



# ECOonline

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# No more Rhetoric: It's time for money to be redirected to a gender-responsive, rights-based ecosystems approach to halt biodiversity loss

*Souparna Lahiri, Global Forest Coalition*

The United Nations Biodiversity Summit is taking place at a time when the Covid 19 Pandemic has resulted in close to 30 million people infected by the virus, with the death toll approaching a staggering million. The International Labour Organisation has reported loss of 400 million full time jobs<sup>[2]</sup> with disastrous impacts on women workers. All the leading 23 economies have gone into severe recession and GDP contraction. UNEP has recently released a scientific assessment<sup>[3]</sup> which states that “Pandemics such as the COVID-19 outbreak are a predictable and predicted outcome of how people source and grow food, trade and consume animals, and alter environments.” The assessment further links biodiversity loss and the emergence of zoonotic diseases to 1) increasing human demand for animal protein; 2) unsustainable agricultural intensification; 3) increased use and exploitation of wildlife; 4) unsustainable utilization of natural resources accelerated by urbanization, land use change and extractive industries; 5) increased travel and transportation; 6) changes in food supply; and 7) climate change.

On all these counts, the UN, the CBD and the Parties have failed to address these drivers. The Global Biodiversity Outlook 5, released on September 15, strongly outlines the failure to achieve the Aichi Targets. But, there is no attempt to assess and learn from these colossal failures after spending millions of dollars of public money on biodiversity conservation. The main reason is that billions of dollars continue to be invested, directly or through subsidies or other incentives, in projects and sectors that are harmful to biodiversity.

Against this backdrop, the UNSG led Biodiversity Summit will be rendered rudderless if it turns into another talk shop of world leaders and corporate CEOs without addressing the immediate actions needed to halt biodiversity loss and extracting ambitious and science-based targets and commitments. Any conversation on biodiversity has to be based on scientific feasibility rather than political or economic feasibility. Any approach towards protection and conservation of biodiversity should be based on an ecosystems approach, and be gender-responsive, while recognising the territorial and land tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities and women.

The world leaders gathering at the UN Biodiversity Summit should ensure a 100% divestment from activities that cause ecosystem destruction and lead to perverse incentives towards biodiversity destruction and loss. Redirecting perverse incentives away from sectors like fossil fuel, agri-business, industrial livestock, tourism and aviation will result in much needed public investment to halt biodiversity loss and forest destruction through supporting genuinely transformative action and gender-responsive community conservation. Conflict of interest triggered by the private sector and corporate engagement in biodiversity conservation must be addressed.

There is no more time for political rhetoric and corporate greenwashing. A pathway towards ‘Harmony with Nature 2050’ means immediate and urgent, concerted, coherent and integrated global action enforced with strong commitments and obligations from Parties and other UN agencies to protect nature, biodiversity and forests.

[2] ILO (2020): ILO Monitor: Covid-19 and the world of work. Fifth edition, Geneva, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_749399.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_749399.pdf)

[3] UNEP (2020): Preventing The Next Pandemic: Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission, Nairobi, Kenya, <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/32316/ZP.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

# Multiple Crises, Maximum Urgency, Minimal Action

Janice Cox & Jessica Bridgers, World Animal Net (WAN)

**“If all the beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts, soon happens to man. All things are connected.” Chief Seattle**

The 2030 Agenda envisages a development model “in which humanity lives in harmony with nature and ... **other living species are protected**<sup>[i]</sup>.” The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), signed by 150 government leaders (now signed by 162 parties) at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, has clearly failed to conserve biological diversity or to contribute to sustainable development. Biological diversity is rapidly being displaced by intensive monocultures, wild animal populations have fallen by over two-thirds since 1970, and there are an estimated one million threatened species<sup>[ii]</sup>. Our ecosystems and wildlife are vanishing before our eyes.

Governments have failed to meet a single Aichi target to stop the destruction of nature, despite rhetoric and pledges. Worse still, the recent Global Biodiversity Outlook<sup>[iii]</sup> confirms there has been very little progress in even removing subsidies and incentives which are harmful to biodiversity, and refocusing these as positive incentives. Most countries have not even made the effort to identify harmful incentives. This is completely unacceptable, and needs to be tackled urgently.

COVID-19 has given the world a wake-up call about the impacts of human exploitation of nature and animals – with massive social and economic fall-out, as well as loss of livelihoods, health and lives. But is this lesson being heeded in the current negotiations on the Post-2020 global biodiversity framework? It seems not...

The proposal even suggests targets increasing nature’s contribution and benefits for humans. At a time when nature clearly needs protection from the massive growth of commercial use fuelled by human greed and materialism. At a time when the whole concept of “sustainable use” needs to be reconsidered – using the precautionary principle, and taking into account factors such as future impacts from climate change and likelihood of future pandemics of increasing regularity and virulence. Not to mention the direct impact on species and the knock-on effects on other species and habitats.

Business as usual has not led to sustainability. It has led to our current crisis. Recovery will not be possible without transformative change to address key drivers, such as food systems and diets. But also, transformative change in human attitudes and ethics. Given limited natural resources and rapidly declining wildlife populations, we must prioritise subsistence uses of indigenous people and local communities; and move away from commercial exploitation – particularly for inessential uses of animals such as luxury goods, the pet trade, entertainment, sport and to tickle the taste buds of distant wealthy consumers...

It is time to put nature before profitability, to take a hard look at what is actually sustainable in these challenging times, and to stop treating sentient animals as though they were renewable resources - with no care for their health, welfare or lives.

[i] <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

[ii] Convention on Biological Diversity. Global Biodiversity Outlook 5. <https://www.cbd.int/gbo5>

[iii] Convention on Biological Diversity. Global Biodiversity Outlook 5. <https://www.cbd.int/gbo5>

# Removing perverse incentives for real

*Friedrich Wulf, Pro Natura - Friends of the Earth Switzerland*

Veterans among us who took part at CBD COP 10 in Nagoya, in October 2010, may still remember the enthusiasm, unanimity and consensus in agreeing on **Aichi target 3** on incentives harmful to biodiversity. It was clear that a good way to generate the funding needed to finance the current strategic plan's implementation was to "eliminate, phase out or reform incentives [...] harmful to biodiversity, in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied,..."

Now, as we take stock of its implementation, GBO-5 reports that this target has not been achieved. In fact, little progress has been made and in many countries, there hasn't even been an assessment of the incentives that have been harmful to biodiversity. Such was the case in Switzerland until last month **two renowned academic institutions systematically screened all subsidies across sectors** and found out that 162 subsidies, comprising 40 billion Swiss francs, were wholly or in part damaging for biodiversity, compared to 500 million (1.25%) annual spending for biodiversity. The **study** provides valuable guidance on how to remove or redirect incentives. Two global assessments which were presented at the **CBD finance workshop in Berlin in January** show that globally the subsidies are at 500-600 billion, compared to 90-153 billion invested in support of biodiversity (**OECD** and **Paulson Institute**).

Clearly, there is potential in addressing this issue – it is a vital part of the transformative change we are striving for. Consequently, the panel of experts on resource mobilisation, at the SBSTTA/SBI virtual meeting on 17 September, presented the "reduction or redirection of resources causing harm to biodiversity" **as one of the three pillars of the post-2020 resource mobilisation strategy**, together with generation of additional resources and enhancing effectiveness of spendings. The post-2020 Global framework may even more heavily rely on the removal of harmful incentives than its predecessor. But how can we make sure we can really make progress this time?

The panel of experts, in **document CBD/SBI/3/5/ADD3**, suggests governments increase capacities, technical assistance and resource allocation, time-bound action plans and monitoring and evaluation systems. Clearly, the first step is to undertake a comprehensive assessment of all subsidies according to an agreed methodology. The next step is to identify priorities and decide which policy approaches to take. Ideally, all of this is done within certain deadlines and reported back at regular intervals. But how to motivate governments to really tackle these issues? A key challenge is to overcome political obstacles. Many subsidies have been in place already for decades and are perceived as normal by their recipients. Parliaments argue that there have been majorities for installing these incentives and that it would be undemocratic to remove them.

**The Swiss study**, on p. 16 has a number of recommendations how to address these issues, such as reforming the incentives so the same people get paid for non-detrimental or even biodiversity-positive measures, making all subsidies time-bound and turning off-budget subsidies into on-budget subsidies for more transparency. We suggest to look at these recommendations for the global level in order to achieve real progress this time.

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# Post-COVID recovery and stimulus: we need a Rainbow New Deal!

*Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh and Global Tapestry of Alternatives*

Across the world governments are considering recovery and economic stimulus packages to ease out of the COVID pandemic crisis. Unfortunately, most of these are based on trying to go back to 'normal', with bailouts to the big industries, banking sector, aviation, and so on. This will only perpetuate an economic system that has been responsible for rapid biodiversity loss (putting to nought whatever CBD and other international processes have tried), as also shameful inequalities that have made hundreds of millions of people vulnerable to loss of livelihoods, food insecurity, and other deprivations.

What is needed is a 'rainbow new deal', one that prioritises biodiversity conservation, justice in all its forms, and the livelihoods and rights of farmer, fisher, pastoral, forest-dwelling, crafts-based, and small-scale manufacturing communities. Such livelihoods support the majority of the world's workforce, and in one way or the other we are all, however rich and disconnected from nature we may be, dependent on the food and services they produce. And yet they get hardly any of the investments that governments and businesses make.

Burgeoning scientific evidence shows that much of the world's biodiversity survives where small and artisanal livelihoods are still practiced, not where large-scale industrial and urbanized lifestyles have taken over. Such livelihoods and the worldviews, knowledge, skills, innovations, and ways of living they are associated with, are also crucial to dealing with global crises like climate and inequality. Examples around the world have shown that communities with intact or regenerated ecosystems and livelihood systems have coped much better with the COVID crisis (in terms of health, food, livelihoods).<sup>1</sup> Approaches to localised self-reliance with direct democracy, social justice, and meeting basic needs, moving away from economic globalisation that creates debilitating reliance on governments and corporations, have also shown immense promise.<sup>2</sup> Support to such communitarian strategies of resilience must form the biggest and most central part of any stimulus or recovery package, if we are to emerge from COVID in directions that will help us both conserve biodiversity, and avoid future such pandemics.

1. <https://wsimag.com/food-and-wine/63382-re-imagining-food>

2. <https://www.localfutures.org/what-does-self-reliance-really-mean-amazing-stories-from-indias-villages/>

# Nature-based Solutions or Nature-Based Seductions?

Doreen Stabinsky, College of the Atlantic

“Nature-based solutions” (NbS) is a widely used and vaguely defined term. It means different things to different people, often including approaches such as agroecology and ecosystem restoration. But a group of actors are using the term to drive a particular agenda related to biodiversity loss and climate change.

Much recent attention on NbS has focused on the challenge of climate change and possible contributions that “nature” can make to climate mitigation, erroneously fueled by findings from a 2017 scientific article that suggested that some very specific “natural climate solutions” could provide up to one-third of the global mitigation effort needed by 2030.<sup>[1]</sup>

A more significant fuel for attention to NbS is the myth that the carbon-sequestering possibilities of nature can compensate for (or in technical carbon market terms – offset) the continued burning of fossil fuels. But offsets **do not** reduce the overall concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere; at best they result in no net emissions.

This is a particularly dangerous myth if we are to reach the Paris Agreement goal of *holding the increase in global average temperature to well below 2C and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5C* of warming above pre-industrial levels. The science is very, very clear – to accomplish that goal will require BOTH decarbonizing our societies AND enhancing the carbon removal and sequestration possibilities within our planet’s ecosystems **over the next few decades**.

Offset myths and carbon markets are very useful for those corporates who want to continue with business as usual. Leading the charge to use NbS as offsets are major fossil fuel and agribusiness companies. Shell is making investments in NbS with the clear intent that “these projects can lead to the marketing, trading and sale of carbon [offset] credits.” Italian fossil fuel giant, Eni, is planning to **increase** oil and gas production 3.5% per year until 2025, and then claims it will reduce its carbon footprint by 80% by 2050, by using 30 million tons a year by 2050 of carbon offsets from primary and secondary forest conservation projects.<sup>[2]</sup>

The fossil fuel industry, aided by some big conservation organizations, is greenwashing its image with lovely photos of these nature-based “solutions,” often located in the global South, while its operations lead directly to the climate impacts that threaten the very biodiversity that the “solutions” are built upon. Carbon colonialism is another term used to describe this practice of seeking “solutions” to your own emissions in someone else’s lands and forests. These projects already involve land grabbing, assaults on human rights, and livelihood impacts on indigenous and local communities, which will only increase as industries seek to acquire more and more natural ecosystems to soak up their carbon pollution.

We must separate genuine nature-based **solutions** from the nature-based **seductions** of corporates such as carbon offsets. There is no free lunch here. Tackling climate change requires **ending** the burning of fossil fuels, while doing all we can in safe and sustainable ways to take carbon that has accumulated from the previous century of fossil emissions out of the atmosphere.

[1]. <https://www.pnas.org/content/114/44/11645>

[2]. [www.shell.com](http://www.shell.com); <https://www.eni.com/en-IT/media/press-release/2020/02/long-term-strategic-plan-to-2050-and-action-plan-2020-2023.html>

# '30x30' risks irreversible social harm and won't save biodiversity

*Fiore Longo, Survival International*

Nearly one hundred and sixty environmental and human rights NGOs and experts have signed a statement warning that the proposal in the draft CBD Global Biodiversity Framework to expand protected areas to 30 percent of the planet by 2030 could lead to severe human rights violations and harm for some of the world's most vulnerable people. As many as 300 million people could be affected unless the GBF provides strong protections for the rights of indigenous peoples and other traditional land-owners and environmental stewards.

The statement says that while bold commitments are certainly needed to tackle climate and biodiversity emergencies, the 30 percent target is counterproductive and could further entrench an outmoded and unsustainable model of conservation. The principle concerns set out in the statement are that:

- There has been no assessment carried out of the possible social impacts of an increase of protected areas to 30%;
- Existing protected areas are failing to prevent loss of biodiversity, whilst heavy-handed enforcement can turn local people against conservation efforts and could actually hasten environmental destruction;
- There are no effective safeguards to protect the lands, rights and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and other land-dependent communities in conservation programmes, which violates UN norms and international law.
- The proposal fails to reflect the findings of the IPBES 2019 Global Assessment that existing protected areas are “not yet effectively or equitably managed” or the emphasis it placed on the need to protect indigenous lands.

Any further increase in protected areas, it is argued, must first be preceded by an independent review into the social impacts and conservation effectiveness of existing protected areas, and scientific justification must be given for the 30% target.

The signatories propose that:

- 1.** The GBF must recognize and protect collective and customary land tenure systems and adopt strong enforceable safeguards for Indigenous Peoples and other land-dependent communities that will apply to all new and existing protected areas. These must adhere to international human rights agreements.
- 2.** There should be an independent review of the effectiveness and social impacts of existing protected areas in order to guide new targets and norms in the post-2020 GBF.
- 3.** A thorough study should be conducted and published on the potential for wider legal designation and protection of Indigenous Peoples and other sustainable community-managed lands to provide the greater conservation of biodiversity that is sought under the post-2020 GBF.

The statement is available in English, French, Spanish, Italian and German [here](#).

## System change is needed

*Isaac Rojas, co-coordinator Forest and Biodiversity Program Friends of the Earth International*

The current crisis, caused by COVID 19, has shown us again the fragility in which we live. This crisis, together with the crisis of loss and degradation of biodiversity plus the climate crisis, reminds us of the great challenges we face. All these crises have something in common: a development model that seeks and privileges profit, economic gains over any other aspect of life. On many occasions, this search for profit leads to human rights violations that can even lead to the murder of those who resist projects and policies that do not seek the common good.

System change is necessary to overcome these multiple crises. It is necessary to make radical changes. We cannot follow the false promises that large corporations make, for it has been more than demonstrated that their only intention is to pave the way for the continuation of their business. It is important to stop promoting false solutions that perpetuate the causes that provoke the crises, make green the polluting and destructive businesses of biodiversity while generating new ones with new impacts. These false solutions also, in their great majority, turn biodiversity into something that is bought and sold even in the financial markets.

System change that respects and implements the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities so that they can decide what to do in their territories, so that they can have land, so that they can have effective participation in decisions that affect them; this is essential. A change in the system would also entail the strengthening and promotion (through public policies) of age-old practices that have proven over and over again to be effective in the conservation - and improvement - of biodiversity: agro-ecology carried out by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as well as the management and administration of forests, biodiversity and their territories. And of course, to have binding mechanisms to achieve a life that is more respectful of biodiversity and human rights, clear punishments and penalties that can be applied even to corporations.

# What's the role of business in transformative change?

Helena Paul, *EcoNexus*

Over the last few years, business – the private sector – has been playing an expanding role across the UN, including the CBD. What is the impact of this? Donella Meadows in her book, “Thinking in Systems, A Primer” notes that:

A system's function or purpose is not necessarily spoken, written, or expressed explicitly, except through the operation of the system. The best way to deduce the system's purpose is to watch for a while to see how the system behaves. (Page 14)

So what is the true purpose of business in relation to biodiversity?

In 1970 the headline for an essay that Milton Friedman wrote for the New York Times was: “*The Social Responsibility Of Business Is to Increase its Profits.*” Not everyone agreed with him, but many did. However, we are told that has changed in recent years, so that increasingly it is not shareholders who are central but ‘stakeholders’ and profits are not the sole aim but, according the World Economic Forum’s: ‘The New Paradigm’ of January 2019, business needs to develop ‘A Roadmap for an Implicit Corporate Governance Partnership Between Corporations and Investors to Achieve Sustainable Long-Term Investment and Growth.’<sup>[1]</sup>

The question is, how does that ‘new paradigm’ actually address the deeply destructive impacts of ‘business as usual’, for example agribusiness, mining, infrastructure, toxic chemicals and waste, on biodiversity? What are the implications for those most intimately involved in protecting biodiversity, the indigenous peoples and local communities and also small farmers who still provide at least 30% of our food while maintaining agrobiodiversity? This ‘new paradigm’ still involves growth, even if dubbed ‘sustainable’ and ‘long-term’. Does this simply mean a slowing down of biodiversity destruction or can it mean real, transformative, change?

Unfortunately, the imbalance of power between business and people is growing, not reducing. It also appears that many feel it is impossible or not desirable to control the activities of business in the wider interests of the population, human and non-human. Individual corporations are extremely powerful, more so than many governments, and many have a global presence. This growing imbalance of power between business, society and government urgently needs addressing. If it is not, little is likely to change and biodiversity will continue to be eroded, with ultimately fatal impacts on humanity.

As IPBES says: “By its very nature, transformative change can expect opposition from those with interests vested in the status quo, but such opposition can be overcome for the broader public good.” Overcoming such opposition is absolutely essential if we are to tackle our multiple crises and imbalances of power. A useful first step would be the stronger will of governments to actually regulate business in the interests of biodiversity.

The demand to continue unending economic growth and the overconsumption that goes with it, however carefully dressed up in fine words or the promise of new technologies to make it all possible, cannot be reconciled with life on a finite planet.

[1]. <https://www.wlrk.com/webdocs/wlrknew/WLRKMemos/WLRK/WLRK.26312.19.pdf>

# Integrated Action Needed to Protect and Restore the Health and Stability of the Biosphere

*Virginia Young, member of Climate Action Network - CAN*

Decisions made in the next 12-18 months will determine the success or failure of the Rio Conventions in dealing with the entwined crises of biodiversity loss and climate change. Overcoming barriers created by the silos of the Rio Conventions is critically important to successfully addressing both crises simultaneously. We know urgently reducing emissions is critically important for the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems. Emission reductions must not be delayed through offsets in the forest and land use sector.

Most climate policy makers understand that climate change is a major threat to biodiversity and ecosystem integrity. However, few understand that the increased risk of damage from drought, fire, pests and disease associated with climate change is significantly greater when ecosystems have been degraded by industrial activity. Nor do they understand that biodiversity loss contributes to climate change by damaging the integrity and stability of ecosystems.

Just as biodiversity protection is dependent on ecosystem integrity, the integrity of ecosystems is dependent on the functional role of biodiversity. Ecosystem integrity goes to the heart of the most important role natural ecosystems play in climate mitigation: maintaining relatively stable, long-term carbon storage. The call in the preamble of the Paris Agreement to protect biodiversity and ensure ecosystem integrity has never been more important. If we fail on climate change, we will fail on biodiversity and vice versa.

The CBD clearly recognises 'climate change as a major and growing driver of biodiversity loss' and 'that escalating destruction, degradation and fragmentation of ecosystems would reduce their capacity to store carbon, lead to increased emissions, reduce their resilience and stability and make the climate change crisis ever more challenging'. (CBD COP 14/5)

In 2018 the IPCC report on limiting warming to 1.5°C noted that: "Examples of response options with immediate impacts include the conservation of high-carbon ecosystems such as peatlands, wetlands, rangelands, mangroves, and forests." In the same year, CBD COP 14/30 noted "the urgent necessity to avoid major fragmentation, damage and loss of primary forests". To deliver synergistic biodiversity and climate outcomes it is fundamentally important to recognise the rights and livelihoods of indigenous people and local communities, as stewards of biodiversity, something both Conventions have been slow to act on.

So what is the UNFCCC doing? Last year it recognised (in 1/CP25) "... the need to address biodiversity loss and climate change in an integrated manner." This decision should strengthen outcomes for indigenous and local people and guide NbS. Whether it will depends upon:

- Prioritizing prevention of loss and damage to natural ecosystems, particularly carbon-dense primary ecosystems;
- Supporting integrated biodiversity and climate mitigation and adaptation actions and ensuring safeguards for biodiversity in any climate action;
- Supporting the rights and livelihoods of indigenous and local people; and
- Not shifting responsibility for emissions or substituting rapid phase-out of fossil fuels.

Successful integration will likely also depend on developing a joint work programme between the Rio Conventions to overcome barriers and to promote synergistic climate and biodiversity outcomes, in support of the wider 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

# Sustainable Use must be at the heart of the 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

David Obura - CORDIO East Africa and the Africa CSO Biodiversity Alliance

The challenge for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and benefits going to the people that really need them (i.e. for the three objectives of the CBD and the emerging goals of the GBF) is that the combination of issues, actors and potential actions are so many, while decline in natural assets and peoples' welfare is accelerating<sup>[i]</sup>. Nature's functions, both in intact and heavily altered ecosystems (e.g. in farms and cities), are critical for ecological balance from the smallest to the largest scales on the planet, and sustaining people through ecosystem services, or Nature's Contributions to People (NCP). People impact nature in positive and negative ways, and mechanisms are needed for all actors to align their actions such that the natural, economic and social capital of each is not harmed by the actions of others.

Not coincidentally, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) provide a universally accepted 'theory of change' that can facilitate alignment across all actors to achieve sustainability, but the goal framework needs to be applied in novel ways and to local scales<sup>[ii]</sup>. Adopting the SDGs as a primary framework means that each actor, while focusing on their primary interests or uses, which are often 'at home' in one or two goals, commits to nurturing and even improving their primary asset while using it, as well as not harming assets important to other actors in other goals, including natural, economic and social assets.

In relation to consultations on the CBD's new Global Biodiversity Framework, the Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 has shown that the historic focus on nature conservation has not been able to reduce the drivers and pressures causing biodiversity decline. Not a single Aichi Target was achieved to an acceptable level. Sustainable Use as a primary approach focuses on the direct transactions from nature to people. It thus directly addresses the three core components of the SDGs: sustaining nature's functions, sustaining its contributions to people, and how those contributions are shared among and affect the quality of life of people.

This sustainable use model helps address lessons we should learn from the CBD global biodiversity strategy from 2010-2020:

- A focus just on biodiversity too narrowly addresses just one part of this nature-economy-society mosaic, and fails to address both economic and social priorities and needs (and can even harm them);
- The focus to date in the CBD on equity in relation to genetic resources is too narrow, and needs to expand to incorporate all facets of nature, including species, ecosystems and nature's contributions to people;

By contrast, goal (b) on Sustainable Use very tangibly addresses the interests and dependencies of stakeholders on natural assets, and is at the juncture between nature on the one hand (goal a) and social interests on the other (goal c), and enables the GBF to sit squarely within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. This forms a primary platform for ACBA's contributions to the post-2020 biodiversity, contained in a policy brief available at the link here ([www.cordioea.net/sustainableuse](http://www.cordioea.net/sustainableuse)). Please also visit ACBA's website for further details on promoting this policy.

[i] IPBES (2019): *Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services* of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services AND IPBES (2018): *The IPBES regional assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa*. Archer, E. Dziba, L., Mulongoy, K. J., Maoela, M. A., and Walters, M. (eds.). Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Bonn, Germany. 492 pages.

[ii] Obura, D.O. (2020). Getting to 2030 - Scaling effort to ambition through a narrative model of the SDGs. *Marine Policy*, 117, 103973. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2020.103973>.

# Too Risky to Interfere with Indigenous People's Lands and livelihoods: Time for transformative and creative ways of conservation

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Indigenous Peoples are said to occupy at least **25% of the earth, steward about 80%** of the biodiversity on earth and are estimated to make up about **6% of the global population**. The rush for development and economic growth has increased interest in Indigenous Peoples' lands, resulting in forceful eviction and takeover and in other cases, death. These natural resources and habitats are so significant to Indigenous Peoples because through them, they are able to fulfil their needs such as medicine, food, shelter, religious, cultural and other necessities without which they will not survive. Indigenous people have been known to protect not only their natural environment but also the animals they co-exist with. In some communities such as the Ogiek and the Endorois of Kenya, it is a taboo to kill an animal and in others, the communities are duty bound to protect their animals which in turn contributes to conservation. Indigenous Peoples also have structured roles that define what roles each cluster, gender or age group is supposed to perform as a result of which communities participate in protection and conservation of the environment with women having been found to have an even closer relationship with natural resources particularly in matters related to traditional knowledge and medicine.

Indigenous Peoples' knowledge is currently harnessed using modern scientific technologies with benefits expected to be shared with the communities and governments alike under the **Convention on Biological Diversity** and the **Nagoya Protocol**. These benefits contribute to **sustainable development and assist governments to achieve their sustainable development goals while improving their citizens' livelihoods** through environmental, economic and social benefits that flow back to the society. Regardless of the evidence, **Indigenous Peoples' contribution in conservation has not been recognised as a result of which achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets has been undermined**. Previous strategies on biodiversity have also not worked and have instead resulted in loss of critical biodiversity and species en masse, **which loss has been expounded/set out in the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Report** (IPBES).

Governments must not disconnect the people from biodiversity who have nurtured it for centuries. . Governments are therefore called upon to engage in transformative, creative ways of conserving biological diversity and achieving sustainable development goals that include Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Women while ensuring that human rights of all persons, particularly those of Indigenous Peoples to their land, life, property, natural resources, e.t.c are protected. These indivisible human rights should be prioritised over those of property, economy and development due to their pivotal role in the survival of not only indigenous peoples, but also wider global and planetary health.

## **IPLC can help us restore a balance with nature**

*Cristina Eghenter, member of Working Group on ICCAs Indonesia*

In these times of global Covid-19 emergency, on top of long-running biodiversity and climate crises, more than ever we need to reflect on what we have done to nature and our dangerously broken relationship with nature. Scientists have been warning for years that the way we produce and consume is pushing the planet to the brink jeopardizing our own survival and that of our future generations. The health emergency is the latest symptom of deeper problems with the economic system and globalization. A very inequitable development model based on unsustainable extraction of natural resources, high footprint and wasteful consumption is a major cause of nature abuse and biodiversity loss, and climate disruption.

The ambition of the GBF should be one that enables the necessary transition towards an economic model that values nature and people as the foundation of a healthy society and a fair economy, and promotion of a fundamental shift in values. A responsible, respectful and caring relationship with nature and each other are the key tenets of achieving a just, equitable and sustainable socio-economic model and safeguarding life on earth.

However, as we build back our societies and economies, we need 'teachers' (leaders?) who can show us the way. Indigenous people and local communities can be our guides. We can draw some key lessons from the custodians of nature whose traditional knowledge, practices, innovation and social solidarity have enabled them to build resilient communities in their territories and waters.

Indigenous Peoples and local communities, men and women alike, have demonstrated that alternative ways of living and being are possible when livelihoods and management of territories of life are holistically integrated, within their cultural and spiritual traditions. They have developed nature-based solutions that work precisely because they are rooted in traditional knowledge, values and social solidarity, and with innovation and additional support can be replicated and scaled for enhancing sustainability. Women especially have unique knowledge, skills and experience relating to nature. They play a vital role in managing natural resources by making daily decisions that ensure economic resilience and security of families and communities, educating the next generation, and passing on their traditional knowledge.

Creating a resilient world depends on protecting and restoring the natural systems that allow us all to thrive. But we can only succeed if Indigenous Peoples and local communities are recognized and supported to manage ancestral lands sustainably, championing a new relationship with nature for the benefit of all. While they are the primary custodians of over half of all land on the planet, they currently have secure legal rights to only 10%. We need to ensure the full participation of IPLC in the visioning and implementation of any recovery strategy and development path forward to help us restore a balance with nature and re-learn caring for biodiversity, our life-support system.

# Draft GBF does not prevent ongoing global biodiversity loss escalation and neglects the required implementation of legal CBD obligations and people's rights

*Ville-Veikko Hirvelä, New Wind Association*

Earth's biodiversity can not be conserved if we violate CBD obligations whose due implementation is necessary to prevent such global biodiversity loss acceleration which is driven by our over-consumption. As processes and activities of over-consumption “originating under [...] jurisdiction or control” of rich states, create “imminent or grave danger or damage [...] to biological diversity within the area under jurisdiction of other States” (1), especially in poor states, thus:

- CBD obliges states to “regulate or manage” such “processes and [...] activities which have or are likely to have significant adverse impacts on the conservation and sustainable use” (2) “to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage” to biodiversity “regardless of where their effects occur”, “outside protected areas” or “beyond the limits of national jurisdiction”. (3)

- Rich states “shall provide new [...] resources to enable developing country Parties to” fulfil CBD obligations (4) to “regulate or manage” also the adverse impacts of rich countries' consumption to the biodiversity in poor countries (5), “rehabilitate and restore degraded ecosystems” securing “compatibility between present uses and the conservation” (6) of plants and animals which are threatened or “offer the greatest potential for sustainable use”. (7)

- Even where exercise of states' “rights and obligations [...] deriving from any existing international agreement” such as from a treaty on commercial rights, sets rich countries' over-consumption to cause to poor countries' biodiversity a “serious damage or threat”, CBD obliges states to prevent that. (8)

Proposed Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) however neglects all these legal CBD obligations on regulating over-consumption, displacing by voluntary targets and monitoring the implementation of these legal obligations, crucially needed to prevent the escalation of global biodiversity loss, which GBF thus however allows to accelerate.

While GBF announces targets to “eliminate unsustainable consumption” and production (9), still no action which could in practice prevent them from escalating is proposed by GBF which instead boosts further voluntarisation of corporations' responsibilities into mere self-monitoring and certification, which expand with global biodiversity loss.

CBD requires however that states “shall not affect” but respect all treaties-provided rights and obligations over biodiversity, when their implementation causes no “serious damage or threat” to biodiversity. Thus also customary sustainable use enabling rights to indigenous and local communities' traditional occupations and land uses/tenures must be respected and protected as obliged by UN treaties (10) - not conditioned or compromised by “national circumstances” as proposed in draft GBF target 20. (11)

## Notes and references

1.CBD article 14.1(b), 2.CBD articles 7(c) and 8(l), 3.CBD articles 3, 4(b) and 8(c), 4.CBD article 20.2, 5.CBD articles 7(c) and 8(l), 6.CBD articles 8(f) and 8(i), 7.CBD article 7(b), 8.CBD article 22.1, 9.GBF targets 14 and 15, 10.CBD article 22.1, 11.GBF target 20

# To go forward, not backwards: The links between the SDGs and the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity must include ethical and empowering population policies to accelerate the pace of progress.

*Nina Jatana, Population Matters*

2020 was billed as the 'Super Year' for nature yet our global goals and targets for human well-being and nature have failed us. It is now acknowledged that none of the principle Aichi targets will be met and the Sustainable Development Goals are progressing painfully slowly, even reversing in some cases. There are many reasons for this, but failure to address human population growth is key among them. In the case of biodiversity loss, it is recognised as an indirect driver in all major recent reports, including the Living Planet Report 2020, Fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook and by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. IPBES states clearly “changes to the direct drivers of nature deterioration cannot be achieved without **transformative change that simultaneously addresses the indirect drivers.**”

The embedding of environmental goals within the SDGs is right and critically important. Yet, to date, only three out of 21 of the UN's landmark environment and poverty reduction targets have been hit. The current forecast predicts the majority of goals will be missed by 2030 and, due to the pandemic, an additional **71 million people** will have been pushed into extreme poverty in 2020.

Population Matters has conducted an **analysis** of evidence that examines the impact of population growth on all of the 17 Goals. The report reveals how in several cases, progress towards meeting the goals has or soon will be cancelled entirely by population growth leading to greater numbers of people suffering. Some of the targets affected include: numbers using polluting fuels, access to clean water, girls' education, family planning and the number of girls facing genital mutilation. Our analysis also found that population is not simply one of population *growth* occurring where fertility rates are currently high. We are already exceeding the capacity of the Earth to supply our needs and maintain planetary health: the primary driver of that crisis is overconsumption in rich parts of the world where fertility rates are currently relatively low.

The final message is this: the solutions to population are for the most part – but not entirely – already embedded in the SDGs. If we pursue these more actively, we reap all the benefits they bring to individuals and communities, and we help achieve other goals. Solutions to population aren't, and must never be, coercive or in contradiction to people's human rights, and in particular women's rights. They are empowering, positive, and people want them – no poverty, decent education for all, access to modern family planning and women's empowerment.

The 5th Global Biodiversity Outlook has already taken this approach. Their latest report recommends linking SDGs 4 & 5 to the Post 2020 Framework.

We urge Heads of States to heed the assessments of global biodiversity experts and invest and defend the population solutions already embedded in SDGs 1, 3, 4 & 5, and to guarantee their rightful position in the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

# Ghost woman: women who work in small-scale fisheries<sup>1</sup>.

*Gisela Alvarado and Vivienne Solis, CoopeSoliDar RL*

Costa Rica has been a country recognized worldwide for having a very rich marine biodiversity. At the same time, this Central American country also has a strong cultural identity near the sea, and a way of life linked to fishing in its coastal marine areas.

In this sense, it is important to note that, despite the marine conservation efforts carried out by the country, the recognition and opportunities for the people of the sea are still a pending task. The work should mainly be done to recognize the work of fisherwomen and mollusk women, who participate in pre, fishing and post-fishing activities and are fundamental to advance towards a fair and equitable development in the coastal-marine territories of the country.

Fisherwomen are mainly in charge of pre-harvest tasks such as: preparation of bait, ordering of the fishing line (lujado) and preparation of the necessary equipment to capture the product. This pre-fishing activity is rarely recognized in the fisheries value chain. Fisherwomen also fulfill a triple working day that is assumed almost entirely in the case of Costa Rica: they take care of children, elderly, and attend the household chores and in some cases they participate in activities carried out for the well-being of their fishing communities.

The post-harvest work in which also fisherwomen participate are related to cleaning the product, preparing it and vacuum sealing it for its respective sale, also cleaning the boat after harvest and unload the product once at the beach. The work of fisherwomen is of enormous importance for the different value chains of small-scale fisheries where women are also directly involved in the sustainable use of mollusks, also as shrimp processors and peelers. They work in rivers, in seas, in mangroves and lakes.

Towards the future and with the aspiration of a strong global framework for the conservation of biodiversity by the year 2030, we need to move towards justice and equity in the distribution of benefits derived from the conservation and sustainable use of fisher resources. This must be done integrating, recognizing and seeking actions for the decent work for fisherwomen and small-scale mollusk women urgently.

1. We invite you to see a short video that provides additional information on the subject at the following link <https://youtu.be/AorPtroKUnc>



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