

Avaaz Submission to the Convention on Biodiversity 2050 Vision and the Global New Deal for Nature

Summary: The current 2050 Vision 'Living in harmony with nature - By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people' should be translated into a long-term goal for nature - a north star that captures the public imagination and guides and inspires citizens, governments, and businesses on the journey to stop mass extinction. **The Avaaz movement is proposing that the Long Term Goal be that half of our planet is restored and protected and the whole planet is sustainably managed to achieve balance between people and nature.** This deal must have an implementation mechanism and stringent accountability and transparency systems that include ratchet and review.

Background: To date, attempts to slow the collapse of biodiversity have failed. Human activity has accelerated species extinction to 1000 times the natural rate and we are eroding the world's capacity to provide food, water and security to billions of people. Without a diversity of plant and animal species, key ecosystems will collapse, threatening the resources on which humanity relies. Without intact ecosystems, atmospheric carbon will increase exponentially making the planet largely unsuitable for human habitation. Unless we urgently change course and unite behind an ambitious Global New Deal for Nature at the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Beijing in 2020, we could move towards crossing thresholds of our planetary boundaries that would be dangerous for biodiversity and humanity.

The 2050 Vision and the Global New Deal for Nature:

The proposal for the Global New Deal for Nature that has been endorsed by over 2 million people already calls for:

- *Meeting existing targets to protect biodiversity;*
- *Forging a new agreement so that at least half of our lands and oceans are protected;*
- *Ensuring our whole planet is completely sustainably managed;*
- *Taking into consideration the needs of human development; and*
- *Ensuring the active support of indigenous peoples.*

The inspiring vision of 50/50 is a north star that can become a lightning rod for mobilisation before the Beijing COP like the net zero goal was for climate at the Paris Climate Deal. Polls across the world show that giving half back to nature is overwhelmingly supported by public opinion¹. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has advocated for the proposal of **50% protection and sustainably managing 50% by 2050**, and **indigenous leaders** from the Amazon have endorsed the idea.

¹ Kumpel, Noëlle F., Freeman, Robin, Ainscough, Jacob, Grange-Chamfray, Sophie, and Baillie, Jonathan E.M. (2018) *How much space do people want for nature? A global public opinion survey.* [zslpoll](https://www.zslpoll.org/).

There are numerous scientific, social, economic reasons that support a 50/50 long term goal.

1. 50/50 is a single apex target that can be universally successful in addressing the crisis as it expands natural areas, moves the rest of the planet into sustainable management of agriculture, fishing, manufacturing and infrastructure, and pushes for equitable sharing of benefits from nature. The beauty of this long term goal for nature is that it compliments and will make real other international efforts, like the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. The leading cause of biodiversity loss is habitat loss. Scientists have been incredibly clear that we need more land and oceans protected to solve the crisis. As such the critical pathway to recovering biodiversity is restoration and protection. Most scientists polled by the IUCN Beyond the Aichi Targets Task Force are aligned that Aichi target 11 - that calls for 17% protection of terrestrial lands and 10% protection of marine areas - is way too low, and a large majority support increased large areas based targets². The key problem with protected areas is enforcement, finance and the political will to expand to the extent nature needs. Those are three things we need to ensure in the 2020 deal.
3. The proposal for the restoration and protection of half the earth has been endorsed by top scientists This includes the Nature Needs Half movement³, the Half Earth Project ⁴ who have found that it is crucial to allow 80% of species to survive, Reed Noss's paper that sets the range between 25% and 75%⁵, and the Global Deal for Nature work led by Eric Dinerstein et al⁶. Key conservation scientists from leading organisations - WWF, Birdlife, Conservation International, National Geographic, WWF etc are now calling for at least 30% protection by 2030 as the short term mission for the Global Deal for Nature, and many share a vision of the long term goal for 50/50⁷. It is critical not to settle just with a 30/30 milestone as it does not adequately indicate to industry that a real transformation is taking place. A Deal for Nature in 2020 needs to be robust and send a long term signal into boardrooms and treasuries that inaction is more risky than action.
4. Conservation scientists have shown that only by conserving half the planet will we be able to feed people and have adequate water resources as our population rises⁸. Others

² Beyond the Aichi Targets. IUCN, 6 June 2018, www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/wcpa/what-we-do/beyond-aichi-targets

³ Nature Needs Half, natureneedshalf.org

⁴ Half-Earth Project. EO Wilson Biodiversity Foundation, 2017, eowilsonfoundation.org/half-earth-project

⁵ Noss, Reed F., et al. "Bolder Thinking for Conservation." *The Canadian Journal of Chemical Engineering*, Wiley-Blackwell, 26 Jan. 2012, onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1523-1739.2011.01738.x

⁶ Dinerstein, Eric. Global Deal for Nature – RESOLVE. RESOLVE, 14 Apr. 2017, www.resolve.org/blog/2017/global-deal-for-nature-2

⁷ Space for Nature, Jonathan Baillie, Ya-Ping Zhang, *Science* 14 Sep 2018: Vol. 361, Issue 6407, pp. 1051
DOI: 10.1126/science.aau1397

⁸ Andrew Balmford FRS, Professor of Conservation Science, Conservation Science Group, Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge, How to Spare Half a Planet, Space for Nature Symposium, 28 Feb, 2018.

have shown how agriculture needs can be met with the protection of half the earth⁹. Some estimates say that by 2050 the world's fisheries could collapse. Empty oceans would mean billions starve. But oceans rebound quickly once placed under formal protection. A new study shows the "spillover effect" from closing 50% of the world's oceans would increase fishery yields by 7x, feeding even more people than today.

5. Climate change cannot be solved without dealing with land use and biodiversity, and pathways for decarbonization that ignore the consequences on the planet's biodiversity have the potential to be cataclysmic. The Paris Climate Deal cannot be made real without a Deal for Nature. Our response to both crises must work in harmony as the climate model assumes carbon sinks from intact natural land. We cannot afford to lose any of them through land conversions or deforestation if we want to keep below the 1.5C target. In fact we need to restore and regenerate to get there. Agriculture, forestry and land use change are responsible for roughly 25% of carbon emissions. So protection of half the earth is a crucial part of the solution to climate adaptation and mitigation.
6. Conservation scientists have shown that the 50/50 proposal is viable. One piece of research shows current natural lands (about 45% of land) - lands lost to conversion (about 0.5%) + ecological restoration areas (about 3.5%) + corridor network (about 2%) = 50%. Another shows that roughly 15.5% of the world's lands are currently under some form of protection, and another 31% are in a natural or semi-natural state. The aim of this goal is to properly protect these key bioregions and restore and protect at least another 4% focusing on key 'biozones' of high biodiversity value¹⁰.
7. The protected half earth would be acquired through reclaiming land from abandoned agricultural areas and through including OECMs, indigenous lands, productive buffer zones, corridors, and private conservation easements. Protected areas wouldn't mean just parks or government mandates. Crucially the areas conserved would be areas important for biodiversity including Key Biodiversity Areas, Ecologically and Biologically Significant Marine Areas.
8. The current idea is the CBD parties negotiate a "common but differentiated" approach. The 50/50 target would not require that 50% protection for each country, but rather the whole world. Scientists have identified over 846 terrestrial bio-regions worldwide, and suggest that any given bioregion needs to be protected by about half (some more, some less) to ensure survival. Some ecoregions with "particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services" will have much higher targets than others. 15% are already protected, 100/846 are already 1/2 protected, and 2/3rds of them could reach 1/2 protection with restoration and conservation projects. So all together it adds up to 50% conserved and the whole earth sustainably managed, and some countries contribute towards a conservation Nature Fund to support others.

⁹ Watson, James E. M., and Oscar Venter. "A Global Plan for Nature Conservation." *Nature*, vol. 550, 5 Oct. 2017.

¹⁰ Dinerstein, Eric, et al. "Ecoregion-Based Approach to Protecting Half the Terrestrial Realm." *OUP Academic*, Oxford University Press, 5 Apr. 2017, doi.org/10.1093/biosci/bix014

9. The 50/50 goal can be translated from the science and policy space into the real economy and with mapping that can give each country a clear picture of what is needed to curb this human extinction threat. Mapping is already underway by conservation biologists and computer scientists who are developing a new dynamic map called the "Global Safety Net." It will depict the world's most ecologically intact lands along with areas that need to be restored and connected in order to allow biodiversity to survive and thrive, water resources to be protected, and carbon sequestration to be maximized. Crucially it will be able to show that there will be different approaches for different countries depending on what natural areas they have, and if they are places with KBAs.
10. Another conservation scientist has come up with three conditions that will help countries determine how they each respond. The Three Global Conditions for Biodiversity Conservation and Restoration are: 1. The highly populated, agriculturally fertile, and developed areas: The target in this condition is to preserve all the remnants of an ecoregion, rather than numerical targets, and conservation must be mainstreamed with sustainable production and sustainable consumption. 2. The Open landscapes: The target for this condition is to develop systems of protected and conserved areas in a connected way. An ambitious percentage target is appropriate in this condition. 3. Wilderness: The targets for this condition are to sustain intactness and protect and conserve the entire natural system as it is now.
11. A Global Deal for Nature ensures the responsibility of solving this global problem is dealt with globally. The 50/50 proposal will depend on sufficient long term funding and experts are right now coming up with innovative models. Richer countries must bear more of a burden of financing biodiversity conservation. They depend on the benefits and cannot expect only the global South to shoulder the cost. Businesses and philanthropists can and should also all play a role.
12. The 50/50 deal for nature must incorporate the ongoing leadership of indigenous peoples and local communities as the traditional guardians of nature. Many of the world's major centers of biodiversity coincide with areas occupied or controlled by Indigenous Peoples. Traditional Indigenous Territories encompass up to 22 percent of the world's land surface and they coincide with areas that hold 80 percent of the planet's biodiversity. As the [Avaaz / COICA report](#) shows Indigenous-led conservation areas must be created, indigenous land rights defended, and full participation ensured.

Ultimately this is about restoring harmony between humanity and nature so that both can thrive. The public and private sector must come forward with deeper determination and higher aspiration around the 50% goal to save our planet -- the alternative is to witness the collapse of our ecosystems, our climate, and our planet.