



Urgent course correction needed for a planet in crisis

CBD Alliance SBI 7 Closing statement

This SBI began with a warning that Africa bears the brunt of biodiversity loss. Home to 25 per cent of the world's biodiversity, it has lost about 24 per cent of its species. Vast forested areas in Europe are in flames, damaging ecosystems irrecoverably. Far worse forest fires raged in the Amazon last year, with many areas fragmented by industrial logging or conversion to pastures and intensive agriculture. In Asia, forests are lost to mining - often meant for "green" transitions and oil palm plantations. These losses are unfolding as Southeast Asia braces for a potentially record-breaking "super El Niño" in the coming year, with unusually high Pacific Ocean temperatures expected to intensify heat, drought and extreme weather.

In every corner of the world, Indigenous Peoples and local communities bear the brunt of this extraction and collapse. However, very few discussions during this meeting directly addressed the underlying causes and drivers, destructive industries, and the macro-economic realities that facilitate these outcomes and perpetuate inequities.

While **mainstreaming** should concretely identify ways to put biodiversity and rights first in all decision-making, no action to effectively ensure that biodiversity is not destroyed has been proposed. Sharing more best practices will not reverse the power imbalance between biodiversity and economic interests.

The **Global Review** should not only clearly reflect whether the GBF is being implemented and if the necessary support for it is provided, but to be truly useful it needs to also assess whether the GBF itself is addressing the biodiversity crisis adequately. We should not be accelerating its implementation if it is heading in the wrong direction. Therefore, a review

of the biodiversity-effectiveness of each policy measure under the GBF needs to be undertaken.

Substantial work remains to be undertaken for the global review. The review should have clear and concrete processes, including dialogues amongst countries, and with rightsholders, on the implementation of the GBF, and the necessary actions required to ensure meaningful outcomes.

The **resource mobilisation** agenda exposed fundamental disagreements over responsibility for providing biodiversity finance. Efforts to broaden the contributor base must not dilute developed country obligations under Article 20, circumvent Convention procedures, or use externally-developed criteria to redefine which countries should provide or receive finance.

Discussions on the institutional structure to operate the permanent financial mechanism also remain unresolved: any mechanism and its trustee must be under the authority of the COP and provide new, additional, predictable, adequate, non-debt creating and accessible finance, including direct access for developing countries, Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

At the same time, mobilising more finance is only part of the challenge. SBI's work has also highlighted how harmful incentives and financial flows, debt and fiscal constraints negatively impact biodiversity, and the need for tax justice, financial



alignment of private financial flows with the GBF. COP17 must address both sides of this equation: fulfilling public finance obligations and changing the financial and economic systems that continue to drive biodiversity loss.

On **digital sequence information** on genetic resources (DSI), the need for accountability and transparency to Parties is paramount. This applies to users of DSI, databases and all other actors involved in the administration, operationalization and governance of the multilateral mechanism and the Cali Fund. Potential conflicts of interest of experts, consultants and other service providers should be avoided or managed to maintain the integrity of outputs and processes.

As biological and genetic materials, and data/information generated therefrom are sovereign assets of Parties and their Indigenous Peoples and local communities, stringent action is needed against biopiracy, including digital biopiracy. Two years on from decision 16/2, there

has been limited or no actions by databases or database-hosting Parties to address the transparency gaps in databases, or to curb the inequitable extraction of DSI from the South to the North.

History should tell us about the dangers of hype and the danger of focusing on symptoms rather than underlying causes. **Synthetic biology** is a resource-intensive undertaking, and yet some Parties block an essential ingredient that could help ensure that resources are spent wisely, namely horizon-scanning, assessment and monitoring. Investing in thoroughly examining reliability and effectiveness and hoped-for benefits of technologies and applications, as well as assessing risk and wider impacts, and more appropriate alternatives, is essential. The capacity to do so is at the heart of sovereign decision-making and policy development on synthetic biology. Without a clear and committed precautionary approach, synthetic biology will be yet another factor undermining biodiversity.

When Development Overlaps with Biodiversity Matters

Azka Syamila, Action for Ecology and People Emancipation

Mainstreaming biodiversity within and across sectors is the key to the implementation of Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, particularly in planning and managing development that drives land-use change, such as the development of extractive industry. Target 1 calls on Parties to ensure that all areas are under participatory, integrated and biodiversity inclusive spatial planning. Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) provide spatial datasets that help governments and stakeholders to identify and map where conservation priorities lie. However, one of the main challenges in implementing this target is when extractive industry's concessions have been allocated without consideration of biodiversity matters, resulting in overlaps between extractive industry's concessions and KBAs.

In Indonesia, for example, overlaps between extractive industry's concessions and KBAs are escalating. Since nickel demand started rising for electric vehicle battery amidst global agenda for energy transition, new nickel mines have proliferated across Sulawesi and North Maluku, along with new smelting facilities. Sulawesi and

North Maluku are regions bearing outstanding biodiversity with high endemism. According to KBA datasets, Sulawesi and North Maluku has 206 KBAs, 28 of which overlap with more than a hundred nickel mine concessions, with overlapping areas up to 152,000 hectares. In Southeast Sulawesi, endemic dwarf lowland buffalo (*Bubalus depressicornis*) occurred repeatedly inside nickel mine concessions, which happen to intersect with KBAs. Even though KBAs are not legally protected, these phenomena have raised concerns in habitat loss and fragmentation. This situation, then, affects broader irony: minerals needed to accelerate energy transition are being sourced in ways that undermine biodiversity.

What happened in Indonesia underscores the importance of biodiversity mainstreaming in planning and managing development, and the urgency to accelerate the identification and further protection of biodiversity-rich areas. The overlaps between biodiversity-rich areas with development agenda also need to be addressed, preferably before, but also after the development takes place.

On [“actors other than national governments”]

When you speak to everyone, you speak to no one

*Xilonem Clarke, Forest Peoples Programme &
Josefa Tauli, Global Youth Biodiversity Network*

After its humble origins in a decision on PMRR on communicating voluntary commitments, the term “actors other than national Governments” has started making its way into SBSTTA and SBI decisions on Item 3. It has slowly proliferated across several SBI draft decisions, a seductive alternative to difficult paragraphs on long days. **Unfortunately, it creates more problems that it solves.** We are already foreseeing decisions that are confusing, vague, imprecise, invisibilizing for marginalized groups, and that speak to everyone and no one in particular. Our policies risk becoming invitations without an addressee, a shout into the void, a shapeless blob.

In drafting the KMGBF, Parties deliberately chose language to distinguish the specific ways that different actors, groups of people, and institutions should be involved in its implementation. They did the complicated work of identifying (and agreeing!) where Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women, youth, the private sector, academia, and others fit in our global plan. The Framework laid out the distinct roles, rights, contributions, areas of expertise, and it recognized that without their participation, the biodiversity crisis cannot be addressed. “Actors other than national Governments” risks undoing some of this good work.

Behind these taxonomies are real people doing the work. They are rights-holders, experts in their own right, with different needs, priorities and roles.

Governments cannot do this alone. The biodiversity crisis demands *collective* action. The Framework needs the Indigenous Peoples who care for their lands and waters, the environmental defenders on the frontlines against illegal logging and mining, the youth who mobilize, the women who farm, the funders, the observers at the CBD providing advice to Parties. If we are to address the still growing biodiversity crisis, we will require the knowledge, networks, creativity, sweat and good will of all of these actors to be brought to the table.

The task ahead

Bracketing of “actors other than national Governments” was the right thing to do, and delegates have been given some homework by the co-chairs: go back to your constituencies and your capitals, speak to the youth, the women, the Indigenous Peoples, the local communities, the persons with disabilities, the real people you represent. Understand their distinct needs, priorities, roles, and expertise. And come to Yerevan ready to craft decisions that resonate with them, that speak to them, that recognize them. Not decisions that cover these groups and Parties in a thick fog that hides the path to achieving our vision of living in harmony with nature.

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Doing less harm is also GBF implementation

The Vjosë-Narta Test: When Governments Choose Greater Harm

Ermelinda Mahmutaj,

Environmental Centre for Development, Education and Networking (EDEN), Albania

Despite activities spurred by the adoption of the KMGBF in 2022, the world still isn't on track to reach the 2030 targets. More needs to be done: more efforts to update the NBSAPs, to implement them, more collaboration and more resources. But "doing less" can be just as important: less damage to nature, less pollution, less harmful subsidies.

Albania, a vibrant Mediterranean country, is an example of a country that still holds unspoiled nature. It is home to the Vjosa, one of the last free-flowing rivers in Europe, protected as a National Park. At the river's mouth lies one of the country's most valuable coastal ecosystems: the Vjosë-Narta protected landscape, an extraordinary mosaic of lagoons, wetlands, dunes, saltmarshes and riverine forests. It provides habitat to many endangered and endemic species, including flamingos, monk seals and loggerhead sea turtles. Its sandy shores protect an inland lagoon, a major migratory site for hundreds of rare birds. It is also a living landscape shaped by local tradition. More than 20 villages remain closely connected to agriculture, livestock, fishing, coastal tourism, beekeeping and other ecosystem-dependent activities.

While implementing the GBF, it is expected from the Albanian government to recognize the importance of protecting Vjosë-Narta. The area is of major conservation importance at the European level: it has been proposed for the Emerald Network under the Council of Europe's Bern Convention and as a future Natura 2000 site. As Albania works towards EU membership, it must also align its national legislation with EU environmental law.

Unfortunately, the opposite is happening! In 2024, the government changed Albania's nature

protection legislation legalizing high-end tourism development in protected areas, under the concept of 'tourism of excellence'. Influential American and Qatari billionaires have seized the opportunity. Now, Vjosë-Narta risks to be turned into an exclusive luxury real estate, and its fragile ecosystems destroyed. This case signals the potential fate of all protected areas in the country. While the government consented, citizens wonder who will benefit.

As governments meet in Nairobi to review progress on the KMGBF, Vjosë-Narta tests what implementation really means. Global biodiversity targets ultimately succeed or fail through national planning and investment decisions. The real test comes when highly biodiverse areas face major development pressures and governments decide to do more damage, rather than less.

Turning a highly valuable ecosystem, accessible for everyone into a luxury resort, accessible for wealthy few has caused citizens to take to the streets in protest. Albanian CSOs have called the Parliament to immediately repeal the 2024 protected areas legal amendments, adopt a new law through a transparent and participatory process, and impose a moratorium of all development permits in protected areas until alignment with EU and IUCN standards is in place.

It remains unclear if this destruction of valuable nature can be stopped. What is clear, is that Albania's nature legislation goes against KMGBF targets 3 and 14. The Vjosë-Narta case also carries a wider lesson: global biodiversity commitments will fail if short-term economic interests of a few block the long-term sustainable developments for many.

Biodiversity finance cannot come from the sale of “permits to destroy”

Mirna Ines Fernández Pradel, Third World Network

A lot of the discussions in SBI7 have revolved around the various biodiversity finance mechanisms that are proposed with the aim of closing the biodiversity finance gap.

While it is true that biodiversity conservation and restoration are still underfunded, especially in countries in the Global South, global efforts to raise the finance is needed to achieve the global biodiversity targets cannot overlook the impacts that these finance mechanisms have on ecosystems and human rights.

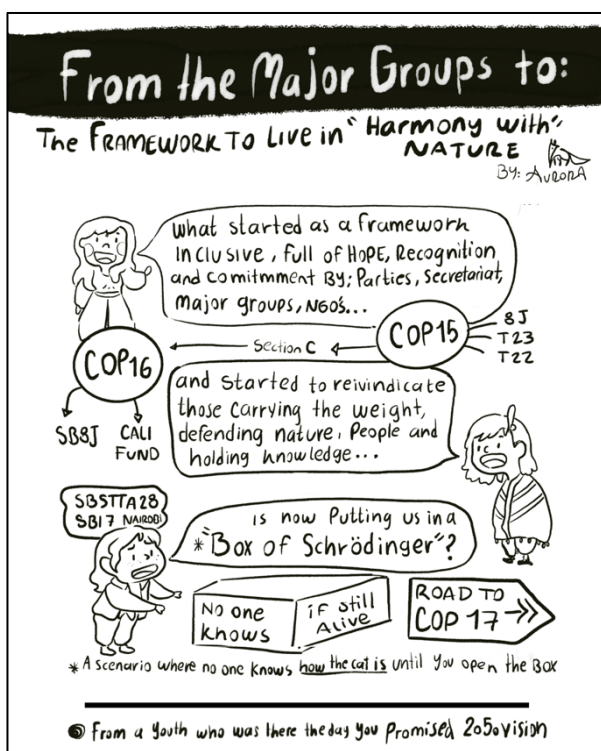
Carbon and biodiversity offsetting have been used for decades to compensate for carbon emissions and biodiversity damage caused elsewhere, and then tied to claims such as “net zero” or “no net loss”.

In the mitigation hierarchy approach, offsetting is the last step that should be pursued after all efforts to avoid, minimize and restore are exhausted. But in reality, companies that destroy biodiversity usually jump straight to offsetting because it is cheaper than

investing in cleaner technologies that cause less destruction.

Worldwide, offsetting projects have numerous documented problems concerning baseline-manipulation, additionality, leakage, and permanence; besides large scandals portraying phantom offsets and human rights violations. None of the major internationally agreed frameworks for payments for ecosystem services (PES), green bonds, nature-based solutions (NbS), nor biodiversity credits impose a blanket ban on offsetting. Therefore, all these financial mechanisms can potentially rely on the sale of permits to further destroy ecosystems.

Trillions of US dollars flow every year towards biodiversity-destructive activities. The main priority in the mobilization of global biodiversity finance should be based on the redirection of these perverse finance flows, not on the few millions committed to mechanisms that have proven ineffective for long enough.



Read the views from the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB), the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), and the CBD Women's Caucus on the terminology:

"actors other than national Governments"

through the QR code below.



This is a living proposal as of August 10, and consultations are continuing.

AURORA

* This is not a "practical decision" - especially in a place debating the difference between engagement/participation...

IPLCS Justice youth section C T22 T23
women

The diagram is a hand-drawn sketch titled "THE BUBBLE OF 'OTHERS THAN...'" at the top. It is divided into several sections by curved lines. On the left, a section labeled "ACTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS" contains a vertical stack of circles labeled T1 through T11. To the right of this, a section labeled "EXPERTISE" contains three stylized human figures labeled "DSI", "PMR", and "CEPA". Further right, a section labeled "PRIORITIES" contains a vertical stack of circles labeled T1 through T11. To the right of this, a section labeled "FINANCE" contains a vertical stack of circles labeled T1 through T11. On the far right, a section labeled "OTHERS THAN..." contains a vertical stack of circles labeled T1 through T11. Various other elements are scattered throughout the diagram, including question marks in circles, the phrase "No Data" written multiple times, and a small illustration of a person at a computer screen in the bottom right corner.

IPLCS Justice youth section C T22 T23
women

COP17, Armenia

Where is the will?

Where is the JUSTICE?

where is the HOPE?

IF WE ARE NO LONGER HERE