

STAKEHOLDER OPEN WEBINAR – EXPLORING LINKAGES BETWEEN CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK, HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2021, 7:00-9:00 AM EST

SUMMARY REPORT

**Prepared by the Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group
on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework**

A. Background

1. This meeting marked the first in a series of informal “Stakeholder Open Webinars” organized by the Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (WG2020), Mr. Francis Ogwal (Uganda) and Mr. Basile van Havre (Canada), designed to explore with Parties and stakeholders the key concepts and issues for the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

2. The theme of this first meeting focused on “Exploring Linkages Between Climate Change and Biodiversity for the Development of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework”, allowing participants to explore the linkages between the issues of climate change and biodiversity, possible ways to improve synergies between climate change and biodiversity conservation actions, and how to enhance coordination between the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

3. Around 900 participants representing Parties and Non-Party Stakeholders participated in the event and every effort was made to ensure that both Parties and stakeholders were provided an equal opportunity to speak. A total of 1100 participants registered for the webinar and 100 comments were received during the session. All requests for oral intervention (20) were accommodated.

B. Key Messages

4. The Co-Chairs would like to highlight the following key messages from the webinar as particularly relevant to the preparations of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework:

- (a) There is general agreement on the need to integrate climate action and biodiversity management more closely.
- (b) Nature-based solutions have been identified as playing a key role in unlocking the synergies between both conventions, and in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, ensuring that such solutions themselves do not cause adverse impacts on biodiversity and people.
- (c) Participants shared a wealth of ideas on how CBD COP15 and UNFCCC COP26 can take to strengthen the synergies between both conventions, including concrete actions, new inter-institutional mechanisms and mainstreaming.
- (d) The post-2020 global biodiversity framework offers a unique opportunity to bring the work of both conventions closer together.

C. Summary

5. Following a welcome by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Co-Chairs officially launched the webinar series. In their opening remarks, they presented the theme of the webinar and reminded participants that the meeting was not intended as a negotiation session but a space for discussion to educate ourselves, increase our knowledge of different perspectives, and improve our understanding of the many complex issues related to the preparations of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

6. The Co-Chairs then invited Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director General of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) to deliver a context-setting presentation on the topic of ‘Climate and Biodiversity: The Big Picture’. In his expert presentation, Dr. Mathur noted the importance of managing biodiversity and opportunities to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic. The expert further highlighted the role of climate change as a major driver of biodiversity loss and the significance of biodiversity investments, in particular into protecting ecosystem services, to counteract this trend. He emphasized the need to link biodiversity management to projects and activities that have ‘here-and-now economic benefits’, providing the example of protected areas and park management. Dr. Mathur identified nature-based solutions as a key tool to unlocking the synergies in addressing climate change and biodiversity together, rather than in silos, and presented several examples of how such solutions are currently being implemented in India.

7. The second expert presentation was delivered by Mr. Charles Barber, Director of the Forest Legality Initiative and Senior Biodiversity Advisor at World Resources Institute (WRI), who spoke on the topic of ‘Building Better Bridges between the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the CBD’. Likewise, Mr. Barber stressed the importance of addressing climate change and biodiversity loss together, noting that to date the UNFCCC and the CBD operate relatively separately from one another. Addressing both the UNFCCC and its upcoming COP26 and the CBD and its upcoming COP15, Mr. Barber outlined several actions both Convention of the Parties (COPs) could undertake to combine their efforts in 2021. For the UNFCCC, the expert suggested Parties should reaffirm the essential contribution of nature to addressing climate change and its impacts, and the need to address biodiversity loss and climate change in an integrated manner (Decision 1/CP.25, para. 15 of the UNFCCC) and recognize the functional role biodiversity plays in climate mitigation and adaptation. To this end, COP26 could recognize carbon stock accounts for ecosystems alongside flows and fluxes; create a post-intersessional mechanism on nature-based solutions; and propose a mechanism to enhance cooperation with the CBD. Looking toward COP15 in Kunming, Mr. Barber highlighted several key elements for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to overcome silo-thinking and strengthen linkages. These include the promotion of nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation; recognizing the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and protecting their territories; adopting an ecosystem restoration goal to rebuild ecosystem integrity; as well as a goal for mobilizing and expanding financial resources from public and private sources. To operationalise the promotion of nature-based solutions, in particular, Mr. Barber put forward the idea of establishing an intersessional ad hoc working group by the CBD to address the

application for nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation, adaptation, future risks and zoonotic pandemics, and jointly with the UNFCCC creating an inter-institutional mechanism to develop coordinated action on nature-based solutions.

8. After his presentation, Mr. Barber imparted the following four guiding questions for the open discussion among Parties and stakeholders:

- (a) Do efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change and biodiversity management need to be more closely integrated?
- (b) What are key barriers to strengthening cooperation and synergies between the two conventions?
- (c) For anyone opposed to increased attention to climate change in the CBD – Can you help us understand the reasons for those objections so we can find a way forward?
- (d) What actions can COP15 and COP26 take to enhance the synergies between both conventions?

9. Subsequently the Co-chairs invited all participants into an open exchange of views and questions based on the guiding questions outlined above. The session was moderated by the Secretariat, which at the outset outlined modalities for making interventions, ensuring that Parties and non-Party stakeholders were accorded equal opportunities to speak. The following summary is not intended as a detailed reproduction of the discussion, but rather aims to impart an idea of the breadth of interventions made during the session and capture the essence of what was being discussed in relation to each guiding question.

10. Judging from their interventions, participants generally seemed to agree on the need to integrate climate action and biodiversity management more closely (guiding question a). Several participants highlighted the key role that nature-based solutions can play to address climate change and biodiversity loss together. One participant pointed to the role of nature as a carbon sink and identified that nature-based solutions can provide approximately 27% of greenhouse gas emissions reductions required to meet the Paris Agreements goals. Another participant expressed caution over the variety of definitions of the term nature-based solutions and suggested using exclusively the definition provided by the IUCN. They further reflected on the importance of ensuring that such solutions themselves do not cause negative impacts on biodiversity and people. One participant highlighted the role of ocean-based solutions to combat both climate change and biodiversity loss, including through marine protected areas. They emphasized that in accordance with best available science, area-based protection should be increased to comprise at least 30% of oceans and land areas. It was also noted that while large area-based conservation is crucial, locally managed protected areas will be equally important.

11. Regarding barriers to strengthening cooperation and synergies between the CBD and UNFCCC (guiding question b), one participant questioned the exploitation of biodiversity for carbon offsets and the unwillingness of banks to make long-term investments in nature, stressing the importance of changing the underlying system based on economic growth. Another participant suggested stock-based tools as an alternative model, providing the example of stewardship for global commons with a world balance sheet. Another participant raised the issue of inequality

between developing and developed countries faced with the task of tackling both crises together, to which one respondent emphasized the need to form coalitions that work for everyone.

12. None of the interventions from participants directly addressed guiding question (c) on the opposition or reluctance to increase attention to climate change in the CBD. Perhaps on a related point, one participant pointed to the fundamental differences in approaches to addressing climate change and biodiversity loss. While common indicators might be suitable for monitoring climate change, addressing biodiversity loss involves diverse and complex systems with regional differences that do not lend themselves easily to integration in a global monitoring, reporting and review mechanism. Nonetheless, the participant remarked that there are important lessons to be learned from the UNFCCC for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

13. Regarding the way forward and the concrete actions COP15 and COP26 can take to enhance the synergies between both conventions (guiding question d), one participant suggested nature should be a key focus of COP26 and an opportunity to demonstrate the contribution of nature-based solutions. Another participant called on both COPs to focus on the implementation of actions that serve both climate and biodiversity, amongst others, through joint implementation of plans and the strengthening and better integration of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) under the CBD and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the UNFCCC to this end. One participant asked to what extent the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can serve as a tool to tackle these challenges together and how they could be further mainstreamed in both processes. Taking inspiration from carbon markets, one participant reflected on the idea of biodiversity credits, noting the difficulty of establishing a market for such credits. One participant expressed alarm at the use of biodiversity credits, fearing such a scheme could lead to the displacement of communities. Another participant remarked that the post-2020 global biodiversity framework offers a unique opportunity to bring both conventions closer together. To this end, they stressed that the post-2020 targets should be multi-purpose, the framework itself should address climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals and should strengthen the engagement of the financial sector to generate a critical mass of resources, as well as explore options for the inclusion of nature-based solutions under the framework.

14. Connected to these points, another participant called on the CBD COP to involve financial institutions more closely in the development and implementation of the post-2020 Global biodiversity framework. Central banks, in particular, were identified as key players who might not be expressly mandated to fund climate- or biodiversity-related investments but have expanded their health portfolio under the COVID-19 pandemic. One participant called for synergies in the implementation of national climate and biodiversity programmes, and stressed the role of capacity-building and technology transfer to further enhance integration. Another participant identified the field of industrial agriculture as a key area for collaboration and coordination between the two conventions to promote sustainable production and consumption patterns and financing for sustainable agriculture. The importance of integrating the rights of indigenous peoples in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework was also expressed. One participant called on the CBD COP to respect and uphold its previous decisions related to geoengineering and to promote its precautionary approach to the issue also within the UNFCCC. The key contribution of subnational

governments and cities was also noted, which under the Edinburgh Declaration are pledging their commitment to implement the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. It was noted that these actors can play a pivotal role in delivering the needed convergence between both agendas.

15. Finally, one participant provided feedback for future Stakeholder Open Webinars, proposing a more equal representation of women, indigenous communities, youth and grassroots organisations on the panel of presenters. The Co-Chairs apologized and explained that due to last minute scheduling changes, the gender balance among presenters could no longer be ensured. The Co-Chairs have taken note of this feedback and will ensure a better representation of women, indigenous communities, youth and grassroots organisations in future webinars.

16. Reflecting on what was an open and fruitful discussion, the Co-Chairs delivered their closing remarks. They noted the diversity of points of views which themselves prove the value of having this discussion. The Co-Chairs would like to once again thank participants for their active and stimulating discussion and look forward to your participation in future webinars in the series.

D. Recording of the Webinar

17. For those interested, a recording of the Stakeholder Open Webinar held on 12 January 2021 can be accessed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqRkvJwNEmU>
