



TOWARDS POST-2020 DIALOGUE WITH #1

DEFINING AND ACHIEVING A POST-2020 AMBITION – INSIGHTS FROM A CONVERSATION IN TOKYO



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As international discussions on post-2020 biodiversity governance progress, the question of ambition remains key. In order to achieve the 2050 Vision, the outcomes of COP15 should help increase action on the drivers of biodiversity loss, increase accountability, and help build broader support for biodiversity.



On the road to CBD COP15, many political and technical issues remain to be addressed to develop the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The recent key messages of the IPBES' summary for policymakers highlight the crucial need for transformative changes across economic, social, political and technological factors not only for biodiversity but also for sustainability purposes for present and next generations. The underlying and crosscutting question of ambition is, however, conditioning much of the other discussions. This is because it affects both the substance (what problems to focus on, what goals to be pursued in priority in the post-2020 framework?), the tools to implement this vision (strengthening existing tools, and how, but also to imagining new ones – with an innovative spirit), the mobilization of state and non-state actors and the search for funding and resources. On 16 and 17 May 2019, in Tokyo, a dialogue co-organized by the European Commission and the Ministry of the Environment, Japan, was the occasion to share perspectives on these issues, including perspectives from negotiators, business, NGOs representatives, and experts from the United Nations University.

1. DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK TO ACHIEVE THE 2050 VISION

Current discussions on the development of the post-2020 framework tend to put much emphasis on the conservation of biodiversity via area-based measures (e.g., percentage of protected areas) or via species' protection (integrity, abundance, extinction rate). While such measures are indeed very important, they are not sufficient to achieve the 2050 Vision¹ adopted during CBD COP10 (Nagoya, Japan) and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Achieving the 2050 Vision indeed supposes that all landscapes and seascapes, and natural renewable resources are managed sustainably, even when they serve productive purposes for, e.g., agriculture or fisheries. In early May 2019, the IPBES Global Assessment highlighted that the major drivers of biodiversity loss worldwide were land-use change (especially towards intensive agriculture, urbanization and infrastructure) and overexploitation of species in landscapes and seascapes, and that this now affects the majority of Earth's surface. Emphasizing only area-based conservation measures thus carries the risk of not sufficiently exploring essential options for the rest of the planet. Through different mechanisms, what happens beyond protected areas' boundaries can furthermore affect what happens inside protected areas, as highlighted by the impressive declines of flying insect biomass observed in German protected areas over the last three decades².

For the post-2020 framework, the Vision 2050 remains valid, and achieving it will thus require, alongside area-based measures, increased efforts to transform socioeconomic sectors towards sustainable production and consumption, which is very much in line with achieving the second goal of the CBD (the sustainable use of biodiversity) and several of the SDGs beyond SDG #14 and #15. Worldwide, there are many traditional land uses and governance systems, as well as experiments, that are real-life laboratories, inventing and implementing modes of sustainable use of biodiversity³. For post-2020, a key challenge will be to spread and disseminate these good practices and find how to mainstream biodiversity through sectors (especially the most impacting biodiversity) but also how to help scale-up, through work on the enabling conditions (including legal ones), decision making the initiatives that promote the sustainable use of biodiversity. The massive development of "Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures" (OECMs), included in Aichi Target 11, could be a way to more strongly link area-based measures and sustainable use in post-2020 and facilitate the dissemination of sustainable practices and models beyond their boundaries.

A STRONGER FOCUS ON DRIVERS OF BIODIVERSITY LOSS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This stronger emphasis on the sectoral drivers of biodiversity loss, mainstreaming and sustainable use should be reflected in the post-2020 framework – while remaining easily communicable and inspiring. In discussions so far, there is also an emphasis on the need for stronger accountability mechanisms and on transparency on what Parties and other stakeholders will do to implement the post-2020 framework. Achieving this would probably be the biggest change compared to the current state of play. Another major change would also come from a stronger implication of non-state actors in implementing the post-2020 framework.

Thus, beyond the development of SMART targets that is currently at the center of discussions, a certain vision of what the post-2020 ambition could be: a strong focus on sustainable use of biodiversity everywhere and on addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss, accompanied with reinforced area-based measures, strong accountability mechanisms, and concrete commitments of all non-state actors concerned by actual transformative changes.

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2. INCREASING COMMITMENTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY: LINKING CURRENT AND POTENTIAL NEW TOOLS

While discussions currently stress the need to increase accountability in post-2020, there is not yet much visibility on the form this could take. There are currently experimentations going on in the CBD context, such as the voluntary peer-review mechanism for instance. But other tools and mechanisms are probably needed, that would apply to all Parties and stakeholders.

At COP14, countries have agreed to invite Parties and other governments to consider developing “biodiversity commitments” on a voluntary basis



¹ “Living in Harmony with Nature” where “By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.”

² Hallmann, C. A., Sorg, M., Jongejans, E., Siepel, H., Hofland, N., Schwan, H., ... de Kroon, H. (2017). More than 75 percent decline over 27 years in total flying insect biomass in protected areas. PLOS ONE, 12(10), e0185809.

³ The Satoyama Initiative, for example, was launched at COP10 and is dedicated to encourage and promote knowledge-sharing between such actions. See: <https://satoyama-initiative.org>



(decision 14/34). While there are several points that need to be clarified, the Tokyo meeting helped discuss several of them. First of all, in terms of accountability, such commitments would ideally be developed through a “whole of government” approach and thus concern not only the environmental constituencies but also governments at the highest levels⁴. This would contribute to an overall philosophy where, once a Party makes a commitment, it feels bound by it, and where there is political momentum between Parties on who has committed what and is doing what. The approach through commitments still seems relatively new in biodiversity governance discussions, but high-level leaders (both from governments, companies, cities, CSOs, etc.) increasingly adopt the approach of making ambitious commitments to display championship on different issues. Having a tool that enables to capture this in the CBD process, on shorter time-scales than the NBSAPs or at different levels (e.g., common engagement between a group of Parties / stakeholders) or focused on specific issues (including arenas beyond classical CBD issues), could prove useful and create new ways of enhancing efforts and processes for concrete and effective actions with positive results.

But the linkage between new modes of commitments and accountability with the NBSAPs and the national reporting system is a sensitive issue. By taking the example of the climate arena, it is possible to distinguish different functions for different implementation tools. Regarding climate, there is an overarching long-term goal on the state of climate (the + 2°C / 1.5 °C target) but also, importantly, a long-term goal on pressures (GHG emissions). This goal is enshrined in article 4.1 of the Paris Agreement, and states that countries will not emit, in the second half of the 21st century, more GHG than what carbon sinks can absorb⁵. Countries then develop how they are going to address the drivers (different transformations that are needed in sectors and public policies) in their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and are invited to develop low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (e.g., long-term view on the transformations on drivers, important to give visibility and consistency to shorter-term actions).

Applied to post-2020, this logic could be unfolded in the following way. The long-term agreed target on the “state of the system” is already available: it is the 2050 Vision. There is a need to find concrete translations for its realization (make the vision more tangible, and adopt related SMART targets, modalities to monitor implementation, and for instance a ratcheting system). Then, for 2030, there is a need to identify action objectives on pressures (e.g., equivalents to carbon neutrality for biodiversity, by building upon the IPBES Global Assessment for example and start with agrifood systems, and other drivers of land-use change and habitat loss), as well as some 2030 milestones on state. Here, NBSAPs could provide medium- or long-term political tools describing the

transformations that countries intend to undertake on drivers, and also show how these actions interlink with the implementation of SDGs and contribute to the achievement of the 2050 Vision. The biodiversity commitments would work, on their part, on a shorter-term (e.g., five-year basis), and be the object of more individual accountability and collective stocktaking at the CBD level. The accountability could be made for both the NBSAPs and the biodiversity commitments during reporting, or other practical systems could be imagined.

This is just an illustration of the type of thinking that could be developed. There are also more pressing issues before COP15, such as building the political momentum and making pre-COP15 high-level commitments pile up⁶. This concerns both state and non-state actors, and is also central to mobilizing finances.

The Paris Agreement on climate, besides long-term temperature goal, contains an ambitious goal on reducing greenhouse gas emissions: the goal of “carbon neutrality” in the second half of the 21st century (article 4.1.), which provides a strong impetus to conserve ecosystems.

3. MOBILIZING ACTORS, RESOURCES AND FINANCES

How to increase the involvement of non-state actors in post-2020 biodiversity governance is a key issue. For them, an “action agenda” for biodiversity was launched during COP14. Such an action agenda⁷ is by no means anecdotal. It fulfills fundamental strategic functions to stimulate a positive political and social momentum prior to COP15, to help achieve an ambitious agreement in Kunming in 2020 and to facilitate concrete changes for the post-2020 period, when investments or long term changes will be needed (e.g., in infrastructure, urbanization, energy, sustainable production and consumption, etc.). There is, therefore, an urgent need to energize the action agenda as soon as possible, including via the mobilization of dedicated networks with different stakeholders. A decision at COP15 could also anchor the action agenda to support the implementation of the post-2020 global framework for biodiversity beyond the CBD arena per se.

There is an ongoing mobilization of cities and business, with several events and coalitions that have been launched by networks such as ICLEI and others on cities and subnational governments⁸; the Act4Nature initiative⁹ in 2018 in France and the newly launched Business for Nature coalition¹⁰

⁴ It should be noted, however, that a “whole of government” approach does not necessarily lead to positive results if it leads to arbitrations that are unfavorable to the environment.

⁵ Vallejo, L., Rankovic, A., Colombier, M., Treyer, S., Voss-Stemping, J. (2018). Carbon neutrality: taking on the global challenge for ambitious climate action, IDDRI, Policy Brief, n°04/18, Paris, 4 p.

⁶ See the 2019’s G7 or G20 declarations on biodiversity.

⁷ Rankovic, A., Maljean-Dubois, S., Wemaere, M., Laurans, Y. (2019). An Action Agenda for biodiversity: Expectations and issues in the short and medium terms, IDDRI, Issue Brief N°04/19. Kok, M., Widerberg, O., Negacz, K., Bliss, C., Pattberg, P. (2019). *Opportunities for the Action Agenda for Nature and People*, PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, PBL publication number: 3630, The Hague, 2019

⁸ <https://youtube.com/watch?v=MoujXzNED5A>

⁹ <https://act4nature.com>

¹⁰ <https://businessfornature.org>



on the business side. There is a need to gather this energy and link it more tightly to on-going discussions on the post-2020 framework. In order to link these questions to the points raised above, an important aspect is to be able to involve actors who are not usually seldom present in biodiversity negotiations, but are key actors when it comes to developing sustainable use and action on drivers. A high-level panel of political champions was considered at COP14, but little progress has been made so far. Setting up this panel could be a priority for the remaining of 2019, with the CBD COP 15 in China in mind.

The level of ambition at COP15 will also be constrained by the funding available or expected to support the implementation of the post-2020 framework. While important results can be obtained with relatively little funding per hectare for restoration projects or for well managed protected areas, the transformations needed in the sectors that drive biodiversity loss will be much more complex. Tools and mechanisms are being developed to incorporate natural capital in decision-making processes at different levels, including for risk management, sustainability of value chains, creation of values via green infrastructure or nature-based solutions, evaluation of true cost and externalities, etc. Enabling conditions for investments are also crucial, including safeguards from banking sectors and regulation of nature impact disclosure. Development banks, investments and insurance sectors should contribute to change the socio-economic models towards sustainability. Ecosystem-based approaches and solutions could be better integrated into national and local plans related to sustainable development, climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction, etc., in order to achieve stronger political coherence and produce co-benefits for multiple actors.

BUILDING BROADER SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC REFORMS

The OECD conservatively estimates that subsidies that are potentially harmful to biodiversity represent USD 500 billion per year, about ten times higher than global funding dedicated to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use¹¹. Making a fraction of these sums converge towards models that are compatible with the sustainable use of biodiversity and its mainstreaming could already

represent an important progress, notably because they could serve as a lever to attract more private investments. Aichi Biodiversity Target 3, which addresses harmful subsidies, has seen very little progress. Several additional economic studies will be released before COP15: they could help define the funding needs for different types of actions (conservation, sustainable use, etc.) and propose further avenues for subsidies reform. Resource mobilization, including domestic resources via the reallocation of perverse incentives, will constitute the backbone of the post-2020 framework implementation.

These discussions will require broader support to help biodiversity actors gain in influence. Here, besides non-state actors and political champions, there are also synergies to be built within environmental and sustainable development's governance. Strengthening cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions, between the Rio conventions, and even with the conventions directly dealing with issues that constitute pressures on biodiversity (such as the conventions of the "chemical cluster"¹²), could help biodiversity issues have more weight in domestic arbitrations. The post-2020 ambition must be coherent, shared with or embeddable within other arenas such as the SDGs, and efforts in this direction¹³ should be pursued and enhanced.

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¹¹ OECD (2019), *Biodiversity: Finance and the Economic and Business Case for Action*, report prepared for the G7 Environment Ministers' Meeting, 5-6 May 2019.

¹² Kinniburgh, F., Rankovic, A. (2019). Mobilizing the chemical conventions to protect biodiversity - An example with pesticides and the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions. IDDRI, Issue Brief N°07/19.

¹³ <https://cbd.int/conferences/post2020/brws-2019-01/documents>

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