



SBSTTA 24 Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May

**Agenda Item 7 -Biodiversity and agriculture**

Madam / Mister Chair

This intervention is delivered on behalf of the CBD Alliance and gathers a diverse range of views and proposals from civil society.

We refer to our previous statement and that of Friends of the Earth Europe in February 2021 and wish to emphasise that soils are the world's greatest source of biodiversity, and are of fundamental importance for agricultural biodiversity and food. Soils are complex ecosystems in their own right. They result from long-term processes and need centuries to evolve and develop their full potential.

Soils also store large quantities of carbon. However, using soils for carbon offsetting is not acceptable. All the well-known problems arising from other forms of carbon offsetting apply even more strongly in the case of soil biodiversity.

Soils are being degraded and lost worldwide, mainly due to large-scale industrial agriculture, which relies heavily on inputs of synthetic pesticides and fertilisers. These are highly destructive of soils and must urgently be phased out. Excessive amounts of animal manure must be brought to levels that do not exceed critical loads. We suggest adding this to activity 2.1 in annex II.

Different types of land ownership and tenure have very different impacts on soil biodiversity. Loss of biodiversity and soil degradation is frequently linked to industrial agriculture, which is large-scale, corporate- and export-driven, causing major land-grabbing, with often violent expulsion of small farmers. Hence the vital importance of IPLCs rights and tenure systems, which allow for more cyclical and holistic farming - agroecological approaches in fact. Their management practices, knowledge and land use techniques, of both men and women, must be taken into account for the recovery and maintenance of healthy soils.

**Agroecology** and **agroforestry** should be central to the whole document, as they make a major contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of soil biodiversity;

We suggest making the following amendments to the text:

1. Remove biochar and biosolids from activity 2.4. in Annex II
2. Prioritise ending perverse incentives and subsidies for industrial agriculture that facilitate the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss including soils, as addendums to para 4 of the draft COP decision and point 1.6 of the plan of action in Annex II
3. Add spatial planning, as a new activity 1.12 of Annex II, recognising this can be an important tool to conserve soil biodiversity
4. Include references to CBD decisions III/11 "Conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity" and to V/5 "Agricultural biological diversity: review of phase I of the programme of work and adoption of a multi-year work programme", to make sure these important parts of CBD work don't get lost.

Finally we note the complete absence of any mention or target related to soil in the current draft GBF, a major omission considering its fundamental importance for food, health, biodiversity including agricultural biodiversity and climate.

We therefore suggest inserting a paragraph 2a) into the SBSTTA decision which could read as follows:

“[SBSTTA] Recommends to the Open-ended working group to include a target or element on the conservation and sustainable use of soils in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework”

We would like to ask for the support of Parties to our statement, or to individual points of it, and are happy to supply language on these points.

Thank you