



Conservation International Comments on the “Revision and Updating of the Strategic Plan: Possible Outline and Elements of the new Strategic Plan” (UNEP/CBD/SP/PREP/2)

The issues

We strongly support the premise underlying the strategic plan that “Biological diversity underpins ecosystem functioning and the provision of ecosystem services essential for human well-being” (page 3). We also strongly support of all elements of the plan that emphasize the need to mainstream biodiversity into all sectors of human society in order to address drivers of loss.

Section (a) (page 4): While we support the target of addressing consumption patterns as an underlying cause of biodiversity loss, we think that it is also important to recognize the associated market forces that drive loss. Therefore we would recommend the following change: “Initiating action to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss, including consumption patterns and associated market forces.”

Section (c) (page 5): We recommend additions to this paragraph to fully encompass the necessary enabling conditions for achieving the post-2010 target.

Paragraph 2, line 1 should be: “Achieving a positive outcome will also require an improved enabling environment at global and national levels, delivered through appropriate policy, financial and institutional frameworks that facilitate conservation.”

Paragraph 2, add a new line 3: The three Rio Conventions should be more closely aligned in order to facilitate the achievement of multiple overlapping goals.

This last addition, related to the Rio Conventions, should be a stronger message throughout the strategic plan. It is important that the CBD be aligned so as to contribute to the goals of the other conventions and serve as an important source of technical input to those conventions.

Finally, we think that it is important for this section of the Strategic Plan to highlight the need for the framework of indicators to be developed quickly so that progress towards the post-2010 target can be tracked.

Vision

As expressed in our the joint paper submitted by BirdLife International, Conservation International, Countdown 2010, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, The Nature Conservancy, the Wildlife Conservation Society and WWF in 2010, we are supportive of a long-term vision to 2050, as proposed here and we like the formulation that includes both conservation and restoration, as well as the importance of biodiversity to human populations.

Mission

Timeline: We support a mission with a deadline of 2020 that will coincide with likely UNFCCC timelines on deforestation and degradation and allow sufficient time for significant action to halt biodiversity loss. However, we believe that a 2020 timeline will only be effective if there is also a milestone target set for 2015 that will clearly establish the need for urgent action to be initiated by that time and will allow for a review that incorporates lessons from the review of progress on the Millennium Development Goals.

The rationale for setting the deadline for the mission for 2015 is well articulated by Khosla & Marton-Lefèvre (2010) *Nature* 463: 25: “The deadline for achieving ‘more modest’ targets should be 2015, not 2020. That would synchronise it with the Millennium Development Goals and with the timeframe of political cycles, which would help to ensure that elected politicians successfully deliver the target to their constituencies.”

That said, we support the general formulation of the mission provided in the footnote of page 6:

“To have initiated by 2015 the necessary urgent and concerted actions required to address the threats facing biodiversity with a view to halting biodiversity loss, and to restoring ecosystems, thus ensuring the continued provision of ecosystem services and avoiding dangerous or irreversible environmental change or change that has dangerous consequences for human well-being, as well as contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.”

The word “dangerous” is unnecessarily duplicated in this version of the target; its first use could be deleted.

We also like the proposed formulation for the mission at the top of page 7, which highlights the importance of stopping extinctions and we recommend including explicit text on this in the mission. Khosla & Marton-Lefèvre highlight the particular urgency of stopping human-driven extinctions, because this is the only aspect of biodiversity loss which is wholly irreversible.

“The 2020 target to sustain life on earth: Safeguard and restore biodiversity, and reduce the threats it faces, staying within ecological limits, in order to improve its status, prevent extinctions and enhance ecosystem services, while equitably sharing the benefits, thus contributing to human well-being and poverty eradication. To ensure that all countries have the means to achieve this.”

We also like the formulations which identify explicit actions to be taken: address threats... halt loss... deliver benefits, because these focus on the positive (“action”) and align well with the indicators framework drafted at the “International Expert Workshop on the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators and Post-2010 Indicator Development” in Reading, UK, Jul 2009.

In sum, **our preferred version of the mission would be:** By 2020 halt anthropogenic extinctions, other biodiversity loss, and restore ecosystems, thus ensuring the continued provision of ecosystem services and avoiding irreversible environmental change or change that has dangerous consequences for human well-being, as well as contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.”

With a 2015 subtarget of: “To have initiated by 2015 the necessary urgent and concerted actions required to address the threats facing biodiversity with a view to stopping anthropogenic extinctions, halting other biodiversity loss, and restoring ecosystems, thus ensuring the continued provision of ecosystem services and avoiding irreversible environmental change or change that has dangerous consequences for human well-being, as well as contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.”

Indicators framework

We would like to see the Strategic Goals and Targets align directly to the indicators framework (of pressure-state-benefits-response) developed at the “International Expert Workshop on the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators and Post-2010 Indicator Development” in Reading, UK, Jul 2009. It is currently very close to this, but could be harmonized with the following modifications:

Label “Strategic Goal A” (page 8) as “Strategic Goal Ia: Pressure (Indirect Drivers)”. This would encompass the current Targets 1–4.

Label “Strategic Goal B” (page 9) as “Strategic Goal Ib: Pressure (Direct Drivers)”. This would encompass the current Targets 5–10.

Add a “Strategic Goal II: State. Improve the state of biodiversity, first by preventing further loss”. This would encompass current Targets 12 and 13.

Label “Strategic Goal D” (page 13) as “Strategic Goal III: Benefits”. This would encompass current Targets 14, 15, 17, and 18.

Label “Strategic Goal C” (page 11) as “Strategic Goal IV: Response”. This would encompass current Targets 11, 16, 19, and 20.

Targets

Current Target 3 (page 9). Instead of “Subsidies harmful to biodiversity are eliminated” this should be “Perverse incentives harmful to biodiversity are eliminated”. Subsidies are just one component of perverse incentives. There are more than subsidies harmful to biodiversity, there are policies, regulations, incentives, taxes, markets.

Current Target 5 (page 10). We do not think that a target of halving the rate of loss of natural habitats is sufficient. We would like to see this target set as “Deforestation and forest degradation, and the loss and degradation of other natural habitats is halted.” This would align with the formulations of the mission being proposed.

Current Target 6 (page 10). We do not think that a target of halving overfishing is sufficient. Also, this target applies as much in freshwater ecosystems as it does in marine. Finally, we think that overharvest of terrestrial species should be incorporated here. Therefore we would recommend rewording this target as “Pressure on marine and freshwater ecosystems through overfishing halted, destructive fishing practices eliminated, and overharvest of terrestrial species stopped.”

Current Target 7 (page 10). We recommend broadening this target to include the mining and energy production sectors as major drivers of biodiversity loss that need to be brought under sustainable practices. “All areas under agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, mining and energy production are managed according to sustainability criteria”.

Current Target 11 (page 12). We believe that protecting 15% of land and sea areas is insufficient to maintain healthy natural systems and as such we recommend increasing this target to 50%. Furthermore, it is important to be explicit about what is meant by “including the most critical terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats”; these are effectively key biodiversity areas (see <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/PAG-015.pdf>). The text could therefore be clarified by changing this wording to “including all terrestrial, freshwater and marine key biodiversity areas”.

Current Target 12 (page 12). An earlier version of this target read “The extinction of known threatened species (vertebrates and higher plants) has been prevented by ensuring that all such threatened species are protected in at least one site.” Given the fact that habitat destruction drives threats to such a high

proportion of threatened species, we think that it is important to retain this full text, although adding “including” to make it clear that safeguard in one site is necessary but not sufficient. However, we are not comfortable with restricting this target to “vertebrates and higher plants”, because conservation is also needed – and, in some cases, already underway – for other taxa. We therefore recommend rewording to read: “The extinction of known threatened species has been prevented, including by safeguarding all such threatened species in at least one site.”

Current Target 14 (page 12). The contribution of biodiversity to climate change is not limited to sequestering green house gases and is highly dependent on its value being recognized and incentivized through policies and markets. By definition, “terrestrial, freshwater and coastal ecosystems” are part of biodiversity, and so we recommend changing this target to read: “The value of the contribution of biodiversity to sequestering and retaining greenhouse gases has been recognized at national and international levels and mechanisms are in place and functioning to increase biodiversity-based climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.”

Multi-Year Program of Work

The following two issues listed as warranting attention from the COP are of particular importance and we support their inclusion.

- Some aspects of the identification and management of threats to biodiversity, sustainable use, and incentive measures (see UNEP/CBD/COP/9/14/Add.1).
- The contribution of biodiversity to human well-being, in particular to health, and to poverty elimination.