002). In addition, the mostly colonial and post-colonial pillars of conservation, national parks and other PAs, while retaining a key conservation role, are no longer sufficient to meet biodiversity conservation goals. They also often fail to meet their mandate due to poor governance, lack of funds, human population increases along their perimeters, and lack of incentives for affected rural people to help conserve wildlife (Smith *et al.* 2003; Cumming 2004). Conserving wildlife populations outside of PAs, where governments have limited capacities to influence sustainable resource use, has thus become an increasingly high priority.

For both moral and strategic reasons, conservation practitioners have recognized the need to address the dual goals of biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation, and community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) has been a logical strategic response of the 1980s, benefitting in particular from early southern African initiatives (Martin 1986; Murphree 1991; Adams and Hulme 2001). By transferring ownership or user rights from the Government to e.g. the producer level, such as local communities, CBNRM can provide affected communities with the necessary economic incentives to effectively conserve and sustainably utilize, rather than to "mine", terrestrial biological diversity outside the PA system, despite many short-comings in national CBNRM implementation (Hulme and Murphree 2001; Baldus 2009; Roe, Nelson and Sandbrook 2009; Torquebiau and Taylor 2009; NACSO 2010; see also case studies in this volume). Neither does this ignore the fact that many governments are reluctant to relinquish control over natural resources by providing communities with adequate tenure (Hulme and Murphree 2001), or the debate whether CBNRM can adequately address rural poverty (Roe 2008; Adams *et al.* 2004) – but in biodiversity conservation terms, there really seems to be no alternative to CBNRM outside of PAs.

CITES tries to serve the interests of conservation by trying to ensure that international trade in specimens or products and derivatives is sustainable. But the Convention has limited capacities to ensure that trade is sustainable (e.g. Jenkins 2000; Abensperg-Traun 2009), and it is no coincidence that the preamble of the Convention text states that "*peoples and states are and should be the best protectors of their own wild fauna and flora*" (Wijnstekers 2011). The widely recognized link between poverty and biodiversity loss has been expressed in a statement of the secretariats of the five major biodiversity-related conventions at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002, namely CITES, the CBD, Ramsar, CMS and WHC. Effective implementation of CITES is therefore difficult to achieve without recognizing the economic, cultural and social concerns of affected communities. It would thus be in the strategic interest for an effective implementation of CITES to win over rural communities as real conservation partners because traditional CITES control measures to effectively conserve its listed species have often not been very effective, particularly the economically valuable and charismatic species such as elephants, tigers and rhinos (Bennett 2011). In combination with international trade controls and national enforcement, CBNRM has the potential to effectively address this problem for terrestrial species. Rural communities should

thus be recognised as actors of critical importance for the implementation of CITES (Hutton and Leader-Williams 2003). It could even be argued that rural communities can themselves be seen as an additional enforcement and implementation instrument, supporting national efforts.

The international community has set itself ambitious biodiversity conservation goals, as in the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the CBD (<http://greenwave.cbd.int/en/resources/target>). However, as long as the world's poor have to carry the bulk of the burden in terms of lost livelihoods and even lost lives, in the absence of financial incentives, these goals will not be achieved. To assist them to achieve their goals, the sustainable commercial use of populations of wild terrestrial species has become central to the philosophies and strategies of international conservation agreements and organizations such as those of the CBD and the IUCN, as well as CITES (e.g. CITES Resolution Conf. 8.3 Rev. CoP13; <http://www.cites.org/eng/res/index.shtml>).

CITES seems well aware that the effective implementation of a species listing is often dependent on the support of affected rural communities (e.g. Mathur 2009; Velasquez Gomar and Stringer 2011; see also CoP15 Doc.14 on "CITES and livelihoods", <http://www.cites.org/eng/cop/15/doc/index.shtml>), and this is reflected in several Resolutions of the Convention, including:

- i. Res. Conf. 8.3 Rev. CoP13 ("Recognition of the benefits of trade in wildlife"), which *"Recognizes that implementation of CITES-listing decisions should take into account potential impacts on the livelihoods of the poor"*;
- ii. Res. Conf. 9.24 Rev. CoP15 ("Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II") where
 - a. the preamble states *"Noting the objective to ensure that decisions to amend the Convention's Appendices are founded on sound and relevant scientific information, taking into account socio-economic factors, ..."*;
 - b. in Appendix 6 ("Format for proposals to amend the Appendices") under paragraph 8 on "Species management", proponents for a proposal to amend the Appendices are asked to provide details of programs in place in the range States to manage populations of the species in question. In addition, where applicable, the proponent is to provide details of any mechanisms used to ensure a return from utilization of the species in question to conservation and/or management programs, such as *"..., community ownership ..."*;
- iii. Res. Conf. 13.2 Rev. CoP14 ("Sustainable use of biodiversity: Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines") where Practical Principles 2 and 12 clearly articulate the need to involve local communities in resource management, and as beneficiaries of associated economic benefits;
- iv. Goal 3 of the CITES Strategic Vision 2008-2013 (Res. Conf. 14.2) states *"Contribute to significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by ensuring that CITES and other multilateral instruments and processes are coherent and mutually supportive"* which, by implication, includes the sustainable development goals of the IUCN, CBD and the MDGs of the United Nations; and
- v. Res. Conf. 15.2 ("Wildlife trade policy reviews") where parties are *"Encouraged to take into account the needs of indigenous people and other local communities when adopting trade policies concerning wild fauna and flora"*.

But CBNRM remains controversial for a variety of CITES-relevant reasons:

- reservations about what CBNRM has achieved;
- lack of understanding that CBNRM is a lengthy process and existing programmes are in various stages of development;
- poor knowledge of the opportunities to be gained through CBNRM;
- differences in cultural and ethical values regarding the extractive use of species; and
- because addressing poverty alongside the sustainable use of species is considered by many to be outside the mandate of the Convention, something that should more appropriately be dealt with by the Convention on Biological Diversity.

While the discussion about linking conservation with poverty reduction goals within CITES is far from new (see also Hutton and Dickson 2000; Dickson 2002; Hutton and Leader-Williams

2003), the role of CBNRM in CITES decision-making processes remains marginal at best, and remains restricted to the implementation phase of a species listing (Res. Conf. 8.3 Rev. CoP13). Furthermore, where CITES decisions involve the issue of extractive use, not all species are equal, which reflects political sensitivities towards certain taxonomic groups (Webb 2000; Velasquez Gomar and Stringer 2011). Clearly, CITES has yet to demonstrate that its decisions are compatible with relevant CITES Resolutions, including Goal 3 of its current Strategic Vision.

Decisions on international trade in species and their products made at CITES Conferences of the Parties are binding and legally enforceable which, in combination with CITES' strong compliance mechanism (Reeve 2006), further underlines the need to ensure that impoverished rural communities are a part of the conservation equation, and not its victims economically and in health terms (e.g. De Boer and Baquete 1998; Chardonnet *et al.* 2010), particularly considering the enormous economic potential that terrestrial wildlife can bring to many rural people (Chardonnet *et al.* 2002). While donors have invested substantial financial resources to support national implementation in developing countries, such as the current European Commission CITES capacity-building project, many Parties find it difficult to effectively implement and enforce the Convention. However, in the absence of effective enforcement (e.g. to control illegal hunting), unsustainable use and illegal trade, frequently involving members of impoverished rural communities, is often the inevitable outcome.

At CITES Conferences of the Parties, the position of the European Union on species listing proposals, or proposals to change the annotations of a species listing, often determines their success or failure. Many proposals potentially impinge on community-based conservation programmes and their livelihoods, with associated implementation consequences. Currently, the quality of discussions within the EU on such proposals invariably suffer from lack of relevant information, which makes the formulation of sensible EU positions difficult.

This symposium was the first international initiative of its kind that brought together key interest groups to synthesize the achievements of CBNRM for terrestrial CITES-listed species in exporting countries, and to provide the knowledge base necessary for a broad, balanced policy discussion within the European Union and beyond, regarding the role of rural communities in CITES decision-making processes. The symposium conclusions should be helpful in identifying options to enhance the current CITES Strategic Vision beyond 2013, and other relevant CITES regulatory mechanisms to strengthen the role of CBNRM in CITES. This applies particularly to the effective implementation of the Convention as stated in Goal 1 of the CITES Strategic Vision 2008 – 2013 (Res. Conf. 14.2, <http://www.cites.org/eng/res/index.php>). In addition, the symposium has identified important links between CITES and other relevant multilateral instruments, especially within the CBD, or the proposed Intergovernmental Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Furthermore, it can provide guidance on how best to proceed with existing Memoranda of Understanding between CITES and other organizations like the IUCN, CMS, FAO and UNCTAD, to maximize relevant synergies with these organizations.

We hope that the international CITES community and relevant organizations, will take advantage of the information compiled in the Symposium proceedings, to engage with a constructive spirit in a debate on the best possible use to be made of the concept of CBNRM while striving to achieve the goal to effectively conserve biological diversity.

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