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TOWARDS A GENDER-RESPONSIVE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK: CONSIDERATIONS FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. At its fourteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted decision [14/34](#), which states that the process to develop the [post-2020 global biodiversity framework](#) should be gender-responsive, by systematically integrating a gender perspective and ensuring appropriate representation, particularly of women and girls, in the process. In the decision, the Conference of the Parties also welcomed the advice for Parties, the Secretariat and other relevant organizations to enable a gender-responsive and gender-balanced process for the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework,¹ and urged Parties, the Secretariat and other relevant organizations to consider this advice in their processes on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

2. Submissions received from Parties and other relevant stakeholders on the scope and content of the post-2020 framework have stated that addressing gender equality and the role of women is relevant for achieving diverse global biodiversity outcomes, and these issues should be addressed effectively in the framework.² Suggestions included that gender considerations (such as specific measures, approaches and activities) be integrated throughout the framework, with some emphasizing the need for an explicit goal or targets on gender.³

3. The mandate and submissions to the post-2020 process highlight the importance of a gender perspective to the implementation of the Convention, and the need for biodiversity conservation, policies, frameworks and processes to reflect women's contributions and strengthen their capacity as agents of change. Women continue to be underrepresented in decision-making processes related to biodiversity and natural resource management, and have much less access, ownership and control of land and natural resources and associated benefits, as compared with men. This means that women have less capacity to support the achievement of biodiversity objectives, and their knowledge, experience, priorities and

¹ [CBD/COP/14/9/Add.1](#), [CBD/COP/14/INF/15](#) and [CBD/COP/14/INF/21](#).

² Canada, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, European Union, Switzerland, South Africa, Uganda, WWF International, GPPC, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Environment, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), Environment and Conservation Organization of New Zealand, Third World Network, BirdLife International, EcoNexus and Global Forest Coalition, Forest Peoples Programme, Born Free Foundation, FIAN International, United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, Working Group on Agricultural Biodiversity of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty, Friends of the Earth, UN-Women, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

³ Chile, International Institute for Environment and Development, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Third World Network, EcoNexus and Global Forest Coalition, Born Free Foundation.

interests may not be taken into account. Ensuring equal rights to land and natural resources, collecting sex-disaggregated data, and undertaking in-depth analysis of women's roles in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use are all necessary to address the full extent of barriers to and opportunities for women's effective engagement and equitable benefit-sharing.

4. The present note provides an overview of considerations for mainstreaming a gender perspective in the post-2020 framework, including proposals for a specific goal or target to address gender issues. Reference is made to relevant submissions received by the Secretariat on the scope and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The [2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals](#) is discussed as a relevant example for addressing issues of gender equality and women's empowerment in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

I. A GENDER-RESPONSIVE APPROACH

5. A gender-responsive approach is one that moves beyond only identifying or raising awareness of gender issues ("do no harm"), to taking measures to actively address gender inequalities ("do better"). As stated by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), gender-responsive planned actions should integrate measures for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, foster women's inclusion and provide equal opportunities for women and men to derive social and economic benefits.⁴ Through this approach women may move from being considered only as vulnerable stakeholders, to being valued as active biodiversity stewards, managers and agents of change.

II. MAINSTREAMING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

6. Mainstreaming a gender perspective is a means to achieve equality and inclusion. It involves assessing and addressing the positive and negative implications of any planned biodiversity-related actions on women and men, and on the relationships between them, to avoid reinforcing existing inequalities. It entails designing, implementing and reviewing initiatives so that they benefit women and men equally. Mainstreaming a gender perspective can therefore be considered relevant for every step of the process to conserve, sustainably use and fairly and equitably share the benefits from biodiversity. As such, mainstreaming a gender perspective is a necessary part of a gender-responsive approach.

7. In the [Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020](#), Parties are requested to mainstream gender considerations, where appropriate, in the implementation of the Plan and its associated goals, Aichi Targets and indicators. The Strategic Plan also indicates that capacity-building for gender mainstreaming should be supported. No other provisions are contained within the Strategic Plan on how gender should be mainstreamed.

8. With the view that a gender-responsive process to develop the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will contribute to a gender-responsive framework, the present section outlines the relevance of a gender perspective and considerations for mainstreaming gender issues within different elements of the proposed framework.

A. Vision 2050 – Living in harmony with nature

9. As noted in one submission,⁵ the 2050 Vision to ensure biodiversity is "valued, conserved, restored and wisely used" for the purposes of "maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people" requires the involvement of all people, women and men. Yet, women are not engaged as equal partners in biodiversity decision-making or implementation efforts. Ensuring that women play a full and equal role in these activities requires that they have equal access, ownership and control over biological resources and associated benefits. Equitable access to land, water and resources and distribution of equitable benefits from nature, are therefore important

⁴ <https://genderandenvironment.org/2015/08/stop-being-so-sensitive-the-shift-from-gender-sensitive-to-gender-responsive-action/>

⁵ [UN-Women](#)

considerations in fulfilling the vision of delivering benefits essential for all people. These are further emphasized below as possible gender-biodiversity objectives and actions for the framework.

B. Principles for a post-2020 global biodiversity framework

10. Consistent with the principle of gender-responsiveness in the preparatory process for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, gender equality and the role of women in the implementation of the Convention is proposed as an overarching principle for the post-2020 framework. Submissions on the scope and content of the post-2020 framework have also highlighted that a transformational post-2020 framework should be rights-based, gender-responsive, inclusive and participatory in nature.⁶

11. Proposing gender equality and the role of women as an overarching principle requires consideration of how these issues would be addressed within the framework and its implementation. The inclusion of a principle on gender equality and the role of women is not likely to lead to the achievement of gender-responsive biodiversity outcomes without associated commitment on gender objectives and guidance on implementation.

12. To be gender-responsive, the post-2020 framework would need to address gender issues not only as a principle but also in respect to objectives, actions, resources, monitoring and evaluation. In other words, a gender-responsive post-2020 global biodiversity framework would have gender equality and women's empowerment mainstreamed effectively throughout it.

13. Elaborating on the desire for a rights-based, gender-responsive, inclusive and participatory post-2020 framework, one submission⁷ stated that this means that the framework should recognize and enhance women's agency, or their ability to act independently and make their own free choices, and women's leadership, including women from indigenous and local communities, in biodiversity conservation and the sustainable management of resources. The submission further emphasized the need to expand women's access, rights to, use of, as well as control over, resources including land, water, related knowledge, and biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as ensure their equal enjoyment of benefits from biodiversity conservation and sustainable ecosystem services. The importance of women's equal rights and access, as well as engagement in decision-making processes on resource management are echoed in other submissions and provide a useful basis for considering the types of gender-biodiversity objectives and actions that could be addressed in the framework. Incorporating such objectives and actions in the framework would serve as a means of demonstrating a principle of "gender-responsiveness" in practice in implementation.

C. Biodiversity targets

14. Of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, Target 14 is the only one to address gender issues overtly, calling for the needs of women, indigenous peoples and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable to be taken into account in the restoration and safeguarding of ecosystems. In submissions received on the scope and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, gender was identified as one of the "gaps" in the Strategic Plan and among the issues that could be better reflected in the post-2020 framework.⁸ Some submissions have noted the importance of a goal or target on gender, with one⁹ advocating for a goal proposing that, "by the year 2030, women and girls are an active part of decision-making in the management and custody of biodiversity and are equally benefitting from this and ecosystem services."

15. An approach to mainstreaming gender throughout the post-2020 framework may also include a specific goal or target on gender, as a means to ensure that gender issues also receive specific attention as a critical issue in their own right, to complement and enhance cross-cutting measures. This approach is

⁶ [UN-Women](#); International Institute for Environment and Development; International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); Third World Network; EcoNexus and Global Forest Coalition.

⁷ [UN-Women](#).

⁸ See [CBD/POST2020/PREP/1/INF/1](#).

⁹ Costa Rica.

reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, which have identified gender equality and women's empowerment as a critical cross-cutting component, with gender targets across many of the Goals, as well as a specific goal to achieve gender equality and empower women (Goal 5).

D. Indicators

16. Among the indicators for assessing progress in the Aichi Biodiversity Targets,¹⁰ only Target 18 (traditional knowledge) includes gender-relevant indicators, in respect to trends in land use change and tenure in traditional territories of indigenous and local communities, differentiated by sex. (These are the same indicators as for Sustainable Development Goal targets 5.a and 1.4.) Aichi Target 14, the only one to address the role of women, does not include a specific indicator on gender, and identified indicators are not disaggregated by sex.

17. The lack of data on gender and biodiversity linkages continues to pose a challenge for effective gender mainstreaming in biodiversity planning, policy and programming. Information on women and men's access to, use of, control over and benefits derived from biodiversity can help guide biodiversity initiatives to be more equitable, sustainable and ultimately more successful over the long term. Identifying gender-biodiversity indicators that can be monitored at the national level is an important means of ensuring gender issues are and can be effectively addressed in implementation of the Convention. Several submissions identified the need for gender and disaggregated indicators, including across all the targets in the post-2020 framework. Submissions also noted that Sustainable Development Goal indicators should be considered in the framework, one noting the need to synchronize with or complement Sustainable Development Goal indicators, a number of which pertain to gender-environment issues.

E. Implementation and national biodiversity strategies and action plans

18. As noted in one submission,¹¹ a gender-responsive post-2020 global biodiversity framework must take into account targeted, adequate and reliable means of implementation. As indicated above, mainstreaming gender effectively involves considering the implications for both women and men at each stage of the process. The identification of specific measures to respond to gender inequalities can then serve as a pathway to enable gender-responsive implementation.

19. The Convention's [2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action](#) includes mainstreaming gender into national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) as one of the possible actions for Parties towards integrating a gender perspective into implementation of the Convention. Reviews of NBSAPs undertaken by IUCN and the Secretariat of the Convention¹² suggest that many Parties recognize some relevance of gender in efforts to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity; yet, there remains a need to more fully and consistently address gender issues throughout the NBSAPs. Women are most frequently characterized as a vulnerable group within NBSAPs, often in association with youth rather than as key actors in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

20. Increasingly, efforts to address gender considerations in respect to biodiversity and environmental issues emphasize women's roles and contributions as agents of change, to support the achievement of biodiversity and environmental objectives. This goes beyond considering women as only vulnerable, and emphasizes the need for approaches to ensure women have the capacity, resources and opportunity to contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, as well as ensuring a rights-based approach to access to ecosystem services and biological resources.

21. Submissions on the scope and content of the post-2020 framework further emphasized the importance of recognizing and enhancing women's agency, participation and leadership, as well as promoting women's rights and equal access to biological resources and associated benefits. These needs

¹⁰ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/strategic-plan/strategic-plan-indicators-en.pdf>

¹¹ UN-Women.

¹² See [CBD/SBI/2/2/Add.3](#).

point to gender approaches and actions for specific consideration in the post-2020 framework, in order to achieve sustainable outcomes for both gender equality and biodiversity.

22. Awareness-raising, capacity-building and provision of adequate resources are also important enabling mechanisms that have been emphasized in the Convention's 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action and other decisions under the Convention, as a means to achieve desired outcomes. Ensuring effective implementation of a gender-responsive framework thus needs to take into consideration these needs and enabling mechanisms for achieving gender and biodiversity objectives.

III. THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ITS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

23. The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals provide a relevant example of how gender can be mainstreamed across and addressed as a distinct target within a set of international commitments. These commitments are themselves also relevant for achieving global gender and biodiversity-related outcomes. The Declaration of the 2030 Agenda recognizes that "gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets."¹³ It further states that "Women and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources and political participation as well as equal opportunities with men and boys for employment, leadership and decision-making at all levels."¹⁴ The Declaration goes on to state that "The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial."¹⁵

24. The Sustainable Development Goals include a specific goal (Goal 5) to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and include gender targets in 10 of the 17 Goals, with 80 gender-relevant indicators. While the Goals most relevant to biodiversity, goals 14 and 15 (life below water, and life on land) do not include specific gender targets, targets and indicators across many of the other Goals are relevant for gender and biodiversity issues. Notably, these include:

(a) Target 1.4 "By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance";

(b) Target 2.3 "By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment";

(c) Target 5.a "Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws."¹⁶

A list of Sustainable Development Goal targets related to gender and biodiversity is provided in the annex to the present document.

25. In addition to targets that directly address gender issues, are those with significant implications for women, such as target 14.b, "Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets". As women play an important role in small-scale fisheries, including as fishers, and are typically disadvantaged with respect to accessing resources and markets, achievement of this target for all small-scale artisanal fishers would benefit women as well as men. Target 15.6, "Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed", is likewise relevant for women, who may often bear the costs

¹³ See General Assembly resolution [70/1](#), annex, para. 20.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ A list of gender and biodiversity-relevant Sustainable Development Goal targets is provided in the annex to the present document.

(such as labour and storage associated with selecting and maintaining traditional seeds and other key resources) but not receive a proportional share of benefits derived from genetic resources.

26. Through its range of goals, targets and indicators, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals provide an indication of how issues of gender equality and the role of women may be addressed in different contexts and provide an agreed international set of commitments that may be further strengthened through an inclusive and gender-responsive post-2020 global biodiversity framework. As noted above, there are many commitments under the 2030 Agenda that are relevant for enhancing the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in a gender-responsive manner.

IV. SUMMARY

27. In summary, developing a gender-responsive post-2020 global biodiversity framework involves mainstreaming a gender perspective effectively and addressing gender aspects throughout the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including in the principles, objectives, implementation, financing, monitoring and review.

28. Achievement of the 2050 Vision of living in harmony with nature also requires that women have the capacity to play a full and equal role in ensuring that biodiversity is “valued, conserved, restored and wisely used”. Ensuring that women have equal access, ownership and control over biological resources and associated benefits is particularly important in order to maintain ecosystem services and ensure the delivery of benefits to all people.

29. Consistent themes raised in submissions related to the post-2020 process of strengthening women’s agency, participation and leadership, as well as ensuring equal rights, access and control over biological resources and associated benefits, provide a basis for the consideration of possible objectives and actions to be included in a gender-responsive post-2020 framework.

30. An approach to mainstreaming gender throughout the framework does not exclude a specific goal or target on gender issues – as in the case of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, gender equality and women’s empowerment have been addressed as a cross-cutting component reflected in multiple targets as well as a specific goal. The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals provide a useful reference and basis for considering how issues of gender equality and women’s empowerment may be addressed in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. A transformative, inclusive, participatory and gender-responsive post-2020 global biodiversity framework presents the opportunity to go beyond the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, to address gender objectives that can support the achievement of equitable, sustainable and effective biodiversity outcomes.

*Annex***KEY TARGETS of the SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS RELEVANT TO GENDER EQUALITY, THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AND CONTRIBUTING TO A GENDER-RESPONSIVE APPROACH TOWARDS BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION**

- 1.4:** By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.
- 1.b:** Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions.
- 2.3:** By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.
- 4.7:** By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.
- 5.5:** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
- 5.a:** Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.
- 5.b:** Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.
- 5.c:** Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.
- 8.5:** By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and person with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
- 10.2:** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.
- 13.b:** Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities.
- 16.7:** Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.
- 17.18:** By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.
-