

Biodiversity is in crisis. The post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is a crucial opportunity to reverse this.

The main focus of this framework has to be on the three objectives of the Convention. Ecosystem-based and culture-based approaches are clearly the correct approach, with the focus on conserving, sustainably using and managing biodiverse ecosystems and managed ecosystems to maintain diversity, as well as the critical ecosystem functions they provide. We clearly need to protect the human rights of all people including to a healthy environment.

The term “nature-based solutions”, on the other hand, is ambiguous and for example, as currently used, equates natural ecosystems such as forests with plantations of fast-growing trees for absorbing carbon, which would clearly not provide the same benefits, whether in terms of climate mitigation, adaptation or other ecosystem functions.

We need to halt the destruction of biodiversity, period. The concept of ‘no net loss’ allows the destruction of one area rich in biodiversity to be replaced by another area with less integrity and ecosystem function. A ‘net gain’ is based on the same accounting trick, allowing claims to be made that biodiversity areas have increased despite the fact that biodiversity was destroyed and/or the rights of IPLCs were violated. These are all offsetting mechanisms.

We therefore reject the concepts of nature based solutions, net loss and net gain and all forms of offsetting.

Secondly, we have to check the role of corporations in this convention. Their core interest is quite different from those of the rest of society, as they depend on a model of continued and unsustainable economic growth which is a root cause of biodiversity loss, and which is often linked to biodiversity-destructive activities. Regulating business activities that destroy biodiversity and violate human rights, is actually the core to the transformative change we need. Their disproportionate influence in this process is deeply concerning, as their objectives are not always coherent with the objectives of the convention.

Finally, purely area-based conservation measures are not enough to counteract the drivers of biodiversity loss. Indigenous peoples and local communities contribute hugely to biodiversity through their governance and stewardship of collective territories, lands and waters. However, they are often targeted and criminalised for defending the life support systems on which we all depend. We urge Parties to respond to IIFB’s calls for appropriate legal recognition and support, and to protect environmental and human rights defenders.