



**Virtual Biodiversity Dialogues
June-July 2020
DRAFT Outcomes Document**

Revised 02 September 2020

Introduction

In response to the need to elevate political ambition with the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) negotiations, a collaborative partnership comprising many of the world's largest environment and development organisations, foundations, several UN organisations, business groups and representatives of youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) was formed to provide a dedicated space for discussions at the IUCN World Conservation Congress Post-2020 Pavilion to be held in Marseille in January 2021.

The mandate of the Post-2020 Pavilion is to build convergence towards an ambitious and transformative post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) -- one that is sufficiently ambitious, scientifically-grounded and mission-aligned.

With the postponement of the IUCN Congress from June 2020 to January 2021, the Post-2020 Pavilion partners used the opportunity to convene a series of ten "Virtual Biodiversity Dialogues", to deepen collective thinking around the central issues under negotiation and to crystallise key messages, including for transmission to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Summit on Biodiversity in September 2020. This Outcome Document presents the key conclusions that were raised in the ten dialogues. It is not intended as a consensus document, rather a synthesis of key messages, which will form the basis of a draft Call to Action that will be circulated to partners for their review and comment ahead of the UNGA Biodiversity Summit.

Our top messages

1. This decade must become the pivotal moment in human history when we recalibrate our relationship with nature and restore a healthy natural environment. Nature and its contributions to people underpin the delivery of all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). When managed sustainably, nature holds the key not just to a carbon-neutral and green economic recovery, but also to global peace, equity and human well-being.
2. However, if we do not reverse the precipitous decline of nature, the planet will soon be unable to provide the ecosystem services, goods and benefits that, until now, we have received for free. Continued loss of nature threatens over half the global GDP as well as sustainable development, with the poorest and most vulnerable hit first and hardest. The roots of the current, devastating pandemic, and all the factors driving the emergence of zoonotic diseases, are linked to our mismanagement of nature.
3. Governments must adopt a global goal for nature that commits the world to taking action now to halt nature loss and ensure that the world is nature-positive by 2030. Such a goal includes actions to achieve the following: retaining and restoring natural ecosystems, effectively protecting the most important areas for biodiversity and ecosystem services; halting the decline of and starting to recover the diversity and abundance of life; transitioning towards a nature-positive economy; and ensuring a healthy environment for healthy societies.
4. Rights, equity and justice must lie at the heart of the Post-2020 GBF. The UN-75 Global Dialogue reveals that people believe that climate and the environment will most affect humanity's future. Governments must recognise the universal right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment and put in place legislation and actions to realise this. Both intergenerational and intragenerational equity is needed to ensure that decision-making and implementation is inclusive and that decision-makers are held accountable. In particular, the role and rights of IPLCs, women and girls as stewards and defenders of nature must be recognised, protected and supported.
5. Governments must recognise that nature must lie at the heart of a sustainable, resilient, green recovery and "building back better" around the world. A more resilient, equitable, nature-positive, carbon-neutral world will secure a better future for all.
 - 5.a. There is a need to embed and mainstream the value of nature (and people) in all decision making,

governance, reporting and capital market valuations. Governments must create the tools and metrics needed to incentivize and support companies, financial institutes as well as the whole of government to do this.

6. In order to prevent further extinctions and decline of ecosystems and ultimately to secure the future of all life on Earth, we must eliminate the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and ensure that robust goals for productive sectors are embedded in the Post-2020 GBF. This must start with a 2030 target of halving the ecological footprint of production and consumption across all sectors.
7. The significant scaling up of public financing for biodiversity is essential but is not enough. Governments and the private sector must redirect financial flows away from activities that harm biodiversity towards those that conserve and restore it. This must be supported by economic decision-making that incorporates the true value of nature.
8. Synergies between the Post-2020 GBF and other global processes are essential because biodiversity loss, climate change, land and marine degradation and unsustainable development are inseparable challenges caused by interdependent drivers. They cannot be tackled in isolation, but rather addressed systemically and synergistically, through coordination and cooperation between and within governments and policy processes, such as for nature-based solutions and biodiversity in the high seas.
9. The Post-2020 GBF must be supported by a robust and rigorous implementation mechanism that is translatable into and across national contexts while being scalable to track global progress (as well as ratchet up ambitions and implementation if needed) , integrates targets and actions relating to other conventions and the SDGs, and includes a binding and transparent system of national targets (accompanied by indicators, milestones and strategies to achieve them), effective monitoring, reporting, review and accountability systems.

The section below presents a more detailed summary of nine (9) key themes that emerged from the first round of Virtual Biodiversity Dialogues.

1. Seize the opportunity and need to transform our relationship with nature

Nature and its contributions to people underpin the delivery of all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, our blatant disregard for the environment and our unbalanced relationship with nature have pushed the natural world to its

limits. Unsustainable activities, including agricultural and livestock intensification, resource extraction, infrastructure expansion and overexploitation of wildlife including fish stocks, are destabilising livelihoods and the global economy, putting the very foundations of human societies at risk.

We are currently experiencing the worst global pandemic in living memory. The combination of increased stress to natural systems from unsustainable food systems, poor management of natural areas and land use change, increasing consumption and trade in wildlife all contributed to the deadly pandemic, which has devastated human lives and economies around the world. But equally, COVID-19 has created an unprecedented opportunity and imperative to reset our relationship with nature, to simultaneously reverse nature loss, boost economic recovery, and enhance the health and well-being of all humans.

The UN Secretary-General warns that “the coming years will be a vital period to save the planet and to achieve sustainable, inclusive human development”. It is imperative that the international community put nature at the core of the UN’s agenda, and in the UN Decade for Action on SDGs. This decade must become the pivotal moment in human history, in which we change our relationship with nature.

If managed sustainably, nature holds the key to our economic recovery and shared prosperity. However, if we do not take steps to reverse the precipitous decline of nature, the planet will soon be unable to provide the ecosystem services, goods and benefits that until now, we have received for free, every day.

It is also clear that bending the curve of biodiversity loss will be impossible if we do not address issues of social justice and growing inequity. This starts with the forging of a new relationship with nature, one that recognises its value and that of environmental stewards and defenders, not just as the foundation of a healthy and sustainable economy, but as the basis for human well-being, peace and security.

This shift in core values must be matched by fundamental transformative changes in our governance, financial and economic systems, and in the way we recognise

and share risks, rights and responsibilities. All of these are essential to ensure that countries, individually and collectively, commit to and implement rigorous science-based goals and targets, to ensure our interdependent human and planetary well-being.

The UNGA Biodiversity Summit provides a critical opportunity for world leaders to reset humanity's relationship with nature and to catalyse the transformative change necessary in our political, economic, financial and governance systems. We must embed a nature-positive approach at all levels of governance, strengthen synergies across national and international action, close the implementation gap apparent in the failure to meet Aichi Targets, and address issues of social justice and growing inequity, in order to bend the curve of biodiversity loss. All of these goals must be embedded in an ambitious Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which engages all of society, puts nature on a path to recovery, and secures a healthy, just and sustainable future for all.

2. Set the global compass to halt and reverse nature loss

Four key planetary boundaries - climate change, loss of biosphere integrity, land-system change, and altered biogeochemical cycles - have already been crossed, with dangerous consequences for the stability of the planet's life support systems. As such, it is imperative that governments adopt a "global goal for nature" - in parallel to the UNFCCC's "net zero" goal - that commits the world to taking action now to halt nature loss and ensure that the world is nature-positive by the end of this decade - the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. By 2030, nature must be on the path to recovery. By 2050, we must aim for full recovery and restoration, with sufficient functioning ecosystems to support future generations and to help avoid dangerous climate change and to achieve the CBD 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature. Actions for nature cannot be achieved without addressing both the climate emergency and social justice, so the international community should strive to achieve an equitable, carbon-neutral, nature-positive world. Such a nature-positive world would include the following, implemented by and for people both locally and globally:

****Retain and restore natural ecosystems***

Effectively protect and conserve at least 30 percent of land, freshwater, coasts and oceans of most importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services by 2030, recognising and respecting the rights and role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), and safeguard and manage the rest of the planet sustainably. This will take the form of public, private and community-led management, with a particular focus on local knowledge, values and collaboration with IPLCs. Strict quality and management standards for protected areas are essential, as well as the full recognition of human rights and the rights of IPLCs to their lands. Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) should be prioritised, as well as those which are ecologically intact and those areas which deliver ecosystem services, at ecologically-relevant scale including in areas beyond traditional boundaries and national jurisdictions. This requires integrated spatial planning for biodiversity and development through spatially-explicit National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), Strategic Environmental Assessments and national development plans.

****Safeguard the diversity and recover the abundance of life***

Halt the decline of genetic diversity, prevent human-induced extinctions, and start to recover wildlife populations, in particular by addressing direct threats to species including from illegal and/or unsustainable wildlife exploitation, trafficking and trade and implementing intensive species management actions where necessary. The species goal in the Post-2020 GBF must capture what is actually needed from a species perspective for the achievement of the 2030 mission “to halt biodiversity loss and put nature on a path to recovery for the benefit of the planet and people”.

****Transition towards a nature-positive economy***

We must pursue a “nature-positive business transition to a truly green economy”, to mitigate future economic and societal shocks. This nature-positive economy could provide \$4.5 trillion in business opportunities annually. We must value

natural capital, invest in nature-based solutions, require sustainable supply chains, transform our food systems, and, critically, incorporate the true value of nature into economic systems, while ensuring that social and environmental safeguards are fully enforced, so that both public and private sector actions have an overall positive impact on nature and society.

**** Ensure a healthy environment for healthy societies***

Recognising our role as both stewards of the environment and beneficiaries of ecosystem services, we must safeguard a healthy environment and nature's contributions to people, and thus lay the groundwork for healthy, just and equitable human societies, now and in the future. A mindset and values shift, including culturally appropriate, nature-positive, transformative education, will recalibrate our relationship with nature from one of exploitation and extraction to one of mutual health, connection, and symbiosis.

3. Recognise and support rights, equity and justice

The impacts of the environmental crisis are not distributed equally or evenly. There are clear marginalized groups who internalize the costs of this injustice. In particular, children, youth and future generations are bearing and will continue to bear the brunt of the impacts of living on a polluted, degraded planet. But within these social groups, the impacts manifest in a differentiated way.

Intergenerational equity - recognising that all generations share a common but differentiated responsibility to ensure a healthy planet for the generations to follow - must lie at the heart of the Post-2020 GBF. This means creating fairness, collaboration and dialogue between all generations.

Intragenerational equity is equally important: the unequal distribution of environmental degradation must be recognised, and women and girls must be empowered to be impactful agents of change, particularly IPLC women and girls, who occupy front-line positions in protecting biodiversity. Those in policy-making positions must be held accountable for their choices and are invited to acknowledge, respect, hear and give space for youth, women and other

marginalised stakeholder groups to be included in decision-making at all levels. Education will be a key implementation tool, starting with equal access to culturally appropriate and nature-positive, transformative education.

Another critical element of the rights, equity and justice imperative is the equitable governance of protected areas and other area-based conservation measures, and the appropriate recognition, protection and securing of title to all the lands and waters traditionally governed by IPLCs for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. At least one-quarter of the global land area is traditionally owned, managed, used or occupied by Indigenous Peoples (and IPLC lands support 80% of global biodiversity), and yet they hold legal ownership over only 10%, leaving much of it subject to external pressures which also threaten biodiversity. Therefore, governments must legally recognise their tenure rights, and transform their relationship with IPLCs to one of mutual partnership in light of this key role that IPLCs play in conservation processes at all levels.

As has been exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, human health and a healthy planet are mutually dependent. The universal recognition of the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment is critical to ensuring that inter-dependence, and all governments must put in place legislation and actions to realise this. The Post-2020 GBF must guarantee, as part of this universal human right, the protection and empowerment of IPLCs, recognising their role as stewards of nature and environmental defenders. Governments must agree to a target calling for a target of zero tolerance for violence, harassment, criminalisation and intimidation directed towards defenders of their land and environmental rights.

4. Mainstream biodiversity into public and private decision-making

In a COVID-adjusted world, it is patently clear that healthy societies, resilient economies and thriving businesses all rely on nature. Governments must recognise that nature must lie at the heart of ‘green recovery’ and be the foundation to ‘build forward better’. This is essential if we are to secure a more resilient, equitable, nature-positive, carbon-neutral economy that will secure a

better future for all. This will require a whole-of-society approach to ensure that biodiversity is mainstreamed effectively into all key productive sectors and across society, with all stakeholders more clearly sharing responsibility and accountability for nature.

Another key mainstreaming challenge is to ensure that the Post-2020 GBF catalyses the integration of biodiversity into the decision-making processes of the corporate and finance sectors. Increasingly they are demonstrating their readiness and a sense of urgency to mainstream nature into the way they do business, as reflected in the extent to which risks of nature loss and ecosystem degradation are becoming boardroom issues. Governments must create new tools and metrics to incentivise and support companies and financial institutions to integrate the value of nature and inclusive, participatory processes into decision-making, governance, reporting, and capital market valuations.

And finally, a whole-of-society approach is essential to ensure that the tangible and intangible values of nature are systematically integrated into education systems, public awareness campaigns and consumer movements. All of these are essential for creating a generation of nature champions, who will help to shift public mindsets, and bring public pressure to bear on governments, holding them accountable to high levels of ambition.

5. Reduce our ecological footprint

Governments must ensure that the key conclusions of the 2019 Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment report regarding root causes of biodiversity loss are embedded in the Post-2020 GBF. According to IPBES, it will be impossible to prevent further extinctions and decline of ecosystems, and ultimately to secure the future of all life on Earth, unless we eliminate the drivers of biodiversity loss, address deep rooted inequalities underlying this loss, especially through the current economic system that drives over-exploitation and the destruction of biodiversity . This must start with a 2030 goal of halving the ecological footprint of production and consumption across all sectors. To achieve this, clear targets

are needed to transform food and agriculture, fisheries, forestry, infrastructure, finance, transportation, energy and economic systems away from unsustainable models to equitable, nature-positive approaches that respect global planetary boundaries. This requires the spatially-explicit integration of biodiversity into development planning, sustainable supply chains, regulations on public procurement, reduction of waste, and, for developed consumer countries, a focus on living within our means and ultimately degrowth.

6. Redirect financial flows toward reversing nature loss

The significant scaling up of public financing for biodiversity for the effective long-term management and local governance of protected and conserved areas is absolutely critical but is not enough. Governments must take a leadership role by incentivising the redirection of private financial flows from lenders, creditors and investors to support these areas as well as the wider conservation and recovery of biodiversity.

In tandem, this must be supported by economic decision-making and systems that incorporate the true value of nature, the transformation of key production sectors, the adoption of a circular economy approach, and divestment from activities that negatively impact nature. As we ‘build forward better’ from the COVID-19 pandemic, we must take full advantage of the estimated \$11.4 trillion economic stimulus package as a unique opportunity to invest in equitable, climate-neutral, nature-positive solutions, and ensure a true green recovery process.

Governments can drive this process by: promoting full-cost accounting to ensure that externalities are captured; promoting ecological tax reform; incentivising the greening of supply chains; repurposing the \$500 billion of harmful subsidies that are currently damaging biodiversity to those that support it, in ways that consider a just transition and costs on households and enterprises; and promoting the valuation and integration of natural capital into decision-making.

Of particular importance is the development of a system for nature-related

financial disclosure as well as new metrics for assessing the dependencies, risks, impacts and opportunities within financial institutions. This is particularly important because decision-making processes in most financial institutions do not factor in the impacts of their actions on nature loss. Moreover, appropriate risk analysis is essential, to mainstream nature into financial decision making, not only for the recovery of nature, but to strengthen and insulate the financial system from shocks resulting from nature loss. Financial institutions have a critically important role to play to ensure that finance flows are truly nature-positive and therefore, in the long-term, rational and sustainable.

7. Strengthen synergies between policy processes

The success of the Post-2020 GBF depends on clear ownership, leadership, coordination and cooperation by governments and multiple stakeholders across numerous sectors and global processes (especially the SDGs, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the other biodiversity-related conventions and the future UN treaty on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ)).

Synergies with these processes are essential because biodiversity loss, climate change, land and marine degradation and unsustainable development are inseparable challenges caused by interdependent drivers. As such, they cannot be seen or tackled in isolation. Rather they must be addressed systemically and synergistically in order to maximize the potential for co-beneficial implementation and to equitably manage trade-offs.

Synergies must not only be limited to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), but extended to human rights conventions and peacebuilding processes. The recognition of the universal right to a healthy environment is essential in this regard and will strengthen the rights-based framework in which nature restoration and recovery efforts should be grounded. This will also contribute to deepening the connection between healthy ecosystems and healthy people.

It is equally important to step up cooperation to address governance gaps in

delivering the Post-2020 GBF, including nationally, as a whole-of-government endeavour. The framework should also include provisions to ensure national-level collaboration and alignment, with Parties identifying how implementing their commitments to other processes will help deliver the GBF, and vice versa.

For example, actions and indicators established in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) under the CBD should be coordinated with those in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) under the UNFCCC, especially where they relate to nature-based solutions, and with SDGs where they relate to human development (for example on SDG targets and indicators relating to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems, sustainable production and consumption, and subsidies).

8. Close the implementation gap

If governments are serious about preventing biodiversity loss, meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, alleviating poverty and reducing global inequality, the Post-2020 GBF must be supported by a robust and rigorous implementation mechanism that is translatable into national contexts and that includes a binding and transparent system of national targets, effective monitoring, reporting, review and accountability systems, including through independent sources of information and indicators. This will enable regular ratcheting up and tracking of global progress, and where relevant alignment with relevant MEAs and the SDGs, improving integration, profile, relevance and funding of biodiversity within the 2030 Agenda.

The robustness of the implementation mechanism will be one of the most important tests of political will and commitment to high ambition among countries. To this end, governments must be prepared to agree to a mechanism that will genuinely hold them to account for their performance. The Post-2020 GBF will suffer from many of the same difficulties that the current Aichi Targets have unless implementation and accountability are better addressed. There are several important elements of a robust implementation mechanism. First and foremost, global and national targets must be significantly improved so that they

are more SMART (Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Time-bound, Unambiguous and Scalable). Indicators and milestones need to be proposed alongside the targets and supported by clear implementation and capacity-building plans that can be translated from the global to national levels.

It is also critical that NBSAPs and CBD National Reports are more uniform and have consistent requirements that apply to all Parties, including for example a standardised, core set of independently verifiable indicators. Parties should also be encouraged to revisit their NBSAP within a specific timeframe (e.g. 2022) in response to the new post-2020 framework to ensure that national commitments align with global ambition. Ultimately, the Post-2020 GBF implementation mechanism should ensure a system of periodic stocktaking to ensure frequent review of progress and the basis for ratcheting up ambition and action. As described above, where relevant, actions and indicators established in NBSAPs should be coordinated with those relating to both climate and wider SDG actions.

9. Elevate cross-cutting nature-based solutions

Ecosystem-based approaches are key to tackling both the global climate and biodiversity emergencies simultaneously and synergistically. Nature-based Solutions (NbS) must be developed and implemented in ways that benefit both biodiversity and people, and not as a mask for business-as-usual, following clear and agreed principles. Only then will NbS fulfil their potential to provide over one-third of our climate mitigation needs by 2030, while improving human well-being, livelihoods and the natural world. Nature-climate linkages and NbS must therefore be explicitly addressed in the post-2020 GBF along with a clear signal that biodiversity is fundamental to the delivery of effective NbS, especially intact, biodiverse ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, grasslands and oceans. The post-2020 GBF should commit Parties to incorporate NbS that protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystem integrity into both NBSAPs and NDCs to meet the Paris Agreement. Delivering local and global ecosystem services through NbS will allow both society and biodiversity to adapt and increase resilience to climate change and environmental degradation and put us on track for a more equitable, carbon-neutral and nature-positive world.