



**UNESCO Statement at the Informal session in preparation for SBSTTA 24: 17-19 February and 24-26 February 2021**

UNESCO welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

We welcome that on-going negotiations are working towards protecting 30% of the world's surface, across land and sea, by 2030.

UNESCO's 252 natural World Heritage sites, 714 Biosphere Reserves, and 161 Global Geoparks which cover 6% of the Earth's landmass are key tools for achieving the targets of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Over and above protecting part of the Earth's surface, UNESCO wishes to mobilize to reconcile 100% of the world's population with the rest of nature that we are part of.

Given the key role biodiversity plays in the economy, health and our well-being, this means making environmental concerns central to our decisions and actions.

Therefore the need is also a deep shift in consumption and production patterns, from agriculture to industry. We cannot continue to rely on destroying nature to generate GDP. The new collective framework of the SDGs of agenda 2030 sets the horizon: sustainable development must address poverty, inequality, human rights, education, health and ecosystems.

In this path towards accelerating the implementation of the SDGs, we must also be innovative, ambitious and imaginative.

We need to devise other ways of inhabiting the Earth and in particular we must develop and better manage areas where the conditions are met for a respectful relationship between humans and nature, such as in biosphere reserves.

As Secretariat to the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO was pleased to participate in the Bern II Consultation Workshop of Biodiversity-Related Conventions on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework together with other biodiversity-related conventions and MEAs. The importance of valorizing existing indicators and data gathered by the biodiversity-related conventions was stressed by most participants in this meeting. We wish to recall that World Heritage Convention operates on the basis of well-established monitoring and

reporting mechanisms and indicators that could be at the service of the Global Biodiversity Framework. These relate to improving the integrity, management and conservation of World Heritage sites through mainstreaming and formalizing private sector engagement and strengthening management effectiveness of sites, among others.

UNESCO recognises the mutual benefits of conserving natural and cultural diversity and their interdependencies. The UNESCO World Heritage Convention and the MAB programme promotes linkages between nature and culture and we consider that the intrinsic value and the importance of biodiversity for our identity, heritage and for human well-being could be recognized in a more holistic manner in the currently proposed targets related to nature's benefits to people, sustainable use and benefit-sharing of the GBF. In this vein, UNESCO further supports the views expressed in this meeting that the global biodiversity framework closely links to the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets, including the SDG Target 11.4 to Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.

UNESCO further wants to stress the important linkages between protecting biological and cultural diversity, and the links among the biodiversity- and the six UNESCO Cultural Conventions, such as the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which recognises the contribution of intangible cultural heritage to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Protecting the natural environment is often closely linked to safeguarding a community's worldviews, social practices, cultural expressions, languages and knowledge systems. The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework should explicitly recognize these linkages.

We therefore have to listen and learn from those communities and societies that know how-to live-in harmony with nature, including indigenous peoples and local communities. Their rights need to be recognized and protected, as their unique local and indigenous knowledge is a key reservoir of solutions for humanity.

UNESCO hosts the IPBES Technical Support Unit for indigenous and local knowledge, which supports the ILK content of all IPBES Assessments. We are pleased to announce our partnership with UNDP and UNEP-WCMC in providing technical support on indigenous and local knowledge in National Ecosystems Assessments.

As a UN Science body we strongly support the interventions referring to building stronger capacity in data collection, data management and robust, consistent scientific practice in monitoring. Such interventions align with the vision and goals of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development that was

launched last month and which will be coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO in collaboration with our numerous partners. UNESCO and its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission are ready to support the development of indicators through our UNESCO programmes and data and information systems such as the Global Ocean Observing System and the Ocean Biodiversity Information System, which are referred to in addendum 1. SIDS are a priority group in UNESCO, and they actively engaged in the UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

We must also better communicate and mobilize actors of change, including youth and welcome the interventions of Parties with regards to indicators on benefit sharing, intergenerational equity and gender mainstreaming.

Lastly, in order to protect and respect the living world, we must mobilize the transformative power of education, including through ocean literacy. UNESCO thus express appreciation for the proposed indicator on education. Indeed, through education, we can achieve long-term results. For this reason, environmental education should be better integrated as a core curriculum component at all levels of education and in teacher training – a commitment that is at the heart of UNESCO's action.

Thank you.