

The place of Biodiversity and Culture in African Institutions

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Biological Diversity

- Biological diversity or biodiversity: “*the different life forms with potentially renewable resource that can best survive the variety of conditions on the earth*” .
 - Genetic diversity: the variety and variability in the genetic make up among individuals within a species.
 - Species diversity: variety and variability among distinct types of living organisms (the species) found in different habitats.
 - Ecological diversity: The variety of ecosystems (habitats and niches) in which different biological communities are found.
- Biodiversity comprise potentially renewable resource and can be replenished in fairly short (seasons) or over a long period of time (decades) through natural processes.

Importance of Biodiversity

- The variety and variability of both communities and their habitats will boost ecosystem productivity where each species, no matter how small, has an important role to play.
- A healthy ecosystem rich of species will provide a number of natural goods and services for everyone.
- Contribute and sustain to human livelihoods, education, health and wealth creation amongst others especially in Africa.

Culture

- **Culture** (Latin: *cultura*, lit. "cultivation") the term Culture has many different inter-related meanings. (Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn 1952,- compiled a list of 164 definitions of "culture") in *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*.
- The term "Culture" is most commonly used in three basic senses:
 - Excellence of taste in the fine art and humanities, also known as high culture.
 - An integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning
 - The set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization, or group

Evolution of Culture

- In 18th Century The term “culture”, connoted a process of cultivation, improvement, betterment or refinement of an individual, especially through education, to the fulfillment of community/national ideas.
- In Mid 19th century, some scientists used the term "culture" to refer to a universal human capacity.
- In 20th century, "culture" has been considered to encompass mainly NON GENETIC human phenomena but rather involves
 - the evolved human capacity to classify and represent experiences with symbols and to act imaginatively and creatively; and
 - the distinct ways that people living in different parts of the world classified and represented their experiences, and acted creatively.

Culture in Biological Diversity

- Cultural diversity is an important tool and closely linked to biological diversity conservation in Africa.
- Culture dictates a sustained way of a people's life style.
- Culture may ensure human choices of resource use.
- Myths and taboos embedded in a people's culture contributes to conservation of biodiversity and habitats.
- Species domestication and preservation perpetuates existence of valuable indigenous species.
- Culture is important for education on sustainable ecosystem management hence biodiversity conservation.

Some African Valuable Cultural Institutions for CBD Implementation

- Lamu Cultural Festivals, LVB
- Nyakach Cultural Festivals, LVB
- Kano Cultural Festivals, LVB
- Suba Cultural Festivals, LVB
- Miji Kenya Cultural Festivals, Kenya Coast
- Meru Cultural Festivals, Mt. Kenya
- Luhya Cultural Festivals, Western Province
- Ibo Cultural Festivals, Nigeria.

Key Challenges for Institutions in Africa

- Gaps - communication and knowledge on CBD and other conventions between the African Universities, international community and local stakeholders that need to be bridged. through education and capacity building.
- Mechanisms, capacities and roles of African universities on information generation, capacity building, information disseminating and forging linkages – Horizontal and Vertical.

Challenges Cont....

- Lack of academic courses /curricula and research initiatives to educate and translate the CBD and complementary policy issues to practice in African biodiversity management.
- Problems of integrating biodiversity and socio-cultural studies and practices leads to lack of institutionalizing CBD programs in Africa.

Challenges

- Lack of a coordinated regional or even national platform for exchange of information and knowledge on CBD and complementary policy agenda and programs of work.
- Little or no collaborative research, capacity building, pilot best practices on to help African countries meet the goals of CBD as scheduled.
- Insufficient national budgets and external funding support on implementation of CBD in African countries.

Some Biodiversity Problems?

- Continues species extinction:- Naturally the average rate over the past 200 million years is 1-2 species per year, and 3-4 families per million years.
- There have also been occasional episodes of mass extinction, when many taxa representing a wide array of life-forms have gone extinct.
- Human population growth and the ever increasing needs.
- Insufficient knowledge and research
- Climate and weather related effects.
- Continued ecosystem degradation and pollution by human activities.
- Changes in culture and consumption practices may lead to increased biodiversity loss.

Addressing the Challenges?

Establishment a
Biodiversity and
Culture for Africa?

THANK YOU