



Statement of VIVAT International and the Mining Working Group at the UN to the 8th Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals Biodiversity, February 2014, United Nations

Threat to Biodiversity from a mining perspective

Our members across 27 countries have consistently identified mining as a serious threat to local biodiversity due to the sector's significant land clearance, use of local water resources, and decades-long environmental degradation. In the future, this threat is likely to grow as the depletion of resources and technological changes in the mining sector encourage new mining projects in remote, biodiversity rich areas. Indigenous and poor populations, who often inhabit these remote, biodiverse areas and rely on them to survive, are especially threatened by any loss of biodiversity.

Prescriptions for the Development Agenda

To help mitigate biodiversity loss and uphold the responsibility of the Sustainable Development Goals to leave no-one behind, we propose that:

1. In setting biodiversity goals:

- **Place a moratorium on mining in biodiverse rich areas;**
- **Identify the extractive industry as an elevated threat to biodiversity loss; and**
- **Require member states to demonstrate that all mining developers have published comprehensive biodiversity restoration strategies in the project development phase.**

2. Ground biodiversity protection in a human rights framework.

The most important aspect of the human rights approach is stakeholder consultations, especially with indigenous and marginalized communities. These consultations lend greater clarity to how communities benefit from biodiversity and are integral to establishing a framework for long-term habitat protection.

Further, a human rights approach must equally incorporate the rights of future generations. Therefore, long-term goals and the rights of future generations to enjoy a biologically diverse world must factor strongly into development decisions and be incorporated into education efforts among stakeholder communities.

3. Establish an effective assessment method for biodiversity targets.

A standardized methodology that measures biodiversity from a variety of perspectives is key to creating a common platform for assessment.

4. Harmonize biodiversity targets with goals for poverty eradication and broader sustainable development

In this way, specific goals for biodiversity can be integrated with metrics that measure food security, water security, and national health indicators.

Biodiversity can be achieved – if we have the will to pursue it.

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The Mining Working Group (MWG) at the UN is a coalition of NGOs with constituencies in a total of 27 mining countries that, in partnership with our members and affected local communities, advocates at and through the United Nations for human and environmental rights related to extractive industries. The MWG addresses unjust and unsustainable extractive practices and policies through the lens of the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples and Earth's carrying capacity.