EDITORIAL: WHAT DOES TARGET 11 REALLY MEAN?

Nik Lopoukhine[1] and Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias[2]

[1] Chair, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas
[2] Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity

According to the latest statistics from the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, there are now over 157,000 nationally designated terrestrial and inland water protected areas recorded on the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) covering 12.7 per cent of the world's land area outside Antarctica. Approximately 1.6 per cent of the global ocean area is also protected, although the majority of these marine protected areas are concentrated in the coastal zone (0-12 nautical miles), where 7.2 per cent of the total is protected (UNEP-WCMC, 2012). As most protected areas have been established in the last fifty years, this represents perhaps the largest and fastest change in land and water use in the history of the planet.

Protected areas are the basis of most national biodiversity conservation strategies, with growing evidence of their success in conserving biodiversity (Pimm et al, 2001; Butchart et al, 2012). More recently, they have also been recognized as playing a critical role in delivering a range of ecosystem services, cultural benefits and economic values (Stolton and Dudley, 2010). Importantly, the process of protected area creation is still underway: since the tenth Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2010, countries have committed to a further extension of protected area coverage by 2020, to: "*at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services*".

Such ambitious targets bring their own social, political and economic challenges. The re-launch of *PARKS* journal comes at a critical time in conservation history, and aims to provide a forum for research, debate and assessment about the establishment and management of protected areas, under all relevant management approaches and the full range of governance types.

One of the most urgent issues that must be addressed by the protected area community is the clarification of

Target 11 of the so-called 'Aichi targets' agreed at the tenth CBD Conference of Parties (COP), which commits to the increase in protected area coverage referred to above. More precisely, confusion remains about what management approaches are, and are not, to be included within the land and water areas established under the auspices of the target.

In 2008, after exhaustive consultation, IUCN agreed a new definition of a protected area, which made subtle but significant changes to the Union's understanding of the nature of protection defining a protected area as: "*A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values*" (Dudley, 2008). The new definition clarified several issues that had long dogged debate. It stated clearly that nature conservation was the primary role of protected areas as recognized by IUCN. An associated principle emphasised this distinction: "*For IUCN, only those areas where the main objective is conserving nature can be considered protected areas; this can include many areas with other goals as well, at the same level, but in the case of conflict, nature conservation will be the priority*" (Dudley, 2008). The primary objective also adopted the broader concept of 'nature conservation', which now embraces 'geodiversity, landform and broader natural values' (Dudley, 2008) and used less technical language that non-specialists were more likely to understand.

The new IUCN definition is also much more consistent with the CBD definition for a protected area, as a: "*geographically defined area which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives*". There is a tacit agreement between the institutions that the two definitions are equivalent.

Both IUCN and the CBD also recognise the six protected area management categories, ranging from strict 'no-go'

Tasmanian Wilderness, World Heritage Site, Australia © Nigel Dudley

protection to broader, culturally-managed protected landscapes; and four governance types (state, private, shared and indigenous and community management). In effect these provide a single 'universe' in which to define and measure protected areas. Such considerations became even more important with adoption of the CBD's Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) in 2004, with clear area-based targets for the international community.

The decision at the tenth COP in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010 added a significant qualifier to the protected areas framework. Target 11 states that the targets refer to: "… *effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas **and other effective area-based conservation measures**, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes*" (our emphasis). Concern has been raised that a loose interpretation of the bolded wording could result in inclusion of areas under so many management approaches that the target becomes meaningless. There have long been efforts, for example, to open up the concept of protected areas to embrace a range of management options, such as intensive forestry, farming and mining, which would seriously undermine their biodiversity values. Care is needed if the Aichi targets are not inadvertently to provide a perverse incentive for weakening the same protected area systems that they were aiming to promote.

At the same time, it is clear that biodiversity conservation is not and should not be confined to protected areas and that a significant proportion will remain outside protected areas. Indeed, the importance of connectivity between protected areas (Worboys et al, 2010) and of implementing broader ecosystem approaches to conservation are enshrined within the CBD targets.

In the context of the PoWPA, it is important to make a distinction between areas that are managed primarily for conservation and those managed for other benefits. If achieving Aichi Target 11 is to be determined by the protected areas that governments recognise and report to bodies such as the CBD, some sites that might logically qualify as 'other effective area-based conservation measures' would clearly also fit the IUCN and CBD definitions of a protected area. However such sites are not usually listed in the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) or the *UN List of Protected Areas*. This may be because governments only recognise, and report on, state-owned areas or because the owners of such sites do not wish to be recognised officially by the UN process. Examples might be private reserves (owned by private individuals, non-profit or for-profit institutions and corporations) and various forms of indigenous and community conserved areas. Many of these sites *could* be included in the WDPA, if governments open their reporting systems to private and indigenous and community-run protected areas (ICCAs). (Indeed, an increasing number of countries are starting to include non-state protected areas in their official statistics.)

Agreeing to list and report these areas would help many countries in moving towards meeting the Aichi Target 11. Both PoWPA and successive decisions of the CBD COP accord recognition to ICCAs and the PoWPA reporting framework adopted by the COP in decision X/31 provides for reporting on ICCAs.

Rangers and Community Committee, Niumi National Park, The Gambia © Colleen Corrigan

It is critical that a distinction is made between such sites and other 'effective area-based conservation measures' which will *never* be protected areas, for instance because their primary aim is directed towards other objectives, or because they have no long-term security of tenure. Examples might be sustainably-managed commercial forestry; organic farms; de-militarised zones; areas of semi-natural vegetation alongside motorways; extensive pasture grazing; and temporary areas set aside to build fish stocks. These may play an important role in the conservation of biodiversity, but do not have the safeguards inherent in the IUCN definition and associated principles. They may need a better form of recognition than is currently available, but are not protected areas in the sense understood by the CBD and IUCN.

In the context of the CBD's Programme of Work on **Protected Areas** (our emphasis), a conceptual division is needed between these two groupings. Effective area-based conservation measures that meet the definition of a protected area but are not currently recognized by the state fit well within Aichi Target 11, while those areas that contribute to conservation aims but could *never be*

protected areas unless appropriate measures are taken to ensure nature conservation in such areas which allow them to meet the definition of a protected area. It is encouraging that most governments instinctively seem to be adopting this interpretation.

The fine-tuning of what is, and is not, a protected area will doubtless continue. Given that governments are ultimately responsible for deciding what to report to the WDPA, regional and national nuances in interpretation will remain. IUCN WCPA is currently developing assignment standards to help people better understand the protected area definition and use of the IUCN categories. Clarity in international understanding of the broad principles involved in defining and describing protected areas will help the world to achieve the ambitious targets that governments signed up to in Nagoya.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Nik Lopoukhine has been Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) since the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2005 and will stand down at the 2012 Congress in Jeju, South Korea. Nik started his professional career with the Forest Management Institute and later moved to the Lands Directorate of Environment Canada. In 2001, Nik became the Director General of National Parks in Canada. He was a key supporter and mover of the idea of ecological integrity in the Parks Canada programme, of strengthening science, and coming to grips with the emerging challenge of climate change.

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, a national of Brazil, is Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. He was formerly the National Secretary for Biodiversity and Forests at the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment. He has been deeply involved with the negotiations and implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity since its origin and participated, as a member of the Brazilian delegation, in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Mr. Dias was previously a Member of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility, Vice-President of the International Union of Biological Sciences and Coordinator of the Steering Committee of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network. Mr. Dias holds a Bachelor of Science in biological sciences from the University of Brasilia and is trained as a scientist, with a Doctor of Philosophy in zoology from the University of Edinburgh.