Legal Protection for Wildlife
Implementing International & National Commitments for the Protection & Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

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Outline

- What is biodiversity?
  Why is it important?
- International and national legal frameworks
- Implementation challenges
- Current approaches
What is Biodiversity?

- The variety of life on earth...

  "the variability among living organisms from all sources.... this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems".

  (The Convention on Biological Diversity)
Biodiversity Hotspots

Large regions containing exceptional concentrations of plant endemism and experiencing high rates of habitat loss (UNEP-WCMC)
Forest and Mangrove Cover in South Asia

Source: World Resources Institute, Global Forest Watch
Forest and ecosystem values

"If there is forest there is life,
and if there is life there is forest."
Economic Value of Ecosystem Services

Total value of ecosystem services:
- 10% of GDP in India,
- 16% of GDP in Indonesia

Value of ecosystem services as a % of income in rural poor household?
- 47% of GDP in India,
- 75% in GDP in Indonesia

Source: Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (2010)
Biodiversity loss and degradation

- Species extinction rates - 100 to 1000 times faster than in geological times.

- Lost already:
  - 50 % of wetlands,
  - 40 % of forests
  - 35 % of mangroves.
Vertebrate Species Population Decline

Living Planet Index (2008 data, Zoological Society of London)
Source: ADB & WWF, 2012)
Main threats to biodiversity

- Exploitation: 37%
- Habitat degradation/change: 31.4%
- Habitat loss: 13.4%
- Climate change: 7.1%
- Invasive species/genes: 5.1%
- Pollution: 4%
- Disease: 2%

Source: WWF, 2014
Living Planet Report
International Responses

- Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1979)
- Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)
- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (1971)
Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)

- Parties commit to: *conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.*

- 2 linked protocols:

- Ratification
  - CBD – All countries in South Asia
  - Cartagena – All except Nepal
  - Nagoya – Only Bhutan and India to date
Networks of Protected Areas

Source: Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool, IUCN, 2015

- **Aims** - ensure that international trade of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.
- **Regulates** and provides international cooperation to safeguard certain species from over-exploitation.
- All import, export, re-export of species covered by the Convention has to be authorized through a licensing system.
- **Ratification** - All countries in South Asia.
Wildlife Crime

- Global natural resources crime inflicts losses worth more than **US$70 billion a year**
  - Increases poverty levels of the most marginalized communities
  - Impacts nature-based tourism.
- Wildlife Crime fuels corruption and insecurity:
  - Local rebel militias and organized crime involvement undermines security
  - More than 1,000 park rangers have been killed defending park assets from poachers and organized criminals

Photo credit: A. Christy Williams / WWF
Key challenges

- Legal framework developed, but poorly enforced
- Capacity weak
  - Protected area management
  - Enforcement & coordination mechanisms
- Working with communities to reduce poverty
- Evidence collection and enforcement chain cooperation
- Liability and punishment

Photo credit: Z-X Zhang (PSBF)
Strengthening enforcement approaches

- Strengthening legal frameworks – recognize serious crime
- Development of an Integrated Criminal Justice Strategy for Wildlife Trafficking
- Focus – follow the money, the “master minds” and corrupt officials that profit from trade
- Use of modern enforcement tools and evidence gathering

Photo credit:
Ranger training in Thailand, WCS.
Technology Options

- Mobile technologies for tracking and identification (eg. WildScan)
- Social media for engaging the public
- Tracking devices (eg. Radio frequency devices)
- “Camera traps”
- Satellite tracking and drones

Photo credits: Freeland.org; UNEP; WWF Nepal
Thank you!

More information


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