

## **Rapporteur Report on Session 2.1.B:**

### **Community Conserved Areas: issues of livelihoods, agro-biodiversity and landscape conservation**

**Chairs: Alejandro Argumedo (Peru) and John Hutton (UK)**

**Presentations by: Roman Aquino and Sergio Garcia (Mexico); Augusta Henriquez (Guinea Bissau); Jan Rhyn (Namibia); and Alejandro Argumedo (Peru)**

**Discussants: Michel Pimbert (Europe) and Madhu Sarin (India)**

**Rapporteurs' Report: Patrick McConney and Brian Jones**

#### **Alejandro Argumedo: *Introduction***

- Communities often declare areas for conservation in response to external threats and demands for meeting livelihood needs.
- Declaring CCAs is also an important expression of rights and an exercise of power
- CCAs are fundamental strategies through which agro-biodiversity can be maintained within a strong cultural context.

#### **Roman Aquino and Sergio Garcia: *Oaxaca, Mexico* –**

- Oaxaca is outstanding in terms of biological diversity and the cultural wealth of a large proportion of the country's indigenous people, who control the majority of lands.
- Ironically, Oaxaca is also a State in Mexico with a high degree of poverty.
- Despite poverty, or perhaps because of it, communities have collaborated and networked to accept stewardship of much of the land through traditional institutions for decision-making.
- Community official positions are non-paid, but people are committed to providing benefits, and CCAs are increasing in number and diversity.
- The community governance system incorporates representatives from NGOs and all levels of government, but help is needed in selective capacity building, financing, monitoring and evaluation, greater incorporation of learning, etc.
- The case proves that CCAs are efficient and need to be included into the official governmental system of protected areas based on conditions of mutual recognition and respect.

#### **Augusta Henriquez: *Formosa Island (Bijagos), Guinea Bisseau* –**

- The case is based on a three-island group that is part of a biosphere reserve inhabited by Bijagos, a people with a rich culture and complex social structure featuring age, gender and class divisions. They are closely linked to their environment culturally, socio-economically and nutritionally.

- The traditional institutions are being threatened and displaced by newcomers with more commercial and less culturally-linked approaches to resource exploitation.
- The weak and distant State governance apparatus cannot safeguard resources, leaving the traditional peoples and recent residents to become involved in a process of dialogue and decision-making to evolve an institutional system for participatory management planning.
- Outputs have included zoning three areas for sustainable use in a management plan.
- Lessons learned underscore the innovation and commitment of populations to achieve both conservation within traditional systems of governance and, with modest external assistance, comprehensive sustainable development to meet complementary needs, such as health.
- Constraints include weak authorities, inability to cope with rapid change, non-sustainable funding and threats to food security that undermine conservation.

### **Torra Community, Namibia – Jan Rhyn**

- 1996 Namibian legislation gives communities wildlife use rights if they form a “conservancy”.
- Conservancies gain additional land use options (wildlife and tourism) with no restrictions on existing uses.
- A Conservancy is a local common property resource management institution.
- To form a conservancy residents need to have a representative committee, a legal constitution, an equitable benefit distribution plan, and they must identify and agree upon boundaries with their neighbors.
- Communities are self-defining and Conservancies retain all revenue.
- In Namibia there are 29 conservancies covering 7 million ha.

### **Alejandro Argumedo: *Potato Park, Peru***

- The area of the case is an agro-biodiversity hotspot for potato and an internationally critical ecosystem.
- The traditional cultural and ecological system of landscape classification developed by indigenous peoples provides a strong conceptual framework for community conservation.
- The conceptual framework describes drivers of change in the system, including internal and external forces, cultural forces, ecosystem goods and services.
- Six communities collaborated to establish a CCA of 10,000 hectares that includes promotion of agro-ecotourism, seeking co-management opportunities and use of traditional knowledge.
- The effort features customary laws, a biodiversity register maintained by women, and job creation.
- There is a need to recognise and legally incorporate CCAs at the national and international levels.

### **Discussant – Michel Pimbert**

- The holistic and integrated treatment of key concepts such as biodiversity and landscapes challenges the jurisdictional, disciplinary and professional divisions of major organisations.

- Current conceptual frameworks do not incorporate different types of knowledge easily and make distinctions between the biophysical and the cultural that may not be real, functional or useful in the context of CCAs, especially to the people involved in bottom-up processes.
- Organisational transformation and reorientation are needed to accommodate these realities.
- The concept of “sovereignty” is important in governance, as illustrated by the WTO Cancun conference, where one can see that poor farmers want to self-determine how they live.
- Reformation of corporate governance that now tends to destabilise peasant cultures is necessary, and this requires links with other policy processes such as for trade.

### **Discussant – Madhu Sarin**

- Once we move away from externally determined concepts of conservation we get a rich combination of cultural diversity integrated with biodiversity that could represent a paradigm shift if dominant conservation organisations use this perspective to rethink their approaches.
- There is much to learn from the ways in which communities innovate, but the combination of rich cultural and biological diversity with human poverty needs to be addressed as priority.

### **Audience**

- The term “community” is very much used and abused, so clearer terminology on different types of groups should be developed.
- Relations between communities and state should be based on cooperation, not opposition, and this requires greater decentralisation that respects the importance of CCAs.
- Mechanisms for effecting change in addressing protected areas includes evolution of PA categories (e.g. IUCN). IUCN categories lose track of the cultural dimension (e.g. in Category I are lands of uncontacted peoples in the Amazon) and there needs to be greater integration of culture into all of the IUCN categories. This would elevate the importance of CCAs in all categories.