



Rio Conventions Pavilion Tuesday, 20 November 2018

Building on the previous day's discussions on scenario planning for transformative change, Day 4 at the Rio Conventions Pavilion explored the formulation of "Nature Futures" scenarios, based on ongoing work by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

Following an opening plenary that introduced the role of scenario-building approaches in informing policies and targets for the Post-2020 Strategy for Biodiversity, three rounds of participatory visioning exercises took place. The break-out sessions explored perspectives from diverse stakeholders, with a focus on three broad ecosystem types: oceans, and rural and urban areas.

In a concluding panel discussion, participants reflected on the results of the interactive exercises and their linkages with ongoing international processes of the Rio Conventions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Day was co-organized by IPBES, the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research (iDiv), the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, New Zealand (NIWA), the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, Australia (CSIRO), and Wageningen University and Research, the Netherlands (WUR).

What are "Nature Futures" and why do we need them?

Carolyn Lundquist, NIWA, introduced the IPBES scenario-building process, charting its evolution from conventional modelling to its current iteration, which she noted aims to integrate global models with exploration of diverse future societal-ecosystem interactions to inform policy and management.

Using the example of New Zealand, Lundquist explained how the country incorporates people, housing infrastructure in future scenarios and highlighted some bottom-up future visions currently under discussion, such as a proposal to make New Zealand predator-free by 2030. She further elaborated on how the use of 2050 scenarios in the far north region have helped identify key dependencies that need to be maintained across future scenarios.

Lundquist explained that the outputs of a series of national and regional visioning exercises were used to develop the IPBES Nature Futures Framework, which identified three underlying perspectives on how people relate to nature. She added that the framework will guide the development of a new generation of scenarios focused on positive visions of the future and incorporation of multiple spatial and temporal scales.

In the ensuing discussion, participants reflected on how to deal with conflict between stakeholders, acknowledging the fact that sometimes if all stakeholders do not agree this can be positive. Other issues raised included how to integrate different



From L-R: **Laura Pereira**, City University of London; **Rob Alkemade**, PBL; **Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen**, WUR; and **Carolyn Lundquist**, NIWA



Eefje den Belder, PBL

visions of the future and differing relationships between people and nature, and how models and scenarios can be operationalized in countries in the global south.

Visioning Exercises

Eefje den Belder, PBL, and Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen, WUR, introduced the participatory visioning exercises. Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen emphasized that scenarios are useful tools for policy support, but global scenarios contain gaps that can be filled through participatory processes. She explained that three rounds of break-out sessions would convene to simulate such participatory processes, with participants exploring different scenarios for the future of oceans, rural and urban areas, respectively.

Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen further explained that, during each round, participants would be divided into three groups, corresponding to the three circles in the IPBES Nature Futures scenario framework, to envision futures around: “Nature for Nature,” where nature is regarded as having value in and of itself without human intervention, and the preservation of nature’s functions is of primary importance; “Nature for People,” in which nature is primarily valued for the interest of people, and which could lead to an optimization of multiple uses of nature; and “Nature as Culture,” in which humans are perceived as an integral part of nature and its functions.

Elaborating on the visioning process, Sana Okayasu asked each group to anchor their discussions against three horizons: Horizon 1, looking at direct and indirect drivers of the current



status quo; Horizon 2, focusing on policy interventions and targets and how to measure progress; and Horizon 3 examining the desirable state under each ecosystem type. She explained that, following the exercises, each group would provide a brief report of their discussions.

Experiencing the Nature Futures Process in a Marine Context

Nature for People: The group described its vision for oceans that are free of plastics, have healthy coral reefs and contain healthy stocks of biodiversity. They expressed their dream for people to view oceans as a clean source of energy and drinking water, as well as a source of jobs. They added that current challenges include the absence of laws or regulations for plastics pollution and overfishing. They recommended the development of more desalination technologies and enforcement on overfishing. The group concluded that development and growth need to be decoupled and there needs to be increased consideration for our ecological footprint.

Nature for Nature: The group described their ideal scenario as one that promotes healthy oceans, healthy coastlines and healthy ecosystems. They stated that there is currently massive corruption, which makes it difficult to effectively manage ecosystems hindering existing policies on ocean protection. The group identified overfishing as a fundamental challenge and recommended a planning structure to set effective targets to encourage less consumption and waste. They also





The Nature for Nature group during the workshop

cautioned against the current tendency to “offset” one problem in sustainable ocean management by creating a problem in another area.

Nature as Culture: The group stated a substantial problem with the current state of oceans is the perceived property rights with oceans. They lamented the cultural exploitation of oceans where humans use them as their amusement park. Instead, the group encouraged humans viewing oceans from a spiritual or mythical perspective.

Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen concluded the first break-out session by noting that the exercises had demonstrated that you can start with different value frameworks but they do not have to be in conflict. She emphasized the importance of finding synergies between the frameworks to arrive at a comprehensive scenario.

Experiencing the Nature Futures Process in a Rural Context

Nature as Culture: The group highlighted, *inter alia*, that rural areas need a lifestyle change, education for children is essential, and that there is need for better management of natural ecosystems. They mentioned the role of technology in overcoming these challenges, and closing the gap between urban and rural areas. Highlighting some policy interventions, they called for an increase in food diversity, eco-friendly farming and increased engagement of youth leaders.



Nature for People: The group drew attention to the diversity of nationalities and perspectives represented in the discussions, noting that it had contributed to an interesting debate. They highlighted the potential contribution of adopting blockchain thinking and the adaptation of current agricultural practices in overcoming some of the negative drivers and trends identified in the discussions.

Nature for Nature: The group reported that they were initially not sure if their ideal scenario should include humans or not. They said they had concluded, however, that there was value in imagining an ideal scenario with a well-functioning ecosystem and clean air and water. Among measures that could contribute towards the transition, they highlighted a decrease in monoculture agriculture and pollution.

In concluding remarks, Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen emphasized that different starting points can lead to similar directions and suggestions for transformation.

Experiencing the Nature Futures Process in an Urban Context

Nature for Nature: The group underlined that the future that they want for urban areas includes sustainable cities, organic local food production and increased overall connectivity with nature. They noted that lack of awareness is one of the main drivers of the current unsustainability and highlighted some



Rapporteurs presenting the outcomes of the Nature for Nature group



policy measures such as adopting more laws and using tax reforms to protect the environment, as well as spatial planning laws that make provisions for nature and connect more cities with rural areas.

Nature for People: The group reported on what this means for urban areas by first presenting ideas on how a desirable urban area can be achieved for people. They encouraged more blue/green infrastructure, ecotourism activities such as bird-watching and wetlands preservation. The group further noted that urban farming should be promoted but will need strong incentives for citizen uptake. They also discussed the importance of a circular economy for urban areas but noted important fragmentations that will need to be addressed such as: conflicting priorities and approaches by different ministries on environmental planning in urban areas, and the need for more education and awareness-raising for certain groups, particularly children.

Nature for Culture: The group highlighted their wish for more equity in access to biodiverse spaces in cities, green buildings with more solar panels on all roofs and community co-op gardens. They said the main challenge is to overcome the

idea that cities do not connect to nature and underlined the need for new social norms, mindsets and standard-setting initiatives that connect both.

Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen concluded the workshop sessions stating that these working streams help with thinking about the pros and cons of different pathways and setting targets for decision making. She expressed her hope that the day's interactions would become a tool to develop relevant scenarios.

Concluding Session

Machteld Schoonenberg, PBL, moderated the final session of the afternoon. Lundquist provided a brief recap of the workshop discussions, which took place throughout the day. Workshop facilitators also described the opportunities and challenges, which emerged from the roundtable dialogue. They noted that between the three scenarios there were many synergies, namely the recommendation to consume sustainably, deepen the role of technology within nature while also encouraging more harmonization and co-evolution of humans with nature. Participants stated that scenario setting is helpful for policymakers as it allows them to consider different options and further, this type of continued exercise will help develop goals to be reached by COP 15 in 2020.



Rapporteurs presenting the outcomes of the Nature as Culture group