

ANNEX 3: SUMMARY OF KEY STRATEGIC MESSAGES OF THE EMG SENIOR OFFICIALS ON UN SYSTEM CONTRIBUTION TO THE POST- 2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Following the proposal of Ms. Inger Andersen, the Executive Director of UNEP and Chair of the EMG, the 25th Senior Officials of the EMG in their 25th annual meeting (25 September, NY) focused their strategic discussion on the UN system contribution to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. ¹ Below is a summary of key strategic points provided by the Senior Officials. As a result of their discussion, they agreed to establish a Consultative Process to continue preparing UN system inputs to the preparation and implementation of the global framework.

UNEP

Ms. Andersen invited those present who may not consider biodiversity to be core to their organisation's mandate to suspend that belief and reflect, as biodiversity likely is relevant to all participants' mandates. She highlighted that the impact of organisations' specific focuses (eg. chemicals and waste, economic development, social dimensions, children, etc.) reflect directly into the natural world and how it operates to sustain us (e.g. farming systems, weather patterns, ecosystem services, etc.). She underlined that even sectors that do not seem to have a direct relevance to natural resources do in fact have a link. She stated that this discussion is intended to explore these links.

CBD

Ms Pasca-Palmer, Executive Secretary of the CBD thanked colleagues for the progress made in promoting the biodiversity agenda at the heart of global policy. She recognised that despite efforts over the past two decades, in recognition of scientific reports which have been released, the international community has not been successful in stopping or slowing biodiversity loss. She highlighted that biodiversity represents the infrastructure underlying our lives, societies and economies, and that in losing the 1 million or more species mentioned in the IPBES Global Assessment report, the capacity of the planet to support us and be resilient will also be lost. She stressed that this issue is urgent.

¹ ILO provided written contribution following the SOM meeting.

Since the 24th Senior Officials Meeting, the formal process for establishing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted at CBD COP 15 in Kunming, China in October 2020, has been initiated. The first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework was held in August 2019, and two more meetings will be held prior to the COP 15.

What is needed is a system change and a paradigm shift in recognising the fact that the roots of biodiversity loss and the climate change crisis are in the economic sector, our societal models, and our consumption patterns. Although these issues were reflected in the Aichi Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals, not enough is being done. The UN system has a unique opportunity to act as a system and as One to get this agenda moving forward.

The theme of the CBD COP 15 is “Ecological Civilisation: building a shared future for all life on earth”. The purpose is to include all forms of life, inter-dependency, and the concept of an ‘ecological civilisation’ as a way forward. COP 15 is expected to take decisions on mainstreaming biodiversity in 10 economic sectors: agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism, infrastructure, mining, energy, health, etc. Ms. Pasca-Palmer highlighted education as a key sector that is missing and expressed the hope that this could be addressed with UNESCO and UNICEF colleagues. The challenge of mainstreaming environmental policy into other policy areas at national level was referenced. Ms. Pasca-Palmer underlined that the UN system has the duty and responsibility, in addition to a unique opportunity to inspire, to work through their networks and clients to move this agenda forward. She expressed hope for a successful COP in 2020, but mentioned that the real work is in the implementation of those decisions.

The chair thanked Ms. Pasca-Palmer and reiterated that biodiversity underlies all of society. She also highlighted the 10 critical sectors for producing the drivers of biodiversity of loss and which must be addressed in order to protect biodiversity.

UNOPS

Ms. Grete Faremo, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), indicated that biodiversity is an important issue for the UNOPS mandate of procurement and infrastructure, with impacts for decades or generations. She referred to the annual statistical report being prepared by UNOPS which covers close to 30 organisations and looks at how UN funds are spent. Given that procurement is a politically sensitive issue, the UN may need to approach this topic from a different perspective. With regard to sustainable infrastructure, UNOPS can encourage governments through the actions of the UN on the ground.

UN Secretariat

Mr. Atul Khare, Under-Secretary-General of the UN Department of Operation Support (DOS) referred to the issue of infrastructure, adding that DOS constructs a considerable amount of camps in places rich in biodiversity. DOS therefore performs assessments prior to constructing camps so as to avoid the need for post-construction adjustments. There is a need to ensure a strategic focus on positive outcomes. He gave the example of planting culturally and environmentally appropriate trees in places where DOS works. For example in Darfur, 300.000 trees including cashew and neem were planted, which are now being harvested by locals. The UN Secretariat also works to enhance the security of those working to preserve biodiversity.

The chair reiterated that sustainable, green procurement is something that UN agencies need to consider, even if organisations are not under the DOS or UNOPS umbrella.

UNESCO

Ms. Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, Assistant Director General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) underlined the theme of ecological civilisation as the area where UNESCO can offer support. Education, science, culture and communication are crucial for changing mindsets to protect biodiversity and avoid its loss. UNESCO's different programmes bring together over 2,200 sites which could be laboratories of learning extended to further understand biodiversity loss. Ms. Nair-Bedouelle expanded on the network of bio-sphere reserves, which are designated as sites where people live in harmony with nature where innovative ideas that combine science and traditional knowledge can be implemented and tested. These reduce biodiversity loss, measure impact, and enhance social, cultural and economic conditions for environmental sustainability. UNESCO offers its network of bio-sphere reserves and the Youth Forum as a platform for dialogue. A workshop on the development of science-based targets and indicators to measure biodiversity loss could, for instance, be organized. The UNESCO Governing Council could also be used to raise the issue of biodiversity amongst its members.

UNECE

Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary of UN Economic Commission for Europe, referred to UNECE divisions on environment, energy, agriculture and forestry which address the issue of biodiversity. The UNECE Water Convention deals with regional water management, transboundary water, improving water quality, but also the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity. In 2018 the Convention was opened to become global. UNECE's work on forest management in collaboration with FAO, supports the work of the CBD and the Aichi Targets. On the eve of the Climate Summit the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) 30 initiative, a regional initiative to support the Bonn Challenge to restore 30 million hectares of land, was launched. UNECE and FAO work closely with the Forum on Forests and Forests Europe to collect broad sets of data which are directly and indirectly related to biodiversity. This includes the Global Forests Resources Assessment produced by FAO and regional partners every 5 years, which linked to the forest-related SDGs and indicators. UNECE is ready to share databases and information, and to cooperate on reporting on the biodiversity-related SDGs and targets. Finally, Ms. Algayerova referred to the Nexus for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and UNECE's inter-disciplinary approach to the SDGs.

UNCCD

Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, mentioned the issue of sand and dust storms and the launch of the new UN Coalition during COP 14 of the UNCCD in India, highlighting that millions of people are affected by this phenomenon globally. He suggested that the EMG could be a forum within which the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration could be discussed to galvanise a broader set of agencies to get involved with ecosystem restoration. He also proposed that the EMG consider the youth movement, taking into account that most UN agencies have a youth department or division that are not coming together in a coherent manner. Further elaborating on the role of the EMG vis a vis the SDGs, Mr. Thiaw stressed the need to look at the transactions between the Goals, as some goals may otherwise be achieved at the expense of others. Currently, no reporting mechanisms are in place to consider this and the EMG could be a platform to consider it.

UN-HABITAT

Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat), highlighted the issue of urbanisation, which is often not properly planned and emphasised the need for proper spatial planning and the involvement of local, regional, and national governments alike to halt biodiversity loss. Urban sprawl will threaten biodiversity hotspots and can only be contained through strengthened urban planning and urban policies. The recently approved UN Habitat Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 reflects the commitment to strengthening the urban environment and making cities more sustainable, resilient and resource efficient. Ms. Mohd Sharif emphasised UN Habitat's interest in working closely with the EMG on formulating a joint UN contribution to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and identifying ways to fill the gap relating to the spatial dimension of biodiversity loss.

The chair underlined that the Aichi Targets lacked an urban dimension. Measurable targets such as those that exist for agriculture, could be brought into the urban and infrastructure space for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

RAMSAR Convention

Ms. Marta Rojas Urrego, Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, stressed that the Ramsar Convention focuses on aquatic ecosystems and that biodiversity therefore is central to the Convention's mandate. Wetlands are the most threatened ecosystem today, being lost three times faster than forests. Wetlands provide services like water, without which sustainable development cannot be achieved, and are the most effective source of carbon storage, for which they were recognised in the last IPCC report. For this reason, the Convention has a key role in contributing to biodiversity ambitions. She underlined that the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is a priority for Ramsar contracting parties, and that the Strategic Plan was designed to be fully aligned with the Aichi Targets and the SDGs. Ms. Rojas Urrego stressed that the post-2020 framework should be a common framework for everyone. The eight biodiversity conventions should be seen as the operational arms to address particular areas of the biodiversity agenda. She underlined the importance of aligning with the SDGs as a way to reach out to the 'non-converted'. Finally, the need to link biodiversity efforts and consider SDGs beyond Goals 14 and 15 in this context was stressed.

UNFCCC

Ms. Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), underlined the potential benefits from deeper cooperation among UN entities at both the leaders and secretariat levels. She suggested that EMG could compile a calendar where members can register events and fora under organisations' responsibilities. This would be helpful to build a thread between EMG members' activities and to maximise what can be done, for example by taking advantage of individuals' presence in different locations for different events, and to highlight the inter-relationships between different organisations' agendas. The signal for cooperation needs to be given from all leaders to all staff, and that there needs to be concrete proposals on how to cooperate. It is evident that there is large potential for cooperation but there needs to be guidance in order to generate this dynamic of cooperation to encourage staff to reach out to colleagues in other UN entities. Climate change is an agenda within each organisations' agenda, and progress needs to be made at every level, including decision-making bodies and Secretariats.

The chair thanked Ms. Espinosa and acknowledged the value of joint townhalls to communicate collaboration.

UNDP

Mr. Pradeep Kurukulasuriya, Executive Coordinator for Environmental Finance of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), said biodiversity is central to UNDP's work and Strategic Plan, which focuses on poverty eradication and inequalities. He reiterated UNDP support for the EMG and the CBD Secretariat including the suggestion to establish an interagency Consultative Process to inform the development and implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. UNDP is already working closely with CBD Secretariat, and other Conventions, sister agencies and partners to prepare for CBD COP15. UNDP highlighted its global portfolio of GEF and GCF funded programmes and linked initiatives on innovative finance and resource mobilization, an element that needs to be strengthened in the Post-2020 Framework, as well as stronger engagement with the private sector on value chains and infrastructure, empowering of local communities and indigenous peoples, and strengthening our biodiversity narrative.

WWF

Mr. Marco Lambertini, Director General of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), expressed his excitement to see the integrated narrative of climate, nature and development. He reiterated the fact that nature is everyone's business and mentioned the WWF Sustainable Summit in the preceding week where CSOs from various non-environment sectors were present reflecting concern for biodiversity. He also reiterated the need to address the economic drivers of biodiversity loss.

WMO

Mr. Pavel Kabat, Chief Scientist of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), outlined the clear relationship between biodiversity and the WMO agenda, offering WMO's system approach to enhance work on biodiversity. There is considerable potential in better connecting the Conventions, particularly through co-benefitting policies. WMO offered to extend their scientific and database support for the UNFCCC to the CBD and help with the elaboration of potential co-benefits amongst the Conventions. WMO provides services such as early warning systems and climate-proofing. Mr. Kabat invited participants to consider whether the weather, early warning and climate services can be discussed in a broader context where nature could be included as a stakeholder, making WMO's services more integrated.

The chair underlined Mr. Kabat's point about climate change causing weather and weather impacts that themselves cause systemic ecosystem shifts. We are now beginning to understand the impacts these shifts have on our ecosystems, an issue which needs to be thought about in relation to the Conventions and the kinds of services that WMO can provide.

FAO

Ms. Maria Helene Semedo, Deputy Director General of Climate and Natural Resources at the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), highlighted that production, consumption, and transformation processes negatively impact biodiversity, as stressed in the first State of Biodiversity Report for Food and Agriculture, launched by FAO in 2018. In relation to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework she commented that FAO promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, but that sometimes more weight is given to conservation than to sustainable use. She said that it is important to think about peoples' livelihoods, and to consider biodiversity as a solution in addition to it being a goal. Ms. Semedo highlighted the link between agriculture, food systems, biodiversity and ecosystem services in the farm-scapes, sea-scapes, and

landscapes, and reiterated the need for a holistic, collaborative and integrated approach with synergies and trade-offs between solutions.

The chair pointed to agricultural subsidies as an issue the UN needs to speak to and encouraged a discussion on how to redirect harmful subsidies towards ones that could promote biodiversity, taking into account lessons learned with subsidies for renewable energy.

IOM

Ms. Dina Ionesco, Head of the Migration, Environment and Climate Change Unit at the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), said that the IOM has been working for over 20 years to connect environment to migration. Many examples show the connection between biodiversity loss and migration, as well as how displacement can lead to environmental degradation. IOM has worked with UNFCCC, particularly in the task force on displacement, and together with UNCCD released a joint report on land degradation and displacement. IOM has also begun working with IUCN to bring migration onto the agenda of the World Conservation Congress.

OZONE Convention

Ms. Tina Birmpili, Executive Secretary of the Ozone Secretariat (Ozone), brought attention to the impact of the hole in the ozone layer on ecosystems. Comparing to the discourse surrounding climate change, apart from IPBES, there appears to be no critical mass of scientists talking about biodiversity loss. A “Stern Report” on biodiversity could anchor the discussion on something more concrete and easily understood by the general public and policy makers.

In response, the chair made reference to the recent report *The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review*.

BRS Conventions

Mr. Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary of the Secretariat for the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS), highlighted the interlinkages between the chemicals conventions and biodiversity and referred to the EMG as an important forum for cross-sectoral strategic thinking where these two areas meet. He mentioned that in 2011 the BRS Conventions produced joint guidance with the CBD on chemicals and biodiversity, and said that an update is necessary, as those who attend the CBD CoP are not representing the same ministries as those who attend the BRS CoPs. A basic challenge is communicating across sectors. Mr. Payet suggested that space be created within the biodiversity negotiations for others even remotely related to connect. He highlighted consumer culture as a driver of biodiversity loss. Raising awareness among consumers is therefore important to bring about change.

IFAD

Ms. Margarita Astralaga, Director for Environment, Climate and Social Inclusion Division of the International Fund for Agriculture and Development (IFAD), emphasized that while progress has been made in mainstreaming biodiversity in agriculture, this work needs to continue. Ms. Astralaga highlighted the

importance of food systems and the lifecycle of producing, marketing, trading and consuming the food, to biodiversity. Food systems link all of the UN system as well as important multi-lateral and inter-governmental organisations. Steps need to be taken to promote integrated approaches that incorporate all the aspects of how we produce, consume, and dispose of food.

World Bank Group

Ms. Karin Kemper, Senior Director for the Environment and Natural Resources Global Practice of the World Bank expressed strong concern that biodiversity loss can roll back development gains, and that in combination with climate change, the impact on the world's poor can be devastating. The World Bank works to link biodiversity to productive sectors such as agriculture, water and irrigation. This enables the World Bank to speak with countries, Finance Ministers and other sectoral Ministers about the entire spectrum, from conservation to the productive sectors and their policies and regulations. Various sectoral investment engagements bring funding explicitly to biodiversity. The possibility to bring biodiversity issues to the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action may be brought to the World Bank's spring meeting in the lead up to CBD COP15.

IUCN

Dr. Grethel Aguilar, Acting Director-General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), stated that the new biodiversity targets should be simple, ambitious and bold. Attention should not only be paid to the loss of biodiversity but include ecosystem services and peoples' wellbeing. A push for transformative change across economic, social and political factors is needed. The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020 next June is expected to galvanize the support of IUCN Members for a robust Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework outcome for the CBD COP.

IFRC

Dr. Jemilah Mahmood, Under-Secretary-General for Partnerships at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), mentioned that this was the first EMG meeting that the IFRC has attended and that observing the EMG has inspired the organisation to develop their own environmental policy. Ms Mahmood referred to the responsibility of international institutions to set an example. The IFRC should focus not only on prevention and mitigation but also be green in their responses. Progress has been made in looking at nature-based solutions for disaster risk reduction. Through their network of 13.7 million volunteers in 165,00 branches globally, the IFRC can contribute to a better understanding of challenges in environmental protection at the community and individual level.

OHCHR

Mr. Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary General of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), referred to the historically low collaboration between the human rights and environmentalist movements, though this seems to be changing. OHCHR is interested in the protection of environmental protesters, the issue of indigenous rights for whom land rights is not only a human rights issue but also the best way for preserving fragile ecosystems in their historic lands, and; the nexus between the biodiversity and the right to health. OHCHR would like to play more active role in breaking down the current siloed approach.

UNDRR

Ms. Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), referred to the obvious risk posed by environmental degradation as a driver of disasters. Supporting UN Habitat's statement, she highlighted the importance of environmental solutions in the urban setting. Biodiversity could be made a focus of UNDRR's multisectoral regional platforms. Ms. Mizutori emphasised that the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework should be firmly embedded in existing national plans and strategies for coherence.

CMS

Ms. Amy Fraenkel, Executive Secretary of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS), mentioned that migratory species are often seen as the face of biodiversity loss to the general public. For CMS a top priority for the new biodiversity framework is that it better addresses the critical issue of ecological connectivity. This involves looking at areas that provide an ecological function, not just for species but also for the mandates of UN entities, for example related to food, city planning, ecosystem restoration, and world heritage. She reiterated Ms. Mizutori's point about the need for national plans to better implement the various commitments of conventions, particularly the biodiversity conventions, so that there can be more coherence at the national level. Biodiversity conventions should come together to address the IPBES findings and to communicate to those not working with biodiversity what the cross-cutting priorities are.

ECLAC

Mr. Raúl García-Buchaca, Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN ECLAC), said that the organisation has been working on issues related to a paradigm shift in the ECLAC region on patterns of production and consumption from a development dimension. ECLAC is promoting an integrated and holistic approach focusing on inequality. As part of this holistic approach to address inequality, ECLAC has developed a track connected to the management of natural resources and extractive industries and their impact on the environment, biodiversity and the agricultural sector. The next session of UNECLAC in 2020 will be dedicated to influencing public policies in the region for the creation of green business opportunities.

UNODC

Ms. Candice Welsch, Officer in Charge of the Division of Operations for UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), referred to the EMG Nexus Dialogue on environment, peace and security in January 2019, noting the need to pay more attention to the environmental dimensions of SDG16. She referred to the threats posed to biodiversity by organised crime and corruption, highlighting that it is impossible to protect biodiversity without acknowledging the negative impact of crime and corruption. A strong prevention and criminal justice response must be part of a comprehensive approach to achieving sustainable development and the sustainable use of natural resources. Ms. Welsch recommended that the prevention and countering of serious crimes that have an impact on the environment, conservation and biodiversity, specifically wildlife, forest and fisheries crimes be included in the Post-2020 Framework.

Ms. Pasca-Palmer of the CBD Secretariat was invited by the Chair to react briefly to the interventions. Ms. Pasca-Palmer thanked everyone for their input and the dynamic discussion agreeing to the need for the post-2020 framework to be a common framework for all.

ILO

Mr. Wolfgang Schiefer, Senior Coordinator on UN and Sustainable Development for the International Labour Organisation (ILO), provided the following updates, by email, on the ILO's work relevant to biodiversity. The ILO's work on biodiversity is undertaken through their DEVINVEST programme on Green Works: the programme addresses water and soil conservation, flood protection, irrigation schemes, etc.. In that context, green works contribute to a significant extent to nature-based approaches that support biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. The ILO WESO Report 2018 found that about 50 percent of public works programmes include environmental objectives such as ecosystem restoration. The second contribution is on climate change. It might be useful for the EMG Senior Officials to be aware that the ILO was actively engaged in the UN Climate Summit supporting Peru and Spain as co-leads of the Action Area on Social and Political Drivers, which includes just transition issues. The notable result of the Summit on the theme of just transition is that some 50 countries have made commitments to formulate just transition plans, as they raise their climate change ambition.