

15 September 2017

**Submission by the European Union and its Members States
to CBD Notification 2017-052 on the preparatory process for the follow-up to the
Strategic Plan for Biodiversity**

The EU and its Member States welcome the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions for the preparatory process for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity. In line with the views expressed at CBD COP 13, the EU and its Member States support CBD Decision XIII/1 which emphasizes the need for full involvement of stakeholders through a participatory process and requests the Secretariat to prepare options for fostering commitments and strengthened implementation.

We reiterate our view that CBD parties should have high levels of ambition and that the preparations for the follow-up should not undermine the implementation of the current Strategic Plan. Furthermore, we believe future targets, and where appropriate milestones, should help and strengthen the implementation in view of achieving the 2050 vision. Achieving the Aichi Targets remains a very important step on the path to that vision.

The EU and its Member States are looking forward to a solid preparatory process for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan. The COP 14 decision on this process is very important and should be prepared in a solid, inclusive and timely manner. In this respect we are happy to see that the present notification 2017-052 is addressed also to stakeholders. In addition to SBSTTA, SBI and potential further dedicated meetings, it is important to involve also the Bureau in the preparations of the COP 14 decision.

The EU and its Member States appreciate the Information Note to the Bureau "CBD/Post-2020/Prep./1 Approaches for the preparation of the post-2020 biodiversity framework" and share to a large extent the analysis. We can generally support the formulated features and options. Furthermore, we should build on the positive experience and lessons-learned derived from the process leading up to the current Strategic Plan and Aichi Targets.

As discussions on these matters are still ongoing, the views set out below have a preliminary character and we would be happy to work together with other Parties and the CBD Secretariat, as well as with stakeholders, to further develop these ideas.

Political visibility

The EU and its Member States stress the importance of raising the political visibility of biodiversity at the global, regional, national and sub-national level. To that end, biodiversity should be on the agendas of relevant high-level events, or biodiversity meetings should be held in the margins of high-level events. The organisation of a Biodiversity summit in the margins of the UNGA should be explored.

Participatory process & stakeholder involvement

The EU and its Member States underline the importance of full stakeholder involvement at the sub-national, national, regional and global level, in line with past COP decisions. Such involvement should be organized at the initial stage of the process for determining the overall approach, as well as at later stages for seeking views on more concrete proposals. It should encompass involvement of, amongst others, the private sector and sectors where biodiversity needs to be mainstreamed as well as of civil society (NGOs, research institutions, etc) and sub-national authorities. Attention should be paid to the involvement of IPLCs and the contributions from women, youth and those who directly rely on and manage biodiversity. Particularly important is close cooperation with the other Rio Conventions, the biodiversity-related MEAs, IPBES, UNEP, UNDP, GEF and FAO, among others. Due consideration should be given to how a future framework can encourage all stakeholders to contribute towards achieving the objectives. The aim should be to provide a universal framework for action on biodiversity, similarly as the current Strategic Plan.

For efficiency, stakeholder meetings should be organized as much as possible back-to-back with, or in the margin of, other relevant meetings, and with a clear purpose and expected outcome. This could include meetings at regional level, e.g. regional workshops on mainstreaming of biodiversity in development processes and SDG implementation. Further consideration should also be given to how to engage with existing stakeholder fora, such as the business and biodiversity platforms. Also the meeting in 2018 of the High-Level Political Forum, where SDG 15 will be considered, will be relevant.

The EU and its Member States welcome close cooperation of the three presidencies of COPs 13, 14 and 15. We hope this will foster consistency and efficiency of the preparatory process as well as political engagement.

In view of wider support, UNGA should endorse the key decisions on the preparatory process towards follow-up to the current strategic plan, as well as the results.

Towards a stronger future framework

We believe that the follow-up to the Strategic Plan could:

- be based on a thorough analysis of the causes that hampered or prevented achieving the objectives of the Strategic Plan 2011-20, especially based on the 6th national reports, the outcomes of GBO 5 and IPBES assessments. The start of the preparations should, however, not wait for completion of GBO 5 and be based on GBO 4, and other (preliminary) findings and analyses;
- contain targets that are, as much as possible, specific, implementable, measurable, results-focused, and time-bound (SMART); their formulation should be clear and streamlined, avoiding overlaps or duplications;
- consider ways to motivate implementation and to increase transparency in the progress being made, such as milestones where appropriate;
- address the entire scope of relevant biodiversity issues, the main drivers of the biodiversity loss, whilst leaving reasonable flexibility at the national level for Parties to address targets that are relevant in their national circumstances;
- address all three CBD objectives;

- be fully coherent with, build on and add value to the related SDGs ¹; the follow-up to the Strategic plan will need to be taken into account when implementing the biodiversity-related SDGs, notably current elements with a horizon of 2020. We are looking forward to the assessment, including a gap analysis, on the relationship between the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals requested in paragraph 35 of Decision XIII/1.
- encourage enhanced use of existing tools and mechanisms across biodiversity related conventions, including systems for reporting, indicators and information sharing, and improve those tools where necessary, keeping in mind the importance of stability and a long-term perspective in order to avoid unnecessary administrative burden and maximise effectiveness.² Such tools should be aligned with other international processes including SDG indicators and IPBES;
- encourage sub-national/national/regional commitments and provide a framework that draws clear(er) links between global targets and the Parties' contributions to those targets;
- establish improved processes for monitoring, evaluation, reporting and review of implementation.
- seek coherence with and build on other relevant plans and frameworks, and foster synergies in implementation;
- foster the mainstreaming of biodiversity in relevant sectors and policy frameworks to enhance their contribution to biodiversity targets, including national development strategies and national strategies for the implementation of 2030 Agenda.

Fostering commitments for post-2020

The process could foster voluntary commitments from Parties as well as from stakeholders, including the private sector, through inter alia:

- solid stakeholder involvement and communication to the public;
- improved understanding of the severity of the challenges and the urgency of the need for solutions, underpinned by solid scientific evidence and analysis;
- a strong narrative based on the multiple and indispensable contributions, opportunities and solutions from biodiversity to human well-being and the economy;
- bottom-up process for Party-level commitments towards implementable and measurable targets, or sub-targets and potentially provide for assessment of those commitments.

¹ The report "The 2030 Agenda and Ecosystems" from the Stockholm Resilience Center will be a useful tool in this context.

² The Data And Reporting Tool (DART) which is currently being developed, seeks to increase synergies when reporting on national, regional and global biodiversity-related targets.