

SIANI Expert Group Discussion Series

Part 3: Wild Foods and Biodiversity

A transcript of the proceedings from the 18 July 2020, 3:30pm (GMT+8) discussion



Background

The Expert Group Discussion Series on Wild Foods, Biodiversity and Livelihood is part of the activities of the SIANI Expert Group of the same name led by NTFP-EP Asia with support from SIANI, an open and inclusive network supporting multi-sectoral dialogue and action around the vision of SDG 2.

The Wild Foods, Biodiversity and Livelihood (WFBL) Expert Group works to consolidate the traditional ecological knowledge about wild foods in Asia and links these with relevant policy arenas on food security, poverty reduction and sustainable forest management.

The session on *Wild Foods and Biodiversity* is the 3rd in a four-part series of discussions on wild foods. The discussion is moderated by Dr. Denise Margaret Matias, a research scientist at the research unit Biodiversity and People at Institute for Social-Ecological Research (ISOE) in Frankfurt. She received her Doctor in Agricultural Sciences from the University of Bonn for her research on forest honey gathering from *Apis dorsata* or wild giant honey bees by indigenous Tagbanuas. She is continuing this research with indigenous Higaonon and is also working with nomadic herders in the Mongolian Steppe Ecosystem. Denise is also a member of the steering committee of the Expert Group.

She is joined by Expert Group member *Teddy Baguilat Jr.*, president of the Global ICCA Consortium and dialogue partner *Claudia Binondo*, project officer from the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity.

Learnings and recommendations from the series will be put together in a dialogue with policymakers to be organized by the expert group¹. These discussions will be consolidated and will be related to issues associated with policies on food security, poverty reduction and sustainable forest management.

Note: *The recommendations in this document are not yet formally developed, but will be developed from the discussions in the webinar series.*

Opening remarks and recap of previous discussion

Femy Pinto, WFBL Expert Group Lead and Executive Director, NTFP-EP Asia

Welcome everyone! I'm Femy Pinto from the Non Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme or NTFP-EP.

Thank you for being here! We are on the 3rd session of our 4-part discussion series on Wild Foods, Biodiversity and Livelihood, which is a key activity of the NTFP-EP and SIANI Expert Group initiative on the same topic of Wild Foods Biodiversity and Livelihood, aiming to contribute knowledge and policy recommendations on the Sustainable Development Goal or SDG 2 towards zero hunger.

At the same time, the expert group initiative particularly also aims to achieve better understanding of local wild food knowledge and traditional food systems such as rotational farming, hunting-gathering, forest and farm systems, the livelihood around these, and to advocate these as critical part of food security interventions. The initiative hopes to develop through dialogue and exchanges, country researches and an online campaign, a future strategic collaboration programme on forests and forest-farm ecosystems for food security, biodiversity and livelihood. At NTFP-EP we are also continuously strengthening ourselves as a knowledge exchange facilitator and we envision in time to see an NTFP-EP Academy that will be a key learning, linking and dialogue space about forests, people and livelihoods. We imagine that NTFP-EP's HIVE e-learning platform that is hosting this discussion would also be part of that. So these are part of the building blocks.

In the NTFP-EP –SIANI Expert Group initiative, we are joined by professionals, field practitioners, experts, advocates from various organizations and networks in different countries in this dialogue process, you can briefly turn on your video if you wish to acknowledge each one by a smile and a wave or a private message.

.....

If you are just joining now, let me give you a brief background on what has already transpired.

First to define, what are wild foods? which we covered in our introductory discussion last June with Madhu Ramnath and Dr. Ramon Razal.

Wild foods are edible, uncultivated plant species, fungi and animals that form part of a rich diversity of species that are collected from the forests, or on the edges of forests and also on traditional gardens, rotational farms, and agricultural lands that are customarily included in the diet of local communities in different ways or forms. Wild foods are a symbol of indigenous knowledge encompassing identification, harvest protocols, processing and intimate knowledge of the ecosystem – the landscape in which they are found. There are numerous examples of these from leaves, seeds, nuts, honey, shoots, root crops, fruits, flowers, fish, meat and insects.

In last month's discussion we explored wild foods and its linkages to customary tenure and indigenous knowledge. Jeremy Ironside talked about subsistence affluence a concept experienced in Laos where people

¹ Date to be finalized and announced

who are rich in natural resources, close to their land and forests and biodiversity are affluent on the basis of access to food and their general needs for wellbeing but this affluence is getting eroded and threatened. His opening discussion took us further to a rich discussion about customary tenure going beyond ownership but also of traditional systems, knowledge and practice of managing the natural resources – the wild food base of people and communities, for example, the Karen rotational farmers shared by Dr. Prasert from Chiang Mai, he shared how they have strong food security and sovereignty. And so do ICCAs – indigenous and local community conserved areas. We also heard that communities that still practice and adopt customary harvest protocols are able to sustain their food and cultures are still strong but we see the challenges currently faced because of the push for formal private land titling, making it necessary and urgent to push for recognition of customary collective tenure lest indigenous and local communities risk losing their land and forests.

We also discussed about the need to bring women and youth in the forefront of wild food discussions; they are the important purveyors of wild food and natural resources knowledge, they also demonstrate the traditional sustainable practices of managing and conserving the resources. Likewise we were also encouraged to integrate health as well into our discussion.

You can read more and view the videos on the NTFP-EP and SIANI pages and we will show you and send you the links.

For today we go further to discuss about the linkages of wild foods and biodiversity. Sustainable use and harvest of wild foods and other natural resources supports and protects biodiversity, rich biodiversity supports the whole life system of our forests, the watersheds, the rivers, the landscape. What are the current efforts, practices and models that demonstrate this sustainable use impacting clearly on the state of biodiversity in ICCAs, community forests, protected areas, customary forests etc.

We also wanted to explore the situation of wild foods now and the communities that depend on them in the time of Covid 19. It has been said that the virus had originally come from wildlife and that had been transmitted through a complex trade chain from forest to wildlife markets. What does this imply for communities that traditionally hunt and harvest wild plants and meat? Lets dive into it.

I am pleased to welcome our moderator / discussant for this afternoon/ this morning, Dr. Denise Margaret Matias. Denise is a research scientist in the research unit on Biodiversity and People at the Institute of Social Ecological Research or ISOE Frankfurt.

Welcome Denise and here's wishing us all a good discussion today!

Inputs from resource speakers from the expert group

Denise Margaret Matias

Apart from being with the research unit on Biodiversity and People at ISOE Frankfurt, Denise is also currently a Fellow at the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) contributing to the topic on sustainable use of wild species and Values assessment. She is also a volunteer Research Associate at the NTFP-EP.

Hello everyone! I'm tuning in from Bonn, Germany. We will discuss wild foods and biodiversity. I will share my screen for a short presentation. Before we start, I'd like to request you to get your pen and paper because first I will ask you to take note of two things:

1. Things you learned from the presentation/discussion – AHA! I learned something new today
2. Things that make you go "huh? What's that? That was not so clear"

Hopefully we get to discuss these in the breakout groups.

Revisiting the definition of biological diversity

What is the definition of biological diversity? Just to have a leveled discussion, I put here the definition as written by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). It essentially says that it is:

Biological diversity is defined as the *variability among living organisms from all sources, including inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems* (Convention on Biological Diversity)

The future of food

This means between animals, plants, and within animals and plants, for example. And so last year, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations actually published a report on "The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture". Some of you may have already seen this. A takeaway from this is that the future of food is under severe threat:

Just looking at plants:

- 6000 plant species available as food, but there are less than 200 varieties eaten
- To top it off, only 9 of these varieties constitute most of world's total crop production. In terms of biological diversity, there is much diversity but food intake/consumption is mostly concentrated on a small number – nine (9)!

This raises the question: What is also the future of wild foods?

- It has been said that nearly 25% of roughly 4000 wild food species are in decline sadly
- This has been happening (surprise!) in Asia, Africa, Latin America – countries that we are a part of, and it's because of increasing pressure on the natural habitats of these wild foods species. So as usual, from development, conservation exclusions (meaning protected areas, one of the long standing debates on excluding people from their traditional lands) and industrial, agricultural expansion.

Contribution of wild food to biodiversity

I am also interested very much in what all of us consume. And so we see here that wild food contributes to agro-biodiversity. The diversity of crops and animals from wild foods are said to contribute to systems resilient to climate and market shocks. One example of this – market shock during COVID-19.

Diversity of crops and animals from wild foods contribute to systems resilient to climate and market shocks

Institute for Social-Ecological Research | NTFP-EP

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FPMA Food Price Monitoring and Analysis

Viet Nam stops signing of new rice export contracts amid COVID-19 pandemic

On 25 March 2020, the Government of Viet Nam put a hold to the signing of new export contracts pending assurance of domestic supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic. The decision was prompted by a sharp increase in prices over the past months due to a combination of factors, including the impact of the pandemic on supply chains and rising import demand from China. The move is a response to concerns over food security and growing amid concerns over the pandemic exacerbating the already strong upward price pressure from the lack of rice stocks in the international market. The Chinese government has two plans to tackle its acute shortage of rice to 270,000 tonnes, as a precautionary measure amid the pandemic outbreak. At the end of March, the Ministry of Industry and Trade proposed to ban rice exports for a period of three months starting from 1 April 2020. This is a temporary period but a final decision has not yet been made. Overall, the country's 2019 aggregate rice production is estimated at 4.4 million tonnes. It represents the 2018 near-average level, which was even at the time of writing, the lowest rice crop harvested since planted in late March, mostly due to saltwater intrusion in the south growing areas.

You can see that Vietnam stopped signing of new rice exports because of the pandemic. This is a market shock that we see, because some countries are dependent on rice imports – like the Philippines. Food security is affected. Could wild foods also bring in aspects of food security for us?

Quick survey

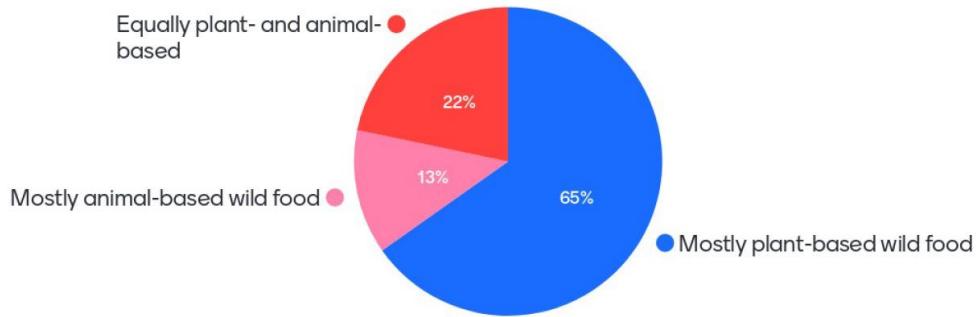
I invite you to get your browsers and smartphones ready because I wanted to ask what type of wild foods do you usually eat? If you get your smartphone, please go to menti.com and type in the code 2165201 and press submit. (<https://www.menti.com/4ym7coud51>). There is a question there: *What type of wild food do you usually eat?*

For those of us based in urban areas, this could also be an exercise for us to think of the food we usually eat – are there any wild food? Do you eat plant-based/animal-based wild food? Or you equally eat both animal and plant-based? Please click a choice and the submit.

The voting results are in: 65% eat mostly plant-based wild food, while 22% eat equally plant and animal-based wild foods and 13% eat mostly animal-based wild food.

What type of wild food do you mostly eat?

Mentimeter



23



We see that for our discussion later – maybe dominated about plants or plant wild foods. However, we see that there are people who also equally eat both animal and plant-based wild foods. Later on you can still vote!

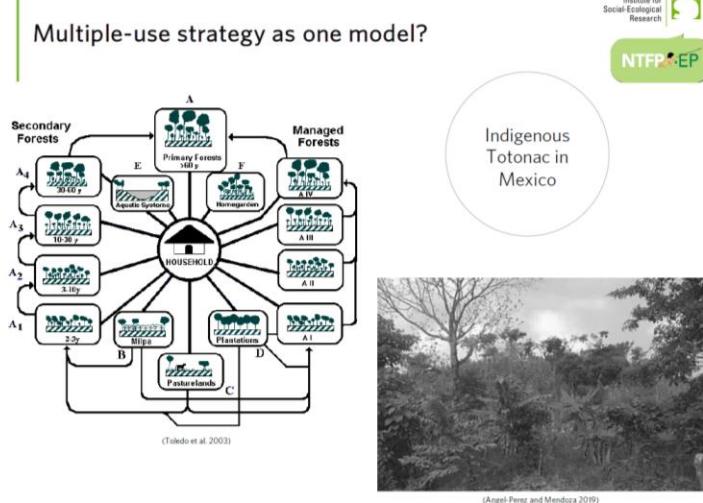
Let's go back to our presentation.

The question is, are there actually models that we could follow for sustainable wild food consumption?

Multiple use strategy as one model? The case of the indigenous Totonac in Mexico

An example that I found – this is a question if it can be a model or not – is the multiple use strategy by the indigenous Totonac in Mexico. When it says multiple-use strategy, it means that they use the forests differently. They have primary forest, where they gather wild foods, on the other hand they have managed forests for non-native species, secondary forests for shifting cultivation. Their diets are mostly dominated by maize – that is where the *milpa* is. They also have pasture lands, also called *potrero*, where you have the cattle grazing, etc. So aquatic systems and home gardens as well.

Multiple-use strategy as one model?



The picture shows one type of a home garden. The question is, is this a model that we could actually use? Or is this already being used in your localities? We can discuss this later on.

Wild foods and biodiversity: challenges

There are challenges for wild foods and biodiversity:

Global level – nutritional and conservation data on wild species is often missing (Sax 2019)

- It was also a challenge for me to look for resources/references for this presentation because conservation data on wild food species is really missing.

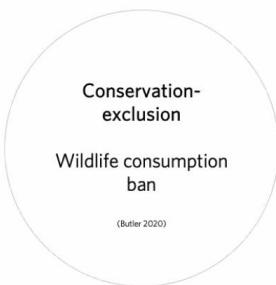
Local level – decline in food-relevant local ecological knowledge (Barucha and Pretty 2010)

- Meaning that this is now being replaced by just buying from stores for example and the younger generations no longer engage in gathering wild foods.

Challenges in relation to diseases such as COVID-19

Recently, there have been challenges to emerging infectious diseases like COVID-19.

Challenges in relation to diseases like COVID-19



In terms of conservation-exclusion we have the wildlife consumption bans. The surprising or not surprising thing here is that conservationists welcome this ban. On China, for example, they welcome it and want that this would be expanded.

*An article on China's wildlife trade ban was flashed – “*Conservationists welcome China's wildlife trade ban*” by Rhett A. Butler (26 January 2020).

But some conservationists are pushing for taking a step back, thinking thoroughly because indigenous and local communities depend on wildlife consumption. And so one of the things that has been proposed is to have biodiversity conservation to mitigate the risk of infectious diseases from wildlife.

*An article on Nature was flashed – “*Why deforestation and extinctions make pandemics more likely*”

It's because when you lose different species, most of the species that are left are often those who are hosts for these diseases. Mostly the emerging infectious diseases were seen in mammals. Not sure if there is a correlation there that most of the mammals are the ones left after the degradation of the forest, etc.

Now the question is, whether we have good practices or models from your communities and what are the challenges in terms of having sustainable use and contribution to biodiversity. There is also the issue of COVID-19 and the biodiversity and wildlife consumption bans that affect IPLCs. What will be your recommendations for policy and action?



We now proceed first to getting some reactions from our guests who we would like to invite to provide reflections on these issues. I want to first invite Sir Teddy Baguilat to share any aha or huh moments.

Teddy Brawner Baguilat, Jr.

Teddy Brawner Baguilat, Jr. is the President of the ICCA Consortium. He belongs to the Tuwali tribe of Ifugao and the Gaddang tribe of Nueva Vizcaya provinces in Northern Philippines. He has held various positions in government, including as Mayor of Kianan (1995-2000) and Governor of Ifugao (2001-2004; 2007-2010) and Congressman representing the lone district of Ifugao, where he was able to champion the cause of all indigenous peoples in the Philippines (2010-2016). He has also proposed laws protecting the rights of indigenous peoples, promoting their culture, as well as laws on protection of the environment and bills against discrimination of marginalized sectors. He is now currently the interim Executive Director of the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights. He has spoken in various international conferences on ICCAs, conservation and heritage sites, human rights and indigenous cultures, emphasizing indigenous practices as key to overcoming current environmental and sustainability challenges worldwide.



Thank you Denise! I will just share briefly my reflections on what has been discussed, primarily focusing on a situation assessment of what has been happening in the Philippines, as well as some policy recommendations, given my experience. Though I am currently the president of the ICCA Consortium, my experience has largely been in terms of legislation and pushing forth policies in Congress.

In recent decades, because of government policies and programs and the aggressiveness of multi-national corporate farming, I'd say there has been a marginalization of small farmers and neglect of locally produced food and community-based farming. This is perhaps where wild foods belong with.

So food production has largely shifted from small farms to large plantation type farms – this is experienced in the Philippines and most of Southeast Asia. This has been strengthened by liberalization policies, since we are all part of this global trade network. So the Philippines, as well as other countries, have adopted liberalization policies brought about by an import-export oriented economy. It meant that food supply rely on cheap imports as well as food production was geared towards supplying foreign markets. For instance, in the Philippines we have the Rice Tariffication Law, which allowed the private sector to import directly staples like rice from overseas. And because government didn't invest enough in agri infrastructure and technology and didn't provide enough capital for farmers, many ceased to produce rice because they just couldn't compete with rice farmers from Vietnam and Thailand, who were heavily subsidized by their own governments.

Conversely, large agricultural lands were converted towards serving foreign markets. So this would mean that lands reserved for rice and corn was converted to banana or pineapple plantations, and even biofuels like palm oil.

And then suddenly, COVID erupted, and it changed everything and revealed certain weaknesses of our agricultural systems in the Philippines, as well as the region. It brought about the disruption of the food supply chain – as Denise mentioned, the countries halted imports as they decided to take care of ensuring the food security of their own populations, for instance like Vietnam and Thailand, from which we used to import a lot of rice. Of course, the supply chain disruption also brought about by the lockdowns that halted trade and transport of goods locally and overseas. Like for instance in the Philippines for a while, foods cannot be transported because of the lockdowns, and commercial farms ceased operations, but not for small farms. They continued producing and supplying food, at least for their own family and communities.

If there is one thing that the pandemic has revealed, it's the importance of developing food resilient communities like what we have in indigenous communities or so called territories of life, like the ICCAs. This is one of the characteristics of the ICCAs or territories of life – in fact, in one webinar discussion that was organized by the consortium, most of the stories of the participants from IPLCs relate about communities surviving pretty well during the pandemic. They had less infections, because they didn't have to go to the city or

outside their communities to buy food or source their sustenance because food was already supplied within their own communities.

I think this is something we need to look at in terms of policy recommendations. Definitely, there's going to be a new normal, and we've already been discussing a lot about this. I am just glad that I was one of the authors of the "Sagip Saka Law" in the Philippines which provides support from government to community-based farmers by providing assistance to small farmholdings. Likewise, among other things, the provision of the law gives the mandate to the local government to buy food from their own local farmers. Because as I explained earlier, food supply in the Philippines has been dependent on large commercial plantations or cheap imports from overseas. So now because of the pandemic, local governments wanted to ensure that their communities do not become hungry, so they can now source or buy food from their own local communities.

Many local government units (LGUs) took advantage of this law to buy food from their own farmers instead of relying on national food relief. More than ever, there is a need to put a halt on liberalization policies or at least reflect on whether liberalization policies have helped the agricultural sector, and instead rely on our own local farmers. Among the policy recommendations that I would propose are:

1. Passage of ICCA law in Philippines – recognize governance of indigenous peoples over their territories which they have been conserving
2. Pass the national land use act which allows governments – local governments are given the mandate to declare certain areas as protected areas. As Denise has mentioned, there is now a push for us to protect our biodiversity especially with this pandemic. With the NLUA, which has been lingering in the Philippine Congress for 2 decades already, governments can declare certain biodiversity enclaves as protected, at least for 30 years. That's what the provision of the law provides for.
3. Likewise, we look forward to the stricter, more efficient and effective implementation of the Expanded NIPAS Act (National Integrated Protected Areas System). Although this is largely state-run conservation. So if you have the Expanded NIPAS Act, which talks about government's responsibility to protect areas, and the ICCA law, which provides for the mandate of biodiversity governance of indigenous peoples and local communities, and then you have the National Land Use Act, which gives LGUs the responsibility to protect their area, I think this would strengthen the policy framework for conservation, at least in the Philippines.
4. Finally, as to the ban on wildlife trade – It's something we need to reflect upon. For me, I'm quite conflicted. Because for example, we in Ifugao, we eat bats for instance and we eat a lot of wildlife. I don't know if it has done damage to the society as a whole. But I think banning wildlife consumption is like looking at the problem from the wrong perspective. Sure there is scientific data that COVID-19 had been borne by bats, but not really sure if anyone really trades in bats. But we should look into the larger picture. And that is, that we have actually been intruding into the habitats of wildlife because of our development efforts – whether these are agricultural plantations or extractive industries or even human settlements. Our global development trends have destroyed biodiversity and I think that is the bigger culprit instead of banning wildlife consumption.

Thank you!

Denise: Thank you Teddy for your rich and interesting insights! Hopefully in the latter discussions we can discuss further the one you mentioned about the resiliency of communities, the wildlife consumption ban, and different policy recommendations that I hope participants from other countries can also contribute to later on.

In terms of an ASEAN perspective, I invite Ms. Claudia Binondo to speak on behalf of Ms. Clarissa Arida, who is the head of the Program Development and Implementation Unit of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB).

Claudia Binondo

Ms. Claudia Binondo, Project Officer of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, speaking on behalf of Clarissa Arida, head of the Programme Development and Implementation Unit of the ACB. The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity is an institution established since 2005 and located in Los Baños, Philippines with the purpose to facilitate cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States and with relevant national government, regional and international organizations, on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of such biodiversity in the ASEAN region. The ACB also serves as the Secretariat of ASEAN Heritage Parks Programme, which is one of ASEAN flagship programmes promoting a regional network of national protected areas of high conservation importance and that which also represents ASEAN's rich natural heritage.



Thanks Denise for the introduction on ACB. As always, ACB is grateful and honored to be part of this group. It's also important for us to widen our network as we strengthen efforts in mainstreaming biodiversity in other sectors, including agriculture and all others that are considered as major drivers of biodiversity laws.

ACB was able to participate in the 1st and 2nd sessions of this group. The 1st session in June was enlightening for ACB as it gave us a glimpse of wild foods. That story about the boy [growing up and learning about yams], like what Madhu Ramnath mentioned in his presentation on exploring wild food and related matters. The boy was able to easily identify the kinds of yams in the place where he grew up. That showed the important link between wild foods and the communities – these communities have lived close to where these resources are and have nurtured them through generations.

We also understand the role of wild foods in enhancing global food security but also enabling local consumption, to maintain these wild foods where they are found. That discussion also noted the increasing commercialization of wild foods, resulting in overharvesting, which threatens their sustainability.

In the 2nd session, which is on customary tenure rights, traditional food systems and knowledge, ACB actually participated in a subgroup on tenurial rights. The group shared good experiences from across Southeast Asia. We need to focus on opportunities.

For this session, we aim to look at wild foods and biodiversity with an eye towards the future. It's important for us to consider various ways how wild foods can be conserved and sustainably used for the long term. We also need to address Intertwined concerns of rights of communities over these resources. Currently, all these concerns are being addressed by the CBD. And then, through CBD we can build our capacities and also that of the communities in dealing with these intertwined issues of utilization and management of biodiversity or natural resources. We can work with the parties to the convention, which all ASEAN Member States (AMS) are parties to.

We need however to move FAST. As we speak, biodiversity worldwide continues to be lost. We have that recent report from the IPBES – the inter-governmental science policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services. That report said that over 25000 species are threatened with extinction. 95% of these described species have not yet been evaluated – we don't even know fully what species of plants, animals have been lost already and we haven't fully identified what they are.

With this challenge, we need to look forward and look closely at post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which is currently under discussion in the CBD. This framework will help us guide our efforts to review our laws. This is what is meant by mainstreaming biodiversity in all sectors, including the economic sector which are identified as drivers of biodiversity laws. The ACB right now working to study the emerging elements of the framework and including as well the emerging issues on pandemics and the COVID-19. We hope to give them inputs so the region can speak with a common voice in negotiations in the framework. In closing, we look forward to the discussions where we may find ways to work together on biodiversity laws while benefiting the communities. If there is more time, we can take up or push for the recognition of indigenous community conserved areas also. We have all to work together- we will all live in harmony with nature which is the goal. Need to protect 30% of earth's surface both in the marine and terrestrial ecosystems by 2030. This is the 30 by 30 ambition goal.

(The connection of Ms. Claudia got lost)

Denise said we missed parts of the final words. Perhaps you can repeat a little bit on the 2030 goal.

The 30 by 30 ambition or goal is to protect 30% of the earth's surface, including the marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

In a little while, we will be going to our breakout groups. I hope you guys are ready!

(The connection of Ms. Claudia got lost again)

I'm sure in the breakout groups, we can ask her about it again.

As I've mentioned, we are now supposed to move to the breakout rooms. I already mentioned the questions earlier. When Claudia came back, Denise invited her to share more in the breakout sessions with the suggestion to maybe perhaps off video so bandwidth could at least facilitate a voice.

Quite similar actually to the ones last time.

Breakout Groups

Topics:

1. Sustainable use and contribution to biodiversity
2. Issue of COVID-19 and biodiversity and wildlife consumption bans that affect IPLCs

Guide questions:

1. What are the good practices or "models"?
2. What are the challenges?
3. What are your recommendations for policy and action?

Breakout Session Report Summaries

Groups were given 5 minutes to report back on their discussions.

Group 1 as reported by Crissy Guerrero

Our group had an interesting discussion which I'll try to lump in key areas. Denise and the other participants can jump in if I've left out anything.

1st - change due to deforestation, climate change and change that has happened and how that has affected wild foods.

2nd is politics –laws, economic politics and how these are affecting forests, consumption and production

3rd is an interesting discussion on knowledge – Who has it? Who thinks they have it? Who do not know that they actually have it? And channels where knowledge passes and channels where those who have knowledge exist and are recognized.

1. On deforestation, Hong in Vietnam has worked for a long time with ethnic minorities. He told us how much people are dependent on forest. Now that there are lots of laws on forests, and there are now hydroelectric dams and such, the rivers don't work like they used to anymore. People don't depend on forest food anymore because of the conversion, so it is difficult to talk about wild foods.
Similarly, Crissy shared about what is happening in Papua. They are the largest producing region in terms of sago, but people are eating less of this, and more food like rice and other foods are coming in. This is also because of conversion and change in inputs in terms of the modern world.
2. In terms of politics, Doris shared that many changes in terms of food have been policy driven – what we eat, what we don't eat. What Denise said about the 9 major crops we all seem to feed on. Hong also stressed on this – the politics between Vietnam and China, dictating what Vietnam produces. For example, 80% of rubber from China is from Vietnam. So that's how much [influence they have] ... if China stops buying mangoes, that affects their industry very, very much.

I also talked about certain policies in Indonesia that looked promising for certain initiatives. For example, teachers in Papua are reintroducing sago at the nursery level, because they are starting to forget. This is in Jayapura City. Once your tongue forgets it, when you're older, you may not want it again. So you have to want it when you're younger.

There are now sago reserves, not just rice reserves, for emergency cases.

3. We talked about knowledge a lot. Doris stressed about the wild foods that exist and are being preserved in the context of a culture that is being recognized, appreciated and practiced. For example, the Ayurvedic industry in India, which has a culture and a history behind it. I also spoke of the Punan who have a strong hunter-gatherer culture behind the wild foods that they eat. Melanie discussed about the changing patterns in terms of what people like to taste aesthetics of food, which drive decisions in terms of purchases and consumption. Doris related to this and said that those who ate wild foods are previously in the past said to be 'backwards', 'uneducated', 'unschooled'. So there maybe has to be a rethinking and rediscovering of this and cultures, species and systems. Denise mentioned about multiple models of forest. How to come back to this in a new model? Hong mentioned community enterprises and how new models of multiple uses of forests can converge to be both an economic and ecological system to provide both benefits for nature and people, humans and animals. That is what I have in my notes, please kindly add if I missed anything.

4. Denise added the recommendations from Doris which were on:
- Organization of IPLCs into local groups so they themselves can have economic identity – cooperatives, with research supports
 - Worrisome closing of indigenous lumad schools in the Philippines – these schools we could recommend to stay on a policy level – we have to push for it too.

Group 2 as reported by *Jeremy Ironside, Femy Pinto*

We started by discussing the Mexican model and noted that there are also similar models in Asia. However, in Mexico they seem to have much more autonomy, more voice, more capacity perhaps to be able to argue their case. So there's a lot of things to look at in terms of people defending their rights.

For example, the case of India's Adivasi people, who have lost their lands. Organizations help them with their malnutrition because they have no land. They get impacted by forest destruction and one of the forest destructions is actually REDD+ process, which is trying to reduce emissions... basically, clearing the forest to plant commercial forests so they can get income from it. They then call this a REDD+ process! At the same time, people are losing.... The young children are becoming malnourished. We have to help these people – get food systems working again, kitchen gardens, where can they go to forest for bamboo, mushroom, things like that, so even when forests are degraded, there are still food systems that people can use. This is very important and we need to think of these policy issues and how they are impacting our people.

After that, we briefly talked about Indonesia where people are doing well from the COVID problem people in the forest areas are faring better. This is becoming far obvious – the whole issue of resilience. Now is the opportunity to push for this. As Teddy said, the small farmer model and the resilience from this small-farmer model. I don't know if you can call it a change in thinking. For example in Laos or Cambodia, where it's all about bringing the big companies in. All of a sudden, the governments are saying, Oh my God, we need the small farmers because it's gonna cost us so much to be able to keep all those small farmers alive if we have to give them food. So there is this change of thinking going on. So as Teddy was saying, the small farmer model and how we can build on the agro-biodiversity and small farmers.

We got into a little bit of discussion about the targets – 30 by 30. How some bureaucrats want targets but advocates want as much biodiversity as possible. It's a big issue too. The other issue is that there is very little data about how much indigenous people and customary people, not necessarily indigenous, actually protect. We don't have enough data. There are these areas of indigenous and where they are. I suppose in terms of wild foods and other resources, not enough coming out on what it is that is important and are being protected.

Apart from all of that, it is basically a case of this idea of multi-stakeholder consultations. We need to have much more voices of different people on these discussions on agro-biodiversity and biodiversity.

Femy added on the 30 by 30 target. A bit difficult and can be debated. If we just follow and adopt the state targets of 30%, what does that mean? Is it ok for the rest to not be conserved, or we don't care what will be in there in the forest, as in the India example – there is a response to climate change with the REDD++ but types of species planted aren't useful for communities. The question is, how do we also advocate outside of the state target biodiversity conservation? There's a lot that isn't being considered including also ICCAs. There is a push because while they might be considered as possible OECMs (other effective area-based conservation measures), there's not much data that is supplemented. They might not be counted. The challenge that Teddy posted was how to continue to support and have more autonomous enclaves of biodiversity conservation.

How do we continue with multi-stakeholder conversations to lend a voice to policy advocacy and other area-based conservation measures and to engage in that. How to bring in wild foods in agro-biodiversity discussions as it is now being touted as an area where there could be support – this is an opportunity. To continue to

develop and strengthen capacities of groups – community-based groups such as this, to document, map out and then communicate, so that local level experiences can be scaled up nationally.

Group 3 as reported by *Dazzle Labapis, Diana San Jose*

We moved forward to just answering the questions and we were able to get all to share, except those who dropped off the call.

Sir Ping and Ms. Clau of ACB mentioned that they are trying to break silos of different sectors working on biodiversity at the regional level. Trying to reach out to other sectors and groups and linking the work of biodiversity into health and other related sectors. They also have good project experience in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, where the value-chain model is used in developing MSMEs with the GIZ-funded projects, and sustainability is embedded in the framework of the value-chain model.

Dr. Grace shared that in looking directly on models or best practices in a research perspective, such practices or models are possible if socio-ecological aspects, whether forests or ecosystems, are still closely linked. In their studies, it's currently being disrupted by different internal and external drivers within the communities or IP groups. It's also good to not only look into models but also look into underlying variables that enable these models to be implemented or practiced.

I'll go on to the good practices first and the challenges. Another good practice that Jaffery shared is their work in Cambodia on agro-ecology – integrating pest management and making connections with local government and forest groups. She mentioned a good action point which is to include valuing nature for its use and many different services.

Madhu mentioned that there's a shift in language in India – focusing on increasing carbon stock rather than focusing on biodiversity itself. Prem shared that in Nepal and the areas where they work in AIPP, indigenous peoples are being criminalized for collecting wild foods and cases of displacement within national parks, and threatened further by militarization. Life of indigenous peoples really depend on nature and the environment and particularly collecting and utilizing wild foods. He recommends to remove the barriers that prohibit indigenous peoples from utilizing such resources.

Dr. Razal also emphasized that there is not enough data or pertinent information on wild foods in the region. It's good that we advocate for sufficient and relevant data management and collection. Who are consuming? What kinds of wild foods are consumed? To come up with a discourse and relevant recommendations on wild foods.

Other challenges mentioned – competing priorities of government in supporting different biodiversity practices, lack of budget, for example ACB cited – project has ended, so continuity and sustainability have to be considered.

Ms. Tes Matibag mentioned that the work of NTFP-EP in Madhu Duniya, as providing a platform for different practitioners to discuss and share about their knowledge on wild foods, particularly forest honey, for Madhu Duniya, and other NTFPs. There needs to be advocacy for relevant policies supporting these kinds of initiatives.

Diana added that another group practice that was pointed out was the involvement of youth, including them in focus group discussions, as in the practice of Jaffery in Cambodia. And then forging partnerships and linkages especially during the pandemic. There have been efforts to connect with other like-minded CSOs and individuals and involve them in dialogues such as this. Finally there was a sharing of Prem of AIPP who said that wild foods have been keeping them away from COVID – secure and sustainable in terms of food, but ironically at the same time criminalized – when they access their food, areas have been converted into parks and they've been displaced by extractive companies. There's a need to negotiate buffer zones that should at least still be

available for communities when areas have already been converted. It's important to highlight and continue the discussions on wild foods and tenure rights to avoid conservation exclusion as mentioned earlier.

Dazzle added that we should link our work to post-2020 biodiversity discussion and a lot of sharing on this already from other groups.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Denise Matias

So we have interesting links and insights shared on the group chat. You can also take a look at it:

Muneezay Jaffery:

Here is an article from a focus group we did: <https://foodtank.com/news/2017/09/green-shoots-foundation/> - not specific to wild foods. but focused more on youth and agriculture.

Nuning Barwa: In Indonesia, young generation through "*Millenials for the forest*" has actively promoted since 2019

Thanks to all who reported. We're almost overtime. I pick important things from the reports:

On a local level, there are some opportunities and challenges. I think given the recent killings in the Philippines, I'd like to focus on or just mention about the criminalization of indigenous peoples. As stories also mentioned, the closure of lumad schools. Something we should take note of – a difficult thing, about security, etc. lives on the line, but something in terms of wild foods is also a challenge.

On global level – we have policies, post-2020 biodiversity framework, hopefully happening next year if COVID will be over. But all in all, I think we had a very good session today and definitely NTFP will send around the summaries. We have good documentors today and thank you so much to all of you. I now turn over to Femy for final words.

Final Words

Femy Pinto, NTFP-EP Asia

Thanks Denise and everyone for your activite participation in today's discussion. We definitely bring home with us a lot of food for thought and recommendations that we can pursue later on for our planned policy dialogue. As an additional overview on what these discussion series is intended for. The Expert Group will be taking on the documentation of all these outputs from the discussions and use these to inform and build a concept for a regional policy dialogue that we are hoping to mount and target policy makers. Possibly also even outside the dialogue, we will document these and communicate to such platforms, possibly the CBD, where there are entry points for us to include all of these inputs into these processes.

Thank you very much! We will post the documentations as we have done in the prevous discussion on both the NTFP-EP and SIANI web pages.

*The participants were invited to the next Discussion Series focusing on **Wild Foods and Community-based Livelihoods** to be moderated by Femy Pinto, NTFP-EP Asia's Executive Director and the Group Leader for the SIANI Expert Group on Wild Foods, Biodiversity and Livelihoods on 22nd of September, 3:30 pm (GMT +8).*