

First meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

Agenda Item 4 - Cluster 4

Thank you, Chair. This statement is on behalf of the ICCA Consortium, Global Forest Coalition, Friends of the Earth International, ActionAid, World Animal Net, Natural Justice and Forest Peoples Programme.

At COP14, Parties agreed that the post-2020 process should be participatory, inclusive, comprehensive, gender-responsive and transformative (among other principles). In order to be truly transformative, the post-2020 framework must address the drivers of biodiversity loss and the financial, investment and legal systems that enable them. This includes reforming perverse incentives and so-called regulatory frameworks that legalise biodiversity destruction for financial gain. These systems have to be upgraded for the 21st century and beyond. They are woefully inadequate to deal with the current environmental and social justice crises we are facing.

Second, the approach taken so far to the mainstreaming debate places too much emphasis on private sector priorities and mechanisms. As long as their core businesses depend on exploitation of biodiversity and nature, corporations' interests will always conflict with the best interests of people and the planet. The post-2020 framework is a multilateral instrument that must halt industrial drivers of biodiversity loss. We cannot afford to negotiate with the private sector as well.

Third, we do not have to remind ourselves that all human beings depend on the environments in which we live. A safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to human rights, and protecting human rights helps to protect the environment. A group of UN experts recently warned that the unprecedented rates of erosion, species extinction and biodiversity loss severely threatens both present and future generations. They stated that failing to protect biodiversity can constitute a violation of the right to a healthy environment, which is legally recognised by 155 States. We urge Parties to recognise and incorporate human rights, intergenerational equity and principles of good governance in the post-2020 framework, as fundamental to achieving the 2050 Vision as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.

Fourth, we are deeply concerned about the growing threats to and attacks on indigenous peoples, local communities and others who are risking their lives to protect and defend nature. We urge Parties to include a specific commitment in the post-2020 framework as part of efforts to implement UN Environment's policy on environmental defenders.

Finally, we agree with the co-chairs' note that indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth, and civil society will play an essential role in achieving the post-2020 framework and must be fully and meaningfully engaged in its development. However, the document currently identifies these groups as mere "stakeholders". We request the co-chairs and Parties to ensure there is a clear distinction in the Working Group documents and the post-2020 framework itself between rights-holders - including indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth - and stakeholders more broadly.

We look forward to continuing to engage on these crucial issues. Thank you, Chair.