

# Biodiversity's Role in Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality

## Input to the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

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### Introduction

Biodiversity—the diversity of life on Earth—is defined as the variability among living organisms from all sources, including diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems. Biodiversity thus includes not only the millions of different species on Earth, it also consists of the specific genetic variations and traits within species (such as different crop varieties), as well as the various types of different ecosystems, marine and terrestrial, in which human societies live and on which they depend, such as coastal areas, forests, wetlands, grasslands, mountains and deserts.

Biodiversity is essential for sustainable development and human well-being. It underpins the provision of food, fibre and water; it mitigates and provides resilience to climate change; it supports human health, and provides jobs in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and many other sectors. Without effective measures to conserve biodiversity and use its components in a sustainable manner, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will not be achievable.

Given the need for biodiversity and healthy ecosystems to achieve the 2030 Agenda, it is not surprising that 14 of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include targets that directly reflect their important role.<sup>1</sup> For example, there are critical biodiversity dependencies for SDG 2 on zero hunger, including Target 2.4 relating to maintaining ecosystems and improvement of land and soil quality, and Target 2.5 on maintaining the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their wild species. Similarly, for SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are reflected in Target 8.4 on decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation and Target 8.9 relating to sustainable tourism.

An analysis of how biodiversity supports the achievement of all SDGs was published jointly in 2017 by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological diversity (CBD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Development Programme.<sup>2</sup> In the context of the six specific SDGs to be reviewed in 2019 by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, biodiversity supports the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the following ways:

- **SDG 4: Quality Education.** Raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity for sustainable development through education systems will be a key element to achieving this SDG, and in particular target 4.7 (ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for

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<sup>1</sup> Including SDG targets 1.4, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.A, 3.3, 3.9, 4.7, 5.A, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 7.A, 8.4, 8.9, 9.4, 11.4, 11.6, 11.7, 11.A, 11.B, 12.2, 12.4, 12.8, 12.C, 13 (all), 14 (all), 15 (all),

<sup>2</sup> [www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity-2030-agenda-technical-note-en.pdf](http://www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity-2030-agenda-technical-note-en.pdf)

sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles...). In particular, there is a significant amount of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities that is relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. According to Article 8(j) of the Convention, such knowledge, innovations and practices are to be respected, preserved and maintained, subject to national legislation, and their wider application to be promoted with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge. Such knowledge systems could be harnessed through culturally sensitive educational initiatives, in line with Article 8(j) of the Convention.

- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.** Various components of biodiversity directly support major economic activity and jobs in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, pharmaceuticals, pulp and paper, cosmetics, horticulture, construction and biotechnology. Biodiversity is the basis for sustainable livelihoods that are based on healthy ecosystems. Benefits of biodiversity are especially important to poor and vulnerable groups: the goods and services derived from biodiversity constitute social safety nets and can mean the difference between misery and well-being.
- **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities.** Recognizing rights to sustainable management of natural resources, enhancing values of biodiversity and related knowledge, and building an environment for equitable benefit-sharing has the potential to improve socioeconomic and political inequality among social groups.
- **SDG 13: Climate Action.** Biodiversity plays a major role in mitigating climate change by contributing to long-term sequestration of carbon in a number of biomes. Biodiversity also underpins ecosystem resilience and thus plays a critical role in climate change adaptation, for instance as part of disaster risk reduction and peace-building strategies.
- **SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.** Conflicts over natural resources, environmental degradation and contamination can be one of the factors leading to social insecurity and violence. Vulnerable people are often disproportionately affected. Strengthening the rights of communities over natural resources management, combating illegal exploitation and corruption, and ensuring transparent decision-making on social and environmental issues constitute an important process toward building an inclusive and peaceful society based on justice.
- **SDG 17: Partnerships.** The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 provide opportunities for strengthening global partnership on science, technology and innovation, dissemination of environmentally sound technologies, and for building national capacity for monitoring the progress of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For more information, see [www.cbd.int/sp](http://www.cbd.int/sp).

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2010 at its tenth meeting<sup>3</sup>, has been recognized by the United Nations General Assembly as the global policy framework for biodiversity. Accordingly, many elements of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs have been drawn from the Strategic Plan and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 itself is framed in the context of sustainable development, with a vision of maintaining and enhancing ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.

At its thirteenth meeting in 2016, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention welcomed the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see decision XIII/3, para. 3)<sup>4</sup> and recognized the strong

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-10/cop-10-dec-02-en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-13/cop-13-dec-03-en.pdf>

interdependence between the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the SDGs in which biodiversity is included in numerous goals and targets (para. 9). In addition, it recognized that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda provides a major opportunity for the mainstreaming of biodiversity and for the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (para.10). Further, the Conference of the Parties called for an integrated approach to the implementation of the strategies and plans for the 2030 Agenda and of national biodiversity strategies and actions plans (NBSAPs; paras. 14 and 15).

In decision 14/3, the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting, which took place in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt, from 17 to 29 November 2018, stressed that mainstreaming biodiversity in the sectors of energy and mining, infrastructure, manufacturing and processing, is essential for halting the loss of biodiversity and for the achievement of goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The current Strategic Plan for Biodiversity will expire in 2020. Ministers at COP-14 committed to supporting the development and implementation of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework (for the period 2021-2030 and as a contribution towards the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity), building on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the lessons learned from the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a level of ambition and practicality that will facilitate the transformational changes needed to achieve the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity.<sup>5</sup>

In decision 14/34, COP-14 agreed on a comprehensive and participatory process for the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.<sup>6</sup> In paragraph 15 of the decision, the COP noted that several of the biodiversity-related targets under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have endpoints of 2020, and requested the Executive Secretary to bring the preparatory process for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to the attention of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The process for developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework is meant to be transformative, to mobilize broad societal engagement to achieve accelerated and sustainable transformations to implement the three objectives of the Convention, whereby biodiversity and ecosystems are recognized as the essential infrastructure supporting life on Earth, without which human development and well-being will not be possible. It will place biodiversity, its conservation, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, at the heart of the sustainable development agenda, recognizing the important linkages between biological and cultural diversity.<sup>7</sup>

Importantly and in the context of the HLPF 2019 thematic focus, the process for developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will be inclusive. Specifically, the process will help enable all relevant groups and stakeholders to provide their views for consideration. This includes Parties, other Governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, United Nations organizations and programmes, other multilateral environmental agreements, subnational governments, cities and local authorities, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, women's groups, youth groups, the business and finance community, the scientific community, academia, faith-based organizations, representatives of sectors related to or dependent on biodiversity, citizens at large, and other stakeholders. Efforts should be made to solicit views from a wide range of perspectives, going beyond those traditionally involved in the work of the Convention and the two Protocols.<sup>8</sup>

## Gaps, Areas Requiring Urgent Attention, Risks and Challenges<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration: Investing in People and Planet. Available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/2000/ec3f/0cbb700fcf8f8e170b5f4afb/cop-14-12-en.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-34-en.docx>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Annex, paragraph 2(d).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. Annex, paragraph 2(b).

<sup>9</sup> CBD/COP/14/INF/24 2 November 2018. Key Findings from The Four IPBES Regional Assessments of Biodiversity

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) recently published four landmark Regional Assessment Reports, one each for the Americas, Africa, Europe and Central Asia, and Asia and the Pacific. The findings of the four regional IPBES assessments are based on thousands of sources of both scientific as well as also indigenous and local knowledge. The reports focus on answers to key questions about the importance of biodiversity and the threats and opportunities for a sustainable future.

While there are many common and comparative key findings among the four regions, there are also differences between the regions and within the regions on the relative magnitudes of the trends in nature and biodiversity, nature's contributions to people, indirect and direct drivers, plausible futures and response options, amongst others. On balance there are more commonalities than significant differences between the four regions. The key findings include:

**Key Finding 1:** Biodiversity and nature's contributions to people are essential for a good quality of life, and play a critical role in providing food, clean water, energy, medicines and securing livelihoods; regulating climate, air quality, freshwater quantity and quality, and pollination services; and are fundamental to social cohesion, spiritual fulfillment, preservation of cultural heritage, mental and physical well-being, and identity and sense of place. Biodiversity in all its forms and levels (genes, species, and ecosystems) is therefore a strategic asset for sustainable long-term development. Unfortunately, the benefits are unevenly distributed, access.

**Key Finding 2:** In many parts of the world, indigenous and local knowledge underpins the way nature benefits people and promotes the harmonious and respectful interaction between people and nature.

**Key Finding 3:** Biodiversity has significant market and non-market economic value and non-economic (social/cultural) value. People value nature for its important contributions to their cultural, spiritual, psychological, physical and economic well-being, and their interactions with nature are shaped by people's diverse values and value systems. However, contributions of biodiversity or nature to human well-being tend to be underappreciated and under-used in decision-making processes, in particular for non-material and regulating contributions to well-being. Valuation of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people is a tool that can be used in decision-making and in communicating the importance of biodiversity/nature, and assisting in promoting their conservation and sustainable use and the equitable sharing of benefits. However, such valuation has to avoid the commodification of those contributions of nature to people related to culture and identity, respecting the diverse holders of cultural values that do not see their cultures as appropriate for commerce and value-based trade-off analyses.

**Key Finding 4:** Biodiversity (genes, species and ecosystems) continues to be degraded in all parts of the world, with a corresponding loss of nature's contributions to people, hence undermining people's quality of life. The risk of loss of populations or extinction of species (mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish and plants) is increasing in terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater habitats in all regions of the world caused directly or indirectly by anthropogenic drivers. The situation has become markedly worse in all regions during the last 20 years. With the exception of Europe and Central Asia, just over 20% of all species assessed by the IUCN are listed in the Red List as either extinct, extinct in the wild, critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable (i.e. extinct or threatened), with endemic species even more threatened.

**Key Finding 5:** Literally all terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems exhibit some level of degradation, with wetlands, forests and coral reefs being particularly transformed in most regions

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and Ecosystem Services. Available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/c25e/2274/3c7ea710e0442730174c4216/cop-14-inf-24-en.pdf>.

**Key Finding 6:** The emphasis on increasing the production of material contributions to people, e.g., food, fiber and energy to meet the needs of an ever-increasing population and a wealthier population has resulted in a decrease in most regulating contributions, e.g., pollination, climate, air quality, freshwater quantity and quality, and non-material contributions. For example, food production has increased in most parts of the world through the conversion of natural habitats, i.e., extensification, and unsustainable intensification. This has caused a loss of biodiversity, which in turn can threaten food production.

**Key Finding 7:** Increases in population and growth in the economy, are two key indirect drivers. Together they have resulted in an increased demand for natural resources, which in turn has resulted in the fragmentation, conversion and overexploitation of ecosystems, accompanied by pollution, invasive alien species and climate change. Unfortunately, the benefits of this growth are not distributed equitably among or within countries. The globalization of trade has led to a decoupling between where resources are produced and where they are consumed. To date, land use change/conversion has been the most dominant direct driver of biodiversity loss in most terrestrial ecosystems, while over-exploitation, i.e., over-fishing, has been the most dominant direct driver in marine ecosystems. There are synergistic and compounding effects among the drivers. Climate, which has already warmed, on average, by about 1 degree C compared to pre-industrial temperatures, and is projected to warm a further 1-3 degree C by the end of this century, interacts with, and amplifies, all other direct drivers. The individual and combined effect of all the direct drivers will have chronic and prolonged consequences for biodiversity, though these are often delayed due to the inertia and considerable time-lags in the response of ecological systems.

**Key Finding 8:** There are some bright spots in all regions, including an increase in the number and area of both terrestrial and marine protected areas, and the restoration of some degraded areas. However, many of the most important areas of biodiversity are not being protected, and not all protected areas are effectively managed. There has been a significant increase in the number of Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) and Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites, with a current global pattern, in which 28 % of IBAs are completely covered by protected areas, compared to 22 % of AZE sites. Particularly in the light of climate change, which will cause fauna and flora to migrate pole-wards and upwards in altitude, mosaics of corridors and multifunctional landscapes based on up to date evidence will be required to connect different protected areas.

**Key Finding 9:** Few of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets are likely to be met anywhere in the world. The evidence suggests that some progress towards many of the Aichi Biodiversity targets is being made in most regions of the world, but this progress appears often to be at an insufficient rate, and for a number of targets there appears to be either no significant change or worse, there is movement away from the target.

**Key Finding 10:** Continued loss of biodiversity, especially when coupled with projected changes in climate, is likely to undermine achievement of many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and many of the climate-related goals. Future impacts on biodiversity and nature's contributions to people are typically underestimated, since most scenarios consider only a few direct drivers, notably climate change. Such scenarios fail to capture interactions among drivers, as well as compounding factors. Between now and 2050, business-as-usual scenarios in all regions are projected to result in a continued loss of biodiversity, with climate change becoming a dominant driver for most ecosystems. Scenarios optimized for economic growth or regional competition tend to result in significant loss of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people, whereas sustainability scenarios, which are characterized by environmental concern (including environmentally motivated changes in consumption patterns), social equity and human welfare and a balanced supply of nature's contributions to people (a balance between material, regulating and nonmaterial contributions), have much more positive outcomes and at least slow down the rate of loss of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people. While future trade-offs between certain of nature's contributions to people are inevitable, the severity of the trade-offs may be mitigated by timely, progressive and proactive policy interventions and environmental safeguards based on the most up to date evidence, and by mainstreaming/integrating

environmental issues (e.g., biodiversity, climate change and land degradation) into all socio-economic sectors, such as agriculture, water, energy, health, transportation, infrastructure, and cities. This will be crucial as most biodiversity is, and will always remain, outside of protected areas. Analysis of different scenarios can help policymakers make better decisions on the most plausible futures for biodiversity and nature's contributions to people.

**Key Finding 11:** According to the assessed knowledge, biodiversity could be conserved and sustainably used with more integrated multi-sectoral policies, institutional arrangements, adequate financing, use of appropriate technologies and behavior changes leading to sustainable production and consumption. However, we must recognize that there is a great diversity of policy instruments across the regions. Choice of low resource intensive diets (the composition of which may vary geographically), coupled with a reduction in food and water waste, would relieve pressures on biodiversity. Ecosystem-based approaches such as ecosystem-based adaptation, nature-based solutions, disaster risk reduction and sustainable forest, agriculture, fisheries and wildlife management, would provide multiple benefits and could foster synergies between biodiversity and climate change and sustainable development agendas.

**Key Finding 12:** More collaborative, inclusive, participatory and decentralized governance systems, at national, regional and global scales, involving governments, private sector, civil society and IPLCs, is likely to result in the development and ownership of more sustainable practices that would facilitate the sustainable use of biodiversity. These governance systems will vary depending on the socio-economic-political environment in which they operate. Regional and transboundary collaboration is considered vital and has shown positive results in almost all regions. Partnerships with the private sector, individuals and non-governmental organizations could assist countries in meeting the growing shortfalls in funding conservation efforts.

**Key Finding 13:** While knowledge gaps were identified in each regional assessment, the general conclusion is that current knowledge is enough to implement more effective and sustainable management of biodiversity. While many of the key uncertainties are similar in each region of the world, the priorities differ among and between them.

The bottom line as described in the IPBES reports is that while the loss of biodiversity is an important environmental issue, it is also an ethical, moral, social, economic and development issue. Human well-being depends on actions being taken now to address the loss of biodiversity and to address human-induced climate change. Decisions taken today by Governments, private sector and individuals will affect current and future generations, with poor people being the most vulnerable. According to the available evidence, these decisions would need to lead to societal transformation and behavioural change, if the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and sustainable development at large were to be achieved. Therefore, developing an effective, realistic and monitorable post-2020 global biodiversity framework is an urgent priority.

## Lessons learned on empowering people, ensuring inclusiveness and equality, and ensuring that no one is left behind

In the context of the 2019 HLPF thematic focus and the SDGs under review including SDG 10 on Reduced Inequalities, SDG 13 on Climate Action, SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and SDG 17 on Partnerships, COP-14 encouraged Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, when undertaking the design, implementation and monitoring of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, to conduct such activities, recognizing that the effects of climate change are disproportionate, with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth and elders, appropriately recognizing and supporting the governance, management and conservation of the territories and areas of indigenous peoples and local communities, and, as appropriate,

in coordination with the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform.<sup>10</sup>

In the context of SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, the UN Human Rights Council at its 34<sup>th</sup> Session, issued a Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Specifically, the report noted that “the loss of biodiversity-dependent ecosystem services is likely to accentuate inequality and marginalization of the most vulnerable sectors of society, by decreasing their access to basic materials for a healthy life and by reducing their freedom of choice and action. . . Economic development that does not consider effects on these ecosystem services may decrease the quality of life of these vulnerable populations, even if other segments of society benefit (page 9).”<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment also noted the following:

- “The loss of biodiversity-dependent ecosystem services has disproportionate effects on people who are vulnerable for other reasons, including gender, age, disability, poverty or minority status.”
- “The degradation and loss of biodiversity often result from and reinforce existing patterns of discrimination. Although everyone depends on ecosystem services, some people depend on them more closely than others. For indigenous peoples, forest-dwellers, fisherfolk and others who rely directly on the products of forests, rivers, lakes and oceans for their food, fuel and medicine, environmental harm can and often does have disastrous consequences.”
- “Many religions call on all human beings to be stewards of the riches of the natural world. However, the loss of particular places is felt predominantly by those who associate their sacred rituals and sites with those locations. Food and shelter may be replaced, but the destruction of a sacred grove may cause irreparable harm.”
- “The loss of biodiversity-dependent ecosystem services is likely to accentuate inequality and marginalization of the most vulnerable sectors of society, by decreasing their access to basic materials for a healthy life and by reducing their freedom of choice and action. Economic development that does not consider effects on these ecosystem services may decrease the quality of life of these vulnerable populations, even if other segments of society benefit.”

Relating to the thematic focus of the 2019 HLPF on empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality, the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting in November 2018 adopted the ‘*Rutzolijirisaxik Voluntary Guidelines for the Repatriation of Traditional Knowledge Relevant for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity*’. The objective of the Rutzolijirisaxik Voluntary Guidelines is to facilitate the repatriation of the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity (decision 14/12, Annex, para. 7)<sup>12</sup>. “Repatriation” in the context of traditional knowledge relevant for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, means “the return of knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities to where it originated or was obtained for the recovery, revitalization, and protection of knowledge on biological diversity (decision 14/12, Annex, para. 9)<sup>13</sup>.”

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<sup>10</sup> CBD/COP/14/L.23, para 3. Available at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/9860/44b3/042fbf32838cf31a771bb145/cop-14-l-23-en.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> [http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/34/49](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/34/49)

<sup>12</sup> Available at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-12-en.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

## Emerging issues likely to affect inclusiveness and equality at various levels

The continued loss of biodiversity and the degradation of healthy ecosystems will have a negative effect on inclusiveness and equality at various levels, leaving vulnerable populations even further behind. Recognizing that “the full enjoyment of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food and water, depends on the services provided by ecosystems” and that “the provision of ecosystem services depends on the health and sustainability of ecosystems, which in turn depend on biodiversity” the UN Human Rights Council at its 34<sup>th</sup> Session, through its the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, concluded that “the full enjoyment of human rights thus depends on biodiversity, and the degradation and loss of biodiversity undermine the ability of human beings to enjoy their human rights (A/HRC/34/49).”

The Convention’s Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 is meant to address this importance of biodiversity to inclusiveness and equality. It states that, “by 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.”<sup>14</sup> Additionally, at its twelfth meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted decisions encouraging Parties to:

*“(3)...integrate biodiversity and nature’s benefits to people, including ecosystem services and functions, into poverty eradication and development strategies, initiatives and processes at all levels, and vice versa, to integrate poverty eradication and development concerns and priorities into national biodiversity strategies and action plans and other appropriate plans, policies and programmes for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and to monitor, evaluate and report on these integration efforts, through appropriate indicators and tools, and include this information, inter alia, in their national report...*

*(5)...enhance the contribution of biodiversity to sustainable development and poverty reduction through the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components.”<sup>15</sup>*

Furthermore, at its 37<sup>th</sup> Session, the Human Rights Council presented the final report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, including its 16 framework principles which set out basic obligations of States under human rights law as they relate to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment (A/HRC/37/59).<sup>16</sup> The 16 framework principles help advance the thematic focus of the 2019 HLPF on empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality. They include:

- **Framework principle 1:** States should ensure a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment in order to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.
- **Framework principle 2:** States should respect, protect and fulfil human rights in order to ensure a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.
- **Framework principle 3:** States should prohibit discrimination and ensure equal and effective protection against discrimination in relation to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and

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<sup>14</sup> [www.cbd.int/sp/targets/](http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/)

<sup>15</sup> [www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-12/cop-12-dec-05-en.pdf](http://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-12/cop-12-dec-05-en.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Environment/SREnvironment/Pages/FrameworkPrinciplesReport.aspx>

sustainable environment.

- **Framework principle 4:** States should provide a safe and enabling environment in which individuals, groups and organs of society that work on human rights or environmental issues can operate free from threats, harassment, intimidation and violence.
- **Framework principle 5:** States should respect and protect the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in relation to environmental matters.
- **Framework principle 6:** States should provide for education and public awareness on environmental matters.
- **Framework principle 7:** States should provide public access to environmental information by collecting and disseminating information and by providing affordable, effective and timely access to information to any person upon request.
- **Framework principle 8:** To avoid undertaking or authorizing actions with environmental impacts that interfere with the full enjoyment of human rights, States should require the prior assessment of the possible environmental impacts of proposed projects and policies, including their potential effects on the enjoyment of human rights.
- **Framework principle 9:** States should provide for and facilitate public participation in decisionmaking related to the environment, and take the views of the public into account in the decision-making process.
- **Framework principle 10:** States should provide for access to effective remedies for violations of human rights and domestic laws relating to the environment.
- **Framework principle 11:** States should establish and maintain substantive environmental standards that are non-discriminatory, non-retrogressive and otherwise respect, protect and fulfil human rights.
- **Framework principle 12:** States should ensure the effective enforcement of their environmental standards against public and private actors.
- **Framework principle 13:** States should cooperate with each other to establish, maintain and enforce effective international legal frameworks in order to prevent, reduce and remedy transboundary and global environmental harm that interferes with the full enjoyment of human rights.
- **Framework principle 14:** States should take additional measures to protect the rights of those who are most vulnerable to, or at particular risk from, environmental harm, taking into account their needs, risks and capacities.
- **Framework principle 15:** States should ensure that they comply with their obligations to indigenous peoples and members of traditional communities, including by:
  - (a) Recognizing and protecting their rights to the lands, territories and resources that they have traditionally owned, occupied or used;
  - (b) Consulting with them and obtaining their free, prior and informed consent before relocating them or taking or approving any other measures that may affect their lands, territories or resources;
  - (c) Respecting and protecting their traditional knowledge and practices in relation to the conservation and sustainable use of their lands, territories and resources;
  - (d) Ensuring that they fairly and equitably share the benefits from activities relating to their lands, territories or resources.
- **Framework principle 16:** States should respect, protect and fulfil human rights in the actions they take to address environmental challenges and pursue sustainable development.

## Guidance from the High-level Political Forum

In decision 14/34, COP-14 agreed on a comprehensive and participatory process for the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.<sup>17</sup> The negotiations to develop the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, prior to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, will be undertaken by a dedicated open-ended intersessional working group under the leadership of two co-chairs and overseen by the COP Bureau. The consultation process will be guided by a set of core principles, namely that it be: participatory, inclusive, gender responsive, transformative, comprehensive, catalytic, visible, knowledge-based, transparent, efficient, result-oriented, iterative and flexible.

The co-chairs will seek to ensure the coherence and complementarity of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework with other existing or upcoming international processes, in particular with regard to consistency and coherence with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and other related processes, frameworks and strategies (paragraph 9 of the decision).

In paragraph 15 of the decision, the COP noted that several of the biodiversity-related targets under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have endpoints of 2020, and requested the Executive Secretary to bring the preparatory process for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to the attention of the General Assembly of the United Nations. These targets include:

- **SDG Target 2.5.** By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.
- **SDG Target 6.6.** By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.
- **SDG Target 14.2.** By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans.
- **SDG Target 14.4.** By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics.
- **SDG Target 14.5.** By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information.
- **SDG Target 14.6.** By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation.
- **SDG Target 15.1.** By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.
- **SDG Target 15.2.** By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-34-en.docx>

- and reforestation globally.
- **SDG Target 15.5.** Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.
  - **SDG Target 15.8.** By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species.
  - **SDG Target 15.9.** By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts.

The HLPF may wish to consider, as appropriate, providing further guidance on these matters.

## Recommendations on Ways to Accelerate Progress in Empowering People, Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality, and Achieving SDGs

### Promotion of approaches to integrate biodiversity in development policies and actions

In order to ensure the benefits of biodiversity to the poor as well as for future generations and to avoid negative impacts of development investments on ecosystem services which support the lives of vulnerable populations, national and local decision makers and stakeholders both in private and public sectors need to ensure that biodiversity and ecosystem services are mainstreamed in development and poverty reduction policies and actions.

Experiences and lessons learned by Parties and other partners of the Convention encompass various approaches: institutional coordination mechanisms, integration of biodiversity consideration in national budgets and sectoral policies, use of spatial planning tools, and use of nature-based solutions to development challenges, such as ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) and Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR). Such approaches are most effective when they are adopted at the earlier stage of planning, following strategic environment assessments. Support needs to be provided to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders and availability of information that enables the use of those approaches in decision-making processes.

### National institutional mechanisms for effective inter-agency coordination, stakeholder engagement<sup>18</sup>

Experiences by Parties and partners of the Convention suggest that effective institutional arrangements are one of the key requirements for integrating biodiversity, national poverty reduction strategies and sectoral plans across all relevant ministries. One aspect of this is the use of effective inter-ministerial or inter-agency processes for developing government-wide policies. Such mechanism provides an effective formal forum for development and implementation of government-wide and sectoral policies through better integrated approach.

Another key aspect of institutional arrangements is the effective engagement of civil society, indigenous peoples, and local communities, and their ability to contribute to decision making. The use of robust and inclusive mechanisms for stakeholder engagement is an important element of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which strives to “leave no one behind”.

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<sup>18</sup> [www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/biodiv/impws-2015-01/official/impws-2015-01-03-en.doc](http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/biodiv/impws-2015-01/official/impws-2015-01-03-en.doc)

## Ensuring that the benefits of conservation mechanisms reach the poorest

Several conservation measures include innovative mechanisms to address poverty, mainly in rural areas. These include: Payments for Ecosystem Services including Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+), ecotourism, sustainably managed fisheries and no-fish zones, community forestry, non-timber forest products, mangrove restoration, protected area jobs, agroforestry, wildlife co-management and community management schemes, grassland management, and conservation of agricultural diversity. Evidence suggests that schemes such as REDD+ and Eco-DRR also have extensive social, economic and environmental benefits. Ecosystem-based solutions can often be more cost-efficient and sustainable compared to grey infrastructure.

However, studies and discussions suggest that the existence of these mechanisms alone does not guarantee that they contribute to poverty reduction. It is necessary to ensure that the benefits produced by such mechanisms reach the poorest and the most vulnerable by embedding rights-based approaches into policy designs and accountability of such interventions through monitoring and reporting. In addition, it is important to provide decision makers with better information on multiple benefits that can be generated by investments in programmes that contribute to both social and environmental benefits.

## Supporting customary rights, traditional knowledge and ecological practices of communities

In order to ensure that the poor continue to benefit from ecosystem services, the importance of recognizing and strengthening the customary rights and laws of indigenous peoples and local communities to access, use, govern and manage lands and natural resources has been repeatedly highlighted. The governments of many Parties to the Convention have undertaken legal, political and institutional reform to recognize such rights. In many cases, these provisions have enabled communities to conserve and use biodiversity sustainably, generate income and empower themselves. Political support for the preservation of traditional knowledge and ecologically sustainable practices by communities, such as supporting conservation of agricultural biodiversity and ensuring a minimum support price for sustainable production in times of drought and floods, also contribute to the well-being of poor households.<sup>19</sup>

## Taking actions for climate change and energy systems, and food systems<sup>20</sup>

*Global Biodiversity Outlook 4* underlines two major areas of actions that may contribute significantly to pathways for the long-term sustainability of human society and biodiversity:

- (a) *Climate change and energy systems*: Halting deforestation and appropriately implementing reforestation could make important contributions to climate mitigation and protection of biodiversity. Nevertheless, a substantial degree of climate change by 2050 and beyond is already committed due to long lags in the Earth's climate system; therefore, measures for adaptation of communities including the poor are needed. Such measures include conservation and restoration of coastal habitats such as mangroves and enhancing diversity of crops and

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<sup>19</sup> CBD Technical Series No. 64. Recognising and Supporting Territories and Areas Conserved by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Global Overview and National Case Studies; Available at:

<https://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-64-en.pdf>

Note by the Executive Secretary on identification of best practices and lessons learned on how to integrate biodiversity, poverty eradication, and sustainable development: Summary of submissions received and synthesis of lessons learned (UNEP/CBD/COP/13/INF/30). Available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-13/information/cop-13-inf-30-en.doc>

<sup>20</sup> [www.cbd.int/gbo4/](http://www.cbd.int/gbo4/). pp. 136-137

their wild relatives to help farmers adapt to climate change by switching to drought or flood resistant varieties. From the perspective of biodiversity conservation, adaptation will require, for instance, anticipating climate change in the design of protected area systems;

- (b) *Food systems*: Major transformations to food systems are among the key areas of actions for achieving sustainability. There is a need for improved management of agriculture, aquaculture and wild capture fisheries. Realistic changes in management of crops and livestock could substantially reduce both water consumption and pollution. Significant reductions in fishing pressure and changes in fishing techniques in most marine fisheries would lead to rebuilding of fisheries over the next one to two decades. It is also essential to restore land and water resources by shifting to more sustainable agricultural practices. Food waste needs to be reduced: roughly a third of harvested food is lost either in the food transport and transformation chain (primarily in developing countries) or in the home (primarily in developed countries). Diverse diets combined with global convergence to moderate levels of calorie and meat consumption would improve health and food security in many areas and also substantially reduce impacts on biodiversity.

## Strengthening the implementation, follow-up and review of poverty-related Sustainable Development Goals in relation to biodiversity and ecosystem services

Sustainable Development Goal 1 recognizes not only socioeconomic but also environmental dimensions of poverty, through its associated targets 1.4 and 1.5 encompassing the rights of the poor and the vulnerable to natural resources, land tenure, basic services, and resilience against socioeconomic and environmental shocks and disasters. Many of them are supported by healthy ecosystems. The current suite of global indicators does not necessarily fully capture the multidimensional aspect of poverty, in terms of access to various ecosystem services. The implementation, follow-up and review of SDG 1 and its interrelation with other relevant Sustainable Development Goals could therefore be further encouraged to take into account the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services for the poor, through such means as additional monitoring and reporting of pro-poor policies and programmes that contribute to safeguarding or enhancing access to ecosystem services.

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## List of further resources

Technical Note: *Biodiversity and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Available at: [www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity-2030-agenda-technical-note-en.pdf](http://www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity-2030-agenda-technical-note-en.pdf)

CBD Technical Series No. 55 *Linking Biodiversity Conservation and Poverty Alleviation: A State of Knowledge Review*. Available at: [www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-55-en.pdf](http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-55-en.pdf)

Principles, Guidelines and Other Tools Developed under the Convention. Available at: [www.cbd.int/guidelines/](http://www.cbd.int/guidelines/)