



The simple 30x30 should make us tremble: We must do it right this time!

Vivienne Solís Rivera and Marvin Fonseca Borrás, CoopeSoliDar R.L - Costa Rica

Various opposing visions come together in the context behind the so-called “30x30” proposal that we recognise nowadays in the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as Target 3.

TARGET 3: *Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 percent of terrestrial and inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.*

One vision presents the situation from groups and sectors close to the blue economy; this position is based on values that promote the unsustainable exploitation that we observe today in large-scale tourism, the extraction of gases and hydrocarbons from the seabed, and large-scale aquaculture, among many others.

This has provoked a series of socio-environmental conflicts, with actions that clearly compete with traditional and coastal human cultures and, on many occasions, have not been respectful of the human rights of communities and users that share the territories in question.

A second position brings together sectors and groups driven by a vision of traditional preservation of biodiversity, through the creation of continental and marine protected areas, with the establishment of instruments and measures for the preservation of natural heritage based on target areas. This second position has not been respectful of the communities linked to the protected areas, and the cost of preserving natural resources has even provoked

conflicts and non-compliance with the human rights of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs). Against this backdrop, the so-called “Coalition of High Ambition for Nature and People”, which brought together more than a hundred governments that are Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in spite of doubts and concerns from some governments and civil society groups, achieved the approval of Target 3 and the 30x30.

Given this situation, it is worth highlighting that, as a result of pressure from governments and civil society organisations, the GBF includes a human rights approach to conservation actions and a set of goals that seek to ensure the participation of civil society, the real inclusion of women in biodiversity conservation actions, and respect for the legal instruments that safeguard the human rights of local communities and indigenous territories.

In contrast to the Aichi Targets, which were not achieved, the alliance of economic groups, traditional conservation groups, non-governmental organisations radically environmental, and governments (committed to economic sectors and large environmental organisations), may make us think that in the coming years we will see an accelerated creation of marine and terrestrial protected areas. However, if it is not possible to ensure compliance with the safeguards for IPLCs (such as: Convention 169, Free, Prior and Informed Consent, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, a Call to Action, among other legal instruments and position papers, and now Target 3 with its vision of respect for the human rights of IPLCs), the near future scenario will be one of conflict and the goals of ensuring the conservation of global marine diversity will not be achieved.

The Global Biodiversity Framework gives us a new opportunity, but this time we must do it right, otherwise we all lose, and there will be no turning back.



Source: CoopeSoliDar R.L.

Fair and equitable benefit sharing for use of DSI, without compromising sovereign rights

Nithin Ramakrishnan, Third World Network

One of the most important breakthroughs of COP15 is an explicit agreement to share the benefits arising from the use of digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources. The relevant Decision (1) states, “Also agrees that the benefits from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources should be shared fairly and equitably.”

Parties also decided “to establish, as part of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, a multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, including a global fund.”

There is also clear recognition that any monetary and non-monetary benefits should primarily be used to support conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and benefit Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs).

A fair, transparent, inclusive, participatory and time-bound process will work out the details and functioning of this mechanism which will be finalised at COP16, to be held in Türkiye in 2024. An ad hoc open-ended working group will undertake this work and make recommendations to COP16.

Notably, the approach set out in the decision is explicitly agreed upon without prejudice to national access and benefit sharing measures. Countries like Brazil and India have national legislation which already covers the use of DSI and they are looking at possibilities of increasing the efficiency of such national mechanisms.

The multilateral mechanism therefore will be in addition to such national mechanisms. These countries want the national and multilateral

mechanisms to be mutually supportive such that gaps in the access and benefit sharing national mechanisms will be filled, ensuring the flow of benefits from scientific progress and its application to the public.

Details are still to be worked out, with crucial issues contained in an Annex, such as trigger points for benefit sharing, contribution to the fund, technology transfer, relationship between national systems and multilateral mechanisms, principles relating to data storage or sharing of issues, etc. These “issues for further consideration” will be taken up by the ad hoc open-ended working group.

In this regard, three important tasks have been requested from the Secretariat:

I. To compile lessons learnt from other international funding mechanisms, in particular funds relating to access and benefit sharing regimes.

II. To commission a study to analyse the benefit sharing options based on certain criteria set out in the decision.

III. To commission a study on the options for revenue generating measures at different points along the value chain, the feasibility of their implementation and their cost-benefit ratio.

In summary, the DSI solution will still have to be elaborated, with important intersessional work to come, starting with a submission of views on the “issues for further consideration”. Nonetheless, the fair and equitable benefit-sharing objective of the Convention has been so far successfully safeguarded.

(1) <https://bit.ly/40LbbiV>

Outcomes of COP 15: Synbio, techno-fixes and false solutions need to be challenged nationally

Sabrina Masinjila, African Centre for Biodiversity

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and related decisions adopted at COP 15 under the aegis of the CBD in Montreal, in December 2023, comprise a mixed bag of proposed measures to address the biodiversity and converging climate and other crises without addressing the systematic drivers for these crises. Outcomes in relation to new and emerging technologies for living modified organisms (LMOs) such as synthetic biology made little progress. While a participatory process for horizon scanning, monitoring, and assessment of technological developments in synthetic biology was agreed to, this will only take place during the intersessional period and with no guarantee for a continuation process. Further, the lack of inclusion of synthetic biology and new and emerging technologies under Target 17 of the GBF itself, is a glaring omission as regards halting biodiversity loss from the application of these technologies, especially in food and agriculture. Overall, the GBF does not include the

critical need for technology assessment and the application of a precautionary approach especially to unproven technologies.

Despite crucial gains made with the inclusion of agroecology in Target 10 of the GBF dealing with agriculture, reference is also made to sustainable intensification, which may include mono-crop farming systems reliant on genetic engineering including synthetic biology applications and new and emerging technologies that are in the pipeline. Certainly, these are not excluded.

The pushback against false solutions and technofixes is imperative, particularly as Parties embark on revising their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) in the ensuing years. It will be extremely important for civil society in Africa to campaign for appropriate responses to the multiple challenges facing smallholder production that is democratic, socially just, and ecologically sustainable.

Agriculture at COP15

Helena Paul, Econexus

Agriculture is a major driver of biodiversity loss and should have been a priority for the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). However, the text of Target 10 on agriculture merely lists contradictory approaches: “sustainable intensification, agroecological and other innovative approaches contributing to the resilience and long-term efficiency and productivity of these production systems and to food security.”

To stop the destructive impact of agriculture on biodiversity, we must end largescale, intensive industrial monocultures, often based on genetically modified crops and using large quantities of industrial fertiliser and pesticides, for the mass production of animal feed for export. This is the basis of a global food system destructive to both biodiversity and human health.

At the same time, we must protect smallholder/IPLCs agriculture which feeds and provides livelihoods to millions of people. It is also where agricultural biodiversity is preserved and generated, while industrial agriculture destroys agricultural biodiversity by promoting few species and

varieties.

However, huge imbalances of power exist between those who promote large-scale industrial agriculture and Indigenous Peoples and smallholder farmers, especially the latter, who often have no land rights and little influence. By contrast, industrial agriculture is often strongly supported by the countries which now depend on the foreign currency it generates.

At the other end of long corporate supply chains are the food merchants, supermarkets and others, that promote cheap, long-lasting, mass-produced, packaged food, often full of fat, salt and sugar; addictive food that is marketed worldwide, with profound negative effects on human health including obesity and diabetes.

This food system that is so destructive to biodiversity and human health needs urgent change, even though the challenges are immense. But Target 16 of the GBF leaves “consumers” to fight for sustainable consumption alone, without government support.

“Nature Positive” was problematic – but is its absence from the GBF sufficient to prevent harmful offsetting?

Nele Marien, Friends of the Earth International

Before COP 15, there was much hype about the concept of “Nature Positive”. A coalition of big NGOs, business organisations and mostly northern governments pushed for it as important for biodiversity, “something equivalent to the 1.5° degrees in climate”. Yet, other organisations (1) raised severe (2) concerns (3): the concept reflected a dangerous offsetting mindset. If more nature gets restored than destroyed, that would count as “Nature Positive”, independent of the amount of ecosystem destruction, the delayed timeframes or the lack of serious indicators.

As more actors –including several developing countries– raised concerns, in the end, it was not considered crucial to the Chinese Presidency’s take-it-or-leave-it package. This is definitely a victory for those who opposed it.

Yet the basic premises that formed part of this proposal, are still present in the final GBF. While Target 1 talks of “bring(ing) the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030”, the related draft indicator looks only at the overall extent of natural ecosystems, leaving “destruction and offsetting” as a viable option. No specific regulation prohibits the destruction of

areas of high biodiversity importance. No indicator asks for the extent of ecosystem destruction, nor a justification. Worse, the provisionally approved “Long Term Action Plan on Mainstreaming” is full of references to offsetting mechanisms.

The last decade has shown that without a strict prohibition of ecosystem destruction for profitable activities, companies very easily get approval to go ahead, as long as there is a restoration or conservation commitment. However, practice has shown that such offsetting rarely reaches the desired quality.

The exclusion of the “Nature Positive” concept from the GBF shows that several actors understand these concerns. However, offsetting is still the main policy proposal to allow for unabated economic development in most parts of the world, much to the detriment of biodiversity everywhere. And there is nothing in the GBF to stop this.

(1)<https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/57395/what-wrong-nature-positive/>

(2) <https://www.foei.org/nature-positive/>

(3) <https://www.gybn.org/nature-positive>

Is the GBF equitable and transformative?

Lim Li Lin, Third World Network

Equity is central to biodiversity protection and hence should be adequately reflected in the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Most of the world’s remaining biodiversity is in developing countries, and the burden for action lies heavily on them. At the same time, the developed countries pushed strongly for increased planning, monitoring, reporting and review obligations, while far from adequately meeting the demands of developing countries on the quantum of and mechanism for financial flows.

As such, entrenched North–South fights pervaded the COP15 negotiations, with developing countries insisting on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. There was a strong demand by developing countries for developed

countries to meet their legally binding obligations to provide financial resources to them. However, the relevant GBF target only aims to increase resources from developed to developing countries to at least US\$ 20 billion per year by 2025, and to at least US\$ 30 billion per year by 2030, far short of the developing countries’ call for at least US\$ 100 billion annually.

COP15 also failed to establish a dedicated Global Biodiversity Fund that more than 70 developing countries had asked for. A compromise proposal was to set up a Trust Fund under the Global Environment Facility (GEF) instead. However, this is seen by most developing countries as inadequate, as financial flows through the GEF are beset with problems.

A last-minute further compromise introduced a sunset clause in 2030 to the new Trust Fund under the GEF, unless otherwise decided by the COP. It also opened the door for future consideration of a stand-alone Global Biodiversity Fund under the authority of the COP.

In contrast, the enhanced multidimensional mechanism on planning, monitoring, reporting and review that was finally agreed includes elements that are much enlarged from the CBD's requirements of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and national reports. Therefore, equity, in terms of providing for the fair sharing of the burden of actions and provision of the means of implementation, remains elusive.

Southern justice-oriented groups also condemned the fact that the GBF was not transformational, and therefore not ambitious, as it does not address the root causes of the biodiversity crisis in a systemic way to bring about real transformational change.

While there were major gains in the GBF targets on the recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), on gender equality, on participation which includes access to justice by IPLCs, and the protection of environmental human rights defenders, all these could be systematically undermined by the failure of the GBF to seriously tackle the systemic issues driving biodiversity loss. Instead, governments seem to have ceded their public responsibilities to the private sector.

The target on regulating the corporate business and finance sectors is miserably weak without

mandatory requirements, accountability measures or legal responsibility for damage done. Agribusiness interests were also behind the sidelining of the precautionary approach in relation to new technologies.

The GBF has also opened the door wide to corporate and market interests, inviting private, blended and "innovative" finance to provide financial resources, without any safeguards. This helps developed countries to avoid their legal obligations under the CBD to provide new and additional financial resources.

Market-based mechanisms such as biodiversity offsets and credits, and offsetting approaches such as "nature-based solutions" are included. In addition, the governance of the GEF Trust Fund for the GBF would be open to influence by the unaccountable private sector and philanthropic foundations. Private sector "commitments" on action also provide another escape hatch for governments to avoid their CBD obligations.

Yet, the crux of the issue remains unaddressed. Resource extraction from developing countries that began since the colonial era and which continues today, driven by corporations, rich countries and global elites have caused the biodiversity crisis. Developed countries have become rich, and overconsumption by the rich world is causing biodiversity destruction in poor countries. The fundamental issue of justice and equitable fair shares regarding the sustainable use of biodiversity has, regrettably, largely been ignored in the GBF.

Human rights in the GBF: a new paradigm for advancing implementation and accountability

Ana Di Pangraco, Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN)

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) brings about a paradigm shift as it moves towards a human rights-based, gender-responsive and socially equitable biodiversity conservation (1). This achievement would not have been possible without the hard work and articulated advocacy of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), women and youth groups, and numerous civil society organisations (CSOs). Improvements remain in the GBF monitoring framework, still a work in progress, as it currently lacks cultural, economic and gender-differentiated indicators.

The GBF does leave the door open to some dangerous approaches/issues, for example, with the recognition of "sustainable intensification" in Target 10 on agriculture, anodyne provisions on techno-fixes and some instruments that fail to address the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity decline, such as biodiversity offsets and credits, risking false solutions to the ecological crisis.

The recognition of a human rights-based approach (HRBA) in the GBF positions people as rights-holders. It can contribute to putting an end to the trade-offs and negative impacts on human

rights that can derive from biodiversity actions, plans and policies. It can also lead donors, for instance, to increase their focus on enabling duty-bearers –States, business– to respond to the claims of right-holders, and to the empowerment of the latter, making sure their fundamental rights are fulfilled. A HRBA provides tools, based on international human rights laws and standards, to IPLCs, CSOs, women and youth groups to tackle the aforementioned risks that might arise from implementation of the GBF and, ultimately, build a more inclusive, just and sustainable approach to safeguarding biodiversity.

As a key instrument for defining national priorities and modalities, National Biodiversity Strategies provide important opportunities to further advance the recognition and integration of human rights in biodiversity action. Work at the national level is now crucial and requires capacity building and awareness raising for the active involvement of IPLCs, CSOs, youth and women. They need to be present and follow closely these institutional

spaces to ensure national targets and activities respond to the real needs of communities and territories, to the common good and not the concentrated interests of a few; demanding authorities a true will to implement the GBF and hold them accountable.

(1) The GBF recognizes the human right to a healthy environment declared by Resolution 76/300 of the United Nations General Assembly; it enshrines the principle of intergenerational equity; whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches; and includes a human rights-based approach under the considerations for its implementation. It embeds a gender-responsive approach in which all women and girls have equal opportunities and capacity to contribute to all three CBD objectives. The GBF also states full recognition and respect for the rights to land, resources and territories of IPLCs, their culture and traditional knowledge, and full protection of environmental human rights defenders.

Our strengths, their weaknesses: Youth reflections on the outcomes of COP15

Global Youth Biodiversity Network

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) came with a mix of feelings for the youth following COP15. There are many victories reflected in the framework that youth have strongly advocated for, but we also express our deep alarm at a framework which threatens to maintain the unsustainable and unjust systems that have caused the biodiversity crisis.

The GBF fails to bridge the financial gap and to adequately provide the means of implementation for developing countries. For us this shows the lack of commitment to truly halt and reverse biodiversity loss, accept historical responsibilities and pay the colonial and intergenerational debt.

The framework features weak language and false solutions for biodiversity, including biodiversity offsets and credits and nature-based solutions that lack clear safeguards. The lack of strong calls to regulate businesses and hold them accountable as key drivers of biodiversity loss is likewise disappointing.

But focusing on the negative aspects of the framework without acknowledging the hard-won

victories from us, the right-holders, would be a mistake. It is thanks to years of preparation, mobilization, consultation, advocacy and campaigning that many Parties listened to us and supported our collective calls for a rights-based GBF.

The much-needed recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), women and youth to inclusive participation and access to justice and information is a huge milestone for international biodiversity policy, as is the long-overdue call for the protection of environmental defenders. And we are proud that this framework has taken a significant step for future generations in its recognition of intergenerational equity.

Youth will continue to push, to voice, to act, guided by our values of inclusion, justice and empowerment of the grassroots. There is much more work to do, and we hope that the implementation of this global biodiversity agreement won't disappoint yet another generation.

What did COP15 bring for women and girls?

Amelia Arreguin, UNCBD Women's Caucus Coordinator

Last December at CBD COP15 in Montreal, Canada, women made history!

After several years of collaborative advocacy, for the first time, a Rio Convention adopted a stand-alone target on gender equality, among

other gender-related provisions, as part of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and a robust Post2020 Gender Plan of Action (GPA) (1).

Section C - Gender (h) Successful implementation of the Framework will depend on ensuring **gender equality and empowerment of women and girls**, and on reducing inequalities

Target 22 - Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and **gender-responsive** representation and participation in decision-making, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge, as well as by **women and girls**, children and youth, and persons with disabilities and ensure the full protection of **environmental human rights defenders**.

Target 23 - Ensure **gender equality** in the implementation of the Framework through a **gender-responsive approach**, where all women and girls have **equal opportunity and capacity to contribute** to the three objectives of the Convention, including by **recognizing their equal rights and access to land and natural resources and their full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership** at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity

In parallel with those significant gains, other critical decisions were adopted back in Montreal, such as on resource mobilisation, on capacity-building and development and other one on mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review. These instruments are potentially relevant to ensure gender justice and constitute a significant step toward equity for people and nature.

For that:

- Gender-responsive resource mobilisation is crucial and ensures women's direct access to resources.
- The contributions of women and girls to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use must be recognised and effectively measured.

- All women and girls, in their diversities, should be empowered and their capacities developed to effectively engage in the collaborative implementation of the Kunming Montreal GBF and its associated instruments.

Women and girls from all around the world are not disempowered victims, but rather active shapers, guardians and defenders of biodiversity, and we deserve Target 23, Target 22 and the GPA to be a reality in all territories.

Now is the moment to unfold them and implement them effectively and immediately.

Faiths at COP 15

Grove Harris, Temple of Understanding

Faiths showed up in force at the recent Montreal Biodiversity summit, after lengthy preparatory engagement through the Faiths at COP 15 Coalition. A collective multifaith document was delivered to Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary to the

convention, in a constructive meeting where she called faiths towards responsibilities in implementation. Faith traditions are in this effort, inside and outside of the United Nations process.

The main points are as follows:

- Our vision: The Web of Life

As people of faith, who believe in the sacredness of all life, we believe the text needs to reflect the worldviews which are grounded in interconnectedness, interdependence and relationship and speak to the sacred wisdom and experiences of many people.

- Ambition

The Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) needs to reflect the current and impending biodiversity crisis and increase ambition by addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss, in a fair and equitable way for the benefit of present and future generations and all life on earth.

- Rights-Based Approach

We believe that the framework will not and cannot succeed without the knowledge, expertise, and active participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) and other historically marginalised groups.

- Cross-Cutting Issues

Policy coherence and synchronisation of programmes across interconnected processes are essential.

- Production and Extraction

The GBF needs to better reflect and address the overwhelming impact that industrial agriculture, food systems and fossil fuel industries have in driving the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem destruction.

- Implementation mechanisms need much more detail, ambition, and integration.

- *More information at:*
<https://www.biodiversity.faiht/policy>
- *Temple of Understanding post on outcomes:* <https://templeofunderstanding.org/cop-15-outcome/>
- *Media coverage:* <https://www.biodiversity.faiht/media>
- *Faith event recordings:*
<http://bit.ly/40MsK21>
- <https://www.ncronline.org/earthbeat/politics/cop15-multifaith-coalition-delivers-priorities-un-biodiversity-chief>

A second issue of this ECO special edition post COP15 will become available soon.

Check the CBDA webinar that took place last February and aimed to inform a very broad group of people from civil society, involved to a greater or lesser extent in the Convention on Biological Diversity process at different levels, on the results of COP15 in Montreal. Recording available at: <https://youtu.be/sT3EmlGoOLA>

And read CBDA closing statement at COP15 at: <https://cbd-alliance.org/en/2022/cbda-cop15-closing-statement>

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