



**First meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework
Opening Statement by the CBD Alliance | 27 August 2019**

Thank you, Chair. This statement is on behalf of the CBD Alliance, a group of civil society organizations active in the CBD.

We are deeply concerned about the interconnected biodiversity, climate and social justice crises we are all facing. As illustrated by the IPBES report earlier this year, as well as ongoing disasters such as the enormous fires in Brazil, Bolivia and other parts of the world, our collective survival and wellbeing are at stake. We have no time to lose.

We count on the strong political will of all CBD Parties to alter the current path of biodiversity destruction. We cannot afford to negotiate down to the lowest common denominator or to be swayed by current political winds. The post-2020 framework must be ambitious, obligatory and effective. The failure of the Paris Agreement to stop climate change has taught us that we need countries to adopt and implement agreements at a level that will actually save the planet's biodiversity. Commitments can therefore not be voluntary.

In order to make sure the new Global Biodiversity Framework will have better results than the current one, we must analyze the reasons why the current strategic plan did not work, and act upon the lessons learned from that. This analysis needs to be incorporated in the formal process of the OEWG.

At COP14, Parties agreed that the post-2020 framework must be transformative. It will not be easy, but the transformative change that is truly needed goes to the heart of the prevailing system that prioritizes short-term gain for individual benefit at any cost. This will require reforming the financial, investment and legal systems that subsidize and enable the main industrial drivers of biodiversity loss, including large infrastructure projects, agribusiness, mining and fisheries. We must closely scrutinize, regulate and hold to account corporations that rely on exploitation of biodiversity and nature, and resist corporate influence in public processes such as the CBD.

The post-2020 framework must uphold key principles of public international law, including the precautionary and polluter pays principles, non-regression, human rights, intergenerational equity, and common but differentiated responsibilities for both historical and continuing roles in the destruction of Nature. The CBD is a multilateral treaty for the good of the planet. Tackling the current crises requires not only taking action for biodiversity within our own national boundaries and supporting each other with implementation, including through public financing; it also requires halting and redressing damage caused to biodiversity in other countries (in accordance with Article 14). For instance, countries that use minerals mined in the global south for their high tech industries, or countries that import palm oil and soy that cause large scale deforestation must halt and redress the damage they are causing.

After the current Strategic Plan was adopted, it took several years for Parties to begin implementing the Aichi Targets in earnest. As we know from the most recent assessments of progress, most of the Targets likely will not be met by 2020. We cannot afford to waste precious time by starting from scratch with the post-2020 framework, but we also need to better address systemic and structural changes. Let's build on the current Strategic Plan and baselines established, improve the Targets and indicators to reflect the transformative change required, and ensure continuity in implementation efforts. We cannot afford to wait another 10 or even 5 years.

The post-2020 framework must contribute to all three objectives of the Convention and implementation of its Protocols. The framework should include the following essential elements:

- Overarching principles,
- Clear goals, targets and indicators, and
- Mechanisms for implementation, monitoring, reporting and compliance.

It is crucial to conserve all remaining biodiversity. One of the most effective ways to do so is to support indigenous peoples and local communities to secure collective rights to their territories and lands and undertake their own conservation initiatives. We fully support their calls to recognize their collective rights and responsibilities, governance systems, and knowledge, innovations and practices, including in the context of any area-based targets and conservation measures.

Indigenous peoples and local communities are the best guardians of biodiversity and nature, but their territories, cultures and lives are under constant threat and attack. Governments have a moral and legal responsibility to protect environmental and human rights defenders as they defend their territories and lands against drivers of biodiversity loss. Granting legal rights to rivers, forests and other elements of Nature is another important way to ensure we all take responsibility to care for Nature.

The new framework also needs to provide mechanisms for participatory assessment of new and emerging technologies and for in-depth and independent horizon scanning for an early warning of potential impacts of these technologies on biodiversity and communities. Some new technologies are being pushed under the guise of biodiversity conservation, but are in fact being used to commodify nature in different ways.

Technologies under synthetic biology such as gene drives are promoted for biodiversity conservation, but they have private and corporate interests invested in their profit-making opportunities, and these technologies may have serious adverse effects on biodiversity. They should be scrutinized for risks at all levels, including by civil society at the national level, and by the IPLCs in the areas where they are being proposed.

The current agenda as it stands does not provide for the necessary structures and sub-elements to address the elements we have mentioned above, such as transformative change and compliance, amongst others. If these elements are not added to the agenda, we risk an outcome that does not take the necessary steps towards halting biodiversity loss in the post 2020 period, and we will draw, in 2028, a similar conclusion as we have to do now: that not enough action has been taken to halt the loss of biodiversity.

As the Nobel Peace Prize-nominated activist Greta Thunberg says, “Hope is not something that you have. Hope is something that you create, with your actions.”

Thank you, Chair.