

CBD SBSTTA-25 side event: Enhancing international cooperation towards minimizing the negative impacts caused by invasive alien species

October 15th, 2023 at 13:15–14:45 (Eastern Africa Time: GMT+03:00), United Nations Offices in Nairobi

Organizers: Ministry of the Environment (MOE), Japan; Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), UK; International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Archived on YouTube: < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RqczMEIEILI&feature> >

SUMMARY of the Report

Outline

Invasive alien species (IAS) are one of the main direct drivers of global biodiversity loss, as reflected in the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services¹ of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and their negative impact has been intensifying globally, requiring strengthened collaboration across sectors and government agencies. Target 6 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)² aims to reduce rates of introduction and establishment of invasive alien species by 50 per cent by 2030. The IPBES thematic assessment report on invasive alien species and their control³ was also recently released.

At the G7 Ministers' Meeting on Climate, Energy and Environment held in Japan in April 2023⁴, Ministers highlighted the need to address IAS and decided to develop a set of recommendations on strengthening international cooperation in this regard. Several occasions, including this side event, were scheduled to exchange views with other governments, relevant international organizations, and stakeholders. Speakers shared their experiences at national level toward the achievement of Target 6 and discussed necessary actions to enhance international cooperation and promote the participation of various stakeholders. In addition to the organizers (MOE Japan, DEFRA, IUCN), speakers included representatives of the CBD Secretariat, GB Non-native Species Secretariat, the Governments of New Zealand and South Africa, and an IPBES IAS assessment co-chair.

¹ IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, <https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment>

² Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf>

³ IPBES Thematic Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and their Control, <https://www.ipbes.net/ias>

⁴ G7 Climate, Energy and Environment Ministers' Communiqué, <https://www.meti.go.jp/press/2023/04/20230417004/20230417004-1.pdf> (ENG); <https://www.env.go.jp/content/000163420.pdf> (JPN)

Introduction and opening

Introduction and opening remarks

Ms. NAKAO Fumiko, Senior Analyst for Biodiversity information, Nature Conservation Bureau, Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOE Japan)

Ms. Nakao noted the threat of IAS as the reason for Target 6 of the GBF and reminded participants of the release of the IPBES IAS report. She said that, under Japan's G7 presidency, a series of IAS-related events including this one were being convened, and a set of recommendations developed among G7 members. She explained that MOE Japan hosted the technical support unit (TSU) for the IPBES IAS assessment and noted the Ministry's recent amendment of a law to create a relationship between private sectors. She explained that MOE Japan was co-organizing the side event with DEFRA from the UK and IUCN, and outlined its programme.

Opening remarks

Dr. Jane STRATFORD, Head International Biodiversity Team, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), UK

Dr. Stratford said that the event would include interesting country perspectives, and expressed the importance of CBD COP-15 and of doing our best to implement its outcomes. She said that the UK are aligning their NBSAP and national policies with the GBF including Target 6. Thanking Japan for opening the dialogue on IAS internationally, she said she considered the side event a catalyst in this regard.

Summary of presentations: Recent progress on IAS

Key messages of IPBES IAS assessment

Prof. Helen ROY, Co-chair, IPBES Assessment of Invasive Alien Species and their Control

Prof. Roy noted that the IPBES IAS assessment is the first comprehensive assessment to demonstrate the magnitude of threat of IAS as a major direct driver of biodiversity loss. She defined alien species and IAS, saying that about 37,000 alien species are established, with about 200 new alien species recorded every year worldwide. Among them about 3,500 are IAS, including about 2,300 on the lands of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. She explained that the assessment shows that current policies have been insufficient in addressing IAS, and that people with the greatest dependence on nature may be disproportionately affected by IAS. She said that 60% of global species extinctions have been caused by, or partly by, IAS; the global annual cost of IAS was at least 423 billion USD in 2019; and 85% of IAS impacts on nature and quality of life and 80% of impacts on nature's contributions to people are negative. She added that, if current trends remain unchanged, by 2050 the number of IAS is expected to increase by at least a third. Other interacting drivers are, however, worsening so this figure is considered to be an underestimate. The report offers solutions and options, most importantly prevention, and sufficient evidence to support the need for immediate and sustained action. With long-term commitment and resources, preventing and controlling IAS are attainable goals, and progress can be achieved with integrated governance. Prof. Roy said it aims to give different stakeholder groups the evidence, critical analysis, and options to make progress against Target 6 of the GBF and many SDGs. She ended by acknowledging all those involved in the assessment.

The importance of international cooperation for the achievement of target 6 and relevant work under the Convention

Ms. Marianela ARAYA-QUESADA, Invasive Alien Species/Biodiversity and Health Officer, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD)

Ms. Araya-Quesada shared some of the CBD's work on IAS, stressing the need for cooperation to reach Target 6 of the GBF through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. She also science and innovation need to draw from different types of knowledge, and noted the importance of information sharing, awareness raising and funding. She pointed to the Inter-agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species as a tangible example of the kind of cooperation required, explaining that the Parties gave the Secretariat the mandate to implement a set of requests mostly in collaboration with the Liaison Group. She said other requests by the Parties include working on evaluation of existing capacity and needs; evaluation of existing knowledge gaps, monitoring and management, and updating the CBD online toolkit on IAS and developing additional training materials. She highlighted the importance of the IPBES IAS assessment and said that the CBD can help in various ways by supporting cooperation. She ended by pointing out that IAS, including the IPBES IAS assessment, are on the SBSTTA agenda.

IUCN's work on IAS

Mr. Kevin SMITH, Invasive Species Programme Officer, The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Mr. Smith told participants about how IUCN, its IAS specialist group, and partners have been supporting work on IAS toward Aichi Biodiversity Target 9 and now GBF Target 6. This support includes development of the Global Invasive Species Database (GISD)⁵, a pathways of introduction classification scheme, the Global Register of Invasive Alien Species (GRIIS)⁶, the Environmental Impact Classification of Alien Taxa (EICAT)⁷, and the official IAS indicator for the SDGs. He said IUCN have also produced many guidance documents on IAS, as well as codes of conduct and guidance for the interpretation of the CBD IAS pathway categories. He explained that, subject to financing, IUCN would like to assess the 3,500 IAS reported by the IPBES IAS assessment, to develop a database on IAS management action effectiveness and on pathways of introduction, to make risk assessments more accessible, to help countries to develop their NBSAPs to include a focus on IAS, and to work with the private sector.

Summary of presentations: Countries' experiences

UK: Target 6 – Can we deliver it: Lessons from the UK and its overseas territories

Dr. Niall MOORE, Head, GB Non-native Species Secretariat

Dr. Moore said that Great Britain has about 2,000 alien species established, rising by about 12 per year. He added that about 10% of these are invasive and their direct annual cost is estimated at about 2 billion pounds. He explained how a complex collection of agencies responsive for IAS was consolidated by a small secretariat and a unified strategy that emphasized prevention. He told participants that the most recent strategy identified a critical lack of resources but identified ways of streamlining Britain's approach to IAS. An alien species inspectorate was set up and found, for example, that contaminated boats and containers brought into Britain every year represented massive potential for cost-effective prevention of IAS introduction. Beyond prevention, he provided the encouraging example of the control of the American ruddy duck, and of improved biosecurity in UK overseas territories, which contain over 90% of the UK's biodiversity. Dr. Moore concluded that what is required to address IAS is coordination, more resources, better biosecurity, and more ambition.

⁵ Global Invasive Species Database, <http://www.iucngisd.org/gisd/>

⁶ Global Register of Invasive Alien Species, <https://griis.org>

⁷ Environmental Impact Classification for Alien Taxa, <https://www.iucn.org/resources/conservation-tool/environmental-impact-classification-alien-taxa#:~:text=The%20Environmental%20Impact%20Classification%20for,living%20outside%20their%20natural%20range.>

New Zealand: Target 6 - Rising to the challenge: Aotearoa New Zealand's experiences and aspirations

Ms. Danica STENT, International Policy Manager, Department of Conservation

Ms. Stent noted that, being an island, Aotearoa New Zealand's biodiversity is particularly vulnerable to IAS. As a result, New Zealand has strict legislation on IAS, but coordination is challenging and preventing introduction is the cheapest and first line of defense. She said New Zealand is reliant on international vessels and these are a major vector for marine pests. In response, New Zealand became the first country to develop biofouling standards. They have so far managed to prevent the introduction of the brown marmorated stink bug due to a "whole-of-system" response including pre-departure treatment, thermal cameras, detector dogs and awareness raising campaigns. She said that predators have been removed from 120 of New Zealand's offshore islands, which are critical for conservation. She also explained that an ambitious programme aims to remove the most damaging invasive mammal species by 2050, and attention is now being focused on urban and mainland eradication, with a lot of public support and participation. She emphasized the importance of new tools and approaches, as well as international partnerships. New Zealand is benefitting from, and contributing to, international collaborations and research. Assistance focuses on supporting small island developing states through the Pacific Regional Invasive Species Management Support Service (PRISMSS), for example in the eradication of rats, to deliver wide ranging environmental and societal benefits and increase island resilience to climate change.

South Africa: Using the science-policy-implementation to manage and control biological invasions in South Africa

Mr. Barney KGOPE, Director: Biodiversity Risk Management, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

Mr. Kgope emphasized the need for partnerships in science, policy and implementation. He said that South Africa has over 2,000 alien species; over 700 IAS; 388 naturalized species; and 355 alien species that are present but not naturalized. He explained that South Africa's comprehensive approach consists of research, policy and implementation, noting that countries need to develop national targets based on GBF Target 6, which can contribute to, and be affected by, other GBF targets as well. He told participants that a new white paper had triggered the revision of South Africa's Biodiversity Act, which contains regulations to help with managing IAS. The white paper included a list of expected outputs and outcomes related to biological invasions and noted the need to look into the effects of climate change on IAS. South Africa is currently finalizing a national invasive species strategy and action plan, which enables the implementation of the white paper and the Act. Mr. Kgope described how South Africa has aligned the 23 GBF targets with the four objectives of the white paper to produce a cohesive implementation plan, and said that GEF-7 IAS programming is enabling South Africa to pilot IAS control at the border.

Q and A

[Facilitator] Ms. NAKAO Fumiko, MOE Japan with Dr. Piero GENOVESI, Head, Wildlife Service, Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA)

In summary Dr. Genovesi noted the common need and challenge of a cross-sectoral approach and said he was pleased to be involved in this G7 initiative, hinting at its potential to support other countries in combating IAS. He opened the floor to questions and comments.

Braulio Dias, former Executive Secretary of the CBD, asked whether we should be talking more about adaptation to new climate conditions in IAS management. In response, Dr. Genovesi said that work was underway to model what could be the next IAS as a means of preparing.

Ms. Clarissa C. Arida, Director of the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity, commented on the importance of engaging with the private sector, and of technology and information. In response, Dr. Genovesi noted that this was discussed in G7 meetings, and could possibly be strengthened in CBD decisions.

Ana Isabel Gonzalez Martinez from the CBD secretariat pointed out the challenges of making the public aware of the importance of IAS, and of bringing together stakeholders. Dr. Genovesi said that, in terms of media, the IPBES IAS assessment has helped to address this.

Carolina Torres Trueba from Island Conservation said that there is not much focus on “innovation and research”. In response, Dr. Genovesi noted that the IPBES assessment has done some work on this but that it is possible to balance assessment of risks and developing tools for combatting IAS.

Closing

Ms. NAKAO Fumiko, MOE Japan

In closing, Ms. Nakao explained that Japan would host a G7 members meeting in November to further discuss and hopefully complete the development of the set of recommendations on how to cope with IAS issues. She said they would like to share the recommendations among the CBD community, adding that the key messages of this side event would be shared with G7 members. She ended by thanking participants and Dr. Genovesi for their enthusiastic participation.