

Input to the 2023 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

“Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels”

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
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Outline of the submission

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Introduction: Biodiversity at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

Biodiversity and the services ecosystems provide are embedded across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and associated targets¹. Biodiversity is explicitly highlighted in SDGs 14 and 15, but also underpins and supports numerous of the SDG Goals. In a business-as-usual scenario, biodiversity, and the services it provides, will continue to deteriorate at a rapid pace which will hinder the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the need to rethink our relationship with the natural world. Healthy and balanced ecosystems have a vital role in human well-being, our economies and sustainable development.

Given the close links between biodiversity loss and pandemic risk, as well as the importance of biodiversity for sustainable development more generally, recovery measures should not only consider the common drivers of biodiversity loss, but also ensure that such measures are not harmful for biodiversity while building resilience and safeguards to reduce the risks of future pandemics.

In December 2022 in Montreal, Canada, governments from around the world came together to agree on a new set of goals to guide global action through 2030 to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, putting nature on a path to recovery by 2050. Parties and other Governments, at all levels, relevant organizations and initiatives, Indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth and older persons, business, and civil society organizations, as well as other stakeholders, have a key role to play in supporting the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework² which builds on and supports the achievement of the SDGs.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework includes four global goals for 2050 addressing the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization, the importance of ecosystem services and functions, and the adequate means of implementation, and twenty-three action-oriented targets looking into 2030. The framework is a framework for all, and the global community will have a critical role to play in its successful implementation. A high level of technical, economic, and financial cooperation, assistance, commitment, engagement, and concerted efforts within and between countries is needed to achieve the global goals. Policies that foster synergies on mitigating biodiversity loss and climate change, while also considering their societal impacts, offer the opportunity to maximize co-benefits and help to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The High-level Political Forum may wish to re-emphasize the essential role of biodiversity in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and express its support to the successful implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. It may also wish to consider the relevant 2030 targets of the Framework as successors to those Aichi Biodiversity Targets which are reflected in the SDGs targets with endpoints of 2020.

¹ A technical note on Biodiversity and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, presents a summary of linkages between SDGs and Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and a detailed description of the linkages between biodiversity and specific SDGs and their associated targets, and also provides a cross-reference to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. <https://www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity-2030-agenda-technical-note-en.pdf> ; policy brief version at <https://www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity-2030-agenda-policy-brief-en.pdf>.

² <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-02-en.pdf>

Meaningful implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in support of the advancement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Biodiversity and ecosystems feature prominently across many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and associated targets³. Biodiversity is explicitly highlighted in SDGs 14 (Life Below Water) and 15 (Life on Land), but also underpins a much wider set of Goals. All the SDGs require adequate ecosystem services, including those related to water filtration, air quality regulation, land and soil quality, sustainable energy, climate mitigation, among others. In this context, consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems is essential as countries make progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, and in the development of key national priorities for sustainable development.

All human well-being and development ultimately depend on ecosystems and biodiversity. It is estimated that over half of the world GDP is moderately or highly dependent⁴ on biodiversity. Globally, half of the human population is directly dependent on natural resources for its livelihood, and many of the most vulnerable people, including Indigenous peoples and local communities, women and girls, and youth, depend directly on biodiversity to fulfil their daily subsistence needs.

On our current trajectory, the rate of biodiversity loss will continue to accelerate and the services it provides, will continue to decline, jeopardizing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the process. Around one million species already face extinction, and there will be a further acceleration in species extinctions unless urgent action is taken to reduce the intensity of drivers of biodiversity loss.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlights how critical the health of our ecosystems is for human well-being and sustainable development. Parties to the Convention have agreed on the importance of a more integrated, cross-sectoral, and biodiversity-inclusive One Health approach⁵ that aims to take actions for a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, which contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and thereby contribute to minimizing the risk of future diseases of zoonotic origin.

With a view to putting biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework set an example of a global agreement for action on biodiversity that considers the human aspect and human rights while supporting global efforts to address the triple planetary crisis as well as to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁶.

As highlighted in CBD's 5th edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook⁷, achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity requires a significant shift away from 'business as usual' across a broad range of human activities. In addition, the second edition of the Local Biodiversity Outlooks⁸ emphasizes that putting the

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⁴ https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_New_Nature_Economy_Report_2020.pdf

⁵ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-29-en.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity-2030-agenda-technical-note-en.pdf>

⁷ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2020) Global Biodiversity Outlook 5. Montreal, 2020, <https://www.cbd.int/gbo/gbo5/publication/gbo-5-spm-en.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.cbd.int/gbo5/local-biodiversity-outlooks-2>

cultures and rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities at the heart of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework would deliver sustainable livelihoods and wellbeing, and positive outcomes for biodiversity and climate. The adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will pave the way for accelerating the uptake of transformative transitions and tackling climate change, biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and a wide range of socio-economic challenges by delivering numerous co-benefits from healthy ecosystems.

Global leadership and coordinated efforts are urgently needed to scale action for people and the planet, with a view to tackling the triple environmental crisis and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Potential contributions of the recently adopted Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework to the SDGs spotlighted in HLPF 2023 (SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11 & 17)

SDG 6: Water and Sanitation. The provision of clean water and the regulation of the water cycle depend on water related ecosystems. Goal B and Target 11 of the Framework focus on nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, supporting the achievement of sustainable development. Targets 2 and 3, respectively, call for the restoration of at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded inland water ecosystems and the protection of 30 percent of areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, by 2030. Target 7 addresses the need to reduce pollution from all sources, including to half excess nutrient loss to the environment by 2030 and to work towards eliminating plastic pollution.

SDG 7: Energy. Various components of biodiversity directly support major economic activities. Target 15 calls on governments to encourage and enable business to assess and transparently disclose on their impacts on biodiversity and financial institutions to do the same in their investment portfolios. These efforts can accelerate the energy transition to renewable sources.

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure. In Target 14, Parties committed to ensure the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning and development processes, strategic environmental assessments, environmental impact assessments across all sectors. As mentioned above, Target 15 was adopted with a focus to promote sustainable production of good and services, and to enable private sector to better understand their relationship with the natural environment while identifying solutions to reduce negative impacts on biodiversity on their operations and value chains.

SDG 11: Disaster Risk Reduction. Biodiversity also underpins ecosystem resilience and thus plays a critical role in disaster risk reduction and peace-building strategies. Target 8 calls for minimizing the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and for increasing its resilience including through disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solution and/or ecosystem-based approaches.

SDG 17: Partnerships. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was developed to be a framework for all in a whole of government and whole of society approach. Partnerships and multistakeholder collaboration will be not only welcomed but critical to the successful achievement of the goals and targets. One of the tools already established is the Action Agenda for Nature and People⁹ launched by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity together with the governments of Egypt and

⁹ <https://www.cbd.int/portals/action-agenda/>

China. The Action Agenda aims to inspire and catalyze cooperative initiatives from non party stakeholders in support of global biodiversity goals.

Inclusive and equitable solutions are needed – from immediate response to preparedness and prevention and eventual long-term sustainable economic recovery. It is in the context of this pandemic and the urgent need to conserve and restore our natural heritage and systems that the Action Agenda provides a source to recognize actions that promote sustainability, and to advance robust multi-partner solutions to reach the CBD Vision of “Living in Harmony with Nature by 2050”.

In addition, target 5 that aims to ensure that wildlife exploitation and trade is conducted in a sustainable way, addressing the need to reduce the risk of pathogen spill-over. The GBF will provide guidance and strongly influence national and regional policymaking around the globe.

Key messages for possible inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2023 HPLF

Considering the above, the HPLF may wish to consider, as appropriate, providing further guidance on the role of the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework, in presenting biodiversity-related targets as a successor to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets which are reflected in the SDGs targets with endpoints of 2020. It may also wish to:

- re-emphasize the essential role of biodiversity in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- express its support for the successful implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as an essential contribution to the UN Decade of Action on the SDGs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the importance of the relationship between people and nature, and it reminds us of all the profound consequences to our own well-being and survival that can result from continued biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystems.

Biodiversity continues to decline at an unprecedented rate, and the pressures driving this decline are intensifying. None of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets was fully met, in turn threatening the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and undermining efforts to address climate change.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework provides a pathway to a sustainable future by mapping out 2050 goals and 2030 targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, improve resilience and contribute to limiting climate change while meeting other essential goals such as improved food security. Implementing the framework requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Bold actions at all levels and by all relevant actors will be needed to implement the Framework and put biodiversity on a path to recovery in the remainder of this decade. In particular:

- Efforts to conserve and restore biodiversity need to be scaled at all levels using approaches that will depend on local contexts and the effective engagement of diverse stakeholders. These efforts need to involve major increases in the extent and effectiveness of well-connected protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, large-scale restoration of degraded habitats, and improvements in the condition of nature across farmed and urban landscapes as well as inland water bodies, coasts, and oceans.

- Effective steps need to be taken to address all direct and indirect pressures driving biodiversity loss, including land and sea use change, overexploitation, climate change, pollution and invasive alien species.
- Transformations need to be achieved in the production of goods and services, especially food. This will include adopting agricultural methods that can meet growing global demand while imposing fewer negative impacts on the environment and reducing the pressure to convert more land to production. Transformations are similarly needed to limit the demand for increased production by adopting sustainable consumption and reducing waste.
- All relevant public and private activities, and fiscal and financial flows need to be progressively aligned with the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.