



Convention on Biological Diversity

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SUBSIDIARY BODY ON IMPLEMENTATION

Third meeting

Venue and dates to be determined

Item 7 of the provisional agenda*

COMMUNICATION

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In decision [XIII/22](#), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity welcomed the framework for a global communications strategy. The Executive Secretary was asked (a) to play a role in establishing the framework for communications, (b) to keep the status of communications under review, (c) to coordinate and advise other actors, and (d) to advise on umbrella messaging.
2. In decision [14/26](#), the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to continue the implementation of the framework for a global communications strategy and to develop themes and background material around which communication and public awareness campaigns could be organized in the 2018-2020 biennium, including on the current state of biodiversity and the discussions towards the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
3. The present document represents a progress report on activities carried out by the Executive Secretary in the bienniums 2017-2018 and 2019-2020, in the context of this decision.

II. DIALOGUES RELATING TO COMMUNICATION

A. The Bogis-Bossey dialogues

4. In fall 2017 and winter 2018, with the financial assistance of the Government of Switzerland, the Executive Secretary convened a series of dialogues on the strategic direction of the Convention. Communication and awareness-raising were discussed, framing the key elements needed for a global communications strategy. Four critical dimensions were highlighted:
 - (a) *Audience*: Engage with multiple audiences to change the trajectory of biodiversity loss. For each, tailored messages are needed in order to meet them where they are and not where we want them to be;
 - (b) *Message*: Messaging must make the topic simple and personally relevant, and must offer meaningful strategies to activate different individuals based on their skills and capacities;
 - (c) *Tone*: Messages need to connect to people's hearts by branding through a narrative of optimism, such as by showcasing local solutions and avoiding "doom and gloom" communications;
 - (d) *Rigour*: Communication campaigns should be designed with rigour involving multiple actors and teams, leveraging partnerships to increase their reach.

* CBD/SBI/3/1.

5. Participants in the dialogues stressed the need for both unified, catchy, top-line messages and targeted communications strategies to bring this message to audiences. Different tools and strategies need to be employed to mobilize the public, the private sector, and government in different cultural contexts.

6. The importance and challenge of designing campaigns that not only raise awareness but that also encourage behavioural change was mentioned. The open source communication campaign model used in the Global People’s Climate March and Earth Hour, which enables adaptation of content to the local context, were cited as examples. Participants noted differences in using negative versus positive messaging. Participants also emphasized that most target audiences do not understand the term “biodiversity”, and that communication efforts may consider using “nature” as an alternative.

B. United Nations Environment Management Group Nexus Dialogue on Biodiversity

7. The Secretariat and the United Nations Environment Management Group co-organized the Nexus Dialogue on Biodiversity, held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 2 and 3 May 2018. The dialogue explored the vital role of biodiversity in the context of human security and well-being. A session on positive communication and targeted messaging, organized and moderated by the Secretariat, provided important messages:

(a) It is important to communicate the urgency to act against biodiversity loss, which is undermining other agendas and threatening human security;

(b) Simple and positive communication strategies are needed to resonate with all stakeholders;

(c) Sharing the message with the public on the need to halt biodiversity loss is a challenge;

(d) Simplicity and clarity are needed, but the nuanced complexities of biodiversity issues must be encapsulated. In this regard, there was debate over the need for an apex message or goal, such as the 2-degree target used by the climate change community;

(e) The need for a simple representation to communicate biodiversity loss was discussed. It was recognized that not all stakeholders are receptive to the same narrative. When dealing with different stakeholders, targeted messaging and differentially organized communication strategies were needed.

8. The breakout groups in the communications session suggested the use of superhero-like narratives to fight biodiversity loss, but there was a difference in opinion in pondering whether a villain-like concept or character should be introduced in the “story” and, if so, who or what should embody such a villain.

C. Many Voices – One Nature with the Cambridge Conservation Initiative

9. The first “Many Voices – One Nature” dialogue was held on 13 April 2018. It brought together numerous organizations to converge on a shared understanding of what biodiversity means and its connections with broader development objectives, and to pitch key connections so it resonates with, and is meaningful to, the average person. The dialogue was organized around several key questions:

(a) What simple messages are most effective in sparking behavioural change for biodiversity?

(b) What narratives will get the buy-in of heads of State, non-environment members of cabinets, other government sectors and sectors of the economy?

(c) What elements are necessary for a game change in biodiversity communication and outreach?

(d) Is biodiversity the right concept to communicate? Is a rebranding needed?

10. Key points from the dialogue were the following:

(a) There is a narrow window of opportunity leading up to 2020 to change public perceptions of biodiversity and to spark a transformation. Communication efforts must go beyond awareness-raising to enable behavioural change or “enhancements”. The key is to communicate the impact of individuals’ daily lives and choices on nature;

(b) A narrative change, utilizing the power of storytelling, is needed to inspire the hearts and minds of individuals – the focus should be on communicating solutions for concrete actions;

(c) It is important to create a global movement engaging diverse groups of stakeholders (conservation, academia, media, business, finance, etc.) to break down silos and bridge gaps between biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and other concepts;

(d) A “flotilla” of partners is needed to communicate a coherent message that inspires a sense of urgency, builds on individual organizational strengths and networks and makes use of complementarity. Common biodiversity messaging must be at the heart of this mandate;

(e) Elements for a successful campaign: a clear, overarching objective; identifying decision makers and the causes they care about; a timeline of political moments and a target date; messaging for those political moments and audiences; and “tactics” for concrete actions;

(f) Social media is a key tool for mass communication – Visual campaigns and provide targeted storytelling and science. Extraordinary rates of social media engagement on nature reflect the power of storytelling and demonstrate that people do care about nature;

(g) Communicating the science – there is a lack of understanding of biodiversity among the public. The science, however, provides a clear link between human activity and biodiversity and identifies key areas for action;

(h) Communicating to the private-sector – businesses act in support of nature when it impacts their bottom line and supports the achievement of business goals. New, appealing narratives that make transformation possible in all sectors are needed;

(i) Communicating to political decision makers – requires a pragmatic approach to build a political movement that identifies key moments in time for organized actions with partners and political leaders around the world. A new communication language aligns political tasks with actions that support the mainstream media in reporting on the movement.

11. Participants highlighted the need for organizing future dialogues to explore specific narratives and tailored messages and to engage various groups of stakeholders. It was also accepted that common messaging in the lead-up to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2020 is essential.

12. Subsequent dialogues will seek to raise awareness on the urgency of scaling up communications on biodiversity, as well as on its interlinkages with global environmental and sustainable development goals. The overall objective will be to mobilize key players to support the biodiversity agenda, ensure common messaging and align activities as momentum builds towards a global biodiversity movement in the lead-up to 2020 and the adoption of the new nature action agenda.

D. Meeting of communication experts in the margins of the twenty-third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

13. In collaboration with communications partners, including the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the United Nations Foundation, Birdlife International and representatives of the presidencies of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth meetings of the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat organized an informal meeting on communication on 21 and 22 November 2019, in the margins of the twenty-third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice.

14. The meeting represented the continuation of discussions and planning originally started in the Bogis-Bossey meetings, the Cambridge Conservation Initiative meetings, and the Global Communications Forum. The meeting addressed the need to: expand the reach of the messages on the importance of biodiversity for human well-being; facilitate ways for all actors to show why the agenda matters; inspire a groundswell of activities to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and inform networks of how to become engaged in the biodiversity agenda in support of sustainability; showcase the wealth of experience in the 2011-2020 period, under the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, as well as other important

global biodiversity targets and goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals; and contribute to the successful negotiation of an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in Kunming, China, that advances the 2050 Vision of the Convention.

15. The meeting was seen as an opportunity to further develop and promote a narrative that spurs action towards conservation of biodiversity, its sustainable use and equity in the use of genetic resources. The narrative was to seek to showcase success pathways available, to inspire the mobilization of many actors, to inform society of the co-benefits that such actions provide, especially vis-à-vis the fight against climate change and poverty, addressing equity and inclusiveness in the global system, and advancing on the Sustainable Development Goals. This narrative will have different targeted interventions and phases throughout 2020 using positive experiences, from all types of initiatives – indigenous peoples and local communities, youth, subnational governments, cities and businesses.

16. The participants agreed to form the Communications “Flotilla” and agreed to an overview of the main goals for the year and plans to reach them. This included the need to develop tailored top line messaging and content on all mediums that allow Parties to reach target audiences with the messages that will resonate best. Reaching out and engaging with the media and journalists in a regular manner was also a focus. The group also agreed on the need to enhance social media and other campaigns to rally the global public to understand the risks and rewards from nature, including by organizing an International Biodiversity Week, supporting the United Nations Biodiversity Summit and developing platforms.

III. INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, 2017 TO 2020

17. The celebrations of the International Day for Biological Diversity represent an important opportunity to develop linkages between different partners and global agendas. Activities carried out represent a part of the global communications framework for the Convention. Over the two bienniums, a great deal of learning and development of platforms was undertaken.

A. Theme for 2017: Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism

18. The theme was chosen to coincide with the observance of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, as proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 70/193 and for which the World Tourism Organization provided leadership.

19. Celebrations were held in at least 95 countries: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Ecuador, Ethiopia, European Union, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, North Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ukraine, United States of America, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), and Viet Nam.

20. The official celebration was held in El Chico National Park, Hidalgo, Mexico, with the participation of President Enrique Peña Nieto.

21. Messages were received from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

22. The IDB2017 logo was designed by the pedagogical staff members of the Environmental Education Center (E.E.C.) of Kastoria, Greece. They composed a visual representation of the importance of rich

biodiversity and attractive landscapes for tourism, as well as the need for appropriate tourism development that would protect and sustainably manage biodiversity. The logo was made available in the six official languages of the United Nations at <https://www.cbd.int/idb/2017/logo/>, and was also translated by Parties and others into 19 other languages: Albanian, Bengali, Farsi, Georgian, Greek, Gujarati, Hangul, Hindi, Japanese, Konkani, Malayalam, Marathi, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Tamil, Telugu, Thai and Urdu.

B. Theme for 2018: Celebrating 25 Years of Action for Biodiversity

23. The theme was chosen to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary and to highlight progress made in the achievement of its objectives at the national and global levels.

24. Celebrations were held in at least 91 countries: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, European Union, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam.

25. The official celebration was held on 22 May 2018 in Mount Royal Park, Montreal, Canada. The Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity opened the event by welcoming senior officials from the Government of Canada, the Province of Quebec, the City of Montreal, representatives of the diplomatic corps and dignitaries from around the world. A video recording of the event in its entirety is available online at: <https://www.facebook.com/UNBiodiversity/videos/1696147693796589/>.

26. Messages and statements were received from: Burkina Faso; Canada; the Caribbean Community (CARICOM); Congo; Côte d'Ivoire, European Commission; Finland; Province of Ontario (Canada); United Nations Headquarters; the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA); the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS); the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); ICIMOD; IUCN; Ramsar Convention; UNESCO; UNEP; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and UN-Habitat.

27. The IDB2018 logo was also the twenty-fifth anniversary logo of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The logo was made available in the six official languages of the United Nations at <https://www.cbd.int/idb/2018/logo/>, and was also translated by Parties and others into 13 other languages: Bulgarian, Farsi, Greek, Hangul, Hindi, Japanese, Kannada, Marathi, Mongolian, Polish, Portuguese, Tamil and Urdu.

C. Theme for 2019 “Our Biodiversity, Our Food, Our Health”

28. This theme focused on biodiversity as the foundation for our food and health and a key catalyst to transforming food systems and improving human health. It aimed to leverage knowledge and spread awareness of the dependency of our food systems, nutrition, and health on biodiversity and healthy ecosystems. The theme was announced by notification on 14 February 2019. More details are available at www.cbd.int/idb/2019.

29. At least 121 countries, as well as 19 organizations/entities, celebrated IDB2019 to varying degrees, and held a variety of activities: Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's

Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tonga, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

30. A number of Governments and organizations have expressed their support for biodiversity by issuing messages to commemorate the International Day for Biological Diversity: Bioversity International; China; Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); EAT-Lancet Commission Forum; Egypt; FAO; Food and Land Use Coalition (FOLU); International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD); International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC); UNDP; UNESCO; United Nations Headquarters; World Health Organization (WHO).

31. The IDB2019 logo was designed by the United Nations Department of Global Communications, Branding and Graphic Design Unit, and was released on 11 May 2019. It was available in the six official languages of the United Nations. Courtesy translations were also available in Korean, Malay and Telugu. The logo was awarded the 2019 American Inhouse Design Award.

32. On 22 May 2019, Google Analytics showed that the IDB2019 page (www.cbd.int/idb/2019) had 6,910 pageviews, which is a 23 per cent increase over IDB2018. The social media campaign started on 15 May. The hashtags used were #IDB2019, #BiodiversityDay, #BiodiversityIsHealth, #BiodiversityIsFood. On Twitter, the combined top three posts reached 222,000 people. The top post earned over 500 likes and reached 135,000 people. The IDB2019 video earned 200 likes on Twitter, and over 8,000 views, reaching 30,000 people. On Facebook, the most popular post reached more than 71,000 people, with 280 likes and 533 shares. On LinkedIn, the most popular post received 181 likes and reached over 4,000 people (a 70 per cent increase compared to the previous month). On Instagram, the campaign was supported by the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) and received a combined 7,543 likes between 15 and 22 May.

D. Theme for 2020: “Our solutions are in nature”

33. The slogan “Our solutions are in nature” emphasizes hope, solidarity and the importance of working together at all levels to build a future of life in harmony with nature. The year 2020 is meant to be a year of reflection, opportunity and solutions in which people “build back better” by using this time to increase the resilience of nations and communities as the world recovers from the pandemic. 2020 is the year when, more than ever, the world can signal a strong will for a global framework that will “bend the curve” on biodiversity loss for the benefit of humans and all other life on Earth (see <https://www.cbd.int/idb/2020>).

34. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat organized its first-ever online-only campaign soliciting videos and written statements. A total of 9 out of 15 Presidencies of the Conference of the Parties, several Governments, organizations, and indigenous peoples and local communities responded to the call and issued messages. Biodiversity Day 2020 was commemorated in at least 107 countries and by 38 organizations/entities to varying degrees (activities/events, messages, and/or news articles). A total of 77 countries/organizations have reported on their activities to the Secretariat, and the remaining 68 countries/organizations were found through a search on the Internet.

35. The Secretariat co-organized and/or participated in five important virtual events: (a) Virtual High-level Discussion (United Nations Headquarters); (b) Expert panel on the links between Coronavirus and biodiversity: the scientific finding (UNESCO); (c) webinar on soil biodiversity: a nature-based solution?

(FAO); (d) post-2020 process webinar: “The future of biodiversity and how you fit in” (GYBN); and (e) “UN Model” webinar for youth (WWF-India).

36. For the period 17 to 23 May 2020, Google Analytics shows 203,915 pageviews to the Convention’s website as a whole. This represents a 62 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2019. Views of www.cbd.int/idb doubled in 2020 compared to 2019. The most notable increase was on www.cbd.int/idb/2020/logo, where visits have increased by 546 per cent compared to 2019. In fact, on 22 May, the logo was available in 51 languages (due to courtesy translations), an all-time record. These results seem to indicate that the 2020 campaign was more successful than previous campaigns in terms of driving traffic to the website.

V. COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS FAIRS AT THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

37. The 2016 Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Fair was held during the United Nations Biodiversity Conference, from 5 to 16 December 2016, in Cancun, Mexico.¹ The CEPA Fair 2018 was also held during the United Nations Biodiversity Conference, from 18 to 28 November 2018, in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.² The CEPA Fair was made possible as a result of the contribution of the host Governments (Mexico and Egypt, respectively), Party representatives, organizations, volunteers and local staff, and the staff of the Secretariat of the Convention. The CEPA Fair was funded by the host Governments. Programmes and presentations are available at www.cbd.int/cepa/fair. Some statistics are shown in the table below.

Summary	2016	2018
Number of participants (organizers, speakers and/or exhibitors)	180	140
Number of represented countries	22	28
Number of represented organizations	70	61
Number of events	30	31
CBD events	28	28
Biosafety events	2	1
ABS Events	0	2
Events organized or co-organized by the CBD Secretariat	6	4
Largest audience (number of people attending an event)	100	70
Number of kiosks	25	30
Number of virtual presentations	1	4

38. In 2016, the Secretariat organized or co-organized six events: UNDB Day (with the Minister of Environment of Japan, UNDB-J, IUCN-J, KCNC and Toyooka City); Vernissage: Aichi Biodiversity Targets Poster Tool (with GIZ); Mainstreaming biodiversity with social media (with ABS Capacity Development Initiative); CHM Awards; #NatureForAll – A movement to inspire a love of nature (with IUCN-CEC and WCPA); ceremonial signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (with WWF).

39. In 2018, the Secretariat organized or co-organized five events: UNDB Day (with the Japan Committee for UNDB, Minister of Environment of Japan, Nature Conservation Society of Japan and Japan Committee for IUCN); Vernissage: Aichi Biodiversity Targets Poster Tool (with GIZ); “Does everyone need to know everything? - Demystifying communication on access and benefit-sharing” (with ABS Capacity Development Initiative); Fifteenth anniversary of the Biosafety Protocol (with UNEP); First Global Biodiversity Communications Forum (with WWF).

¹ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2016/ntf-2016-082-cepa-en.pdf>

² <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2018/ntf-2018-058-cepa-fair-en.pdf>

VI. WORK WITH PARTNERS

40. An important element of the development of the global communications strategy is the work that was conducted with partners. Important work was conducted with WWF International, the Commission on Education and Communication of IUCN, and the Biodiversity Communications “flotilla”, among others.

A. Activities with WWF International

41. The Secretariat concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with WWF International in 2017, which provided a framework for activities and mutual support for the global strategy as well as in support of the implementation of Aichi Biodiversity Target 1.³

1. Results of the “Connect2Earth” campaign in 2018-2020

42. In the context of the Memorandum of Understanding, WWF and focal points to the Convention carried out a number of activities that represent part of the “Connect2Earth” campaign. Based on enabling actors who can serve as multipliers, the campaign is developed around the notion of “open source”: umbrella messages are created that are then adapted by partners moving the campaign forward. The concept of multipliers has been successful by using events organized across the biodiversity community as opportunities to mobilize the message. Therefore, the Convention’s International Day for Biological Diversity, the World Environment Day of UNEP, Earth Day, Earth Hour, and the World Scouting movement have all provided opportunities. The following are resulting activities:

(a) In 2018, Earth Hour messaging pivoted from a climate message to more of an all-encompassing climate and nature message. Millions of people, cities and landmarks switched off the lights to participate in Earth Hour while using the open-source material provided by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) project (videos, images, social media posts, and starter kits on how to take action). The starter kits were conceptualized for different audiences: communities, corporates, hotels, schools, individuals and for youth groups. The resulting numbers broke records of previous years: 188 countries and territories participated and 3.5 billion impressions were counted. The hashtags #EarthHour, #connect2earth and other associated hashtags trended on Twitter in 33 countries. Over 250 celebrities and influencers took part. Influencers called for protecting climate, nature and biodiversity. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, and French President Emmanuel Macron were among those drawing attention to biodiversity loss and called on people to “connect2earth”;

(b) In Earth Hour 2019 (30 March), individuals, organizations, businesses and cities in 188 countries and territories worldwide joined Earth Hour to speak up for nature and inspire urgent action for the environment. Again, WWF provided toolkits with open-source assets for event organizers, businesses, hotels, educators, youth groups, zoos and aquariums, cities and partners at www.EarthHour.org and www.Connect2Earth.org for download. This resulted in #EarthHour, #Connect2Earth and related hashtags trending in 26 countries, generating over 2.8 billion impressions;

(c) Earth Hour 2020 focused on “Nature as a solution to the climate crisis”. A total of 190 countries and territories took part. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and national lockdowns, the global campaign was communicated exclusively via digital media, making Earth Hour 2020 the first ever fully digital event. The switch to purely digital communication resulted in a significant increase in digital outreach worldwide. At exceptional speed, innovative online events and digital campaigns were developed, adapting planned on the ground events into digital versions. A total of 4.7 billion digital impressions were counted on various social media channels (including Facebook, Twitter, Weibo and TikTok), which is the highest number of digital impressions achieved so far during Earth Hour. More than 578 influencers, public figures, environmental activists and celebrities supported Earth Hour in 37 countries, among them the Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres, Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, the Colombian model Claudia Bahamon and the British singer Cat

³ Target 1: “By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.”

Stevens. Worldwide media coverage resulted in more than 12,500 articles related to Earth Hour despite global news headlines being dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. *WWF survey on biodiversity awareness*

43. In partnership with several global partners in awareness-raising and market research, WWF International carried out a survey of public awareness on biodiversity, environment and sustainability in 10 countries (Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Peru, South Africa and Viet Nam). The survey suggested the following with regard to biodiversity knowledge:

(a) The majority of people did not have a good comprehension of the term. Respondents across 10 countries claimed they did understand or were familiar with biodiversity; 4 per cent of people were able to explain that it meant animals and habitats. A good portion of people had a basic comprehension of living organisms but still did not connect it with habitats;

(b) Half of the respondents did not believe that biodiversity was on the decline;

(c) One third of people realized that the source of food and fresh air and water was biodiversity;

(d) The majority say that they felt personally responsible, while a smaller percentage believed they could not do anything. Overall, people agreed about the loss of biodiversity and their responsibility, but were unwilling or unsuccessful at making the necessary habit changes;

(e) Most people want to protect the basis of life, while only 40 per cent see biodiversity as a source of raw materials;

(f) Steps taken include turning off lights, reducing food and water waste, recycling when possible, and using energy efficient appliances.

44. The research suggested that we need to broaden the understanding of biodiversity in relation to habitats and resources. Easy everyday lifestyle changes can be made to conserve biodiversity and a majority of people is willing to do this. Respondents do not connect biodiversity as a source of life, but they relate biodiversity to nature.

3. *Global Biodiversity Communication Forum*

45. WWF and the Secretariat of the Convention convened the first Global Biodiversity Communications Forum in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on 18 November 2018, during the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The focus was “the role of communication campaigns in increasing awareness on biodiversity and nature”. Organizations and government representatives presented their efforts to scale up communication activities to raise biodiversity awareness. A wide overview of biodiversity-related campaigns across many groups and sectors was presented: youth, agriculture, food production, consumption and waste, national Governments, local governments, local communities, conservation non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as zoos and aquariums. Campaigns presented during the Forum were concentrating on a few key objectives, namely: information and knowledge sharing, connecting people to nature, initiating behavioural change and raising awareness of the threats to biodiversity.

46. WWF convened the second Global Biodiversity Communications Forum (GBCF-2) in Woking, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on 10 and 11 September 2019, in the lead-up to 2020 and to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Communicators, representing convention secretariats, United Nations bodies and NGOs focused on ways and means to scaling up biodiversity communication and discussed communication priorities for 2020 in the run-up to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, a narrative for mass communication and public mobilization, the link with the climate movement, key events to roll out public mobilization actions, and online mass mobilization tools, such as “Voice for the Planet”.

B. Activities with the Commission for Education and Communication of the International Union for Conservation of Nature

47. The Commission for Education and Communication has been a long-standing supporter of the programme of work on communication, education and public awareness, providing support to the production of the CEPA toolkit, and to the development of the “Love not Loss” storyline at the beginning of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity.

1. #NatureForAll

48. The movement was formally launched at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawaii in 2016.⁴ The #NatureForAll movement is driven by a growing IUCN-led global coalition of partners who represent a variety of sectors. It aims to build support and action for nature conservation among people from all walks of life by raising awareness and facilitating experiences and connections with the natural world.

2. Research on awareness, nature engagement and behavioural change

49. As is noted in the description of Aichi Biodiversity Target 1, understanding, awareness and appreciation of the diverse values of biodiversity underpin the willingness of individuals to make the necessary changes and actions and to create the “political will” for Governments to act.

50. A new synthesis of factors that influence conservation and pro-environment behaviour has been developed by the Children & Nature Network as part of the work of the Secretariat and the Commission for Education and Communication of IUCN and its #NatureForAll initiative. The results of this work were made available to the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting.⁵ The report shows that, in addition to awareness, meaningful experiences and a connection with nature are key to engendering stronger valuation, support and action for biodiversity conservation across generations, sectors and societies. Increased attention to public engagement and a connection with nature will be important for achieving behavioural change and creating and maintaining the political will for Governments to implement the Convention.

51. National and subnational governments and stakeholders have the opportunity to implement sector-specific policies to enhance action on connecting people with nature as a key strategy for achieving the 2050 Vision and implementing the post-2020 biodiversity framework, including the following:

- (a) Education and childcare policies that enable time outdoors in nature and experiential learning about nature in early childhood and throughout life;
- (b) Health and elder care policies that embrace contact with nature as a mechanism for delivering physical and mental health benefits for all people of all ages;
- (c) Community planning and urban development policies to create nature-rich cities that include parks and protected areas tailored to maximize the co-benefits for people and nature;
- (d) Parks, outdoor recreation, and tourism policies that encourage family-friendly experiences, interpretive programmes and outdoor, nature-based and experiential education;
- (e) Arts and culture policies that promote the integration of culture and nature to develop a sense of oneness with nature while celebrating stories of connection and healing;
- (f) Policies that encourage private-sector investment in environmentally sustainable programming, infrastructure, and innovative solutions for connecting people with nature;
- (g) Policies that call for biodiversity conservation organizations to work across sectors so that all people experience the diverse benefits of connectedness with nature.

⁴ <http://natureforall.global/>

⁵ [CBD/COP/14/INF/20](#).

C. The “Biodiversity Communications Flotilla”

52. As a result of the meeting of experts held on the margins of the twenty-third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice on 21 and 22 November 2019, a group of organizations encompassing Parties to the Convention, United Nations agencies, secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements, civil society organizations, youth, women and indigenous peoples and local communities coalesced into an ad hoc group for communications coordination referred to as the “Flotilla.” The term comes from the Cambridge Conservation Initiative meetings of 2018.

53. The members informally agreed that the group needed to have a low cost of participation in terms of human resources, with members free to participate in some elements and not others. The principle of open source would govern the products shared by the group with inclusivity, transparency and neutrality as important elements. The focus would be on promoting the biodiversity/nature agenda with the goal of supporting the negotiations of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Messages for the group were to be developed over the course of meetings and activities in the year with different organizations providing their contributions.

54. Coordination and organization mechanisms for the group included an email list, a WhatsApp group, weekly meetings of the group and ad hoc small working groups to address different topics. If resources became available, then staff to serve as Sherpa and their support staff could be mobilized. The group identified the following tactics:

- (a) Partner activation moments: including international days and other commemorative occasions;
- (b) Produce open source content (assets, posts, pics, videos, stories);
- (c) Recognize member strengths, including model petitions, science leaders, influencer networks, network strengths, educational communities, and others;
- (d) Focus on peak moments; major events and moments, such as the meetings of the Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the IUCN World Conservation Congress, International Day for Biological Diversity, World Environment Day and the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA);
- (e) Media partners would be engaged by flotilla members;
- (f) Some members of the flotilla could produce a white paper and carry out other advocacy activities on behalf of a strong communications target in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;
- (g) Promote new and unexpected voices;
- (h) Target-specific tactics (business, faith, parliamentarians, etc.);
- (i) Merge climate and biodiversity discussions.

55. The flotilla meetings were held on an almost weekly basis during 2020, starting in March. Most of the communication activities taking place for World Wildlife Day, Earth Hour, International Day for Biological Diversity, World Environment Day, the launch of the fifth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, and other activities, were amplified by the activities of the group.

VII. ACTIVITIES IN 2020

A. 2020 social media

56. Social media activities under the Convention in 2020 began with a “2020 resolutions” campaign to build awareness and excitement about the “biodiversity super year”. The campaign benefited from high participation and engagement, with Party representatives, stakeholders and United Nations leaders sharing

video messages of commitment to advancing biodiversity goals ahead of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.⁶

57. The commemoration of the International Day for Biological Diversity featured a multimedia package of materials posted on CBD channels and shared with partner organizations. A 36-hour “wave of solidarity” featuring messages of support from Parties and stakeholders around the world also helped to raise the reach and engagement of the campaign.

58. Other key moments that were heavily promoted and gained traction with social media users included: the reveal of the logo of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the release of the zero draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the entirely digital celebrations of the International Day for Biological Diversity, World Environment Day and the launch of the fifth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*.

59. As a result of this strong push, all CBD social media platforms registered strong growth during the first half of 2020, except for the United Nations Decade for Biodiversity Facebook page, which registered only modest growth. Engagement rates were consistently above industry averages. The emergence of Instagram as a growth platform was an important development. Details are as follows:

- CBD Twitter: **@UNBiodiversity** <https://twitter.com/UNBiodiversity>. Followers on 1 January: 39,166. Followers on 30 June: 53,361. Growth: +36%
- Executive Secretary Twitter: **@Mremae** <https://twitter.com/mremae>. Followers on 1 January: 314. Followers on 30 June: 2,842. Growth: 805%
- Facebook: **@UNBiodiversityConvention** <https://www.facebook.com/UNBiodiversityConvention>. Followers on 1 January: 163,858. Followers on 30 June: 165,393. Growth: +1%
- LinkedIn: **@UNBiodiversity** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/UNBiodiversity>. Followers on 1 January: 15,519. Followers on 30 June: 19,543. Growth: +26%
- Instagram: **@UNBiodiversity** <https://www.instagram.com/unbiodiversity/>. Followers on 1 January: 130,202. Followers on 30 June: 202,000. Growth: +55%
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/ConventiononBiologicalDiversity>. Subscribers on 1 January: 1,397. Subscribers on 30 June: 2,015. Growth: +44%

B. Launch of the fifth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*

60. The Secretariat collaborated with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the United Nations Foundation, Terry Collins & Associates, and members of the Communications “Flotilla” and other allied institutions to launch the fifth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* on 15 September 2020. The campaign generated extensive media attention, helping to further elevate awareness of biodiversity loss as a threat to human well-being comparable to climate change.

61. Strategic communications planning and preparations began several months in advance, including research and liaison to confirm or identify specific contacts in key media outlets and non-governmental partner organizations worldwide. This included a pre-launch (January 2020 - September 2020) with the main objective of awareness raising, with focus placed on the scope, scale and significance of the *Outlook*. The prelaunch also sought to identify and activate partners, allies and advocates and the media.

62. A “Primer” about the *Outlook* showing the original launch date of 18 May was first sent to thousands of media organizations and NGOs prior to the second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, held in Rome in February 2020. The primer described the main topics, objectives, and timeline of the report. Most importantly, it provided the media

⁶ <https://www.cbd.int/article/2020-01-03-19-45-58>

with a dedicated email address to apply for accreditation, which entitled them to advance, embargoed access to the report, news releases, and complementary materials.

63. Updated with the new launch date of 15 September, the primer was resent in late August, and again in early September to media who had not opened the email. Its reach was extended on the social media channels of the Convention and partner organizations. Using the primer as the basis of discussion, leading journalists were followed up by phone and email. In all, about 140 journalists were accredited for the launch of the *Outlook*.

64. Major non-governmental and other partner organizations from the Communications Flotilla were similarly engaged, and a multi-partner social media effort was undertaken to inform and expand reach into key stakeholder constituencies. The primer was complemented by a video version for social media channels. Post-launch social media materials, including VIP “quote cards” and key messages, were prepared.

65. All of the media resources, along with the full *Outlook* and the *Summary for Policymakers*, were placed in an online folder, available exclusively to accredited media and NGOs under embargo, one week prior to the launch.⁷

66. One week prior to the preview of the *Outlook* during the virtual session for the twenty-fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the news conference launch, the news release was issued under embargo, and a series of advance interviews began with key media outlets and a small group of spokespersons, led by the Executive Secretary, the Deputy Executive Secretary and Tim Hirsch of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility as well as IPBES experts.

67. As of September 24, the total number of hits at online news sites had reached 2,308 in 32 languages, from 95 countries. Potential online impressions reached 8.1 billion, not including television, radio and newspaper print editions. Amplified by partner organizations in the Communications “Flotilla”, social media coverage of the report launch was extraordinary, with more than 10,000 tracked social media “mentions” (potential impressions: 168 million), including 6,900+ tweets and retweets captured between 15 and 17 September.

68. Links to coverage were shared via the social media channels of hundreds of major influencers, including the Executive Director of UNEP, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and former New Zealand Prime Minister and UNDP Administrator Helen Clark, as well as celebrities Ed Norton and Bianca Jagger, among others. Between 1 and 19 September, the Secretariat issued 28 posts related to the *Outlook*, including 11 live tweets during the launch, generating 450,000+ total impressions.

VIII. SUGGESTED ELEMENTS OF A DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

69. The Subsidiary Body on Implementation may wish to adopt a recommendation along the following lines:

The Subsidiary Body on Implementation,

Welcoming with appreciation the work of the Executive Secretary in support of the Framework for a Global Communications Strategy,⁸ as outlined in the note by the Executive Secretary,⁹

1. *Invites* the Executive Secretary to continue to work on the activities listed in the note by the Executive Secretary⁹ and further develop these activities, in particular to support the negotiations and implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in coordination with the proceedings of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework;

⁷ <https://bit.ly/GB05Media>

⁸ Decision XIII/22.

⁹ CBD/SBI/3/9.

2. *Recommends* that the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth meeting adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Conference of the Parties,

1. *Requests* the further development of additional activities in coordination and complementarity with a variety of communication activities, including the programme of work on communication, education and public awareness, the outreach and awareness-raising provisions of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the United Nations Decade on Restoration¹⁰ and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;¹¹

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to coordinate, configure and secure enough communications resources to support the range of communications activities needed for a global communications strategy, consistent with the activities and goals in the Medium-term Operational Results Framework, and other relevant communications initiatives in the upcoming biennium, including:

(a) The comprehensive communications strategy which is expected to accompany the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as outlined in decision 14/34;

(b) The programme of work on communication, education and public awareness;

(c) Corporate communications for the Secretariat, including resources to support a dynamic and growing use of social media, support for traditional media outreach, the continued work to redesign the website, and development of new and ongoing communications campaigns, such as the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and “Nature-based solutions to climate change”;

(d) Working with important partners, such as the Communications “Flotilla”, the biodiversity-related conventions, the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Department of Global Communications, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature;

3. *Requests* Parties to mobilize sufficient and predictable human and financial resources to carry out these tasks, including in coordination with the Global Environment Facility.

¹⁰ See General Assembly resolution [73/284](#).

¹¹ See General Assembly resolution [70/1](#).