

Convention on Biological Diversity
COP-11
Hyderabad October 8-19, 2012
Report by Dr. Samia Sarkis

Dr. Samia Sarkis- Expert on Marine & Island Issues

Address: Department of Conservation Services, Bermuda

Responsibilities: Assist John Clorley (DEFRA), Vin Fleming and Vicky Morgan (JNCC) in the review of:

- 1) Marine and Coastal Biodiversity: Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA)
- 2) Island Biodiversity, and
- 3) participation, as a representative from a UK Overseas Territory, in “Island Innovation Event”

Relevant Conclusions for UKOTs:

- **The submission of the results from EBSA workshops to the CBD Repository.** This has substantial ramifications for the UKOTs as it provides a means to bring forth the importance of areas beyond national jurisdiction, as well as provide some leverage in encouraging protection for territorial waters in OTs. The support provided by international conventions and/or Regional bodies is at times needed in smaller jurisdictions to contribute to conservation on a larger scale, and assist environmentalists of UKOTs to ensure that decisions, which are typically driven by economic concerns only, also take into account longer term conservation concerns and the benefits (often economic ones) derived from ecosystem services. Furthermore, it is of direct relevance to the current work by Bermuda on the designation of the Sargasso Sea as a High Seas Marine Protected Area. All information in the repository will be made available for relevant international competent authorities to take note of with regards to any potential environmental impact of their activities on described EBSAs. These areas can also be used by Regional Sea Convention and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations as an aid for other measures such as MPA designation and fisheries management. Ultimately, to enable EBSAs or other areas to become formal protected areas on the High Seas (Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction – ABNJs), the UN General Assembly will need to develop an implementing agreement under UNCLOS (UN Convention on the Law of the Sea).
- **The support to the Island Programme of Work** ensuring the continued work on priorities (see below), and urging to develop a mechanism to mobilize resources to do so (such as payment for ecosystem services).
 - Note six priorities mentioned in the island programme of work include: 1) prevention, control and eradication of invasive alien species, 2) climate

change adaptation and mitigation, 3) Marine Protected Areas, establishment and management, 4) capacity building, 5) Access & Benefit sharing, and 6) poverty alleviation

- The awareness of transboundary pollutants, such as underwater noise, and the recognition that there is a need to defining it, quantifying it and its potential impacts on marine organisms, more specifically marine mammals. There is scientific evidence of negative impacts on biodiversity, and enhancing regional cooperation over trans-boundary pollutants is supported by CoP 11 Decision.
- The added priority given to terrestrial protected areas
- Recognition of need to address Access and Benefit Sharing, including intellectual property rights.
- The launching of the Darwin Plus fund for UKOTs and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund at CoP 11.
- **Island biodiversity decisions should assist UKOTs in addressing invasive alien species issues.** Building collaboration, developing frameworks, strategies and providing means to implement actions identified will be key to addressing these issues- supported by the Decision in CoP 11 to strengthen local capacity and information sharing tools as well as promote and support high level regional commitments. Many UKOTs have similar invasive species issues, for example that of the lionfish in the Caribbean UKOTs, and developing a common strategy should be realistic; this will hopefully lead to pooling of resources and avoid duplication of efforts in exploring control/eradication means. Additionally, although there is considerable Territory effort on addressing such issues, existing legislation is at times an obstacle requiring amendments, as is the lack of legislation (for some OTs) enabling the implementation of what is considered key actions. Assistance from the UK in providing guidance for improving legislation may be beneficial. Continued support to the Overseas Territories through the Overseas Territories Environment & Climate Fund ('Darwin Plus'), and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund for parties involved is likely to be critical in supporting implementation of the PoW by OTs.
- The promotion of success stories during the **Island Innovation Event**, where case studies on conservation of protected species, eradication of invasive alien species, and/or sustainable approaches to biodiversity preservation were presented.

Further Details on Key points and issues:

- 1) Ecologically Biologically Significant Areas (EBSA)
 - a. Coming to a compromise in the outcome of EBSA workshops was difficult, due to the reluctance of certain parties to agree on the "endorsement" of EBSA workshops.

- b. Stemming from SBSTTA meeting in Montreal earlier this year, the importance of making the distinction between submitting workshop reports in the CBD repository or the information-sharing mechanism was further stressed. Briefly, the information-sharing mechanism does not imply any “endorsement”, commitment or political will by parties, and is truly only a means of storing scientific information prior to further review as a contribution to CBD, but not formally disseminated to external organizations.
 - c. The suggestion that Parties had to approve workshops if held in their jurisdiction was strongly rejected by the UK and the EU; this would create issues where Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) would be involved.
 - d. The paper was finally adopted by avoiding all reference to endorsement, and instead accepting a compromised text brought forward by the chair along the lines of “requesting the Executive Secretary to submit the summary report and include it in the repository”. This means that results will be disseminated to international competent authorities to take note of with regards to any potential environmental impact of their activities on described EBSAs. These areas can also be used by Regional Sea Convention and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations as an aid for other measures such as MPA designation and fisheries management.
- 2) The Darwin plus fund, adapted for overseas territories was launched by the UK Minister. It will operate under the banner of DEFRA’s Darwin initiative. The Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund (Darwin Plus) will bring together existing UK Government funding (previous OTEP, DFID, and Darwin) for OT environmental projects into one place.
- 3) A strong push is made by scientists to include underwater noise as a consideration in Adverse Impacts in Marine systems. Much more data is required, however, there is existing strong evidence of impacts on reproduction and health on marine mammals. Although mentioned in a number of papers, it is not reflected very clearly at this point by CBD.
- 4) Policy, or lack of, relating to intellectual property was raised, and included in general terms. This is a matter that can be further reviewed at the next experts meeting.
- 5) Island Biodiversity
- a. The Island biodiversity document was adopted without too much discussion. All points brought forward in SBSTTA 16 were included in adopted paper- i.e. the organization of an “island innovation event”, noting the need to focus on all six priorities of decision IX/21, to accord priority to management of terrestrial protected areas with inland waters, inclusion of uninhabited islands, consider developing financial arrangements, and consideration of transboundary pollution (including underwater noise).
 - b. There was further emphasis on considering innovative financial mechanisms to mobilize additional resources by linking it to the strategy for resource mobilization; this includes such actions as debt for adaptation to climate change, payment for ecosystem services, tourism user fees, etc. This was a cross-cutting issue and the main political focus of the Conference with an agreement ultimately being reached to double resources from

developed countries for biodiversity conservation by 2015 (and to maintain that level to 2020 at least).

- c. Island Innovation Event- renamed from suggested Island Summit at SBSTTA, and organized by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), consisted of sharing of information on the following issues: 1) Sustainable financing mechanism, 2) Invasive Alien Species, 3) Green Economy, 4) Ecosystem-based Adaptations, and 5) Food security. Successful case studies were briefly presented for each (5 minutes), key points were re-iterated, and discussion on adaptation to other islands followed. A high level panel discussion was conducted later on, and the day ended with a reception launching the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, and speeches by the BVI Minister, Hawaiian, Costa Rican, and Ecuador ministers on the importance of biodiversity and its preservation on islands. Details of case studies for panels attended are given below:
 - i. Sustainable financing mechanism- mainly discussed development of Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, driven by The Nature Conservancy and supported by the German World Bank (K), and the World Bank. Countries involved are committed to raising a 1:1 match. These are:
 - ii. Ecosystem-based Adaptations- presentation of fisher community involvement in Madagascar in the design and implementation of marine protected area. Key points were to demonstrate the benefits of protected areas on invertebrate fishery in a first instance (more specifically on octopus), which thereafter facilitated the implementation of closures for other species including finfish and the self-regulation of these areas by the islanders convinced of their importance. 2nd case study: New Caledonia and the involvement of a mining company in the reforestation with tree species- a successful example of a public-private partnership.
 - iii. Invasive Alien Species- Case studies related to Guam and the region, where control and eradication of the water brown snake is developed through the prevention of introduction of the species to surrounding islands.