

EMG Issue Management Group on Biodiversity
Common Approach to Biodiversity – Webinar Series

Human Rights and Biodiversity: Three-part Sub-series

Incorporating human rights-based approaches to the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity: A UN inter-agency and multi-stakeholder discussion

Webinar 1: Tuesday 9th July 2024, 14:00 – 15:30 CEST
Format: Virtual (MS Teams)
Language: English

Concept Note

Sub-Series Objectives

- Build capacity on and promote human rights-based approaches to the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the equitable sharing of the benefits from its utilization.
- Promote awareness and implementation of the Common Approach in the UN system, as well as exchange and disseminate best practices and lessons learned from actions that consider rights-based approaches for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Webinar 1 Objectives

- Present the importance, opportunities and existing gaps for the incorporation and implementation of human rights-based approaches for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- Recognize the Common Approach potential to guide UN collective action to mainstream biodiversity and nature-based solutions, considering a human rights-based approach and including common UN messaging on human rights and biodiversity for COP16 to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- Set the tone and expectations for future sessions in this webinar series.

Background

Nature and Biodiversity

Biodiversity is fundamental for the processes that support all life on Earth. Humans depend on biodiversity for all ecosystem services, including air and water quality, climate regulation, pollination, disease control, food, raw materials, medicines, and cultural activities. Healthy ecosystems and biodiversity are a critical component of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, recognised by the Human Rights Council and General Assemblyⁱ. The protection of the environment, including healthy biodiversity and ecosystems, contributes to and promotes human well-being and the full enjoyment of all human rights, for present and future generations. Additionally, biodiversity is essential for economic prosperity, as it underpins over half of global GDP.

Humanity is altering the planet and its biodiversity to an unparalleled degree; biodiversity is declining faster than at any time during human history. Consequently, biodiversity loss is considered one of the triple planetary crises, alongside climate change and pollution. Several ramifications stemming from these interlinking crises include the destruction of natural habitat, deterioration of key ecosystem services, species extinction, ecosystem restructuring, and extreme climatic events such as storms and wildfires. The triple planetary crises urgently need to be resolved if humanity is to have a viable future on this planet.

In 2022, at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Member States adopted a landmark instrument which signifies a collective commitment to confront the escalating crisis of biodiversity loss. The [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (GBF) sets out twenty-three ambitious targets and four overarching goals seeking to halt the degradation of ecosystems and promote the protection and sustainable use of the world's living resources. The GBF sets out that its implementation should follow a human rights-based approach. It also acknowledges the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as well as the right to development. The GBF's role is to guide urgent and transformative international cooperation on achieving the 2050 vision of 'living in harmony with nature'. In adopting the GBF, all Parties committed to setting national targets to implement the framework and catalyze action within their governments, subnational and local authorities, and societies.

In addition, the United Nations (UN) system has established its own commitments through the adoption of the "[Common approach to integrating biodiversity and nature-based solutions for sustainable development into the United Nations policy and programme planning and delivery](#)". Through the Common Approach, the UN system recognizes the urgency of acting and commits to mainstreaming biodiversity, and nature-based solutions, and to catalyzing collective action to address the drivers of biodiversity loss, restore ecosystems and ultimately living in harmony with nature. By leveraging the convening power and expertise from across the UN system, the Common Approach will contribute to and support the implementation of the GBF and the realization of the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, in alignment with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

The Common Approach is focused on creating opportunities for collective action and joint delivery of initiatives at the global, regional and country levels, while pursuing alignment within the respective

entities. One of the three impact areas explored within the Common Approach concerns human rights, peaceful societies and planetary stability.

Human Rights and Biodiversity

The intersection of human rights and biodiversity conservation is increasingly recognized as pivotal for sustainable development. Biodiversity loss, driven by human activities, threatens the well-being of communities worldwide, particularly Indigenous Peoples and people in vulnerable situations whose livelihoods depend on natural resources. Integrating human rights into conservation efforts, as set out in the GBF, is crucial for ensuring equitable and effective conservation outcomes. As the international community convenes for upcoming events there is an opportunity to strengthen awareness of this intersection, fostering dialogue and collaboration to uphold human rights while safeguarding biodiversity for present and future generations.

In this regard, Section C of the GBF states that *“The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including its Vision, Mission, Goals and Targets, is to be understood, acted upon, implemented reported and evaluated”*, consistent with the *Contribution and rights of Indigenous Peoples, and local communities, Different value systems, Whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, Human rights-based approach, Gender, Intergenerational equity, and Formal and informal education*. It establishes that *“the implementation of the Framework should follow a human-rights-based approach respecting, protecting, promoting and fulfilling human rights”*, and that *“the Framework acknowledges the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment”*.

Moreover, different GBF targets relate to these issues and explicitly address the intersection of human rights and biodiversity, such as: *Target 1: Plan and Manage all Areas To Reduce Biodiversity Lossⁱⁱ*, *Target 3: Conserve 30% of Land, Waters and Seasⁱⁱⁱ*, *Target 22: Ensure Participation in ¹Decision-Making and Access to Justice and Information Related to Biodiversity for all^{iv}*, and *Target 23: Ensure Gender Equality and a Gender-Responsive Approach for Biodiversity Action^v*.

Agenda

Time	Agenda Item	Speaker
Welcome and Introduction		
5'	Welcome and Opening Remarks	EMG Secretariat
15'	Keynote presentation	Astrid Puentes Riaño , Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment
Panel Discussion		
16'	Question 1: Interlinkages between human rights and biodiversity	<i>Panellists respond [3-4min each]</i>
	Q&A based on Q1	<i>All participants</i>
16'	Question 2: Challenges and Opportunities	<i>Panellists respond [3-4min each]</i>
	Q&A based on Q2	<i>All participants</i>
16'	Question 3: Best practices	<i>Panellists respond [3-4min each]</i>
	Q&A based on Q3	<i>All participants</i>
16'	Question 4: CBD COP16	<i>Panellists respond [3-4min each]</i>
	Q&A based on Q4	<i>All participants</i>
Closing Remarks		
6	Closing Remarks	EMG Secretariat

Webinar duration: 1hr 30min

Panellists:

- **Benjamin Schachter**, Coordinator, Environment and Climate Change Team, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- **Phoebe Ndiema**, Project Officer, Chepkitale Indigenous People Development Project (CIPDP)
- **Josefa Tauli**, Policy Co-coordinator, Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN)

Moderator

- **Terence Hay-Edie**, Local Action, Indigenous Peoples and Nature Global Programme Manager, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Target Audience

Global, regional and national level dissemination to UN entities, including their HQs, UNRCs and UNCTs. Additionally, civil society organizations, indigenous peoples' groups, youth organizations, women groups, technical specialists, researchers, and practitioners involved and interested in incorporating human rights-based approaches to biodiversity conservation.

Contact

EMG Secretariat: emg@un.org

References

- [Agriculture and natural resources governance - Legal tools for inclusive and sustainable transformation](#)
- [From Agreements to Actions - A guide to applying a human rights-based approach to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#)
- [GEF Early Action Support Webinar Series – Webinar #4: Integrating Human Rights and Gender Considerations into NBSAPs](#)
- [Guidance on integrating human rights in National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans \(NBSAPs\)](#)
- [Human Rights-Based Approaches to Conserving Biodiversity: Equitable, Effective and Imperative](#)
- [Key Messages on Human Rights and Biodiversity \(UNEP, OHCHR\)](#)
- [Legislative approaches to sustainable agriculture and natural resources governance \(FAO and UNEP. 2020\)](#)

ⁱ See, in particular, UNGA Res 76/300. The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; 48/13. The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; HRC Res 52/L.7, The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

ⁱⁱ *Ensure that all areas are under participatory, integrated and biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land- and sea-use change, to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030, **while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities***

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and of marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, **recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories***

^{iv} *Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making, and **access to justice and information** related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, **respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge**, as well as by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities and ensure the **full protection of environmental human rights defenders***

^v *Ensure gender equality in the implementation of the Framework through a gender-responsive approach, where **all women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity** to contribute to the three objectives of the Convention, including by **recognizing their equal rights and access to land and natural resources** and their full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity*