

## WORKSHOP 10

### Biodiversity and Ethics

#### Moderators

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Earth belongs more to those 3.5 billion species that coexist with a delicate balance and superb harmony, than the human who came much later. But this youngest of nature's creations with its most superior intelligence has turned out spoiled brat, disturbing this natural balance, causing devastation of species and its habitat to satisfy its greed for development and materialistic pleasure. Large scale destruction of forests and other natural ecosystems, polluting our water bodies and air, all this has increased the rate of loss of biodiversity at an alarming pace. Benefits of biodiversity are being threatened by developmental choices that ignore complete/holistic value of these natural services to us all and particularly to the poorest who has closer dependence on nature.

The large section of human society in developing countries still lives with biodiversity; and is dependent on it for basic needs and livelihood. Biodiversity is also integral key to any development sectors may it be agriculture, livestock, forestry, fishing or tourism.

Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use with equitable sharing of benefits derived from its natural services are the basis of sustainable livelihoods. Biodiversity loss threatens to increase poverty and undermine development in long run. Thus, sustainable development deeply relates to and therefore cannot be separated from biodiversity conservation. Degradation of biodiversity adversely influences sustainable livelihood opportunities and it also crucial to the reduction of poverty, due to basic goods and ecosystem services it provides. Reversing this negative trend is not only possible, but necessary to human well-being.

The Earth Charter's "ecological Integrity" principle emphasizes to protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life. The ethical framework aims to ensure that the industrial production and community livelihood in major economic sectors such as forestry, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and tourism are compatible with biodiversity conservation. There is a need to evolve policy, support to institutional strengthening, investment, and enabling on-the-ground activities to implement effectively biodiversity management approaches.

There are some concerns and conflicts in ethical values underlying biodiversity conservation. These are

- How should the society view its responsibility towards communities who conserve biodiversity and community which exploit because of their different ethics, and accumulated wealth?
- What kind of moral and legal instruments and incentives can be generated which do not force communities who conserve biodiversity to remain poor?
- How do we balance between the rights of present generation to benefit from this knowledge and underlying diversity with the rights of future generations?
- The predation is a rule in nature and thus why should an anthropomorphic view of nature be decried so much.
- Human health is not an area where utilitarianism can be practiced; cost benefit analysis is not useful when human life dominates the discussion.
- Value in nature cannot simply be considered as the aggregation of its individual components' values (individuals, species, and ecosystems), since it is their integration and interaction that really counts. The whole complex of relationships that has given (and still gives) rise to products and processes, or in other words, the systemic creativity of the whole biological system of the Earth, in itself is of value. We cannot risk losing it; otherwise we will lose too much
- How right and wrong are defined by law, religion and custom, and how the deontological (), utilitarian and naturalistic moral theories could be used to aid rule and judgment making. Moral theories should not be confused with the truth and that ethical decision making cannot be made easy.

- Is only current economical value of species basis for conservation?
- Whether intellectual property rights fully capture the contribution of local communities, local innovators, communities, traditional herbalists, etc. given the complexities of conservation.
- Should the environment be protected because of intrinsic moral value or because it is a valuable resource for mankind. There is an obvious conflict between human requirements and respect for nature which is a key issue in development and deployment of transgenic crops.
- How do we treat the oral traditions which are likely to die away if patterns of social interactions continue to change the way they are changing at present?
- What happens to the identity, authorship and proprietary rights of the individuals, families and the communities which share biodiversity knowledge in good faith with outsiders?

The workshop will discuss above concerns and will focus on developing ethical framework of biodiversity conservation leading to practical value principles to ensure that livelihood of poor and that the environment doesn't suffer. The workshop will focus on generating discussion to identify opportunities, challenges, and key considerations for the implementation of various interventions either practices, technologies, institutional mechanisms, educational process, knowledge, governance, social concession and negotiation, social and economical instruments, leadership, etc. at the national, regional or international level demonstrating complementary relationship between biodiversity conservation and sustainable development

Creating cultures of Non-violence and Peace will be a crosscutting theme which will be discussed in the workshop in the context of the ethical framework of the Earth Charter. A major focus of this conference is also to engage youth, enabling them to share their experiences in applying the EC principles in their work. Youth will bring their perspectives to the thematic workshops and meet together to develop an action plan to strengthen the Earth Charter youth network, especially in their respective regions.

### **Objectives of this session**

1. Discuss ethical value challenges in biodiversity conservation and educational initiatives.
2. Identify key ethical concerns for biodiversity education and conservation; opportunities and challenges to integrate it.
3. Share how to integrate ethical concerns of sustainability into biodiversity conservation planning and implementation.
4. Identify needs, tools and recommendations for developing an action plan for implementation of Earth Charter principles in biodiversity conservation.