

Declaration by the Group of Likeminded Megadiverse Countries (LMMC) at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties of the Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD COP15)

We, members of the Group of Likeminded Megadiverse Countries (LMMC) that consists of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Malaysia, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the People's Republic of China, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Republic of Colombia, the Republic of Costa Rica, the Republic of Ecuador, the Republic of Guatemala, the Republic of India, the Republic of Indonesia, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Madagascar, the Republic of Peru, the Republic of South Africa, the Republic of the Philippines, and the United Mexican States,

- In line with our common interest that brought the LMMC into existence 20 years ago as a mechanism for consultation and cooperation to promote issues pertinent to the three objectives of the CBD;
- Cognizant of our irreplaceable position in CBD-related processes since we harbor more than 70% of the global biodiversity, account for over 45% of the population of the world, and host an extraordinarily rich cultural diversity and associated traditional knowledge; and,
- Being supportive of long-awaited decisions that will contribute to halting the loss of biodiversity globally; and which, in turn, will be of significant implications to our people who heavily rely on biodiversity and also to the global population at large.

We have been working as a group to contribute to the biodiversity cause, specifically to the comprehensive formulation of the ongoing post 2020-Global Biodiversity Framework, as per our renewed commitment made at CBD-COP14 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, by engaging in the various processes organized by the CBD as well as the Group's interaction platforms including the recent virtual meeting hosted by Ethiopia, the current chair of the Group, on 13th September 2022.

The LMMC members, hereby,

1. Expresses its sincere gratitude and appreciation to China as the Presidency for COP15; to Canada and its people for hosting the meeting here in Montreal;
2. Acknowledge the effort made by the CBD Parties and its secretariat so far to arrive at a comprehensive, ambitious, and inclusive post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) encompassing agreed targets that help to address the current biodiversity-related challenges and promote the CBD objectives in an integrated manner;
3. Consider CBD-COP15 to be humanity's and Mother Earth's last best chance to halt and reverse the current trend of loss of biodiversity globally and recognize the need of a sense of urgency and solidarity to make progress in further developing the GBF. The LMMC are willing to help as a group by developing consensus on key issues.
4. Highlight that the main result of COP15 and the measure of its success is a package including decisions on ambitious GBF, digital sequence information (DSI) and robust resource mobilization, as these decisions reinforce and enable each other.
5. Recognize that the achievement of the proposed GBF targets, especially conservation-related targets, depends on the effective implementation by the LMMC member countries.
6. Further recognize that the proposed target 3 of the post-2020 GBF allows for flexibility and a broad set of tools for countries to use to contribute to its achievement, including supporting other ongoing conservation efforts in different multilateral fora and ensuring that sustainable use of these areas, if applicable, contributes to biodiversity conservation.
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7. Highlight the invaluable importance of LMMC to achieve ambitious conservation target in terrestrial, coastal and marine areas, as in the current proposed target 3 and stress that the target will require significant financial and technical support to developing countries and flexibility on the measures for its implementation, subject to national capability and available financial resources.

¹ As the target would allow for the six IUCN protected area categories, the IUCN Protected Area category VI and other categories designed and managed by the countries are the available options that allows for certain types of sustainable use. The target can also be met by other effective conservation measures (OECMs), which most countries have not fully utilized yet. Areas managed by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) that support biodiversity outcomes along with sustainable use, also qualify as protected areas or OECMs and will be a key path to contribute to the conservation targets, including indigenous territories as a specific category. OECMs, as part of proposed GBF target 3, need to clearly recognize instances of sustainable use and include territories conserved by IPLCs as per the CBD OECM criteria in decision 14/8 taken in 2018.

8. Consider the need to scientifically arrive at priority areas to ensure that sustainable restoration, at natural baselines, of degraded terrestrial, inland waters, coastal and marine is incorporated under target 2 of the post-2020 GBF.
9. Highlight further that all proposed targets in the GBF need to have a matching financial ambition that is clearly reflected in target 19.
10. Stress that the increase by \$10 billion per annum in international financial flows in proposed target 19 is far from adequate.²
11. Highlight the 8th replenishment of CBD's financial mechanism as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) that preceded the Global Biodiversity Framework agreement. We welcome the increased allocation for biodiversity though recognizing that the need to mobilize new and additional funding to plug the financial gap for implementing the GBF in eligible developing countries. A solution would be to establish a supplementary global biodiversity fund at the earliest that attracts the necessary financial resources as well as overcome the concerns regarding accessibility of funds, together with innovative implementation mechanisms to accelerate implementation of the GBF such as payments for environmental services and strengthening multi-stakeholder partnership.
12. Remain committed to contribute to the finalization and implementation of GBF as agreed during the Group's meeting at Sharm El-Sheikh in 2018.
13. Express appreciation to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for its chairmanship of the LMMC during the period 2019-2022.

*December 7, 2022
Montreal, Canada*

² This notion of the Group originates from pertinent and evidence-based recommendations that have already been made. A group of leading NGOs recommended at least \$60 billion per annum. Similarly, a group of like-minded developing countries had suggested \$100 billion per annum as the target for international financial flows in line with Article 20 and 21 of the Convention, the amount to be further revised for the period 2030-2050 to address the needs of developing countries. Other options for closing the financial gap have been suggested, perhaps most notably a proposal by the Africa group (AMCEN resolution of 16th September 2022) to dedicate 1% of global GDP to nature by all countries.