



SUSTAINABILITY AT THE INTERSECTION OF TRADE, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

UNCTAD-CITES-OAS

Side event to the Eighth Session of the Open Working Group on
Sustainable Development Goals

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Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

After extending a heartfelt thank you to my CITES and UNCTAD colleagues for the privilege of being here today to address such a relevant topic and to enjoy the company of such distinguished panelist and audience; I would like to start my remarks by sharing some thoughts on why I am here, and on the relevance of sustainability of biodiversity trade to the OAS.

The OAS was established as an international organization among other things to promote peace and justice, to strengthen collaboration, and to defend the territorial integrity of its member States.

The essential purposes of the Organization rely on the principles of social justice, respect for cultural values, and economic cooperation as the basis for lasting peace, security and welfare of the peoples of the Americas.

Good environmental governance is at the center of these ambitious goals and principles. Moreover, the full democratic development of the peoples of the hemisphere depends in great measure on the ability of our people to protect, manage and use our natural endowment in a sound way. Trade has a significant role in this task.



In fact, this was recognized for the first time in 1940, when the Organization, then known as the Pan-American Union, and our member States signed one of the first environmental treaties, the Western Hemisphere Convention on Nature Protection and Wildlife Preservation (The Western Hemisphere Convention), which includes provisions on trade of wildlife, cooperation, research, as well as on the establishment of protected areas.

The challenge for the Americas does not lie in the realm of vision, policy, mission or a lack of commitments. In fact, our region could be ranked as the most prolific with regards to environmental treaty ratification.

The challenge that our member States currently face is one of governance including all of its elements: funding, enforcement, human resources, institutional strengthening, technology, participatory decision-making, and rule of law, among many others.

The Americas is endowed with some of the most biodiverse spots in our planet together with an abundance of genetic resources. At the same time, trade in goods and services, a major source of foreign exchange, national income and employment is also a major charge on the natural resources of the region, given that the key sectors in the regions' economy are natural resource based and primarily derived from resource intensive sectors.

The question that must be answered is what can we and what are we doing about this as an international community?

Efforts from the national to the global level, including with support of Organizations like the OAS, CITES and UNCTAD, should continue to be centered in extending the welfare-enhancing benefits associated with trade liberalization to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

We all know this doesn't happen automatically and that the struggle for consensus on a balanced development agenda has significantly slowed down global trade talks.



Cognizant of this reality, I would like to highlight three concrete areas of work:

- 1) Supporting the implementation of regional and global agreements related to biodiversity through sustainable use and trade;
- 2) Building on the space provided by the Regional Trade Agenda for cooperative action on this topic; and
- 3) Monitor progress with regards to conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity in the context of good governance and rule of law.

1) Supporting implementation of regional and global agreements related to biodiversity through sustainable use and trade

In this area I see significant value-added in the OAS mandate, as a regional UN agency, of supporting the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), such as CITES and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), other global commitments such as the 10-year framework for Sustainable Production and Consumption, and regional treaties such as the Western Hemisphere Convention.

Key examples of how this mandate has emerged include:

a) Sustainable global shark trade.

Almost a year ahead of the listing of five shark species in CITES, the OAS in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat, the governments of Brazil and the United States, as well as other partner organizations, co-sponsored a workshop focused on the implementation of the new measures for international trade of the listed shark species that will come in effect in September 2014. The training provided information on and demonstrated the use of tools and techniques that will help advance the identification of sharks, improve data collection and data reporting on shark catch in the region, and enhance the tracking of shark specimens in trade, ultimately contributing to sustainable global shark trade.



The OAS has also been collaborating with the CITES Secretariat on efforts related to the impact of Convention decisions in livelihoods of local communities in our region.

b) Sustainable Use of Biodiversity and CBD implementation

The Inter-American Biodiversity Network (IABIN) was established in 2004 to assist countries in accessing and exchanging relevant biodiversity information that complements value-added tools, improves decision-making, and supports the implementation of CBD among other biodiversity commitments and the development of value chains in biodiversity products in the Americas.

c) Mainstreaming Sustainability into Government Procurement

The OAS has recently provided input into initial efforts in Peru to include the principle of sustainability in the national government procurement policy.

Mr. Chair, these are just a few examples of what has been done, can be done and scaled up in this area through partnership and collaboration.

2) Building on the space provided by the Regional Trade Agenda for cooperative action on this topic

The emergence of bilateral and Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) negotiations, in my opinion represents an important opportunity that must be highlighted despite the tensions that have traditionally existed regarding environmental issues in a trade context.

WTO statistics show that to date, approximately, 400 RTAs are in force. In this context countries have increasingly recognized the need for a complementary agenda to maximize the full developmental benefits associated with free trade, in particular in the area of environmental management.

New generation trade agreements include environmental commitments, including related to enforcement of environmental laws and the implementation of conventions such as those represented here today.



Moreover, environmental cooperation has been a key feature of these agreements, in particular with regards to biodiversity.

Two concrete examples include the US-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement (PTPA) and the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). The PTPA includes a Biodiversity and Traditional Knowledge understanding as well as a chapter on Forest Governance. The understanding has reinforced the role that Peruvian biodiversity goods play in the global economy while the Forest Governance chapter has had a significant impact on forest management and sustainability at the national level.

While the TPP is still being negotiated, substantive discussions regarding marine biodiversity and sustainable trade are going on in this context.

Last but not least, in this area I would like to highlight the DR-CAFTA Agreement – as an example of a positive contribution to sustainable trade of biodiversity. The positive contribution of this agreement is evidenced with concrete indicators – developed by the OAS with support from the Parties – related to use of market-based conservation and CITES implementation. Concrete results in the context of the DR-CAFTA Environmental Cooperation Process include: programs on sustainable trade of cacao and coffee, among other sustainable produced goods; and the composition of a prosecutors network for wildlife protection.

Additionally, the liberalization scheme in this agreement includes Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQs) aimed at promoting trade of organic products in a non discriminatory way.

3) Monitor progress with regards to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the context of good governance and rule of law

Establishing benchmarks and monitoring progress contributes not only to sustainable development but also to good governance.

There are many processes at the national and regional level that address the state of the environment and biodiversity. This has to do with the consolidation of the concept of good environmental governance and the right



to a healthy environment.

These ongoing processes and the emerging Sustainable Development Goals process at the global level, have the possibility of highlighting the positive role trade can play in advancing sustainability by enhancing livelihoods and the interactions between people and ecosystems.

I would like to illustrate this point by citing two examples. The first is the process that has been consolidated in the CAFTA DR agreement context, with OAS support, towards compliance to a commitment in the Environmental Cooperation Agreement of this Treaty. Conservation of biodiversity and market-based conservation are two of the five priority areas for which concrete indicators at the outcome level have been established to capture visible, measurable changes in the capacity of CITES management, the role of enforcement authorities in wildlife protection and prevention of illegal trade, areas of biological significance placed under improved management schemes, increased percentage of regional production and retail value of certified cocoa, bananas and coffee, among others.

I have noticed with interest that the Western Hemisphere Convention has been acknowledged in many countries as one the international treaty that recognizes human rights. In this context, another process in the Americas has to do with the right to a healthy environment. Over the past decade this process has been focused in establishing progress indicators for measuring rights established under the protocol of San Salvador on the protection of socio-economic and cultural rights. Article 11 of the Protocol establishes the right to a healthy environment. In June 2013, a set of indicators was agreed upon by the Working Group to Examine the Reports of the States Parties to the Protocol of San Salvador (see CP/CAJP/INF. 206/13 rev. 1), including indicators that address how the right to a healthy environment has been assimilated into the structure of the State, public policy, and the achieved results. The reporting process regarding to the right to a healthy environment shall be guided by the criteria of availability, accessibility, sustainability, acceptance and adaptation of the distinct environmental elements.

Thus, the indicators adopted by the OAS General Assembly for the most part look at the state of forest resources and biodiversity and include the following:



- Percentage of areas affected by environmental degradation
- Percentage of the total territory established as protected areas
- Percentage of forest coverage
- Degree of erosion and soil degradation

The contribution of biodiversity to the livelihoods of the people of the Americas, as well as the need to guarantee the right to a healthy environment, make it imperative that these aspects together with the role of trade to be mainstreamed into the Sustainable Development Goal process. Capturing the synergies and building on the progress attained within existing processes offers the hope of achieving the imperative balance of sustainable development. Moreover, input from existing processes could provide the necessary conditions for specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely SDGs.

As previously mentioned, countries in the Americas have increasingly recognized the need for a complementary agenda to maximize the full developmental benefits associated with free trade, in particular in the area of environmental management. In closing, I would like to do so as well, by emphasizing a principle established during the first Summit of the Americas, held in Miami (1994), regarding Guaranteeing Sustainable Development and Conserving Our Natural Environment for Future Generations. This principle indicates that social progress and economic prosperity can be sustained only if our people live in a healthy environment and our ecosystems and natural resources are managed carefully and responsibly.

Thank you very much for your attention.