

Civil Society joint opening statement

Second meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on post-2020
Rome, Italy

Mr. Chairs,
Delegates,

This statement is read on behalf of all civil society organizations attending OEWG2.

Over a year ago, in Sharm el Sheikh, we embarked on the journey towards a new global biodiversity framework. The reason for this is not only the expiration date of the present strategic plan. It is also an opportunity to change shortcomings of the CBD and its implementation, and agree on a transformational new plan to address the planetary emergency we are in. IPBES tells us we are losing the biodiversity upon which we depend at an unprecedented rate. The Global Biodiversity Framework has to contain the inspiration and the means to halt and reverse that loss. As the zero draft says, the framework needs to galvanize urgent and transformative action across all of society, and we want to see that happen.

Key to success is to improve implementation. So far, the discussions have been largely focused on goals and targets. However, a robust and effective implementation mechanism must be a key element and an integral part of the Kunming package. It must have the power to ensure that the goals and targets are delivered on the ground. A whole of government approach and the means of implementation including resource mobilization and stakeholder engagement, should form an integral part of the framework.

But this week, we will mainly negotiate the targets until 2030 and the 2050 goals. For these, we have the following important points:

Ambition

In light of the current biodiversity crisis, the post-2020 framework must be more ambitious.

If we are serious about bringing transformative change to halt and reverse nature loss, the ambition level of the new framework should be significantly strengthened. Regression compared to the current framework is not acceptable. The maximal ambition level should be set for 2030, not delayed until 2050.

Humans rights and rights of nature

The GBF should embrace and fully integrate a rights-based approach. Ensuring the rights of rightsholder groups including indigenous peoples and local communities, women, peasants and youth as well as the rights of nature, is to recognize the mutual and inter-dependent wellbeing of nature and peoples.

Rights-based, equitable governance of biodiversity requires full respect for the territorial rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities as well as a strong Human Rights framework for the realization of the rights to participation, information, and ensuring safe and effective inclusion of all groups. The rights-based approach is a concept that goes beyond stakeholder participation in decision-making, as it recognizes the distinct rights of rightsholder groups and the risk of unequal power balances. It should reject strict conservation approaches that deny a rights-based approach and rather, recognize and provide clear support for ICCAs and community conservation initiatives.

Gender

We welcome the inclusion of gender responsive approaches as enabling conditions in the zero draft. However, we need gender to be embedded in all targets, otherwise it is simply not implemented. Gender is a transversal issue and it needs to be present all throughout the framework to become a reality.

Root causes

We need to change the mindset of economic growth, profit and over-use of resources that is impulsed by the economic sectors.

As IPBES has amply shown, the main direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss are the unsustainable activities and growing footprint of production and consumption. These drivers have been inadequately addressed by the CBD to date and are not reflected in the Zero Draft. Action targets should include specific policy reforms and regulations actions to that should be taken in key sectors such as - infrastructure, resource extraction, agriculture, fisheries, and urbanization - to reduce their impacts on biodiversity loss.

The post-2020 framework must define clear commitments and actions for these sectors and embed them securely within its target and accountability framework. Addressing drivers should not be buried in other goals or be secondary in our strategic thinking as a cross-cutting element; it should be the main transformative element of the post-2020 framework.

The GBF should also include a firm, progressive target on the redirection and/or phase-out of all perverse incentives and investments that harm biodiversity and transparent, inclusive mechanisms to facilitate a clear shift away from business-as-usual.

Agricultural biodiversity and Sustainable Use

The main threat to biodiversity is industrial agriculture and livestock production. Agricultural biodiversity has only been mentioned under sustainable use but not in the section on addressing threats. What is also missing from the framework is the recognition of smallholder farmer and peasant rights and their biocultural systems, which include their spiritual values, sustainable livelihoods and interaction with the ecosystem.

There is concern that the way that sustainable use is mentioned in the framework fosters increased production - this has troubling implications of leading to overexploitation. It should instead call for an improvement of the sustainability of the use.

Education

Education should be emphasized more in the draft – for all generations because we need understanding about the impact of extraction and consumption on biodiversity, towards transformative education.

Synergies between conventions and equity

Given nature underpins the SDGs, it is vital to promote synergies of the SDGs, climate and other conventions with the CBD to come to effective, fair and inter-generational ecosystem-based approaches for the planet that keep the focus on the diverse values of biodiversity and its sustainable use.

Nature-climate nexus

We support the recognition in the framework that nature is essential for meeting our climate commitments, and that we cannot tackle the biodiversity crisis without action on climate change. Ecosystem-based approaches to address climate change must follow a set of clear principles, including that they are not a substitute for rapid fossil-fuel phase out, they prioritise the protection and restoration of existing carbon-rich ecosystems and they recognise the key role of indigenous peoples and local communities.

New technologies

New technologies proposed as a means to solve problems may cause biodiversity loss. We need a horizon-scanning mechanism for all new technologies being developed that could have detrimental impacts on biodiversity. Then we must ensure that risk assessments are carried out to understand the implications; to assess direct and indirect negative impacts; verify claims for benefits; develop risk assessment guidance and set up regulations and accountability mechanisms based on the precautionary principle.

Species and Ecosystems

We need a framework that will halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030. It must prevent extinctions, recover the abundance and diversity of life, and retain and restore ecosystem integrity, so that all people and nature can thrive. To achieve both of these things we need clear outcome-focused goals and action targets for species and ecosystems.

END paragraph

Civil society has proposals and suggestions to improve the current draft, and make sure that we deliver a strong and impactful post-2020 framework. We stand ready to engage with all delegates at the open-ended working group this week.

The following are the signatory organizations until the moment of reading the statement:

- Action Aid International
- Center for Environmental Justice
- ICCA Consortium
- Natural Justice
- AVAAZ
- Global Forest Coalition
- Japan Civil Network for UNDB
- World Animal Net (WAN)
- Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF)
- SEEDS ACTION NETWORK / SAN Germany
- Born Free Foundation
- Friends of the Earth International
- EcoNexus
- WWF
- Conservation International
- BirdLife International
- The Nature Conservancy
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- Rainforest Foundation Norway
- ETC group
- Friends of the Earth Switzerland
- Pro Natura
- Compassion in World Farming