

Peoples' response to the High-Level Summit on Biodiversity

The [UN Biodiversity Summit](#) that will take place on September 30, 2020, will draw the world's attention to the biodiversity crisis and the urgent need to take action. However, we are concerned that it lacks time for meaningful dialogue and does not ensure adequate participation of civil society, in particular those groups who are most affected by the destruction of nature and who play a key role in preserving biodiversity.

We denounce the fact that there has been no democratic process for civil society to nominate speakers that can reflect our voice. We condemn the fact that indigenous peoples, local communities, women, youth, customary and indigenous farming systems, and small-scale food producers are not adequately represented through their organizations, while the Summit provides a prominent role to some of the world's biggest corporations and financial actors who are among those most responsible for biodiversity destruction.

We remind states that they have obligations to protect biodiversity, but also they must ensure the realization of human rights. This requires them to ensure effective participation of people and communities as rights holders and to ensure accountability of states regarding their commitments.

We also urge states to engage in good faith in the process towards an ambitious Global Biodiversity Framework which is compatibly derived from all the CBD provisions as a direct tool to implement - not just some other cherry-picked voluntary targets, but - the due totality of the legal CBD obligations - under the auspices of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD). The upcoming summit must not pre-empt this process, but support upcoming negotiations and agreements at the CBD, which is the dedicated UN space.

To overcome the current deep ecological crises, the new Global Biodiversity Framework needs to address the root causes of biodiversity loss and pave the way towards truly transformative change that:

Is based on the commitments that states have agreed to under the CBD, the fundamental principles of environmental law and the international human rights framework, including also that: the CBD legally obliges its parties to "regulate or manage" "activities which have or are likely to have significant adverse impacts on the conservation and sustainable use" (1) "to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage" to biodiversity "regardless of where their effects occur", within or "beyond the limits of national jurisdiction" "within or outside protected areas".(2)

Sets a deadline for divesting from biodiversity harm, and redirects perverse incentives. It makes no sense to ask for increased investments in biodiversity conservation if governments continue to invest far more funding in subsidies, fiscal incentives and infrastructure and other projects that harm biodiversity.

In addition, current unsustainable consumption and production, a major root cause of biodiversity loss, cannot be addressed by voluntary approaches. What is therefore needed is systemic change that includes strong policy measures backed up by the requisite regulatory measures.

Is centered around a strong rights-based approach that: protects, respects and fulfills all human rights, in particular the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities as well as peasants and other small-scale food producers; realizes the right to a healthy environment; recognizes the rights of Mother Earth to exist and flourish with diversity and recognizes ecocide as an international crime.

Creates enabling conditions and reduces hurdles for the implementation of food sovereignty, agro-ecology, small-scale family farming and fisheries, and local small-scale initiatives in ways that also enhance inherent agricultural biodiversity within peasant seeds, livestock breeds and local fisheries.

Includes proper and effective monitoring based on the whole of CBD obligations, rights-based review and accountability systems, harmonized at CBD level, taking into account the capacities of developing countries and providing the support they may need, to make sure implementation is effective to prevent the escalation of global biodiversity loss and degradation. These monitoring systems shall also include critical review by non-State public interest actors and include implementation of Article 20 of the CBD (3).

We've tried all the market-based and voluntary approaches since Rio and the evidence of failure is piling up. Now is the time for strong public investment which can be generated through redistribution of wealth by time-tested means – taxes and payments for ecological debts. We cannot afford to repeat past mistakes:

Blanket targets for increasing areas under protection will not halt biodiversity loss. Protected areas have not prevented the acceleration of biodiversity loss so far, but have rather channelled the overall growing biodiversity-degrading impacts of our life and overconsumption into other parts of Earth that have already beforehand suffered more from degradation. Protected areas have often been badly designed and poorly governed, based on the priorities of opportunistic funding, PR value and top-down governance that has harmed local communities and violated human rights rather than promoting equity. Their value has been further undermined as we have seen in the exponential growth of exploitation and extraction that occur in parallel.

Increasing evidence shows that indigenous territories and community-managed lands and forests are more effective for biodiversity conservation than protected areas. Any action for biodiversity, including the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework must thus place indigenous peoples, local communities, women, indigenous farming and small farmers, front and centre of future efforts to conserve biodiversity. At present, it fails even to offer a minimal level of protection for their rights.

The concept of nature-based solutions remains uncharted in the CBD context and could undermine the long-established ecosystems approach of the CBD, to protect and conserve biodiversity. This hype over nature-based solutions is used for instance by fossil fuel emitters to offset their emissions and thus to continue emitting.

We cannot fail to address a major risk - zoonotic disease and future pandemics - in biodiversity policy for the next decade. By overlooking One Health and One Welfare, the connections between human health and wellbeing and the health and wellbeing of plants, animals and ecosystems, the current version of the GBF fails to address the looming risk of future zoonotic disease outbreaks. We must eliminate practices that threaten the health and wellbeing of Earth's life in its diversity, and transition towards healthier and more sustainable consumption patterns.

The world is going through multiple crises, which threaten our survival. The loss of biodiversity is intrinsically connected to the climate crisis and the current pandemic as well as unacceptable inequalities, which in turn are the product of a predatory production and consumption system that is based on extraction and exploitation, causing the destruction of life support systems.

New and emerging technologies such as synthetic biology and genome editing - including the release of genetically modified organisms containing engineered gene drives - are not 'solutions' but have the potential to add to our current crises.

We must be on track to achieve Harmony with Nature by 2050. The planet can only be preserved “through a paradigm shift from a human-centric society to an Earth-centred global ecosystem” and the UN must “be the champion of non-anthropocentrism and a voice on behalf of the natural world and to play a lead role for a twenty-first century global Earth-centred transition, in which the lives of all human and non-human species matter.”(4)

We cannot wait for more reports stating what is already obvious and well known, namely the alarming speed of biodiversity destruction and our failure to take action. What we need is courageous action to transform the economic systems and development models once and for all.

Notes and References

1. CBD articles 7 (c) and 8 (l) 2. CBD articles 3, 4 (b) and 8 (c) 3. [Do's and Dont's document containing more detailed elements of the positions from civil society](#) 4. A/75/266

Signatory organizations / networks / groups from all over the world (139 in total):

Third World Network
Global Forest Coalition
FIAN international
World Animal Network
Survival International
Natural Justice
New Wind Association - Finland
EcoNexus
Japan Civil Network for the United Nations Decade on
Biodiversity
Community And Family Aid Foundation-Ghana
Centar za životnu sredinu/ Friends of the Earth Bosnia and
Herzegovina
Green stewardship international, Ghana
Corporate Europe Observatory
Green Finance Observatory
Sri Lanka Nature Group
FIAN Sri Lanka
Environment Conservation Trust - Sri Lanka
Lanka Organic Agriculture Movement
Reacción Climática - Bolivia
FIAN Belgium
Blue Ridge Impact Consulting, North Carolina, USA
Agora Association-Turkey
CHIRAPAQ, Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú
ECMIA (Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las
Américas)
Society for International Development (SID)
Observatorio Plurinacional de Salares Andinos, Chile
Indigenous Environmental Network
Indigenous Knowledge and Peoples Network, Society for
Wetland Biodiversity Conservation Nepal, Federation of Kirant
Indigenous Associations Nepal
Food Security Network- KHANI, Bangladesh
Participatory Research Action Network- PRAN, Bangladesh
Association Actions Sans Frontières Madagascar
National Adivasi Alliance India
Confédération Paysanne du Congo-Principal Regroupement
Paysan
Human Rights Concern - Eritrea (HRCE)
Earth Law Center
Armenian Women For Health And Healthy Environment
Attac France
FIAN Colombia
Karuna Mission Social Solidarity-Loikaw (KMS-Loikaw),
African Volunteers Association, Uganda
FIAN Sweden
The Development Institute
Food Sovereignty Ghana
Pa-O Youth Organization (PYO)
Burma Environmental Working Group (BEWG)

Women Acting Together for Change (WATCH), Nepal
African Centre for Biodiversity, (South Africa)
Eastern and Southern Africa Small scale farmers Forum
(ESAFF) Morogoro Tanzania
Navdanya International
Emmaus Aurinkotehdas ry
Zambia Alliance for Agroecology and Biodiversity (ZAAB)
EASUN Center for Organizational Learning Fundación
Patagonia Natural
Fundación Patagonia Natural, ONG
Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad - Colombia
Defensa de los mares al sur del mundo - Chiloé+Patagonia
(Chile)
Fundación Biodiversidad Argentina - Argentina
Health of Mother Earth Organisation (HOMEF),
Aliados por Mérida - México
Action for Sustainable Development
Pivot Point, A Nonprofit Corporation (USA)
Nature Tropicale ONG - Benin
Association Nodde Nooto (A2N) Niger
Amis de l'Afrique Francophone- Bénin (AMAF-Benin), Benin
Afar Pastoralist Development Association, Ethiopia
Partners for the Land & Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples
(PLANT)
Casa Río Lab, Argentina
Rainforest Foundation UK
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP),
Kalpavriksh, India

Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability
(PalestineNature.org)
Australian Rainforest Conservation Society
AbibiNsroma Foundation
Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN)
Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities (AERC-Ghana)
Avaaz
Al-Haq - Palestine (www.alhaq.org)
FAPD: Fédération des AgroPasteurs de Diender -Sénégal
Southern African Rural Women's Assembly -
Trust for Community Reach and Education (TCOE) South Africa
Biowatch South Africa
Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN) - Argentina
ETC Group
WildOceans, South Africa
African Wildlife Foundation (AWF)
Pesticide Action Network North America (PANNA)
CoopeSolidar R.L
Zambia CBNRM Forum, Zambia
Washington Biotechnology Action Council (WashBAC, Seattle)
Marche MONDIALE DES FEMMES TUNISIE
Centro Ecosocial Latinoamericano
Alianza Nativa de Chile
Pederasyon sa Nagkahugpong mga Mag-uuma nga Nanalipud
ug Nagpasig-uli sa Kinaiyahan Inc. (PENAGMANNAK Inc.)
Brighter Green (USA)
Population Matters
VRIKSHAMITRA(Friends of Tree) INDIA

Tebtebba (Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education)
Asia Indigenous Women's Network
ICCA Consortium
MARUAH, Singapore
Sahodaya Trust, Gaya, India
African Conservation Centre (ACC), Kenya
World Initiative for the Nature, (WIN), Burundi
Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO, East Africa)
Climate Action Network Tanzania
Coalition Nationale de Plaidoyer Environnemental (CNPE Madagascar)
Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO) Namibia
Community Leadership Network CLN (Southern Africa)
Public Association "Dignity", Kazakhstan
Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights
Pesticide Action Network UK
Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre, Zambia
Pestizid Aktions-Netzwerk e.V. (PAN Germany)
Pesticide Action Network Asia Pacific (PANAP)
Inyanda National Land Movement - South Africa
Pesticide Action Network Europe
POINT (Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together) www.pointmyanmar.org
Community Resource Centre Foundation (CRC) - Thailand
Tanzania Alliance for Biodiversity
Pesticide Action Nexus Association (PAN-Ethiopia)

BirdWatch Zambia, Zambia
Center for Research and Documentation Chile-Latin America (FDCL / Germany)
Organisation Béninoise pour la Promotion de l'agriculture Biologique (OBEPAB)
Coorg Organisation for Rural Development Karnataka India
Africa Center For Energy and Environmental Sustainability (ACEES)
Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement au Niger
Pesticide Action Network India (PAN India)
Pesticide Action Network Africa (PAN Afrique/Africa)
Pesticide Action Network International (PAN International)
Pesticide Action Network Aotearoa New Zealand (PANANZ)
La Red de Acción en Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas de América Latina (RAP-AL)/ PAN Latin America www.Rap-al.org
Centro de Estudios sobre Tecnologías Apropriadas de la Argentina (CETAAR)
RAP-AL Uruguay (Red de Acción en Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas de América Latina - Uruguay)
Red de Acción en Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas en México (RAPAM) - PAN México
Red de Acción en Plaguicidas de Chile (RAP-Chile) - PAN Chile
Centro Internazionale Crocevia
Caritas Zambia
Friends of the Earth International
COECOCEIBA - Amigos de la Tierra Costa Rica
Amigos de la Tierra América Latina y el Caribe - ATALC