

BirdLife International

Policy position on mainstreaming biodiversity

CBD COP13, Cancun, Mexico, 2016

The *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020* recognises that integration of biodiversity into broader policies, strategies, programmes and actions is essential to achieve progress in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. GBO4 found limited progress on mainstreaming biodiversity in key sectors, including fisheries, agriculture and forestry.

BirdLife, therefore, welcomes the decision of the Government of Mexico to focus the High Level Segment on mainstreaming biodiversity and welcomes the proposal to adopt a Cancun Declaration on mainstreaming.

However, BirdLife believes that the current draft of the Cancun Declaration lacks a sufficiently clear focus on concrete action: if the final declaration does not set out tangible, ambitious commitments, we fear it will be yet another statement of positive intentions, with no consequent effects.

Likewise, on the related draft COP13 Decision, BirdLife is of the view that Parties should clearly identify the actions they will take to adjust the *modus operandi* of production systems towards sustainable ones. Therefore, BirdLife calls on Parties to amend the SBI I recommendation on mainstreaming to COP13 by inserting the following text:

“Parties commit to develop national road maps on sustainable agriculture, tourism, fisheries and forestry, with clear and measurable targets and monitoring mechanisms, taking into consideration elements of sustainability presented in this Decision and other relevant material, to be presented to COP14. In addition, COP urges Parties to:

- *mainstream biodiversity targets across sectoral policies, decision-making processes, and practices, and ensure that biodiversity is clearly reflected in indicators of socio-economic development;*
- *map incoherence between national sectoral policies and biodiversity targets, and work on their alignment;*
- *identify effective sub-national and local mainstreaming initiatives and provide the regulatory, institutional and financial ways to scale them up;*
- *explore options for effectively mainstreaming biodiversity into national implementation of the SDG agenda, beyond the environment related goals (14, 15); and*

- *establish appropriate governance and institutional frameworks to allow for effective dialogue and alignment of policies and practices among productive, development and financial sectors.”*

On the productive sectors selected to be addressed at this COP13, BirdLife suggests the following elements to be taken into consideration within the SBI I Recommendation to COP13 and the national biodiversity mainstreaming road maps:

SECTORAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Agriculture:

“Agriculture systems worldwide must become more productive and less wasteful. Sustainable agricultural practices and food systems, including both production and consumption, must be pursued from a holistic and integrated perspective.” (UN)

BirdLife calls the attention of Parties of the significant services and benefits biodiversity offers to agriculture, such as soil stability and fertility, biological pest control and pollination.

We therefore call on Parties to agree on and implement actions that address impacts to all levels of biodiversity resulting from agriculture, including:

- *Habitats:* reduce habitat loss by constraining expansion of agriculture into natural habitats, while encouraging more productive, diverse and sustainable use of existing farmland.
- *Soil:* promote management of soil to reduce erosion, build soil fertility, increase soil carbon content and improve soil water-holding capacity.
- *Water:* promote water efficiency in the agricultural sector, reduce exploitation of surface water and groundwater to ecologically sustainable levels and improve management of fertilisers and pesticides to prevent water contamination.
- *Pollution:* reduce risks to species and ecosystems by replacing high risk chemicals with safer alternatives and regulating the use of chemicals in the agriculture sector.
- *Incentives:* systematically identify and eliminate subsidies that directly or indirectly promote habitat conversion, unsustainable water use and pollution.

Fisheries

"Fisheries contribute significantly to global food security livelihoods and the economy... overfishing impairs the functioning of ecosystems and reduces biodiversity, with negative repercussions for sustainable social and economic development... Biodiverse marine sites require safeguarding to ensure sustainable long-term use of their precious natural resources." (UN)

BirdLife calls on Parties to:

- **By-catch:** reduce impacts on non-target species, including seabirds, by working with the fishing industry to ensure adoption of proven by-catch reduction measures.
- **Habitats:** identify, manage and conserve important marine and coastal habitats, including Key Biodiversity Areas, using marine spatial planning and marine protected areas.
- **Over-fishing:** enhance efforts to eliminate illegal and unregulated fishing and ensure that fisheries allocations are set within sustainable limits, taking into account broader ecosystem processes.
- **Incentives:** systematically identify and eliminate subsidies that promote ecologically and economically unsustainable over-harvesting of marine living resources.

Forestry

"Forests have a significant role in reducing the risk of natural disasters, including floods, droughts, landslides and other extreme events.... Investing in forests and forestry represent an investment in people and their livelihoods, especially the rural poor, youth and women. Around 1.6 billion people - including more than 2,000 indigenous cultures - depend on forests for their livelihood." (UN)

BirdLife calls on Parties to:

- Prevent conversion of important forest habitats, including Key Biodiversity Areas, High Conservation Value areas and primary forests, and ensure that activities within these areas maintain and enhance their conservation values.
- Promote certification of sustainably harvested forest products and effectively regulate forestry operations to maintain and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Eliminate subsidies that promote unsustainable use of forests, while adopting positive incentives for maintaining and restoring ecosystem services from forest landscapes.

BirdLife contribution to mainstreaming agenda

BirdLife is engaged in a diverse range of mainstreaming initiatives around the world, working with productive sectors, policy makers and local communities to promote sustainable solutions to conservation challenges, including:

- reducing seabird by-catch in longline, trawl and gillnet fisheries, in partnership with the fishing industry, governments and international fisheries bodies;
- working with pastoralists in South America to maintain and improve grassland bird habitat;
- reducing the impacts from agriculture, hunting, tourism, waste and energy sectors on migratory soaring birds in the Rift Valley-Red Sea flyway; and
- working with financial institutions to agree and set appropriate biodiversity safeguard policies.

These case studies are highlighted in a series of fact sheets recently launched by BirdLife International and IUCN. To learn more, visit: <http://datazone.birdlife.org/info/mainstream>



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