

Oceans and seas, forests and biodiversity

Statement on behalf of France, Germany and Switzerland

Delivered by Ambassador Michael Gerber, Switzerland

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Mr Co-Chair,
Honorable delegates,

I am speaking on behalf of France, Germany and my own country Switzerland.

Biodiversity, oceans and seas as well as forests are key elements to ensure sustainable development. One cannot ignore the existing interlinkages between preserving and protecting the ecosystems and fighting poverty. This was clearly pointed out by the various speakers today, and by the Technical Support Team's useful issue briefs.

I will now make a few comments specific to each of the three topics under discussion.

Firstly, concerning oceans and seas:

Oceans cover more than 70 per cent of our planet and a large proportion of all life is found under the ocean surface. The protection and restoration of marine biodiversity as well as the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems is of extreme importance. States explicitly recognize in the Rio+20 Outcome Document that oceans, seas and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the Earth's ecosystem and that they are critical to sustaining it.

Globally, all societies and economies depend on the protection, conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems. They are of overwhelming importance for the economic and social development of coastal states, mainly for the

developing states including the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) among them.¹

In our view, the following elements, should be integrated into sustainable development goals:

- Improve the health and resilience of oceans by applying the ecosystem approach, reducing sea- and land-based pollution and fighting against the chemical modification of oceans and their acidification, which is also one of the consequences of climate change;
- Guard coastal populations against rise of the sea-level and coastal erosion by implementing integrated management of coastal zones;
- Enhance the security of navigation and life at sea by addressing such issues as piracy, terrorism, living conditions on board or gender mainstreaming.
- Enhance the safety of navigation and thus minimise, as far as possible, the impacts of maritime navigation on ecosystems.
- Enhance food security, biodiversity and fishstocks by sustainable management of fisheries, including eliminating illegal, unreported and unregulated fisheries based upon best available scientific data;
- Promote the sustainable management of mineral, extractable and genetic marine resources, and fostering the development of marine renewable energies.

Secondly, as regards Biodiversity:

Biodiversity – the variety of life on Earth – has a high intrinsic value, it is fundamental to our lives and livelihoods and essential to all dimensions of sustainable development, i.a. constituting the basis of the global food security.. A new sustainable development framework should not only acknowledge the role of biodiversity for sustainable development, it should also provide the enabling conditions for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, an equitable sharing of benefits derived from the utilization of genetic resources, and the reduction of drivers of biodiversity loss, deforestation and forest degradation, and for sustaining associated traditional knowledge.

¹ The global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 demands that by 2020, “10 percent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are to be conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures”.

The Convention on Biological Diversity and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and its vision until 2050, represent a modern and comprehensive approach that considers conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the use of genetic resources as equally important. The achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets by 2020 will make a significant contribution to sustainable development. Thus the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity must be reflected at a highly aggregated level in the goals and targets structure of the SDGs and at the same time reaching the Aichi targets must be secured by adequate targets of different SDGs.. In particular, the Post-2015 framework should:

- Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss; i.a. by natural capital accounting and removing harmful incentives;
- Reduce direct pressures on biodiversity and promote its sustainable use;
- Improve biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity;
- Enhance the benefits from biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- Improve access to genetic resources and, again, a fair and equitable sharing of benefits;
- Promote the implementation of biodiversity conventions and strategies.

Thirdly, regarding forests:

Sustainable forest management and responsible governance of tenure of forests promotes sustainable development that can help eradicate poverty, hunger and malnutrition for millions of people who depend directly or indirectly on forest resources for their livelihoods.

Targets should include:

- To promote sustainable forest management as well as the integration of sustainable forest management policies in policies for sustainable management of renewable natural resources;
- to slow, halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation, by addressing the direct and underlying causes of forest loss
- to promote reforestation, restoration and afforestation, preferably with native species,
- to strengthen forest governance frameworks, including secure forest tenure and inclusiveness of decision making,

- to balance between the multiple social demands to deliver products and services and the limits of the forest resources,
- to sustain the multiple roles and functions of all types of forests, forest- and woodlands contributing to poverty alleviation and economic development of rural population, as well as to conserve and enhance carbon stock, address resilience to disaster risks and impacts, to contribute to a green economy as well as to mitigate the adverse impact of climate change.

Mr Co-chair,

We promote the integration of Oceans, seas, Biodiversity and Forests in the Post-2015 Agenda because they are of utmost importance for the Earth's life-support systems and ecosystems, because they contribute to resilience to various pressures like climate-change and because they also have a fundamental role for social and economic development and poverty eradication. We have to ensure that biodiversity, oceans and seas, and forests are fully addressed through relevant goals, targets and indicators, while taking into account the necessary interlinkages with other essential determinants of human well-being, in particular issues of sustainable agriculture and fisheries, food security and nutrition, sustainable growth, health, water and energy.

Thank you.