

Summary of the Third Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework: 23 August - 3 September 2021

The Convention on Biological Diversity's Strategic Plan 2011-2020, and its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets expired in 2020. The fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD (COP15), which was supposed to convene in 2020 under the theme, "Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth," was expected to be the launching pad for a new post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF), including a new set of goals and targets to curb biodiversity loss.

In the midst of the process to develop the GBF, however, the world experienced first-hand the consequences of the disrupted balance between human and nature. The rapid proliferation of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a global public health emergency, but also slowed progress in efforts to develop the GBF, including new commitments to curb biodiversity loss.

After over a year of postponements due to COVID-19, the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework convened virtually to negotiate the first draft of the GBF, and to consider the outcomes of an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on ways to resolve divergent views on benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources.

After two weeks of dialogue in virtual contact groups, the Working Group approved the draft report, which also includes the reports from five contact groups on:

- Goals, Milestones and Overall Structure;
• Reducing Threats for Biodiversity;
• Tools and Solutions for Implementation and Biodiversity Mainstreaming;
• Nature's Contributions to People; and
• Digital Sequence Information on genetic resources.

Delegates agreed that these reports would form a basis for discussions at the resumed session of the Working Group, which is expected to reconvene as an in-person meeting in January 2022, in Geneva, Switzerland.

On Monday, 30 August, the Government of Colombia co-hosted a Pre-COP with the Indigenous community Monilla Amena in the Amazon Rainforest to build high-level political commitment for

negotiating an ambitious GBF by inviting Heads of State, ministers, heads of international organizations, representatives of multilateral financial institutions, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and major groups.

This first part of the third meeting of the Working Group convened virtually from 23 August - 3 September 2021 and was attended by 1680 participants including 141 parties, one non-party, and more than 200 observer organizations.

A Brief History of the Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was adopted on 22 May 1992 and opened for signature on 5 June 1992 at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio "Earth Summit"). The CBD entered into force on 29 December 1993.

There are currently 196 parties to the Convention, which aims to promote the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

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Three protocols have been adopted under the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (January 2000, Montreal, Canada) addresses the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) that may have adverse effects on biodiversity, taking into account human health, with a specific focus on transboundary movements. It entered into force on 11 September 2003 and currently has 173 parties. The Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (October 2010, Nagoya, Japan) provides for international rules and procedures on liability and redress for damage to biodiversity resulting from LMOs. It entered into force on 5 March 2018 and currently has 49 parties.

The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising from their Utilization (October 2010, Nagoya, Japan) sets out an international framework for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and technologies, and by appropriate funding, thereby contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and currently has 131 parties.

### Key Turning Points in Strategic Planning

**2010 Target:** In April 2002 at COP 6 in The Hague, the Netherlands, parties adopted a Strategic Plan 2002-2010 (decision VI/26) to guide further implementation at the national, regional, and global levels. The stated purpose of the plan was to effectively halt the loss of biodiversity so as to secure the continuity of its beneficial uses through the conservation and sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

Parties also committed themselves to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional, and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth. This target was subsequently endorsed by the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and the UN General Assembly, and was incorporated as a target under the Millennium Development Goals.

**Aichi Biodiversity Targets:** At the tenth meeting of the COP in Nagoya, Japan, in 2010 parties adopted the CBD's second Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (decision X/2). Under the theme "Living in Harmony with Nature," the purpose of the Strategic Plan is to promote effective implementation of the Convention through a strategic approach, comprising a shared vision, a mission, and strategic goals and targets, that will inspire broad-based action by all parties and stakeholders. The Plan contains the "2050 Vision for Biodiversity": By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet, and delivering benefits essential for all people.

The 20 Aichi Targets were organized under five strategic goals:

- address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society;
- reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use;
- improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity;

- enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services; and
- enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management, and capacity building.

This current Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Targets expired in 2020.

**COP 14:** At [COP 14](#) in November 2018, in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, parties adopted decision [14/34](#), which set forth a comprehensive and participatory process to update the Convention's strategic plan, and established an open-ended working group to develop the GBF to be adopted at COP15. Francis Ogwal (Uganda) and Basile van Havre (Canada) were appointed as Co-Chairs of the Working Group (WG).

**First meeting of the WG:** At the [first meeting](#) of the WG (27-30 August 2019, Nairobi, Kenya), parties deliberated on the structure of the GBF and agreed that the Co-Chairs and the CBD Bureau would develop a zero draft on the GBF to be submitted at least six weeks before the second meeting of the WG.

The WG adopted conclusions of the meeting compiled by Co-Chairs Ogwal and van Havre and the report of the meeting, which reflects agreement by the WG, including on:

- a non-paper on possible elements of the GBF;
- the preliminary list of meetings, consultations, and workshops for the development of the GBF;
- submissions on the structure of the GBF to be submitted to the Secretariat by 15 September 2019;
- the provision of a zero-draft text of GBF six weeks before the second meeting of the WG; and
- a detailed workplan to be prepared by the Co-Chairs and the Secretariat, and be presented at the informal briefing of the Co-Chairs on 24 November 2019 during the meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA).

The WG also agreed to request SBSTTA to provide guidance on specific goals, targets, indicators, baselines, and monitoring frameworks related to the drivers of biodiversity loss for achieving transformative change, within the scope of the three CBD objectives.

**Second meeting of the WG:** The second meeting of the WG (24-29 February 2020, Rome, Italy), commented on the zero draft of the GBF that was released in January 2020. The WG approved the final recommendation of the meeting compiled by the Co-Chairs, and adopted the meeting's report. In the recommendation, the WG, *inter alia*:

- invites SBSTTA at its 24th meeting to provide elements for the development of the GBF for consideration by the third WG meeting;
- invites SBSTTA to provide a scientific and technical review of updated goals and targets, and related indicators and baselines;
- requests the WG Co-Chairs and the Secretariat to prepare a document, updating the elements of the draft framework that were reviewed by the second WG, and to update the tables in the appendices to the draft framework;
- requests the Secretariat to provide scientific and technical information to support SBSTTA's review, including an analysis of linkages with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and
- requests the WG Co-Chairs and the Secretariat, to prepare a first draft of the GBF.

### Post-2020 Working Group Report

On Monday, 23 August, Co-Chair Francis Ogwal opened the third meeting of the WG on the GBF with a moment of silence in memory of those whose lives have been lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He expressed confidence that the WG would make progress on the GBF based on inputs from the discussions at SBSTTA 24 and the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 3). Co-Chair Basile van Havre noted that the difficulty caused by working online has not hampered progress and interactions among parties.

On behalf of the COP14 Presidency, Hamdallah Zedan (Egypt), thanked the Government of Colombia for hosting the meeting, expressing hope that parties will build on the good progress on the first draft of the GBF prepared by the Co-Chairs to build an ambitious and robust framework. He called this a “make or break moment” for both the people and the planet with the impacts of climate change, from droughts, to floods, to unstoppable wildfires making it necessary to urgently address the interlinkages with biodiversity.

Co-Chair van Havre reported that COP15 would be convening in two parts, the first from 11-15 October virtually with limited on-site presence and the second in person in Kunming, China, from 25 April to 8 May 2022.

On behalf of the COP15 Presidency, Zhao Yingmin, Vice Minister, Ministry of Ecology and Environment (China), welcomed the first draft by the Co-Chairs as a basis for discussion to develop a strong party-driven GBF. Recalling that there are only two months left until the first part of COP15, he said there will be at two-day high-level segment to lead to the release of the Kunming Declaration, meant to boost the confidence of the international community.

CBD Executive Secretary Elizabeth Maruma Mrema pointed to the stark warning of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its Sixth Global Assessment that there is no time to spare and that urgent actions are needed in the next decade to get on a sustainable road. She recognized that although the road since the second WG meeting had been more winding than anyone could have expected, a first draft of the GBF is available. She said the GBF can galvanize transformative action, including by developing ambitious national goals and targets and facilitating regular review.

On behalf of the host country, Carlos Morales, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Colombia), said that this third WG meeting is one of the final steps of a long process since CBD COP14. He urged parties to be creative in working on remaining gaps in the GBF, and to negotiate actions towards sustainable consumption and production patterns and achievement of sustainable development. He said the targets to conserve 30% and restore 20% of the planet’s biodiversity may not be enough if we do not discuss sustainable use and strengthen sustainable value chains.

**Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work:** On Monday, 23 August, Leina Al-Awadhi (Kuwait) was appointed as meeting rapporteur. Delegates adopted the agenda and proposed organization of work (CBD/WG2020/3/1/Add.2/Rev.1 and Add.1).

### Progress since the Second Meeting of the Working Group

On Monday, 23 August, Co-Chair van Havre opened discussions on the agenda item on progress since the second meeting of the WG. The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (CBD/

WG2020/3/2) and delegates were invited to comment on the progress. No comments were received.

### Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources

Co-Chair van Havre opened discussions on the agenda item on digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources on Monday, 23 August. The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (CBD/WG2020/3/4), which contains an overview of the science and policy-based process, including by the AHTEG, and informal activities on DSI on genetic resources.

Christopher Lyle (UK), Co-Chair of the AHTEG on DSI, provided a brief report of the outcomes of the AHTEG meeting, starting with scope and terminology. He noted that there is no clear boundary between data and information, noting that DSI includes nucleotides, proteins and epigenetic modifications, and metabolites and other macromolecules. He clarified that even though associated traditional knowledge is not DSI, the AHTEG discussed its importance and benefit-sharing obligations under the Nagoya Protocol and the CBD.

Co-Chair Ogwal provided an overview of the informal processes, including a series of webinars on DSI, and drew attention to options arising out of the process, which include:

- maintaining status quo with no agreement on how to address access and benefit-sharing (ABS) for DSI;
- fully integrating DSI into the CBD and Nagoya Protocol;
- use of the standard mutually agreed terms (MAT), either by using national standard MATs or a standard MAT at the international level;
- no prior informed consent (PIC), no MAT; this option requires a payment or contribution to a multilateral fund;
- enhanced technical and scientific cooperation; and
- no benefit sharing from DSI.

Malawi, for the AFRICAN GROUP, proposed that any monetary benefits arising or resulting from all utilization of DSI should be collected through a 1% markup on retail sales of consumer goods arising from the use of genetic resources in developed countries, in cases PIC and MAT are not implementable or practicable. They further noted that technical capacity to generate, access and use DSI is still low in Africa and thus the benefits of open access are not available to all in a fair manner.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA, noting that the term DSI is too broad in scope for its current use in the document, suggested the use of the term “Genetic Resource Sequence Data.”

The EUROPEAN UNION (EU) said DSI is not specifically mentioned in the Nagoya Protocol. He underscored that the global pandemic has shown its role in protecting human, animal, and plant health, and noted that timely and unrestricted sharing of such data has been effective in responding to the public health crisis. SWITZERLAND did not support extending the definition of genetic resources to include DSI, yet still welcomed efficient, solution-oriented approaches to addressing DSI, taking into account all stakeholders, including industry and the research community.

INDONESIA, supported by MALAYSIA and UGANDA, stressed linkages of DSI with the Nagoya Protocol. SAUDI ARABIA called for mechanisms to enhance access to DSI for all countries for purposes of scientific research and innovation. COLOMBIA, noting the technical nature of the document, called for clarification

in the background section or the development of a summary for policymakers.

AUSTRALIA said any benefit-sharing mechanism established for DSI must maintain open access arrangements to ensure the availability and efficient transfer of information for use in science, public health, and innovation development.

JAPAN said that any attempt to monetize DSI is a negative distraction from scientific research and not consistent with the CBD. He opposed linking it to the GBF and said that the options described were based on informal discussions, which were not mandated and are thus problematic from a procedural point of view.

Urging the recognition of the country of origin and a traceability mechanism, MEXICO described DSI as an intrinsic component of the genetic resources requiring fair and equitable benefit-sharing. ETHIOPIA also called for fair benefit-sharing from DSI through modalities that do not hinder scientific research or innovation. Noting that access to DSI leads to enhancement of innovation, scientific research, food security and public health, the UNITED ARAB EMIRATES opposed restrictive measures that hinder progress, while calling for capacity building on DSI.

NAMIBIA said that benefit-sharing from DSI is essential for meeting the CBD objectives and targets, calling the GBF a “once in a generation chance” to establish a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism needed to tackle the challenges to conserve biodiversity. The UK urged maintaining open access to DSI, while expressing readiness to discuss options for fair and equitable benefit-sharing and resource mobilization.

COSTA RICA noted that free access and non-commercial use can result in non-monetary benefits and said that a mechanism is needed to distribute benefits from commercial use. MOROCCO pointed out that availability of DSI from genetic resources can make it unnecessary to access the original genetic resource, requiring a concerted effort to address DSI and share monetary benefits. Calling DSI a scientific revolution that is part of the value chain, SOUTH AFRICA warned against leaving it as a loophole to avoid fair and equitable benefit-sharing, and called for a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism to address inequities.

Noting its recent ratification of the Nagoya Protocol, BRAZIL called benefit-sharing the most neglected objective of the CBD, stressing the importance of DSI in terms of both sharing information and benefits equitably. JORDAN supported integration of all DSI under the CBD and Nagoya Protocol and increased capacity building. ARGENTINA urged for a COP decision that recognizes: genetic resources include the information derived from them; effective and innovative mechanisms for benefit-sharing from DSI; and the relevance of related capacity building.

ECUADOR called for developing transparency mechanisms regarding access to and exchange of information. Several countries, including INDONESIA, NORWAY, and the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, highlighted the need for capacity building to ensure equal benefit-sharing from DSI. NORWAY emphasized transformational change, which underpins the GBF, is not possible without promoting science, research, and innovation.

Discussions continued on Tuesday, 24 August, with the US saying that the path forward on DSI must respect Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and respect rights of local knowledge holders. The INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY (IIFB) emphasized that traditional knowledge

provides leads to sequencing, discovery, and innovation, and that rights for breeds, varieties, biological samples, and derivatives should extend to embodied traditional knowledge. She supported a hybrid approach combining full integration of DSI into the Nagoya Protocol, including PIC and MAT, for the use of biological samples acquired from IPLCs’ lands, territories, and waters, or where traditional knowledge is directly accessed.

The GLOBAL YOUTH BIODIVERSITY NETWORK (GYBN) highlighted the current acceleration of generation of genetic sequences involving data from unspecified sources and urged for ensuring principles of ensuring benefit-sharing and respect of traditional knowledge are followed. The CBD ALLIANCE and CBD WOMEN’S CAUCUS said misappropriation of genetic resources through use of DSI is an existential threat to the Convention as it is actively undermining the CBD’s third objective of fair and equitable benefit-sharing.

The INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE cautioned against restrictions that may cause interference with open access and open exchange policies necessary for research and innovation. CGIAR recommended referring to existing international treaties that have made progress in benefit sharing approaches including the UN Food and Agriculture Organization’s (FAO) work on genetic resources for food and agriculture.

Co-Chair van Havre established a contact group on DSI, co-led by Lactitia Tshitwamulomoni (South Africa) and Gaute Voigt-Hanssen (Norway). He said the contact group co-leads would draft a document on the process proposed for the contact group discussions, and guidance on text for the draft recommendation, taking into account interventions from parties.

**Contact Group on DSI on Genetic Resources:** The contact group met on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 25-27 August.

On Wednesday, the contact group addressed a paper prepared by the co-leads on the basis of plenary discussions, which included sections on: organization of the work of the contact group; elements of a draft recommendation on DSI; text proposals related to DSI in the GBF; and other related text proposals. Delegates engaged first in a general round of reflections and then submitted text proposals on elements of a draft recommendation.

During the general round of discussions, parties highlighted priority elements for consideration, including, among others, the need to: preserve open access to DSI for scientific progress; build capacity for DSI analysis and use in developing countries; establish a mechanism for sharing of monetary benefits arising from DSI use; link DSI use to resource mobilization efforts; and follow rights-based approaches, including IPLCs’ right to PIC. It was also noted that, unless a global solution on benefit-sharing from DSI use is found, countries may restrict access to DSI on their genetic resources through national ABS legislation and agreements. Some stressed the need to clarify the distinct ways DSI is used, while others called for a cost-benefit analysis of the policy options that resulted from the informal intersessional process on DSI.

On Thursday, deliberations continued based on a second version of the co-leads’ paper on elements of a draft recommendation on DSI in the context of the GBF. Co-Lead Voigt-Hanssen explained that the new version compiles text amendments received during the first meeting of the group. He further clarified that the text would not be negotiated at the current meeting of the WG but form guidance for the report of the contact group to plenary and for text that will

form the basis for negotiations on DSI in the GBF at the in-person meeting of the WG. Delegates continued to discuss elements of possible convergence with a view to resolve divergent views on benefit-sharing from the use of DSI.

Participants welcomed the draft, noting it reflected most inputs. They emphasized that any approach to address DSI may include terms and conditions of the use of such data and based on the legal framework of the CBD. They also noted the need to ensure that the language for PIC is consistent with the Convention's provisions.

On capacity building and technological transfer, some delegates suggested that this could take the form of research collaborations including further research, training, knowledge platforms, technology co-development, among others. Some developing countries also called for recognizing that the technical capacity to generate and access DSI is still low in most developing countries and, therefore, the benefits of having open-access are not fairly nor equitably available for all.

After reviewing the co-leads' paper, participants discussed potential next steps, including a suggestion by Co-Lead Voigt-Hanssen on compiling a list of areas of convergence and divergence among party positions to help discussions.

He noted the following areas of convergence: open access; fair and equitable benefit-sharing; and the importance of capacity building for all stakeholders regarding the use of DSI. Some parties also suggested additional areas of convergence, such as the relevance of DSI to conservation and the role of DSI in delivering the SDGs.

Delegates also highlighted areas of divergence, including on what "open access" means and what form it can take, with many agreeing that this is an important topic of discussion. There was some disagreement on whether the issue of modalities for addressing DSI within the CBD was an area of convergence at this moment in time.

On Friday, Co-Lead Tshitwamulomoni presented the third draft of the co-leads' paper, containing the following sections:

- Draft recommendation submitted by the co-leads for consideration by third meeting of the WG;
- Potential elements of a draft recommendation to CBD COP15, representing a collection of views formulated by the contact group;
- Annex I: The co-leads' summary on draft potential areas of convergence and apparent divergence on DSI on genetic resources, prepared to facilitate further work and consideration of this topic at the resumed session of the WG on the GBF; and
- Annex II: Text proposals related to DSI in the GBF.

Co-Lead Tshitwamulomoni invited delegates to discuss Annex I on potential areas of convergence and apparent divergence. Delegates called for elaboration of areas of convergence and divergence, noting that while the need for access to DSI is an area of convergence, the modality of access is once of divergence.

Delegates also called for further elaboration of areas of convergence such as the important role of IPLCs when considering the sharing of benefits, traceability of DSI, and capacity building.

Some areas of divergence mentioned for further explanation include options, approaches, and modalities for benefit-sharing arising from DSI.

One observer asked parties to consider how they can incentivize information sharing. Another pointed out the need for understanding how the terms and conditions of users for open access databases can

enable and contribute to benefit sharing, and stressed that IPLCs should be primary beneficiaries of monetary benefits of DSI.

Participants were then invited to consider connections between DSI and the GBF. One delegation stressed the absolute necessity of finding agreement on the issue of DSI in order to achieve the aims of the GBF.

Participants then discussed the draft recommendation to be submitted by the co-leads. Following a lengthy debate on process and the difficulties of virtual negotiations, they focused on paragraph 4, which includes, *inter alia*, the invitation for submissions of views of options for addressing DSI under the convention and the GBF, and the establishment a Friends of the Co-Leads group to guide further work. Regarding the submission of views, one delegate asked for a reference to be made to the Nagoya Protocol, and another asked for special reference to be made to IPLCs. One observer group suggested further strengthening the evidence base, for instance through capacity-building workshops and online consultations. One delegation also insisted on the need for a cost-benefit analysis of the potential options. The meeting wrapped up with the co-leads asking parties to signal interest in joining the Friends of the Co-Leads group.

### **Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework**

**General Comments on the first draft:** The first reading of the GBF took place on Tuesday and Wednesday, 24 and 25 August. Co-Chair van Havre opened discussions on the first draft of the GBF, contained in an annex to the main document (CBD/WG2020/3/3).

Slovenia, for the EU, welcomed the first draft as a basis for negotiations, urging an ambitious GBF to effectively address deterioration of biodiversity, halt biodiversity loss by 2030, and strengthen implementation, with the ecosystem approach as an overarching principle. He said mainstreaming biodiversity is indispensable and should be addressed throughout, alongside synergies with addressing climate change. He urged: strengthening marine issues and the monitoring framework; a green and just recovery from the pandemic; changes to trade and consumption patterns; making targets more measurable; elimination of harmful incentives; updating the glossary; and coherent goals and targets.

The AFRICAN GROUP said the GBF has to provide solutions to the global challenge of unprecedented biodiversity loss and retain global natural assets. Urging a strong connection between all the GBF elements and balancing all three objectives of the CBD, he requested: simplification of the structure; avoiding ambiguity; making targets more outcome-oriented, smart and measurable; emphasis on ecosystem restoration; and resource mobilization by the time the GBF is adopted.

Argentina, for the LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP, urged the following improvements: building a common understanding for a solid structure, including streamlining, and deletion of milestones and to instead merge them with targets, as appropriate; taking into account the role of the region as custodians of biodiversity, centers of origin, and home to many cultures and traditional knowledge; recovery from biodiversity loss by building sustainable value chains and agriculture, mainstreaming biodiversity, and ensuring intergenerational equity; and addressing scarcity of resources for implementation through access to and mobilization of new resources.

Georgia, for CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, called for: sustainable production and consumption to be the most important point of the GBF; National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) as the main tool for implementation; clarity of terms, including in the glossary; building on synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to ensure achievement of goals; and greater resource mobilization, for developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states (SIDS), and countries with economies in transition.

NEW ZEALAND requested further strengthening the rights of IPLCs and recognition of their role in biodiversity protection.

JAPAN called for clarification that the mobilization of resources should be commensurate with aspirations of achieving sustainable use and biodiversity conservation. He emphasized that the period between 2011 and 2020 should be used as the reference period for monitoring using the new indicators, noting that to use the pre-industrial period for the monitoring of the GBF would not be applicable for many parties.

INDONESIA recommended supporting technological development in developing countries in order to enable sustainable development while minimizing impacts on biodiversity.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA called for logical and systemic linkages between goals, milestones, and targets, reflecting scientific evidence, which will be required to answer how the achievement of the targets will affect the 2050 goals and 2030 milestones.

BHUTAN highlighted that the lack of baseline data will make reporting on a rate of increase or decrease regarding particular targets and towards the headline indicators challenging.

MALAYSIA said the goals, milestones and targets need to be realistic, comparable and transferable across national, state, and local jurisdictions. COSTA RICA urged balanced goals, ensuring they contribute to meeting people's need and changing economic models to minimize impacts on biodiversity.

ARGENTINA suggested changes to ensure the GBF is ambitious yet inclusive by simplifying the framework, incorporating milestones into the targets, and new targets featuring human rights-based approaches and support for just transition from the COVID-19 pandemic. MEXICO, *inter alia*, noted: concerns about the GBF structure, since goals, targets, and milestones are not linked, urging removal of the latter; goals should be aspirational, requesting removal of percentages; the need to develop all headline indicators; and further elaboration of the implementation section.

COLOMBIA urged: maintaining a comprehensive and holistic approach; a strong restoration target; reinsertion of language on nature-based solutions, intergenerational equity and mainstreaming biodiversity. CHILE stressed: the importance of protecting oceans and the need for a network of fully protected marine areas; more work on the implementation sections; and adoption of headline indicators at the face-to-face segment of COP15.

Welcoming strengthened text on the role of IPLCs and a stand-alone target on restoration, NORWAY urged revision of NBSAPs in line with the GBF, a global stocktaking, and inclusion of wording that states must respect existing human rights obligations. UGANDA asked for targets to be more outcome-oriented and to address unsustainable population growth and natural disasters as drivers

of biodiversity loss. Supporting ambitious global action to end biodiversity loss by 2030, the UK requested addressing the critical importance of transitioning entire societies to be nature positive.

AUSTRALIA stressed: sustainable fisheries management; a combination of protected areas and other area-based conservation; IPLCs as full partners; recognizing the contribution of traditional knowledge as a cross-cutting issue; and the need to address invasive alien species.

The PHILIPPINES said the Association of Southeast Asian Nations considers the GBF as key to their post-COVID-19 recovery strategies. She highlighted the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity across sectors, and ensuring inclusive participation of all stakeholders, including regional governments.

INDIA emphasized the need to build coherence and linkages between the GBF and the Paris Agreement, the UN Strategic Plan for Forests, and the Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan, and highlighted that technology transfer is needed to achieve the GBF targets.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE said some milestones and targets are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound (SMART) and said support for implementation of the GBF is a priority. SENEGAL called for simplification of the language of the GBF, and realistic links between milestones and targets.

PERU urged parties to consider ambitious goals and targets that contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and synergies with other biodiversity-related MEAs.

BRAZIL said addressing benefit-sharing is key to successful conservation and sustainable use policies and should be included in the GBF.

The UNITED ARAB EMIRATES said all stakeholders, particularly youth, should be engaged in GBF development and implementation. MOROCCO welcomed the emphasis on NBSAPs for national implementation and said this depends on investment, financial support, capacity building, and technology transfer.

CHINA said it is important for parties to monitor progress, indicating support for quantified indicators to improve monitoring. BOLIVIA said the GBF draft reinforces the Western anthropocentric worldview where humans are alienated from Mother Earth, and nature is commodified, warning that this does not support the 2050 vision on biodiversity, "living in harmony with nature." ECUADOR urged appropriate financial resources for GBF implementation, in particular mega-diverse countries requiring capacity building and scientific and technological cooperation.

NAMIBIA noted that the structure of the GBF should better reflect the integrated and inseparable nature of the three CBD objectives. He noted that in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, the GBF needs to lay out a clear path towards global efforts to "build back better" and achieve a "green recovery."

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION said the draft should balance biodiversity conservation targets and sustainable use targets.

SWITZERLAND supported the 30x30 target, which refers to preserving and protecting at least 30% of land and ocean by 2030, noting it is measurable and easily understood by everyone.

SAUDI ARABIA said the goals, objectives, and indicators of the GBF should be accompanied by effective guidance and capacity-building programmes to achieve the 2050 vision.

MALAWI stressed the importance of linkages to the Nagoya and Cartagena Protocols. CAMEROON asked to take into account the need for socio-economic development and financial support for developing countries. ETHIOPIA said GBF goals and milestones need to be specific, and targets should be quantified in measurable terms within an appropriate monitoring mechanism.

SUDAN asked that the GBF have baselines to measure implementation and an awareness raising plan. ALGERIA stressed the need to include mitigation of drought and desertification and said certain goals are vague while others are difficult to meet for developing countries.

SAMOA pointed to gaps in relation to marine and coastal biodiversity including sustainable fisheries and conservation of coral reefs. BANGLADESH urged connected and effective area-based conservation measures and global gross domestic product (GDP) allocations for biodiversity and major international financial flows to developing countries. SOUTH AFRICA also urged removal of the milestones and did not support the 30x30 target.

ICELAND welcomed the ecosystem-based approach, while noting that nature-based solutions terminology does not meet the expectations for this process. The DOMINICAN REPUBLIC warned that some of the percentages are not very realistic and that targets with monetary values should take into account the realities of developing countries. ZAMBIA urged a whole of society approach and strengthening resourcing. SAINT LUCIA emphasized the importance of knowing the status and distribution of biodiversity through inventories of biodiversity and traditional knowledge.

The IIFB called for support for IPLCs' conservation initiatives, and the inclusion of rights-based approaches including: protection of Indigenous rights defenders; inclusion of mechanisms for claims and compensation for tangible and intangible damage; and recognition and protection of traditional knowledge.

GYBN compared the preparation of the GBF to the preparation of a meal, listing necessary ingredients such as intergenerational equity, transformative education; and rights-based approaches, including the protection of environmental defenders.

The CBD WOMEN'S CAUCUS also supported a rights-based approach and proposed a stand-alone target calling for appropriate recognition of gender equality, women's empowerment, youth, gender-responsive approaches, and the full and effective participation of IPLCs in GBF implementation.

The CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES stressed the importance of ecological connectivity in area-based approaches, highlighting that migratory species are suitable indicators for areas needing conservation. She further noted that use of wild species should be sustainable, legal, and regulated.

The CBD ALLIANCE said the GBF as it stands undermines the CBD obligations of states to prevent the acceleration of global biodiversity loss by regulating its main drivers, business, and overconsumption. He urged rights-based, community-based, and equitable governance for conservation and to regulate business and consumers.

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability said the definition of whole of government approach should be added to the glossary to ensure synergies with local and subnational governments, particularly in their ongoing contribution of post-pandemic recovery.

BUSINESS FOR NATURE COALITION suggested the mission should drive action in the business community to reflect the urgency to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030

THE INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN) via video message said his organization's protected area guidelines can support ambitious goals to prevent extinctions and improve populations of wild species.

On species-related goals, BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL called for a SMART target focusing on species population abundance and extinction risk, aimed at nature restoration, and bending the curve on biodiversity loss.

The WORLD CONSERVATION SOCIETY supported outcome-oriented goals for the state of biodiversity and action-oriented targets that measure interventions, and recommended focus on important and vulnerable ecosystem types; and that the GBF must encourage significant changes to "business-as-usual" to prevent the next pandemic of zoonotic origin.

The ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES urged improved incorporation of the CBD's objectives, including acknowledgment of the importance of biodiversity to people's livelihoods and better highlighting the role of subnational governments.

UN WOMEN underscored the importance of the post-2020 Gender Plan of Action of the CBD, currently under development, as a key tool to support the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

The CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA (CITES) recommended greater emphasis on sustainable, well-regulated, and legal use of wild species, which can be a driver for biodiversity conservation as well as providing benefits for people and supporting their livelihoods.

TRAFFIC underscored the importance of the health-biodiversity nexus and the One Health Approach and drew attention to priorities and milestones identified in the Draft Global Action Plan for Biodiversity and Health.

NEW WIND ASSOCIATION urged that the GBF emphasize the regulation of over-consumptive processes and the role of businesses to prevent them, while supporting people's rights to sustainable use of biodiversity.

**Goals, Milestones and Overall structure:** This contact group, co-led by Nibert Bärlocher (Switzerland) and Vinod Mathur (India), met on Wednesday, 25 August, and Tuesday, 31 August.

**The 2050 goals and 2030 milestones:** On Wednesday, the discussions focused on the section on the 2050 goals and 2030 milestones, which contains four long-term goals for 2050 related to the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, and a number of corresponding milestones for assessing, in 2030, progress towards the goals.

**On enhancing ecosystem integrity, connectivity, and healthy resilient populations (Goal A),** some delegates questioned the rationale of the percentages proposed for increasing the area of ecosystems to be enhanced, saying these are not adequately supported by scientific evidence. Others said the proposed 15% increase is not ambitious enough and should be increased to 20%. Many suggested that the goal be redrafted as an aspirational phrase to include emphasis on, *inter alia*, connectivity and integrity

of natural ecosystems, and enhancing natural functioning of all ecosystems. Several delegates suggested merging targets and milestones under this section.

On reducing the rate of extinction by at least tenfold, some delegates said there is a need for clarity, since reducing extinction tenfold does not align with the proposal to maintain at least 90% of genetic diversity within all species. Observers stressed the key role of IPLCs in meeting this goal, with some asking to include reference to their management of ecosystems. Some proposed reference to halting human-driven extinctions of known threatened species, and that the risk of species extinctions across all taxonomic and functional groups be eliminated. One delegation suggested referring to significantly reducing the rate of population decline and deterioration of habitats rather than extinctions.

On Wednesday, 25 August, and Tuesday, 31 August, the contact group discussed **Goal B on nature's contributions to people through conservation and sustainable use for the benefit of all**. Some developing countries proposed more specific reference to valuing biodiversity and ecosystem services and integrating them across policies and sectors, and reducing the global ecological footprint of production and consumption on the environment. A delegate asked to include a reference to "addressing the challenge of climate change, for the benefit of all now and in the future."

Some delegates proposed to focus the goal on sustainable use, with a possible formulation being: "biodiversity is sustainably used, maintaining or enhancing ecosystem services and contributing to sustainable development." Others suggested adding reference to stimulating bio-based activities and products to increasing productivity across all sectors, fostering innovation and supporting the provision of ecosystem services and the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. One delegate asked for the text to reference planetary boundaries, with another suggesting a reference to peoples' dependence on biodiversity.

Some delegates wanted to add references to diverse conceptualizations of nature, ensuring that these are respected, recognized, maintained, and enhanced. Seconding this, another delegate also asked for the text to refer to "nature's contributions for people and all living beings of Mother Earth" and the need for "strengthening the collective action of Indigenous Peoples and local communities." Some also proposed including reference to a human-rights based approach, and equitable practices.

On Tuesday, 31 August, the contact group discussed **Goal C on benefits from the utilization of genetic resources**. Regarding the utilization of genetic resources, some called for referencing DSI on genetic resources. Some objected to including DSI, saying there is no language on this issue in the CBD.

Delegates suggested benefits-sharing should, *inter alia*:

- take into account derivatives and traditional knowledge;
- be proportionate to the growth rate of economic sectors most reliant on the access and use of genetic resources;
- follow MAT and PIC;
- be done in accordance with the Nagoya Protocol and other benefit-sharing instruments, and with consideration for IPLCs; and
- consider principles of international law and international agreements to protect intellectual property.

Regarding increasing monetary and non-monetary benefits, delegates debated whether "substantial increase" is an adequate

formulation or if a numerical figure should be included. Some said a baseline should be established to monitor the desired increase of benefits.

Discussing **Goal D on closing the gap on the availability of financial and other means of implementation**, some delegates suggested including references to the importance of financial capacity, and technical and technological needs of developing countries. Delegates suggested, among others, that financial and other means of implementation should be equitably distributed. They also stressed the need to align financial flows with the CBD objectives, including minimizing public and private financial flows that contribute to harming biodiversity.

Others argued that there was too much focus on financial resources, highlighting other means of implementation such as mainstreaming biodiversity across sectors and capacity development. Delegates also put forward suggestions to reform or eliminate incentives harmful to biodiversity and encourage activities with positive outcomes instead.

**Overall structure of the GBF:** The contact group discussed this item on Tuesday, 31 August, noting the need for the goals and targets to be short and simple to ensure uptake by governments and the general public, and to support implementation. They also proposed:

- clarifying relationships between the various elements of the GBF and CBD objectives;
- connecting targets with indicators, and ensuring that they are supported with appropriate means of implementation;
- SMART targets with balance between those that are measurable and those that are not;
- goals remain aspirational, and address the core aim of transformative change;
- clarification and strengthening of the scientific basis for numerical goals and targets; and
- developing a text with overarching principles on Indigenous Peoples and local communities' rights, reflecting, for instance, human-rights based approaches, respect for customary law, and common but differentiated responsibilities.

Delegates had diverging views on the importance of clear milestones. To some, these are crucial for interpreting and implementing the framework, as well as tracking progress. Others believed they are unnecessary and that their content could instead be integrated into the goals and targets.

Delegates then submitted comments and textual suggestions on sections A-E on Background, Purpose, Relationship with the 2030 Agenda, Theory of change, and 2050 Vision and 2030 Vision.

On the **Background (Section A)**, delegates noted the need to include text from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform of Biodiversity (IPBES) Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, to provide a detailed description on the urgent need for transformative action to address biodiversity loss.

They also called for synergies with other biodiversity-related conventions for actions to reverse biodiversity loss. When discussing implementation, they commented on the need to elaborate financial resources and equal rights and participation of IPLCs, women, girls, youth, the elderly, and other stakeholders.

Some delegates called for the **Purpose (Section B)** to include a description of the reasons for the failures of the Aichi Targets and



lessons learned; and to emphasize urgent and transformative actions needed by “all levels of government to reverse biodiversity loss.”

On **Relationship with the 2030 Agenda (Section C)** some highlighted that the GBF should be viewed as a tool for addressing the SDGs in an integrated manner. Others urged for the inclusion of other global initiatives such as the One Health Approach, the Paris Agreement, and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and for elaboration of the relationship between the pillars of sustainable development and the GBF.

On **Theory of Change (Section D)**, delegates called for, among others, clarity on the relationship between goals, targets and milestones, and for states to address the weak bond between people and nature, and strengthen the harmony among all living beings of the Earth. Some said that the infographic should clarify how the five drivers of biodiversity loss will be addressed, and that the timelines from present through to 2030 and 2050 need clarification.

Delegates noted that the **2050 Vision and 2030 Vision (Section E)** should among others:

- remain inspirational and easy to communicate;
- contain a clear message on transformational change; and
- express the need for bending the curve of biodiversity loss and dramatically increase mobilization of resources to achieve this mission.

**Reducing Threats to Biodiversity:** This contact group met on Thursday, 26 August, and on Wednesday and Thursday, 1-2 September, under the guidance of contact group Co-Leads Teona Karchava (Georgia) and Alfred Oteng Yeboah (Ghana).

On **Target 1 on integrating spatial planning**, delegates urged ensuring targets are simple, short, yet ambitious and achievable. Some supported including ecosystem and landscape approaches and improving the connectivity of ecosystems. Many made comments pertaining to terminology. For instance, several parties questioned the use of terms such as wilderness and intact ecosystems for spatial planning, pointing out that most areas targeted for reducing threats for biodiversity are occupied areas. Here, some parties supported focus on critical and vulnerable ecosystems. More broadly, a number of parties preferred using the terms “terrestrial, marine and freshwater” in place of “land and sea.”

Numerous parties called for the recognition of rights of IPLCs over lands, territories, waters, and resources, with some suggesting that this should be an overarching principle applicable to all targets of the GBF. Some also supported attention to minimizing impact from infrastructure and other sectors responsible for land-freshwater-and-sea-use change and degradation.

On **Target 2 concerning restoration of degraded ecosystems**, many welcomed a stand-alone target on this issue, while also reiterating the importance of having clear, brief and ambitious targets, cautioning against over-complicating the language and purpose of the targets. Parties discussed what metric was most appropriate for the target, with suggestions including using a percentage or quantitative target, such as a billion hectares.

Opinions varied on the need to mention climate change adaptation and mitigation, with one delegate suggesting that this be put under another target. One delegate recalled the findings of IPCC and IPBES studies indicating the alarming rate of climate change and biodiversity loss, asking for a more ambitious target. Parties also discussed suggestions for including references to baselines, such as

the pre-industrial period or pre-human disturbance, which a number of parties opposed.

Several parties supported a proposal for the target to call for enabling and supporting restoration initiatives of IPLCs.

On Wednesday, 1 September, the contact group discussed **Target 3 on protecting at least 30% of land and sea areas**. Several delegates noted that only referring to land and sea areas is rather limited, and suggested additional terminology, such as terrestrial, inland waters, coastal areas, and marine ecosystems. While there was wide support for the recognition and respect of the rights of IPLCs, such as the right to their free PIC, some highlighted the need for an umbrella target to indicate their important role in all targets.

Suggestions from delegates included text on:

- prohibiting environmentally damaging activities in protected areas;
- restoration as well as conservation of ecosystems;
- ecosystem functions, ecologically well-connected systems, and taking into account cultural diversity;
- prioritization of areas of high biological importance;
- sustainable management of protected areas that deliver environmental and social outcomes;
- environmental social safeguards, and ecosystem connectivity;
- adequate funding of protected areas that are effectively and equitably managed, and adopt gender-responsive governance; and
- recognition and support for IPLCs’ collective lands, territories and resources.

Many supported the 30x30 target, saying it should refer to 30% terrestrial and 30% marine area protection. Others said the percentage lacks adequate scientific evidence, and one delegate asked for explanation as to why 30% is likely to be achieved within eight years whereas as the Aichi Targets failed to achieve protection of 17% and 10% of terrestrial and marine areas, respectively.

When discussing **Target 4 on management actions for species and their genetic resources**, many suggested explicit mention of *in-situ* conservation alongside *ex-situ*. One delegate noted that area-based management is covered in previous targets, and thus the current target should retain focus on *ex-situ* conservation. Some delegates also suggested reference to disease transmission, including zoonosis.

Regarding species conservation, several questioned the restriction to wild and domesticated species, and made suggestions to include among others: social, cultural, and economically important species; native species; and prioritizing species at risk of extinction.

On reducing human-wildlife conflict, several delegates felt that this was best dealt with under a different target, noting that such conflicts relate to land- and resource-use and management, and not to genetic diversity of species. Some suggested addressing this issue “for the benefit for both wildlife and humans,” with others also suggesting rephrasing “reducing human-wildlife conflict” to “promoting human-wildlife co-existence.”

Discussions on **Target 5 on the harvesting, trade and use of wild species** received wide support for including the One Health Approach, which connects the relationship between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment. Many suggested that human risk from zoonotic diseases should be moved to targets on meeting people’s needs.

Support for regulating harvesting and trade included emphasis on legal enforcement, traceability, eliminating illegal commercial exploitation and illicit wildlife trafficking, applying ecosystem-based approaches, and eliminating adverse impacts of non-target species, addressing wildlife trafficking, and biopiracy. There was support for safeguarding the customary laws and sustainable use, as well as the rights of IPLCs, and to include effective sustainable fisheries management. There was also some support for incorporating elements from other biodiversity-related conventions working on these issues.

On Thursday, 2 September, the contact group addressed **Target 6 on managing pathways for the introduction of invasive alien species (IAS)**. Delegates supported addressing IAS through preventative measures, noting the need for capacity for identification of IAS. Some also suggested increasing efforts for early detection, rapid responses and the management of risks, including through border controls.

Regarding impacts from IAS, delegates suggested, among others, focus on human and animal health, on native species, and on ecosystem integrity.

Prioritization in addressing IAS included support for:

- species with higher invasive potential;
- priority pathways;
- key biodiversity areas;
- endangered and vulnerable species; and
- islands.

Some delegates called for strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks and capacity for identifying, managing pathways, and eradication. The tracking and addressing species range shift due to climate change also received support.

Regarding **Target 7 on reducing pollution from all sources**, many delegates supported special reference to noise and light pollution. Some also asked for special reference to be made to electronic waste. Several also proposed mention of circular economy approaches in helping to reduce waste.

On pesticides, delegates debated on terminology, with some preferring reference to “hazardous pesticides,” others supported “hazardous chemicals,” and still others “biocides,” which would account for harmful herbicides. There were also diverging opinions on whether the text should have numerical targets, with some instead suggesting a more general reference to a decrease in use of pesticides. In acknowledging that pesticide use is tied to other global issues such as hunger, as pointed out by one delegate, another highlighted that less-harmful alternatives exist, such as agroecological approaches, and that in the interest of maintaining a high ambition, parties should adopt numerical targets on this issue. Others also called for greater scientific evidence on the topic of pesticide use, with a few suggestions to put in place mechanisms to enable and monitor pesticide use.

Many parties preferred using the term plastic “pollution” rather than “waste.” Some delegates believed that fully eliminating the discharge of plastic waste was unrealistic, instead suggesting that this be “significantly reduced.” One participant also asked for delegates to address the issue of existing plastic pollution in the environment.

On **Target 8 on minimizing the impact of climate change on biodiversity**, delegates noted the aim should be to maintain carbon stocks while also focusing on mechanisms to enhance resilience

and adaptation for biodiversity, including disaster risk reduction. A number of delegates opposed the inclusion of a numerical target, stating that this would prejudice work in other conventions, and risked taking attention away from biodiversity loss as the priority of the GBF. One delegate suggested text referring to “net-gain for biodiversity” rather than merely “reducing negative impacts on biodiversity,” while others wanted to add more qualifying language such as “as much as possible.”

Several delegates supported including reference to “nature-based solutions,” while others preferred the terminology “ecosystem-based solutions.” There was also support for language from the IPBES and IPCC joint report on biodiversity and climate change, to enhance conservation and restoration of natural carbon-rich ecosystems, while strengthening ecosystem resilience to climate change impacts. One delegate suggested including support for community-based approaches, and non-market-based approaches that protect, restore and enhance biodiversity. Some called for equitable sharing of benefits and burdens in the work to address climate change and its impacts on biodiversity.

**Nature’s Contributions to People:** On Wednesday, 1 September, this contact group, co-led by Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica) and Andy Scott (UK), initiated discussions on five targets on nature’s contributions to people.

On **Target 9 on benefits for people through sustainable management**, several delegates requested the use of familiar and broadly accepted terminology such as “conservation and sustainable use” and “ecosystem services.” Some questioned the necessity of mentioning specific benefits such as nutrition, food security, and medicines, while others urged referencing water security, food sovereignty, energy, and healthcare. A few delegates suggested replacing “wild terrestrial, freshwater and marine species” with “native species.”

Other suggestions included:

- referring to “sustainable long-term benefits,” keeping in mind the interest of future generations;
- incorporating elements related to equitable governance, protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities, in particular women;
- adding reference to international regulations and commitments in relation to sustainable use;
- changing reference to vulnerable groups to vulnerable situations, in accordance with the UN Human Rights Council’s recognition that people and groups are not inherently vulnerable, but made so by circumstances; and
- removing reference to species altogether, with some pointing out that this was a target associated with ecosystems, not species.

Discussions on **Target 10 on ensuring areas under agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry are managed sustainably**, delegates called for adding fisheries and livestock including nomadic pastoralism, while others suggested combining these activities using terms such as “human-made production systems,” or “agroecosystems.”

Many noted that increasing productivity is not a mandate of the CBD and does not necessarily support sustainability and resilience of agricultural ecosystems. They called for its deletion.

Some supported, among others, wording for restoration, protecting pollinators and soil biodiversity and the use of agroecology and other biodiversity friendly practices as a means of

increasing resilience and environmental responsibility. Others also suggested reconversion of marginal and unproductive agricultural lands by retirement or restoration

Drawing attention to the UN Food Systems Summit to be held in September 2021, some called for adding text on transforming food systems to ensure they contribute to biodiversity, human and planetary health, and the reduction of post-harvest waste. Delegates also supported promoting Indigenous and local knowledge of IPLCs and their role in maintaining plant varieties, and using a rights-based, equitable, and gender-just governance approach.

Delegates raised different opinion on appropriate wording of **Target 11 on maintaining and enhancing nature's contributions**. Some suggested that "nature's contributions" is a broad definition that encompasses non-direct benefits such as evolutionary processes. Others preferred "ecosystem services," arguing that this was a clear and well-established term within the CBD. Others suggested referring to natural functioning ecosystems, and the inclusion of references to climate change adaptation and mitigation, and soil fertility and quality.

Delegates debated whether to refer to nature-based solutions or ecosystem-based approaches. Those opposed to nature-based solutions argued that it is not yet an accepted terminology within the CBD.

In terms of who should benefit, one delegate said "all people" was too anthropocentric, suggesting reference to women, youth, IPLCs, and vulnerable groups. Another urged including all living things, and reference to future generations.

On **Target 12 on increasing the area of, and access to, green and blue spaces**, several delegates suggested including reference to green and blue infrastructure, as well as the significance of management, ensuring ecological connectivity, and contributing to biodiversity. Some also asked to include mention of the quality, quantity and connectivity of these spaces. Delegates requested text to address equity, such as prioritizing people living in disadvantaged areas.

Regarding benefits, one delegate proposed mentioning "social cultural and human development, with another suggesting adding "learning" alongside health and well-being.

On **Target 13 on legal measures to facilitate access to genetic resources and ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits**, several delegates suggested adding reference to derivatives, DSI, biological resources and ecosystem services.

On benefit-sharing, several delegates noted the need for the text to be in accordance with the provisions of the Nagoya Protocol, and other relevant international instruments. Reference to PIC, with regards to traditional knowledge holders, also gained support.

Some proposed splitting this target to separate access to genetic resources, benefit-sharing, and implementation of ABS mechanisms. Others urged streamlining ABS measures to reduce current inefficiencies. Another suggestion was to create a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism funded by a 1% levy on retail sales in developed countries of all products derived from biodiversity. A suggestion to ensure planning and support for the development of educational, scientific, technological and trade capacity of developing countries was also supported.

**Tools and Solutions for Implementation and Biodiversity Mainstreaming:** This contact group, co-led by Anne Teller (EU) and Jorge Murillo (Colombia), convened on Friday, 27 August, and Thursday, 2 September, to deliberate and provide suggestions on targets of this section of the GBF.

On **Target 14 concerning integration of biodiversity values across society**, some delegates proposed referring to "diverse" or "multiple" values to indicate the importance of more-than-economic valuations of biodiversity, and the different approaches, visions, and models of sustainable development. Some parties called for clarification of the term "values," and others called for discussing intrinsic values.

In relation to the alignment of activities and financial flows with biodiversity values, several supported a suggestion to instead refer to the "goals and targets" of the GBF in order to be more precise.

Other delegates expressed concern at the potentially unrealistic wording of the text and called for short, concise, and easily understood language, and urged all to refrain from adding on issues that should be dealt with at the national level. Some said the main message is to ensure mainstreaming of biodiversity into diverse sectors, and suggested, among others:

- mention of budgeting processes;
- to include sustainable development and poverty reduction in biodiversity mainstreaming;
- enhancing the capacity of developing countries to access financial flows; and
- creating an enabling environment from private and financial sectors to address risks and opportunities with regard to preserving biodiversity.

On **Target 15 regarding ensuring that businesses minimize their dependence and negative impacts on biodiversity**, many parties stressed the need for a target indicating actions that can be measured and monitored. Opinions varied on whether the target should address small as well as large businesses, and other actors such as financial institutions. Many also suggested that the target reiterate the role of governments in setting policies and regulatory measures to encourage and require sustainable practices.

In relation to progressively reducing negative impacts on biodiversity by at least half, many questioned this figure, with some asking for a more ambitious target. Some parties cautioned against disproportionately burdening small businesses. Regarding changes for addressing negative impacts by businesses, parties suggested, among other things:

- promoting circular economic frameworks;
- adopting a sectoral approach to broaden the scope of actors;
- strengthening transparency measures by requiring that actors disclose their dependencies and impacts to the public; and
- stronger wording around repairing environmental damages and minimizing harmful extractive and production practices.

On **Target 16 on responsible choices to reduce waste and overconsumption**, delegates urged alignment with SDG 12 (sustainable consumption and production), and to, among others, include reference to footprints from diets and the impacts of diets on human health; replacing "responsible choices" with "sustainable choices," and to address all forms of waste.

On food waste, parties supported considering cultural in addition to traditional preference, ensuring access to relevant information and transformative education and awareness building in areas such as sustainable alternatives.

On Thursday, 2 September, delegates resumed discussions on **Target 17 on measures to manage to control potential adverse impacts on biotechnology**. Some delegates asked for clearer wording, in line with CBD provisions, with some asking for reference to “living modified organisms resulting from biotechnology.”

Multiple delegates supported referencing cultural and socio-economic considerations alongside biodiversity and human health, and the need to obtain PIC. Several emphasized the importance of establishing and strengthening capacity for broad horizon scanning, monitoring, and assessing of technological developments. Some also pointed out that the text seemed to imply that all biotechnology will have adverse impacts on biodiversity, suggesting textual edits to address this. In this regard, some also wanted to include reference to potential benefits from the development and use of biotechnology. A number of delegates asked for reference to effective participation in biotechnology research and development.

On **Target 18 on redirecting, repurposing, or eliminating harmful incentives for biodiversity**, delegates debated the figure of USD 500 billion of subsidies addressed by the target, with some noting that it was an underestimation of total subsidies.

Some noted that positive incentives should be scaled up and that all, and not just the most harmful, incentives should be addressed. To some, neutral incentives should not be included in the text.

Delegates noted the need for consistency with World Trade Organization work on incentives and include subsidies in the agriculture and fisheries sectors. Some supported redirecting subsidies to IPLCs who are stewards of biodiversity.

During discussions of **Target 19 regarding financial resources and means for implementing the GBF**, delegates agreed that further discussion and work was needed on the quantitative elements of the target, and there were diverging opinions on what these may look like. Some wanted them removed altogether, while others wanted them increased, and some suggested the use of percentages instead. A number of delegates proposed that financial resources from all sources should be used to meet implementation needs, and be increased to at least 1% of global GDP.

Several delegates asked for the target to be framed in line with Article 20 of the CBD on financial resources, especially emphasizing common but differential responsibilities. Some suggested the creation of a Global Fund for Biodiversity to support implementation, and the need to increase multilateral financial flows. Opinions varied on whether to leverage private finance: some argued that the GBF should focus on public funds and the responsibilities of governments; while others argued that mobilizing private finance was a crucial implementation strategy. A number of delegates proposed referencing the important role of National Biodiversity Plans.

Several delegates proposed dividing the target, either into two parts, or two separate targets: with one focusing on financial resources and mobilization; and the second addressing capacity development, technology transfer, and technological and scientific cooperation.

On **Target 20 on knowledge for decision making for management of biodiversity**, some delegates said the aim should be to strengthen national information systems to facilitate reporting. Many recognized the importance of traditional ecological practices and knowledge, and of ensuring that the target covers education, communication, and research. Noting that the target can allow inclusion of DSI on genetic resources, some supported inserting a footnote to guide text in this regard.

On **Target 21 on effective participation in decision making related to biodiversity**, delegates called for, among others, strengthening language on participation of women and girls, and to include all relevant stakeholders. Noting that IPLCs may have capacity constraints to participation, some urged strengthening platforms, policies and processes to support their effective participation. Some said the target should contribute to solving socio-environmental conflicts, tackling tenure rights, security of human rights defenders in environmental matters, and recognition and implementation of the right to a healthy environment.

On Monday, 30 August, the contact group discussed the sections related to implementation support mechanisms; enabling conditions; responsibility and transparency; and outreach, awareness, and uptake.

On **implementation support mechanisms**, parties supported text to ensure a strategic approach to mainstreaming of biodiversity. The proposed text highlights: resource mobilization as essential to achieving the GBF; requiring transformative change to eliminate and redirect incentives harmful to biodiversity; enhanced effectiveness of resource use; and the need for national financial plans and instruments. They also supported a long-term action plan for engagement of all biodiversity-related conventions in mainstreaming biodiversity, and to strengthen cooperation and synergies.

In the text on **capacity building**, some highlighted the need for alignment with ongoing SBSTTA and SBI discussions on the implementation mechanism. Delegates requested updating a footnote in this section when the SBI 3 recommendations on resource mobilization, capacity building, and technical and scientific cooperation are agreed. They also commented on the need to support baseline data generation. Parties also supported observers’ requests to include horizon scanning into scientific cooperation and technology transfer.

On **enabling conditions**, some parties requested highlighting the need for efficiency and integrity of implementation. One delegate stressed that cooperation needs to be party-driven and asked to add the establishment of a liaison mechanism among parties to the biodiversity-related conventions. Others asked to include references to international cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions, and for inclusion of a reference to the IPCC’s work.

In the part on employing rights-based approaches, some parties urged including a reference to the rights of nature. Others called for including the qualifier “according to national legislation,” and a reference to delegate support for business through training and for transition to a nature positive economy.

Some further suggestions included:

- separate paragraphs on the role of governments and stakeholders, asking to move the reference to the Edinburgh Declaration to the former; one delegate asked to remove all references to specific documents in the section;

- a separate paragraph related to the sustainable development agenda; and
- strengthening the references to gender equality by including gender mainstreaming.

Delegates also requested a separate paragraph on IPLCs, noting their standing as rights-holders and including reference to their rights as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and human rights law.

On **outreach, awareness and uptake**, a number of participants highlighted the importance of education and requested reflection of this in the title of the section, and others suggested a new target on education as it is a priority for youth.

Some text suggestions for the section included increasing understanding, awareness, and appreciation of:

- the intrinsic values of biodiversity;
- including the associated traditional knowledge, and cosmovision of IPLCs; and
- not only raise awareness but also inspire action by all actors.

### ***Biodiversity Pre-Conference of the Parties (Pre-COP)***

The Biodiversity Pre-COP took place on Monday, 30 August, to promote the high-level political commitment for the adoption of the GBF. The event, hosted by the Government of Colombia, convened in a hybrid format featuring a physical meeting in Leticia, Colombia, and an online platform.

This high-level event gathered Heads of State and Government, ministers, heads of international organizations, and representatives of multilateral banks, women, youth, and IPLCs. Participants discussed priorities and expectations for an ambitious and effective GBF. Discussions focused on sustainable consumption and production patterns, mainstreaming, and means of implementation in the context of the GBF.

Iván Duque Márquez, President of Colombia, opened the session, highlighting the linkages between the biodiversity and climate crises and the need to take urgent action, including on energy transition, transport, sustainable production, and the circular economy. He proposed, among others, zero deforestation by 2030, increasing protected area coverage, and combating environmental crime.

**High-level Segment:** The high-level segment was moderated by President Duque. UN Secretary-General António Guterres called for ambition across the entire GBF, and highlighted the need for: agriculture and fisheries that do not undermine biodiversity; reversing harmful subsidies; establishing additional conservation areas; and safeguarding the leadership of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in biodiversity management.

CBD Executive Secretary Elizabeth Maruma Mrema stressed the need for governments to accelerate the actions necessary to reduce negative impacts on biodiversity outside the environment sector, integrating these actions in national planning and budgetary processes, and economic actors to identify and disclose their dependencies on nature and associated risks.

Sebastián Piñera, President of Chile, highlighted the interlinked biodiversity and climate crises, with attention to the role of the ocean.

Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President, European Commission, called for: ambitious 2050 goals; clear and measurable milestones for 2030; commitment to implementation, including a monitoring and review process; fair and equitable sharing of benefits

from the use of genetic resources; and respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Mathias Cormann, Secretary-General, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), stressed the need for including in the GBF: quantitative targets to measure progress; reporting on headline indicators; and positive incentives, while scaling down negative ones. Klaus Schwab, Executive Chairman, World Economic Forum, called for: reshaping the economic model to include people and the planet; investment in nature as part of the global responsibility to bridge the financing gap; a change in mindset to value natural capital; and an ambitious GBF engaging business and citizens.

Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary, UN Convention to Combat Desertification, pointed to the importance of land and ecosystem restoration as a positive implementation strategy that can also create jobs, and urged a comprehensive approach to implementing the three Rio Conventions.

Guillermo Lasso, President of Ecuador, stressed the need for: fair and equitable benefit-sharing; addressing biodiversity loss and transforming global consumption patterns; and sufficient resources for the implementation of GBF commitments.

Cristián Samper, President, Wildlife Conservation Society, proposed a nature-positive goal with three measurable objectives: zero net loss of nature from 2020, net-positive by 2030, and full recovery by 2050.

Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Environmental Affairs, Egypt, and COP14 President, highlighted the need to strengthen interlinkages between the Rio Conventions, and investments in science, technology, and people, in particular youth and IPLCs.

**Pre-recorded video segments:** Carlos Alvarado Quesada, President of Costa Rica, said the GBF must include a transparent implementation process and an effective roadmap to put nature on a path to recovery by 2030.

Alberto Fernández, President of Argentina, said the GBF should address the CBD objectives in a balanced manner, promote innovation, and provide for ambitious capacity-building and technology transfer provisions.

Huang Runqiu, Minister of Ecology and Environment of China and COP15 President, drew attention to China's experience in striking a balance between conservation and development, highlighting commitment to green development, protection and restoration of ecosystems in a holistic manner, and ecological pathways for poverty alleviation.

Inger Andersen, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), stressed the need for: system change on production and consumption; ambition in the GBF beyond targets, to include means of implementation, as well as political will; and involvement of business and academia, together with leadership of IPLCs.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO), noted the WHO Manifesto for a healthy recovery from COVID-19 recognizes the role of nature, and expressed commitment to work with the biodiversity community.

Noting that climate and biodiversity action can be compatible with economic growth, Mauricio Claver-Carone, President, Inter-American Development Bank, drew attention to nature-based solutions and the need to involve the private sector in investment.

Sergio Díaz-Granados, President, Development Bank of Latin-America, invited all development banks to be at the forefront of ecological conservation and shared his organization's commitment to increase green investment.

Absalón Arango, Chief, Monilla Amena community in the Amazon and host of the meeting, shared experiences confirming that climate change is real, and biodiversity is deteriorating, calling for respecting Mother Earth and educating children to do so.

**Ministerial Segment:** The ministerial segment was moderated by Carlos Correa Escaf, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Colombia. It featured three panel sessions on: Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns and Green Recovery; Resource Mobilization; and Role of Coalitions and Non-State Actors. Marta Lucía Ramírez, Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, highlighted her country's involvement in the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People and commitment to conserve at least 30% of the planet by 2030.

**Panel on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns and Green Recovery:** Gaute Voigt Hanssen, speaking on behalf of Sveinung Rotevatn, Minister of Climate and the Environment, Norway, called on parties to ensure that nature-based solutions support combating biodiversity loss and climate change.

Siti Nurbaya Bakar, Minister of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia, reported on bioprospecting activities to promote food security and the health sector, and welcomed collaborations to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Florika Fink-Hooijer, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission, highlighted the 30x30 target and supported mainstreaming of biodiversity across policies and sectors, and addressing drivers of biodiversity loss.

Milciades Concepción, Minister of Environment, Panama, reported on efforts towards a green economy, noting the implementation of actions to combat climate change, biodiversity loss, and deforestation.

Krista Mikkonen, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Finland, said the GBF needs to support transition to sustainable consumption and production patterns, and to be aligned to the SDGs.

Eva Zabey, Executive Director, Business for Nature, said the GBF must provide a finish line to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 in order to accelerate innovative business models that ensure the global footprint is within planetary boundaries.

Thomas Lovejoy, President, Amazon Biodiversity Center, gave examples of how Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge have pointed to great value in the Amazon as a repository of biodiversity. Discussing the role of academia and science in GBF implementation, Bruno David, President, Museum of Natural History of France, urged respect for access and benefit-sharing obligations, including in the Nagoya Protocol, to deal with the ethical dimension of nature-based solutions. Fredy Chiro, Vice-Minister of Climate Change, Guatemala, said biodiversity-related financing and circular economy models can support inclusive economic growth.

**Panel on Resource Mobilization:** The panel on resource mobilization was moderated by M. Sanjayan, Conservation International. Leonore Gewessler, Minister of Climate Action, Austria, noted that public financing will remain the smaller portion of the funding needed to address biodiversity loss, and urged looking

for funding from new sources, including private and philanthropic. She further called for elimination of harmful subsidies.

Discussing ways of transferring finances to on-the-ground conservation, Christiane Paulus, Director General for Nature Conservation, Germany, pointed to participatory, transparent processes specific to the region and capacity building.

Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, CEO and Chairperson, Global Environment Facility (GEF), stressed the need for policy coherence, including by shifting the criteria used for investment and public expenditures to stop investing in activities that destroy nature.

Carter Roberts, President, WWF US, pointed to coalitions of institutions, building on government commitments and catalyzing changes in finance. James Deutsch, CEO, Rainforest Trust, stressed funding commitments must reach the ambition of area-based conservation targets, noting that countries that benefit from global trade have a moral obligation to fund action to reverse biodiversity loss.

Onno van den Heuvel, Global Manager, United Nations Development Programme's Biodiversity Finance Initiative, said that biodiversity should become a top priority of the finance sector, while governments should set up regulatory frameworks to ensure streamlined reporting on biodiversity from the private sector.

**Panel on Role of Coalitions and Non-State Actors:** Andrea Meza Murillo, Minister of Environment and Energy, Costa Rica, drew attention to the High-Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, noting that coalitions putting nature at the forefront of development may increase ambition and catalyze action by non-state actors.

Zac Goldsmith, Minister of State for Pacific and the Environment, UK, highlighted the Leaders' Pledge for Nature, and the Global Ocean Alliance, aiming to translate joint ambitions to meaningful action on the ground and build consensus for an ambitious GBF.

Sylvie Lemmet, Ambassador for the Environment, France, stressed that coalitions serve to showcase and validate commitments and ambitious actions taken at the national and international levels, including offering solutions within the negotiating process.

Gabriel Muyuy Jacanamejoy, Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, highlighted the GBF targets' fundamental importance for implementing partnerships with IPLCs, including: inclusion in conservation initiatives; recognition of rights to customary use; free prior and informed consent; and recognition of traditional knowledge in relation to genetic resources.

Enric Sala, National Geographic Explorer-In-Residence, said the funds required to protect nature are a fraction of the amount spent on subsidies for industries that pollute the air, empty oceans, and destroy soils.

In a message on behalf of SIDS, Parnell Charles, Jr., Minister of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change, Jamaica, stressed that climate change is the greatest threat to biodiversity and urged prioritizing the biodiversity-climate change nexus. He highlighted that conservation and sustainable use solutions have potential to reduce disaster risk in SIDS.

**Closing Session:** In his closing remarks, President Duque pointed to climate change as the greatest threat to the planet, alongside biodiversity loss, and said the Pre-COP discussions pointed to the need for: specific GBF targets, additional financial resources and debt alleviation; additional financing tools; public policy instruments

mainstreaming biodiversity across all sectors; and building partnerships for implementation. He thanked the Indigenous community of Monilla Amena for hosting the Pre-COP. In a closing ceremony, with representatives sitting on the traditional thinking seats, holding hands, Chief Absalón Arango, passed on a communal message to all of humanity based on the force of Mother Earth to inspire hope for the future urging all: Let's not mess with our lives!

### **Draft COP15 Decision**

During plenary on Tuesday, 31 August, WG Co-Chair van Havre opened discussion on the elements of the draft decision to be sent to COP15 (CBD/WG2020/3/3 Appendix).

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, on behalf of AFRICA, and Germany, on behalf of the EU, along with several others, argued that it was inappropriate and premature to discuss the text now, given the ongoing discussions taking place at multiple intersessional meetings. Several delegates refrained from submitting text proposals, instead offering preliminary views.

NORWAY and AUSTRALIA requested that references to financial support be consistent with the provisions of the CBD on financial resources. ARGENTINA proposed that the GBF be described as a flexible framework for parties to implement the CBD, in accordance with national priorities and circumstances. BRAZIL also proposed the establishment of a global fund for biodiversity.

SWITZERLAND proposed additional paragraphs on cooperation among all relevant MEAs, international organizations, and relevant programmes, as well as the establishment of tools that will enable integrating strategies, achievements, and reports of the other conventions. In this regard, MEXICO stressed the importance of optimizing efforts to enhance cooperation among the Rio Conventions, the SDGs, and other biodiversity-related forums. PERU proposed text that would link the GBF with the SDGs.

The UK argued that, apart from the preambular paragraphs, the text did not reflect the full urgency of the transformative change needed to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. He also expressed concern that paragraph five seemed to suggest a delay in implementation activities until COP16.

MEXICO asked that reference be made to the transitions provided for in the fifth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook and stressed the importance of considering and including the proposals of IPLCs. In this regard, BOLIVIA called for the full and effective participation of IPLCs.

AUSTRALIA questioned the omission of Action Plan for the Long-Term Approach to Mainstreaming Biodiversity from the list of key documents, noting that mainstreaming plays a key role in implementation. JAPAN suggested including reference to the sharing of best practices related to the implementation of the GBF and said that any provision of information and guidance should involve updating NBSAPs.

CHILE and COSTA RICA suggested reassessing the 2030 timeframe for implementing parts of the GBF, saying that due to delays associated with COVID there is no longer a decade until 2030.

Regarding the process of the WG meetings, COSTA RICA, COLOMBIA, CHILE, and BOLIVIA also asked for a streamlined approach, and that important information, working papers, and changes to meeting methodologies be made available sufficiently in advance.

The IIFB expressed regret at the slow progress in some of the contact groups, and asked for strengthened participation by Indigenous Peoples and local community representatives in global processes, including formal and informal meetings, thematic consultations and other workshops.

WWF International underlined that implementation is key to parties' ability to fulfil their obligations under the CBD.

### **Closing Plenary**

On Friday, 3 September 2021, Co-Chair van Havre opened the final plenary session to review the outcome of meeting, the draft report, and hear closing remarks before suspending the meeting until January 2022. Co-Chair Ogwal opened discussions on the GBF, and the co-leads of the contact groups reported on the completion of their work, and drew attention to the relevant reports to be appended to the report of the meeting.

The Secretariat explained that: the contact group on reducing threats to biodiversity had concluded its work; since the WG did not gather input on goal A the same way as all others, participants are invited to submit their input by 8 September 2021; and participants are similarly asked to confirm that their other proposals are appropriately reflected in the compilations, or to otherwise submit corrections by the same date. Recalling that plenary had initiated discussions on a draft decision on the GBF, Co-Chair Ogwal said that this work would continue at the resumed session in Geneva.

Delegates then resumed discussions of the agenda item on DSI. Contact Group Co-Lead Voigt-Hanssen presented the report of their work, which addresses areas of convergence and divergence and other areas that will benefit from more information. He said that the co-leads' report will be appended to the report of the meeting, noting the text has not been negotiated or agreed upon, but rather is a compilation of views. He asked the Co-Chairs to establish an informal Co-Chairs advisory group on DSI and delegates agreed.

#### **Adoption of the First Part of the WG-3 Meeting Report:**

Rapporteur Leina Al-Awadhi (Kuwait) presented the report of the first, virtual, part of WG-3 (CBD/WG2020/3/L.1), noting that the structure of this meeting had been unique, with her report adapted accordingly. She reminded parties, given that discussions would be resumed at the in-person meetings in Geneva, this only constituted a draft of the first part of the final report.

Co-Chair van Havre then asked parties to approve the report section by section. Regarding Item 4 on the post-2020 GBF, ARGENTINA, RUSSIA, and SOUTH AFRICA made minor editorial suggestions to ensure that their statements were better reflected in the report. Regarding DSI, the EU suggested textual edits to clarify that the report prepared by the co-leads was based on the views and submissions from parties and observers. With regards to proposed intersessional work on DSI, BRAZIL asked for the text to read "there was no objection" rather than "general support." In the end, it was agreed that the text should read "there was general support and no objection."

Noting that the remainder of the report would be drafted and completed once the Working Group reconvenes in-person in January in Geneva, Switzerland, parties approved the report of this first part of the meeting. Regarding DSI on genetic resources, SOUTH AFRICA announced ongoing cooperation with Norway on the Global DSI Dialogues carried out by the ABS Capacity

Development Initiative, and looked forward to continuing discussions of this highly complex issue.

In concluding remarks, Franz Perrez (Switzerland) informed delegates that his country is working hard to make an in-person session of the WG and the CBD subsidiary bodies possible for January 2022, pointing out that the situation with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic is fragile and subject to change. Noting that the meeting had clearly made progress deepening the understanding of areas of convergence and where significant work still needs to be done, he called for intersessional work and urged delegates not to land on the lowest possible common denominator but aim for the highest possible “landing ground.”

On behalf of the COP-14 Presidency, Hamdallah Zedan (Egypt) lauded this impressive virtual session, including the Pre-COP hosted by Colombia, stressing that ambition is needed to achieve the transformative changes through cooperation. CBD Executive Secretary Elizabeth Maruma Mrema welcomed the positive and optimistic attitude of the meeting, which brought together over 1680 registered participants from 141 parties and more than 200 organizations, advancing an ambitious global biodiversity framework.

Noting that this meeting had displayed the party-led process called for at COP14 with strong participation throughout, Co-Chair van Havre expressed concern about the high expectations put on the resumed meeting in Geneva, urging participants to prepare as much as they can through formal and informal work, building on the strong existing relationships and working as one team. Co-Chair Ogwal urged delegates to hang in for the last stretch of the marathon of GBF negotiations, and to then make the necessary resources available for its implementation.

Co-Chair van Havre suspended the meeting at 8:39 am EDT (UTC-4).

### **A Brief Analysis of the Meeting**

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has thrown the world into unprecedented times of illness, increased mortalities, and unmeasurable socio-economic loss. Even though natural scientists have for decades predicted proliferation of pandemics due to biodiversity loss and degraded ecosystems, nations of the world were unprepared with no contingencies in place to deal with the extent of loss and devastation experienced.

These occurrences have led to many discussions on how we got here, how to get out of this conundrum, and, more importantly, how to never return to this dire state. The necessity to restore harmony with nature has resounded globally as the only possible future. The 2050 Vision of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s (CBD) Strategic Plan, a world of “living in harmony with nature,” coined a decade before the pandemic, echoes this exact notion. However, the vision’s 2050 timeline presents a challenge for a world in dire need of immediate redemption and solutions to secure a conducive environment for nature and people. So, a more detailed plan is needed, and hopes are pegged to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF).

The GBF Working Group (WG) began its work in 2019, soon after its establishment by the fourteenth meeting of the CBD’s Conference of the Parties (COP14). The Working Group was expected to hold three meetings in Nairobi, Kenya, Kunming,

China, and Cali, Colombia, in the lead up to the COP15, where the framework was expected to be adopted in 2020. But then the pandemic hit and disrupted not just the schedules but caused new pressures on fulfilment of the Working Group’s mandate.

This brief analysis focuses on the progression of the GBF negotiations, the challenges, and opportunities presented in the process of COVID-19 recovery, and the hopes placed on the GBF as a lifeline for a sustainable future in harmony with nature.

### ***Into the Woods***

The world is in the throes of an unprecedented global health crisis, which, according to science, is caused by humanity’s destructive relationship with nature. The triple planetary crisis—climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution—are no longer the greatest concern for mankind. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has exponentially increased the stakes, presenting the world with a more palpable crisis requiring emergency interventions and immediate attention.

Society is no longer naïve about how we got here, and the blame game of who carries more responsibility has been superseded by a global joining of hands to identify how to bend the curve towards the path to stem biodiversity loss and stop ecological breakdown. As many noted, the GBF is tasked to lead the way to emergence onto a greener path.

Faced with this issue, delegates cited the findings of the IPBES Global Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Report, which highlights the five main drivers of biodiversity loss, and thus important areas to focus interventions: changing use of sea and land, direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution, and invasive alien species. Throughout the meeting, these areas evoked healthy discussions in contact groups.

The GBF must, several delegates said, live up to its promise to provide a clear pathway to halving biodiversity loss by 2030 and lead to positive biodiversity trends by 2050. Failure is not an option, one delegate said, noting that the threat of present and future pandemics provides an additional incentive to address this.

### ***Seeing the Forest for the Trees***

Delegates at the first meeting of the WG in 2019, saw their mission as turning a page on the failures of the GBF’s predecessor, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Many parties regarded their task as a second chance to correct their approach based on lessons learned. However, by the second meeting the urgency of the task was elevated as the meeting had to move to Rome due to the outbreak of the pandemic in China where the WG was supposed to meet. During the final days of the meeting, as the pandemic followed the Working Group to Italy, the discussions were laced with fear of the unknown and the notion of a second chance changed to “the final chance,” to bring the biodiversity agenda to the highest priority of international negotiations.

During preparations for the third meeting, there was great uncertainty as the meeting was postponed for over a year and options for an in-person meeting diminished. With no choice but to meet virtually, the Working Group soldiered through challenges of internet connectivity, poor audio quality, and overall awkwardness, to complete its mandate.

While contact groups compiled comments on convergences and divergences on the GBF, it was the divergences that were often a



great source of frustration. The unpacking of targets often ended in longer lists, more complex sentences, and dissecting of issues. This approach, some said, counters the intent of delivering an ambitious framework, as the added complexity in many cases led to loss of aspiration and ambition.

Some delegates highlighted the need to have Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound (SMART) targets as a priority. However, the balance between the different components of SMART targets proved difficult to achieve, due to diverging views by delegates, for instance, on the use of quantitative values for targets. Some delegates lamented the attachment of numerical targets to actions such as rates of extinctions, on one hand, while there was reluctance to attach quantitative values to targets on resource mobilization, on the other.

Major divergences were also noted on digital sequence information (DSI), especially when discussing “open” access and benefit sharing. Indeed, the use of DSI to create COVID vaccines reignited debate about inequalities, as delegates noted the disparity in access to vaccines between developed and developing countries.

Warning that debates on numeration and detailing every aspect of a topic is leading to complicated composite texts, one delegate sensed a deviation from the intent of the GBF, and another highlighted that the Aichi Targets, which had been crafted with much detail and precision, had not live up to the desired result.

### ***Clearing the Trail***

In the context of the ongoing pandemic, the GBF is expected to push ambition beyond expected limits and clear a trail that will bring humanity out of uncertain times to hopefully avoid a precarious destiny. The interpretation of the WG’s mandate by some participants was to provide a clear direction and find a path out of the cycle of lack of action and unsuccessful interventions against biodiversity loss. But this path was not easy to find.

The linkages between biodiversity and climate change, the reliance of agriculture on biodiversity, and the growing recognition of the importance of biodiversity-rich ecosystems such as sea grasses, mangroves, peatlands and forests to combat climate change has elicited a need for interconnectivity in implementation strategies. The ecosystem approach under the CBD, the One Health Approach, and other solutions gained prominence during discussions in a bid to achieve a wide range of benefits across sectors as well as multilateral environmental agreements. In other words, the GBF cannot afford to fail, as it will play a pivotal role not just in halting and reversing biodiversity loss, but also in other commitments, including the climate, pollution, and land degradation, among others.

This WG meeting was considered a pre-negotiation process, which leads up to Geneva’s formal negotiation process. During the WG, delegates discussed the first draft of the GBF and began to examine the details in a bid to ensure the text is consistent with agreed language of the CBD and other relevant processes including the Paris Agreement, IPBES, and others. Contact groups discussed ways of translating the ambition of the GBF into measurable outcomes. However, the meeting did not make formal changes to the first draft, but collated suggestions into alternative texts and compiled in contact group reports.

The ability of the GBF to live up to its ambition may depend on the Geneva meeting, when the Working Group is expected convene in person. The Geneva meeting will also involve resumed sessions

of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI). The strategy of holding these meetings side-by-side will allow resolution of GBF-related issues subject to decisions of the subsidiary bodies. These include resource mobilization and capacity building to be concluded by the SBI, and the provision of scientific basis for numerical targets, monitoring, and the review mechanism under SBSTTA. At the same time, it was made clear at the first part of SBSTTA-24 and SBI-3 earlier this year that all recommendations regarding the GBF were under the sole purview of the Working Group.

As a result, references to the Geneva meeting by some as a “make-it-or-break-it-moment” seem to reflect the pressure on the resumed session to build consensus and iron out major remaining divergences to pave the way to CBD COP15. While delegates feel apprehensive about the task in Geneva, they are also cognizant that investing in intersessional work will be the surest way to avoid discussions on the nitty gritty, and make the resumed session a breakthrough moment to shine light on a transformative pathway.

Before the Geneva meeting, delegates hope to carry out informal consultations on issues on some diverging issues such as resource mobilization, and the enumeration of targets. The hope is that in Geneva, individual members will be able to move negotiations forward from text to ways of translating collective ambition into national commitments and actions.

### ***Coming out of the Woods***

As some suggested, the GBF, despite its great potential, is not a magic wand and to achieve its high ambition, parties need to address the direct drivers of biodiversity loss, as well as the indirect drivers, particularly by ensuring adequate funding and means of implementation.

Some suggest that CBD COP15 is going to be the event of the decade, an event that will at last throw a much-needed lifeline to save nature. With all hopes set on the COP, parties in Kunming will be called upon to provide an answer to the biodiversity crisis. The hope of political good will was displayed during the Biodiversity Pre-Conference of the Parties (Pre-COP), which was intended to build up high-level of political commitment towards adopting the GBF at COP15. The meeting also received support from three political coalitions, namely the Leaders Pledge for Nature, the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, and the Global Ocean Alliance, which jointly reaffirmed their role in reversing biodiversity loss by 2030. Many hope this political momentum continues at the first part of COP15 in October 2021, where a two-day high-level segment is expected to reinforce ambition for the GBF.

As the Working Group suspended its virtual session, observers and parties alike expressed the need to listen to a wide range of world views in the journey towards sustainability. The words of the leader of the Monilla Amena Amazonian community, who co-hosted the Pre-COP with the Colombian government, are relevant in this regard, “Let’s not play with our lives! Let the force of nature and Earth inspire confidence to build a world full of hope.”

The GBF, although negotiated by governments, is expected to provide a space for all peoples to engage in sustainable lifestyles and actions. Echoing this message at the end of the closing plenary, the parting words of Working Group Co-Chair Francis Ogwal

left delegates humming to a popular tune from the late pop music legend, Michael Jackson, as he urged delegates to “talk to the man in the mirror, and ask him to make the change!”

## Upcoming Meetings

**UN Food Systems Summit:** As part of the UN Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs by 2030, the Food Systems Summit aims to provide a platform for ambitious new actions, innovative solutions, and plans to transform food systems and leverage these shifts to deliver progress across all of the SDGs. It will be held during the UN General Assembly to set the stage for global food systems transformation. **date:** 23 September 2021 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** [un.org/en/food-systems-summit](http://un.org/en/food-systems-summit)

**First Part of the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP15):** The first part of CBD COP15, the 10th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the 4th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing are scheduled to take place in a virtual format with limited onsite presence of delegates from embassies and organizations based in China. The first part will include the opening of the meetings and will address agenda items that have been identified by the Bureau as essential for the continuation of the operations of the Convention and its Protocols, including the budget. There will also be a High-level Segment on 12 and 13 October. **dates:** 11-15 October 2021 **location:** Kunming, China, and online **www:** [cbd.int/meetings/COP-15](http://cbd.int/meetings/COP-15)

**UNFCCC COP 26:** The 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26), the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 16), and the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 3) will convene. **dates:** 1-12 November 2021 **location:** Glasgow, Scotland, UK **www:** [unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/glasgow-climate-change-conference](http://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/glasgow-climate-change-conference)

**61st meeting of the GEF Council:** The Council, the Global Environment Facility’s main governing body, meets twice annually to develop, adopt and evaluate the operational policies and programs for GEF-financed activities. It also reviews and approves the work program (projects submitted for approval). **dates:** 7-9 December 2021 **location:** Washington, D.C., US **www:** [thegef.org/council-meetings/gef-61st-council-meeting](http://thegef.org/council-meetings/gef-61st-council-meeting)

**Resumed Sessions of the CBD Subsidiary Bodies and WG-3 on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework:** The resumed sessions of SBSTTA-24, SBI-3 and the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework are scheduled to reconvene as face-to-face meetings and address as a core topic outstanding issues in regard to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. **dates:** 12-28 January 2022 (TBC) **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** [cbd.int/meetings](http://cbd.int/meetings)

**Resumed Session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5):** Convening under the theme, “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the SDGs,” UNEA-5 will provide a platform for discussing and implementing nature-based solutions that contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, by holistically addressing its social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Building on the online session in February 2021, the meeting will discuss ways

to ensure that policies for economic recovery following COVID-19 lead to a resilient and inclusive post-pandemic world. A special session of UNEA to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of UNEP will be held for two days (3-4 March 2022) in conjunction with the resumed session of UNEA-5. **dates:** 28 February – 4 March 2022 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** [unep.org/environmentassembly/](http://unep.org/environmentassembly/)

**Second Part of the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP15):** The second part of CBD COP15, the 10th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the 4th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing are scheduled to reconvene in a face-to-face meeting in Kunming, China. COP15 is expected to take a final decision on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as well as decisions on related topics, including capacity building and resource mobilization. **dates:** 25 April – 8 May 2022 **location:** Kunming, China **www:** [cbd.int/meetings/](http://cbd.int/meetings/)

For additional upcoming events, see [sdg.iisd.org/](http://sdg.iisd.org/)

## Glossary

ABS	Access and Benefit Sharing
AHTEG	<i>Ad Hoc</i> Technical Expert Group
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
DSI	Digital sequence information
GBF	Post-2020 global biodiversity framework
GDP	Gross domestic product
GYBN	Global Youth Biodiversity Network
IIFB	International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and local communities
MAT	Mutually agreed terms
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreements
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
PIC	Prior Informed Consent
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SBI	Subsidiary Body on Implementation
SBSTTA	Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound
WG	Working Group