

PRESS RELEASE

Virtual Science-Policy Forum identifies key biodiversity knowledge gaps and priorities for science-policy research

- *Two thousand participants discussed options and solutions, including nature-based solutions, to tackle biodiversity loss and climate change based on solid scientific knowledge and evidence.*
- *Forum identified key knowledge gaps and priorities for science-policy research, needs for capacity building and opportunities for increased technical and scientific cooperation.*
- *Forum presents unique opportunity for scientists, policy makers and other relevant stakeholders to exchange on recommendations of how science, technology and innovation can contribute to the effective implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.*

Montreal, 23 April 2021 – The virtual sessions of the joint fifth Science-Policy Forum for Biodiversity and the eighth International Conference on Sustainability Science closed today with participants identifying key biodiversity knowledge gaps and priorities for science-policy research, needs for capacity building, and opportunities for increased technical and scientific cooperation.

Some 2,181 participants participated, with the conclusions and recommendations of the virtual sessions to be submitted to the twenty-fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 24), the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 3), and the third meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, said, “It is you, the scientific community, through your tireless work and engagement, that have kept ringing the alarm bells on the continuing loss of biodiversity worldwide. Your critical contributions will help the world community, and especially policymakers, understand how critical it is to act and urgently change our relationship with nature.”

Key points identified during the sessions include:

- Protected areas can play a big role in stopping the spread of zoonotic diseases.
- Forest Restoration can decrease transmission risk of zoonotic diseases, however, depending on how it is done, it can also increase the risk of some diseases.
- Investments in nature, including halting land-use change, supporting restoration and making food systems nature positive, are key to preventing next pandemic.
- Nature is deeply intertwined with and influenced by social, economic, and political forces; therefore, nuanced understandings of dynamic people-nature relationships are crucial to inform restoration activities that can support positive ecological outcomes alongside social well-being.

- Viable biodiversity-based solutions for sustainability already exist and new solutions still can be developed based on new technologies and local context.
- A culture of data sharing and attribution, capacity building and resource mobilization are needed to generate the information needed to implement and track the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- There is a need to reduce/eliminate misalignment between policies on renewable energy expansion and biodiversity conservation.
- Digital technologies can facilitate mechanisms such as information-sharing, transparency, interconnectivity, value maximization and automation to alleviate challenges in the woody biomass supply chain as a nature-based solution.
- Renewable energy can create context-specific trade-offs, considering that renewable energy installations, ancillary infrastructure, and upstream/downstream activities could affect biodiversity through multiple mechanisms. Important to delineate and conceptualize trade-offs between biodiversity and renewable energy in a comprehensive manner.

Initially scheduled for October 2020, prior to the postponed fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the co-organizers decided to convene a series of virtual sessions to maintain momentum and use the opportunity to provide science-based input to the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The joint event is still planned to take place prior to COP-15, now scheduled for 11-24 October 2021.

The Science Forum is a unique opportunity for scientists, policy makers and other relevant stakeholders to conduct open discussions and make recommendations on how science, technology and innovation can contribute to the effective implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, bend the curve of biodiversity loss, obtain positive biodiversity outcomes, and foster transformative change towards achieving the 2050 Vision.

The virtual sessions were jointly organized by the International Union of Biological Sciences, the Consortium of Scientific Partners on Biodiversity, the University of Tokyo (Institute for Future Initiatives), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Society for Environmental Sciences, the United Nations Environment Programme, the UN Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the UN Environment Programme-International Ecosystem Management Partnership, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, the International Science Council, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, the University of Stockholm and the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research. Additional contributors included the United Nations Development Programme, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the University of Bonn (West African Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services), the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network, NatureServe, VertNet and the Young Ecosystem Service Specialists.

Notes to Editors

For further details about the joint sessions, including videos of the sessions, please visit: <https://science4biodiversity.org/>.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties so far, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through

scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 173 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified by 130 Parties. For more information visit: www.cbd.int. For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 561 2720 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int; or Johan Hedlund at johan.hedlund@cbd.int.