POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR PROTECTED AREAS MANAGEMENT : SOUTHEAST ASIA*

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INTRODUCTION

The world's protected areas face rapidly emerging threats, stemming from such changes as climate, sea level rise, invasive species, fragmentation of the natural landscape, and growing demands upon natural resources. Governance arrangements are changing, particularly in relation to decentralization of authority and responsibility over protected areas.

Protected areas are considered by scientists and managers to be a central strategy for maintaining biodiversity *in situ*. But given the realities of poverty, health, nutrition and other demands, developing countries cannot be expected to provide sufficient internal financial, human, and technological resources to other than provide minimal expenditures for *in situ* biodiversity conservation.

Despite the impacts of the recent economic crisis on the natural resources and environmental condition, the ASEAN Environment Ministers discussed the importance of keeping their commitment to environmental protection and sustainable development. ASEAN already adopted strategic plan of action on environment, including the areas of coastal and marine environment, nature conservation and biodiversity, multilateral environmental agreements, management of land and forest fires and haze, and other environmental activities.

On nature conservation and biodiversity in the region, the ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation has been established in collaboration with the European Union (EU). The project areas to promote information exchange and networking among the member countries. Various kind of training and research activities are implemented.

The ASEAN region hosts one of the richest and yet, most threatened biodiversity of our planet. The region has four major biodiversity "hot spots" and 36 out of a global total of 221 Endemic Bird Areas. Indonesia is ranked as one of the top five countries in the world for biological richness and contains more than 15 % of all vertebrate species. The marine areas of the region are the richest in the world. However, conservation does not merely involve documenting where biodiversity exists and how it is being managed, it also means monitoring the promotion of its sustainable and regulated use. The ASEAN region has population of 470 million people who heavily depend on biodiversity through the daily extraction of timber, fibres, fruits, wildlife and medicinal plants and harnessing of valuable genetic materials from the native germaplasm of the region on an increasing scale.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

The importance of protected areas is emphasized by international conventions and programmes such as the Convention in Biological Diversity (CBD), the World Heritage Convention (WHC), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and others. These agreements and programmes are the backbone of international policy on the establishment and management of protected areas for biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources.

The conservation on biological diversity, among with the other global agreements on Climate Change, Land Degradation, Forests, World Heritage, and Man and the Biosphere, offer solutions and tools to address the issues of biodiversity loss, sequestration of carbon, reduction of land degradation and deforestation. Shifting to sustainable resources use is a common thread in all such international initiative.

Several major international initiatives have taken place which a better framework for evaluating performance of different countries in the field of biodiversity conservation. Two significant initiatives deserve special mention. First, the signing and ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) by most of the countries in ASEAN. Second, the establishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as a major international funding mechanism to promote, among other objectives, the conservation of biodiversity. The CBD

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* ***"Presented at the International Conference on Protected Areas Management, the***

requires to develop a fully representative system of protected areas (article 8) that has full ecosystem coverage, buffer zone integration, necessary restoration, control of alien species, and respect of traditional require *ex situ* conservation, international co-operation, monitoring, training and education work. The CBD has been signed by almost all countries and has the power of funds in the form of the GEF to assist developing countries in its implementation.

For a wide range of activities, conservation action can benefit greatly from an international approach or perspective. Some sites are of such value to mankind that the global community as a whole should take action for their protection. Some habitat types are under threat in many parts of the world, yet can be tremendously productive if used in the right way. International coordination of research and training within protected areas networks can have a multiplier effect if the results of such efforts are shared.

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971) provides a framework for international co-operation for the conservation of wetland habitats. It places general obligations on states relating to the conservation of wetlands throughout their territories, with special obligations pertaining to those wetlands designated to the List of Wetland of International Importance.

Wetlands are defined by the conservation as : areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas or marine waters, the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters. More than 600 sites are now listed in more than 80 countries, although representation in Southeast Asia is still rather low.

The Convention concerning the protected of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (adopted in Paris in 1972) provides for the designation of areas of "outstanding universal value" as World Heritage sites, with the principal aim of fostering international co-operation in safeguarding these important areas. Sites are independently evaluated for their World Heritage quality before being declared, and include both natural and cultural sites; only natural sites are considered here.

The World Heritage Convention considers as natural heritage, among other qualities :

- Natural features of outstanding scientific value
- Geological or physiographical formations which are of global significance
- Particularly significant areas for threatened species
- Natural features of outstanding natural beauty

The World Heritage Convention has more signatories than any other conservation Convention, with 162 states parties as of January 2001. The World Heritage Sites consist of cultural property, natural property and mixed property (cultural and natural); and the approximate locations of the 690 properties-529 cultural, 138 natural and 23 mixed-inscribed on the World Heritage List in 122 States Parties.

The establishment of Biosphere Reserves is not covered by a specific Convention, but is part of an international scientific programme, the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme. Biosphere Reserves differ from the preceding types of site in that they are not exclusively designated to protect unique areas or important wetlands, but for a range of objectives which include research, monitoring, training and demonstration as well as conservation roles.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and it is also known as The World Conservation Union established in 1948; this global union known as the earliest organization which have interest in protected areas and conservation. IUCN is an unique global union, an international non-profit organization where governments and non-governmental organizations work together as partners. World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) is one of the six Commission of IUCN. WCPA's work is tightly integrated with the rest of the IUCN programme, enabling the Commission to contribute to the wider environmental agenda and to work with and draw on other IUCN programmes. Other Commissions cover Species Survival, Environmental Law, Ecosystem Management, Education and Communication, and Environmental, Economic and Social Policy. IUCN is in the privileged position of advising UNESCO's World Heritage Committee on all aspects for natural sites. WCPA plays a key role. In particular it advise on each nomination for a natural site.

THE ROLE OF IUCN - WCPA

The mission of IUCN is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

IUCN defines a protected areas as "an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means".

IUCN divides protected areas into six types, depending on their objectives :

Category I - Protected area managed mainly for science or wilderness protection (Strict Nature Reserve/Wilderness Area);

Category II - Protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation (National Park);

Category III - Protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features (Natural Monument);

Category IV - Protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention (Habitat/Species Management Area);

Category V - Protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation (Protected Landscape/Seascape);

Category VI - Protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems (Managed Resource Protected Area).

The categories reflect a gradient of management intervention. In categories I-III, strict protection is the rule and natural processes are paramount, Category II and III sites combining this with facilities for visitor. In Category IV, in effect the managed nature reserve, the manager intervenes to conserve or if necessary restore species or habitats. Category V is about protecting cultural, lived-in landscapes, with forms and other forms of land-use. The new Category VI, the sustainable use reserve, is a protected area deliberately set up to allow use of natural resources, mainly for the benefit of local people.

Most countries have followed more-or-less closely the international categories of protected areas as defined by IUCN-WCPA.

The worlds protected areas now cover over 9 % of the earth's surface. However, many biomes are poorly represented and there are significant gaps in coverage, such as in relation to the marine biomes. WCPA recognizes that traditional approaches to protected areas must be more effectively linked with surrounding areas. Many innovative approaches on biological planning and sustainable use of natural resources have been developed from a basis in protected areas management. This integrated approach is also supported by the IUCN system of Protected Areas Management Categories, developed by WCPA which is increasing being adopted by countries.

Many protected areas around the world are not as effectively managed as they could be in terms of meeting their objective. There is a need to more systematically assess the effectiveness of management of protected areas and to develop programs to improve the effectiveness of management of these areas.

Protected areas have a long and worthy tradition as beautiful places and refuges for wildlife. But now we need to see protected areas in their wider context as vital reservoirs of biodiversity for the world, often as a key component of national prosperity, and as providers of sustainable benefits for people living nearly. They should not be seen as isolated areas where no one may tread but as an integral and valued part of the land use of a country; not as land or water "set aside" for conservation but as areas that fulfil a wide range of functions and provide benefits to the locality, the nation and the world. This is the outward - looking agenda that guides WCPA's work.

WCPA recognizes that successful management of protected areas requires the support and involvement of local people. Local communities must be effectively involved in the planning and implementation of protected areas. WCPA advocates approaches to protected area management which involve working for, with and through local communities, not against them. The challenge for the 21st Century are:

- To bring benefits to people, embedding protected areas more firmly in local economies, so that communities, local, national and international, benefit from the full range of material and non-material values of protected areas;
- To develop the global network, using the full range of protected area types, planned as elements of whole landscapes;
- To strengthen the capacity to manage, improving the quality of management by setting standards and by monitoring, evaluating and reporting.

IUCN - WCPA also initiate The World Parks Congress. The World Parks Congress is a 10-yearly event which provides the major global forum for setting the agenda for protected areas. Scheduled to be held in 2002, however, due to South Africa will be hosting The World Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2002; therefore, the Congress reschedule to be held in Durban South Africa at June 2003. The coming Congress will take stock of protected areas; provide an honest appraisal of progress and setbacks; and chart the course for protected areas over the next decade and beyond.

The Vth World Congress on Protected Areas will be to show how protected areas are relevant to the broader economic, social and environmental agenda for humankind in the 21st Century. The title of "Benefit Beyond Boundaries", capturing the challenges for protected areas in the next millenium and providing the flexibility to explore a wide variety of relevant themes. Two aspects of new paradigm in the adoption broader approach to management of a protected areas which among others might be explored in the Congress : 1) the involvement of a full range of actors in the management of protected areas, and 2) the growing significance of trans-boundary protected areas.

The four previous World Parks Congress have been held in : 1) Seattle, USA 1962; 2)Yellowstone, USA, 1972; 3)Bali, Indonesia, 1982; 4) Caracas, Venezuela, 1992.

WCPA Southeast Asia Region already launched final draft of the Action Plan for Southeast Asia Region which cover 5 objectives :

1) To more effectively establish and manage terrestrial protected areas;
2) To more effectively establish and manage marine protected areas;
3) To strengthen the capacity of protected area institutions and managers and establish linkages with key sectors;
4) To increase awareness of the values of protected areas at all levels;
5) To build a stronger WCPA network within the region, including links between WCPA and regional and international organizations.

The priority actions for each objective were elaborated at national, regional, and international levels. This action plan still open for further improvement.

REGIONAL POLICY & PERSPECTIVES

ASEAN's commitment to nature conservation, and protected areas management in particular, began in 1977 with the initiation of the ASEAN Sub-Regional Environment Programme (ASEP) through the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Two of the earliest activities undertaken in this regard were :

1. Conservation of Forest, Plants and Animals in Southeast Asia with the collaboration of International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and UNEP.
2. Survey and Establishment of Biosphere Reserves in Southeast Asia which was associated with UNEP and UNESCO.

During the period of 1978-1988, the ASEAN Expert Group on the Environment (AEGE) had deliberated on several major issues pertaining to conservation, namely :

1. Draft Action Plan for the Conservation of Nature in the ASEAN Region
2. ASEAN Agreement on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
3. ASEAN Heritage Parks and Reserves
    - Declaration on ASEAN Heritage Parks and Reserves
    - Master Plan for ASEAN Heritage Parks and Reserves
    - Principles, Criteria, Guidelines for Selection, Establishment and Management of a Network of Reserves.

To enhance ASEAN cooperation in environment, the AEGE was elevated to become the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment (ASOEN) in 1989.

Protected areas are essential for a conservation of biological diversity and for meeting a range of community objectives. World-wide, there is current growth in protected areas : both the number of sites and the area under protection have increased substantially over recent decades. But ensuring that appropriate management is in place to realise the potential benefits remain a major problem in many places, including ASEAN.

IUCN also involve in the preparation of ASEAN Agreement on Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources which have been signed by the government of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippine, Singapore and Thailand in July 1985. The Agreement specifies the measures necessary to maintain essential ecological processes and life-support system, to preserve genetic diversity, and to ensure the sustainable utilization of harvested natural resources under their jurisdiction in accordance with scientific principles and with a view to attaining the goal of sustainable development. The Agreement cover among others : (1) conservation and development; (2) conservation of species and ecosystems: (3) conservation of ecological process; (4) environmental planning measures.

In the environmental planning measures there is an article on protected areas. Countries shall as appropriate establish in areas under their jurisdiction; territorial; freshwater, coastal on measure protection areas for the purpose of safeguarding ;

- The ecological and biological processes essential to the functionary of the ecosystems of the region;
- Representative samples of all types of ecosystem of the region;
- Satisfactory population levels for the largest possible number of species of fauna and flora belonging to those ecosystem;
- Areas of particular importance because of their scientific, educational, aesthetic, or cultural interests;

And taking into account their importance in particular as :

- The natural habitat of species of fauna and flora particularly rare or endangered or endemic species;
- Zones necessary for the maintenance of exploitable stocks of economically important species;
- Pools of genetic material and safe refuges for species, especially endangered ones;
- Sites of ecological, aesthetic or cultural interest;
- Reference sources for scientific research;
- Areas for environmental education

Countries should take all measures possible in their power to preserve those areas which are of an exceptional character and are peculiar to their country or the region as well as those which constitute the critical habitats of endangered or rare species, of species that are endemic to a small area and of species that migrate between countries.

Protected areas established shall be regulated and managed in such a way as to further the objectives for the purpose of which they have been created. Countries should, wherever possible, prohibit within such protected areas activities which are inconsistent with such objectives. Countries shall co-operate in the development of principles, objectives, criteria and guidelines for the selection, establishment and management of protected areas in the region with a view to establishing in co-ordinate network of protected areas throughout the region, giving particular attention to those of regional importance.

The ASEAN Heritage Parks and Reserves programme was launched in 1984 and its main objective is to develop and promote a regional network of protected areas notable for their outstanding wilderness quality and biological diversity. ASEAN Heritage Parks are protected areas of high conservation importance preserving in total a complete spectrum of representatives ecosystems of the ASEAN region. Therefore, it is a category of protected areas, recently conceived for a select group of national parks and native reserves that have outstanding wilderness and other values. Keenly aware of the uniqueness of a number of the region's national parks and reserves, and that they be given the highest regional recognition so that their importance as conservation areas be appreciated internationally.

As pressures on the region's protected areas have continued to mount, there have been on increasing number of conflicts between government conservation agencies and local communities. These conflicts have made it clear that-in many parts of the region-the traditional, top down approach to protected area management will not be a viable conservation strategy in the long term. A more participatory approach, in which local communities are actively engaged, will be required in many areas.

ASEAN have in their care some of the most globally valuable sites for protecting biodiversity (species, genetic varieties, habitats and landscape) and the provision of ecosystem services and goods to their people.

ASEAN policy makers, protected area managers, directors should protect their *in situ* biodiversity in the rapidly changing context of coming decades. Protected areas proved an opportunity to respond to many of the current global environmental challenges. They also face unprecedented threats from climate change, alien species, rising human populations, destructive resource use, unsustainable patterns of development and pollution. Fortunately, the WCPA-IUCN, the World Resource Institute (WRI), Conservation International (CI) and other partner institutions will establish an ongoing international program that will make

available the lessons learned from field activities around the world that demonstrate how particular policies, strategies, and field practices can meet the challenges of accelerating change.

In response to the challenges of accelerating change including the increase number of members (now 10 countries), ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment (11th ASOEN) held on 1-3 August 2000 in Hanoi, Vietnam endorsed the ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity (AWGNCB) to review and improve among others the documents on : 1) ASEAN Agreement on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources; 2) ASEAN Declaration on Heritage Parks and Reserves; and 3) the Principle, Criteria and Guidelines for the Selection, Establishment and Management of a Network of Protected Areas.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

The major threats to conservation in most countries lie outside the protected area system. Unless the linkages between protected area management and external factors are identified and addressed, fundamental conservation issues are difficult to resolve. Protected area system plans cannot therefore focus solely on protected areas, but must address broader issues of concern to society.

Protected area traditionally viewed as national parks, nature reserves and protected landscapes, to day the term 'protected area' encompasses more recent approaches such as sustainable use reserves and wilderness areas. Therefore, in maintaining and strengthen the protected area systems in the Region requires attention to several priority issues :

1. Extending the protected area coverage of representative terrestrial and marine ecosystems, involving the preparation of national system plans.
2. Integrating protected area design and management within the context of regional development planning.
3. Integrating conservation with development to provide benefits to local and regional communities to relieve pressures on protected areas and reduce degradation of natural habitats and loss of biodiversity.

4. Giving greater emphasis to marine conservation, especially on integrating conservation with coastal zone development.
5. Fostering participation of local communities and NGOs as partners with government agencies in protected area management.
6. Extending education and awareness programmes targeted at all levels of society (local communities to government planners) to increase recognition of the values and roles of protected areas in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
7. Increasing financial and institutional support for protected areas and buffer/support zone activities, including improved allocation of existing resources and the long - term sustainability of funding.
8. Strengthening protected area legislation and its enforcement.
9. Promoting regional collaboration and cooperation to encourage exchange of expertise through study tours, regional training, consultancies, and international programmes.
10. Fostering more active participation in global conventions and other conservation programmes.

The activities that will convert these priorities into action in each country will vary according to national conservation objectives, history, and political will.

CONCLUSION

There is no existing program that provides developing countries with easily accessible information on the relationship between global change issues (climate, sea level, fragmentation, invasive species, growing human populations and their demands for food, fiber and water, along with decentralization of governance) and their protected areas, and options and opportunities for adapting to and benefiting from these changes. There are very significant on-going projects around the world that are designed to address one or more of these issues. And various institutions on related topics already have prepared a pool of case histories and guidelines. Needed is a program that will systematically draw out what is being learned from these efforts, and share that learning with protected area policy makers, directors and managers. Failing to respond to these rapidly evolving issues can lead to reduced quantity and quality of ecosystem services and goods at local and national scales. At the global scale, this failure risks a loss of globally important biodiversity and biological resources.

ASEAN policy makers, directors and managers of protected areas institutions should aware in protecting some of the world's most valuable biotic assets in the region adapt to the global changes in order to maintain theirs, and the world's biodiversity and biological resources. Therefore, they should adopt new policies, strategies, and practices for adapting their management to the threats and opportunities of global change.