

Renewing system-wide collaboration on Biodiversity

For consideration by the 23rd Senior Officials' Meeting of the Environment Management Group

1. Biodiversity as a strategic global issue

The world's population depends on biodiversity and ecosystem services for its wellbeing and future prosperity. Biodiversity provides energy, food, clean air and water, medicine, is an integral part of our cultural and spiritual activities and contributes to solving sustainable development challenges such as human health and wellbeing, food and water security, poverty eradication and elimination of hunger.

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets provides a global framework for action to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and halt its loss. These objectives and Targets are strongly reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals¹.

However, implementation lags behind what is necessary. Based on current trends, pressures on biodiversity will continue to increase and the status of biodiversity will continue to decline². Most countries lack the whole-of-government approach necessary to address the drivers of biodiversity loss. Attention is needed at the highest levels of government to address this problem. In addition, public engagement and awareness of the issues and their importance needs to elevate to a level associated with climate change and the momentum that led to the Paris Agreement.

Actions need to be taken urgently to integrate the value of biodiversity into policy, implement policy and regulations, reach out to greater numbers of stakeholders, and change societies' consumption and production habits, including in relation to land, water, food and energy.

2. UN-wide dimensions

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity serves as a framework for the Convention, other biodiversity-related conventions³ and the United Nations system. Many UN agencies, programmes and other multilateral environmental agreements contribute to the implementation of its objectives for the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. Others have programmes that, while not explicitly addressing biodiversity, have the potential to contribute to the biodiversity agenda, for

¹ The linkages between Biodiversity and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are presented in a Technical Note (available online at: <https://www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity-2030-agenda-technical-note-en.pdf>) and a Policy Brief (available online at: <https://www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity-2030-agenda-policy-brief-en.pdf>) prepared by CBD Secretariat, FAO, World Bank, UN Environment and UNDP.

² Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2014), Global Biodiversity Outlook 4 — Summary and Conclusions. Montréal. Available online : <https://www.cbd.int/gbo/gbo4/gbo4-summary-en.pdf>

³ Several biodiversity-related conventions welcomed the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, undertook analyses of the linkages between their respective strategies with the Strategic Plan or aligned their strategies with the Strategic Plan, urged collaboration among the respective national focal points and prepared guidance for the integration of their respective objectives into national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

example through implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides the framework for the entire UN system.

Over the coming three years, governments need strong support from entities of the UN system for national actions, delivered in an integrated manner, which will contribute to achieving, by 2020, the Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the associated Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁴ (see also footnote 4 and Annex).

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets contribute to a 2050 vision of a world without biodiversity loss or degradation of ecosystems. In 2018, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity will consider the long-term strategic direction for the 2050 vision. It will also agree a comprehensive and participatory preparatory process and timetable for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, providing for consultations among Parties, and with other relevant conventions, and inputs from indigenous peoples and local communities and relevant stakeholders and sectors. In 2020, the COP will consider the final assessment of the implementation of the Strategic Plan and achievement of its Targets, and adopt a global framework for its follow-up, post-2020.

The post-2020 global framework for biodiversity would be aligned with and continue to support and reinforce the SDGs. It will be developed in close collaboration with other biodiversity-related conventions and in consultation with all relevant organizations and stakeholders. Again, its development and implementation will require the full involvement of the UN system.

3. Environment Management Group

The United Nations Environment Management Group (EMG) provides a unique forum to convene views and attention to the biodiversity agenda across the UN system. Previous successful work of the EMG related to biodiversity includes an Issues Management Group (IMG) that, among other things, prepared and published the report, “Advancing the Biodiversity Agenda: A UN System-wide Contribution”⁵ as a significant contribution to the preparation and implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The IMG also prepared an Aichi Biodiversity Targets Mapping Tool and guidance for integration of biodiversity in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF).

The timing of the 23rd Senior Officials Meeting (SOM 23) of the EMG makes it well positioned to reconsider the challenges outlined above and appropriate responses of the UN system to enhance efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and contribute to the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

⁴ Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development relevant to biodiversity and to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, that have a target date for achievement by 2020: 2.5, 6.6, 11.b, 12.4, 14.2, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6, 15.1, 15.2, 15.5, 15.8, 15.9, 17.18

⁵ Advancing the Biodiversity Agenda: A UN System-wide Contribution (report by the Environment Management Group, 2010). This report was developed by an Issue Management Group on the post 2010 biodiversity agenda established under the Environment Management Group with the participation of representatives from 27 United Nations entities. The process had been initiated in 2008 by the President of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention together with the Convention’s Executive Secretary.

4. Proposal for future work of the Environment Management Group

Based on the above considerations, and with the intent of building on its previous work in this area, it is proposed that the EMG takes a renewed look at the biodiversity agenda with the intent of promoting enhanced efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and contributing a UN system input to the preparation of the post-2020 biodiversity framework. The following actions are proposed:

a) Discussion by the Senior Officials during the 23rd Senior Officials Meeting (2017)

Aided by an introduction by the Executive Secretary of the CBD, the Senior Officials are invited during the senior segment of SOM23 to consider appropriate responses of the UN system to: (a) the need to focus current efforts related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and enhance efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and (b) contribute to a comprehensive and participatory process to develop proposals for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

Consideration of these matters by SOM 23 will contribute to regaining high-level political attention to biodiversity, including by underlining the relevance of biodiversity to work of the UN agencies, to the Sustainable Development Goals and to key issues of human health, wellbeing, food security, energy, poverty eradication and water.

b) An EMG Nexus Dialogue on biodiversity (2018)

A Nexus Dialogue of the EMG is proposed to be held in 2018 to look at opportunities and challenges in implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and biodiversity-related Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the respective roles and contribution of UN agencies and other actors. The dialogue can bring the health, energy, food and water sectors, among others, around the table to suggest new ways to implement these global objectives. The dialogue could also promote ways to integrate the biodiversity considerations in development-related plans through the nexus methodology.

In doing so, the dialogue could consider and discuss the following elements.

- Consider the achievements and challenges related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the associated Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- In light of these, consider how UN agencies and their partners could, during the next three years, further enhance their collaborative and individual efforts to support implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the associated Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Consider how to elevate the biodiversity agenda, learning from the climate and other successful experiences in forging a UN and global commitment;
- Consider how UN agencies can effectively contribute to the consultations for the preparation of the post-2020 biodiversity framework and actively engage their constituents in these consultations.

The dialogue could be informed by a note that elaborates on the challenges, needs, and options for follow-up, outlined above. Among other things this could provide an informal assessment and observations on earlier contributions of the EMG and their follow-up, including its 2010 report, *Advancing the Biodiversity Agenda: A UN System-wide Contribution*, in particular its recommendations for system-wide cooperation on biodiversity, progress that has been made and what challenges are still persisting.

The report and outcome of the dialogue could be provided to the CBD COP at its fourteenth meeting in Egypt in November 2018 and disseminated through an event held at the margins of COP 14. It would also be considered by SOM 24 in September 2018.

c) Task Team on the development of the post 2020 biodiversity framework (2019)

Building on the outcome of the EMG Nexus Dialogue on biodiversity, the Senior Officials may at their 24th Meeting in 2018 consider establishing a task team, through which EMG Member agencies could provide inputs to the development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework in 2019.

Suggested Action X: Renewing system-wide collaboration on Biodiversity

The Senior Officials decide to revitalise its work on biodiversity by:

1. Organizing an EMG Nexus Dialogue on biodiversity in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2018 to identify areas for an EMG contribution;
2. Based on the outcome of the Dialogue, requesting the EMG Secretariat in consultation with interested EMG Members, to prepare Terms of Reference for a possible UN system contribution to the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework and implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Annex

Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that are relevant to biodiversity and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and that have a target for achievement by 2020

2.5 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and

equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed

6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes

11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels

12.4 By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment

14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans

14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics

14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information

14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation

15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements

15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species

15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species

15.9 By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts

17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity,

migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.