



28.6.2019

## Informal Meeting of Environment/Climate Ministers 11-12 July Helsinki

### Working lunch for the Heads of Delegations: Post 2020 global biodiversity framework; EU role, input and level of ambition

#### **Background**

The Convention on Biological Diversity and its Conference of Parties (COP15) will agree on a new post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the meeting to be held in October 2020 in Kunming, China. The existing Strategic Plan for Biodiversity agreed for 2011–2020 includes a vision for 2050 and the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets under five strategic goals adopted in 2010. Building on the lessons learnt from working to achieve the 2010 Biodiversity Targets and recognising the importance of multi-stakeholder contributions to developing the 2011–2020 global biodiversity goals and targets, a number of bodies and institutions ranging from the United Nations and the European Union to civil society organisations will participate over a fifteen-month intense period in discussions to develop a 'New Deal for Nature'.

It is common knowledge that no country can solve the biodiversity crisis alone, and the consequences to our economy, quality of life, national security, health and environment will be dire if we do not work with others to reduce the loss of ecosystems and biodiversity. As we can see from the commitments that have been made since early 2000, countries, organisations and individuals around the world are keen to take action together to ensure a sustainable and healthy future for our planet and all the generations to come.

However, an assessment of how these commitments have translated into measurable actions to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity indicates that there are significant challenges in translating the commitments into actions that result in impacts. The Living Planet Report of WWF (2018), the Global Assessment Report of IPBES (2019), the review of actions to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (through the NBSAPs and National Reports, 2018–2019) and other reports clearly indicate that we continue to lose our ecosystems, species and biodiversity at an alarming rate. This means there is a gap between commitments, actions and results achieved so far. Moreover, these reports demonstrate that the window of opportunity to prevent irreversible damage to

the planet and humanity is narrowing quickly. In other words, the next 10 years will be essential to taking the necessary decisions and actions without delay.

Finland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union is organising an Informal Meeting of Environment Ministers on 11–12 July in Helsinki that will contribute to the continuation of and building on the discussions to be held on the post-2020 biodiversity framework and the scientific evidence of the IPBES Global Assessment (May 2019). Bending the curve of biodiversity loss is essential for achieving and delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals and for the future of our planet.

### **Action Agenda for Nature and People**

At the 14<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Egypt, countries agreed to encourage state and non-state actors to make voluntary biodiversity commitments that contribute to the achievement of the CBD's objectives and the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Further, they adopted the '*Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People*'.

This type of an action agenda was of central importance on the way to the COP21 climate conference. It is likely that the Paris Agreement would not have been reached without the climate action agenda serving as a catalyst to channel common action and energy into finalising it. We're now faced with the challenge of gaining such momentum for biodiversity. We need to put the biodiversity Action Agenda into operation as we move towards COP15 in 2020 in Kunming, China.

The importance of actions has been underlined and countries have committed to working together to promote the Action Agenda and mobilise all stakeholders to build concrete proposals for halting the loss of biodiversity. The Action Agenda for Nature and People has the explicit aim of catalysing actions from all sectors and stakeholders in support of biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use.  
<https://www.cbd.int/cop/cop-14/annoucement/nature-action-agenda-egypt-to-china-en.pdf>

**The Action Agenda has three objectives:** (1) raise public awareness about the urgent need to stem biodiversity loss and restore biodiversity health for the sake of humanity and the global ecosystem; (2) inspire and help implement nature-based solutions to meet key global challenges; and (3) catalyse cooperative initiatives across sectors and stakeholders in support of the global biodiversity goals. An online platform has been set up to map current global efforts in order to assess impacts and help identify key gaps. The aim is to provide a repository for numerous, ambitious and credible initiatives on biodiversity.

<https://www.pbl.nl/en/news/newsitems/2019/opportunities-for-the-action-agenda-for-nature-and-people>

### **The 1.5 °C equivalent**

Limiting the global average temperature rise to 1.5 °C compared to 2 °C above pre-industrial levels will reduce the negative impacts on biodiversity and on the people that

depend on ecosystem functions and services. Global warming is projected to shift the ranges of many species to higher latitudes, alter their capacity to adapt to rapid change, and increase the amount of damage to many ecosystems. Some of these projected changes are likely to have irreversible consequences such as the loss of ecosystems. Global warming is also expected to drive the loss of coastal resources and reduce the productivity of fisheries and aquaculture. **Keeping within the temperature range and target will allow countries to increase their resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change, including limiting impacts on biodiversity** (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2018 <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>).

Biodiversity can support efforts to reduce the negative effects of climate change. Conserved or restored habitats can remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thus helping to mitigate climate change by storing carbon in, for example, soil, forests and marine ecosystems. Actions to achieve the overall goals of both the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement are urgently needed because ecosystems play a key role in the global carbon cycle, in adapting to climate change, and in reducing the risk of disaster through nature-based solutions, while also providing a wide range of ecosystem services that are essential for human wellbeing and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Way forward**

CBD COP Decision 14/34 encourages indigenous peoples and local communities and all relevant organisations and stakeholders, including the private sector, to consider making, prior to COP15, voluntary biodiversity commitments that may contribute to an effective post-2020 global biodiversity framework and to provide this information as a contribution to the Sharm-El-Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda. It also invites Parties and other governments to consider, on a voluntary basis, making biodiversity commitments that contribute to the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention, that strengthen National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), that facilitate the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and that contribute to an effective post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and to share this information.

The IPBES Global Assessment, the Trondheim Conference and the upcoming meeting of the CBD Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in August are important milestones for the preparations and the EU level of ambition.

A starting point for the discussion is that the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will build on existing work such as the Strategic Plan for 2011–2020, its mission and vision for 2050, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. However, learning from the shortcomings of the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategic Plan and its Aichi Targets is important. The structure of the new-post 2020 global biodiversity framework should include specific, ambitious, realistic and, where possible measurable and time-bound objectives and targets. The elements need to be organised in a more

logical structure and build on the current Aichi Biodiversity Targets, to help communication and implementation.

One of the new initiatives for better implementation is to involve different stakeholders (e.g. youth, indigenous peoples and local communities, NGOs, academia, business, cities) as outlined in the Action Agenda for strengthening implementation and ownership. The EU and its Member States adopted the Council conclusions in advance of the CBD COP14 on voluntary commitments. The COP14 Decision 14/34 on commitments was agreed and a web site for registration of the commitments is available on the CBD website: [www.cbd.int/action-agenda](http://www.cbd.int/action-agenda).

### Commitments for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

It is clear that commitments are necessary from a wide range of stakeholders, including the Parties to the CBD. However, the role, relevance and recognition of these stakeholders have to be taken into account in determining and meeting future commitments. Commitments led by the Parties alone are not enough.

The discussions and negotiations that are currently ongoing to prepare the post-2020 global biodiversity framework need to focus as closely on commitments as they do on targets and indicators. The Open-ended Working Group, which has been mandated to develop the new post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and the CBD COP15 will further set in motion the need for new commitments for enhancing the implementation of the new post-2020 framework, with options for both clarity and purpose of commitments that will form the basis for future reporting to the CBD by the Parties. A possible 'ambition mechanism' for this work is shown below.

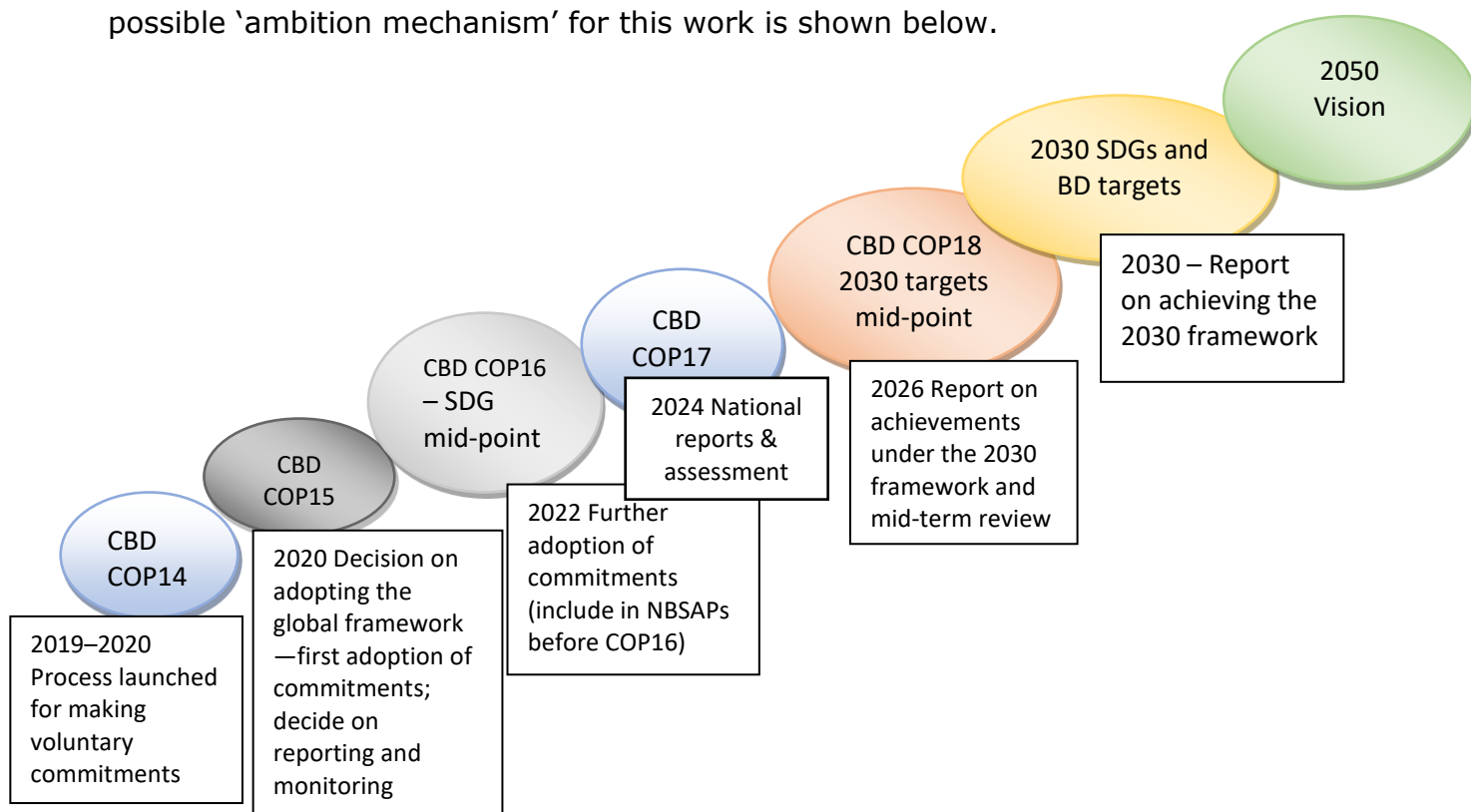


Figure 1. Timeline and road map for determining and meeting commitments

As the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy and NBSAPs come to the end, we need to look beyond 2020. The aim of the Informal Meeting of Environment Ministers is for the EU Member States to engage in discussions on finding common ground and preparing for the upcoming international negotiations and for preparing the EU position ahead of CBD COP15 in 2020 and beyond.

In the Council conclusions prior to CBD COP14, the EU called for the launching of commitments before COP15 or at the conference. The EU should therefore lead by example and ensure it is prepared in advance of COP15. Various international organisations have provided suggestions for possible commitments, for example, an increase in coverage of well-managed protected areas, setting of measurable restoration targets for degraded ecosystems, mainstreaming, reduction of deforestation, financing, and reductions in key pollutants such as plastics and pesticides.

Important topics during Finland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union are: linkages to the circular economy, climate change, assessment of ecosystems and their services, voluntary commitments and future work on business and biodiversity and, therefore Council conclusions are needed on enhancing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and on enhancing the overall implementation of the biodiversity agenda. Additionally, discussions in the Council will provide a good opportunity to exchange views on the multiannual work programme of the European Commission.

### **Questions:**

1. How do we establish an equivalent to the 1.5 °C target in the Paris Agreement for biodiversity? What could this target or objective be for biodiversity in 2020?
2. What commitments are the EU and its Member States planning to make globally to ensure EU contributions to an effective post-2020 global biodiversity framework?