



United States Department of State
*Bureau of Oceans and International
Environmental and Scientific Affairs*
Washington, D.C. 20520

14 December 2018

Dr. Cristiana Paşca Palmer
Executive Secretary
Convention on Biological Diversity
413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800
Montréal, Québec, Canada H2Y 1N9

Dear Dr. Paşca Palmer:

The United States appreciates the invitation to provide our perspectives in response to the Secretariat's 17 July 2018 Notification 2018-063 inviting the submission of initial views on the scope and content of the post-2020 biodiversity framework. We are pleased to have the opportunity to share the views attached.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara M. De Rosa-Joynt".

Barbara M. De Rosa-Joynt
Division Chief for Biodiversity
U.S. National Focal Point for the
Convention on Biological Diversity

Attachment: U.S. Submission of initial views on the scope and content of the post-2020 biodiversity framework

**U.S. Submission of Initial Views
on the Scope and Content of the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework
14 December 2018**

Focus on nature and develop 2°C target for biodiversity

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the scientific underpinning of the scale and scope of actions necessary to make progress towards the 2050 Vision and a possible structure for the post-2020 biodiversity framework. The United States was pleased to play an active role in the development of the Aichi Targets and look forward to engaging constructively in the post-2020 process as well. The United States believes that one strength of the Aichi Targets is that they have spurred national biodiversity assessments, which were required to obtain baseline data to assess progress. However, we consider that future targets need to be more measurable, realistic, and achievable in order to have the greatest impact. We believe it would be useful to develop a succinct, tangible target similar to the 2°C target for climate change. For example, something along the lines of “maintain X% of functioning ecosystems.” Along with this, in our view there should be fewer, more specific targets that provide clear guidance to businesses and governments. We therefore suggest that the next round of targets focus only on nature, and that targets under strategic goals A and E be eliminated or consolidated.

Increase specificity and simplify targets

We believe that the next round of targets would benefit from more specificity, as in our view vague language in the Aichi Targets made them less likely to be achieved. For instance, rather than saying “areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity”, we could instead say “By 2030, 95% of agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry products come from certified sustainable sources.” This type of target would give businesses that do not directly manage habitats guidance on specific actions they can take to benefit biodiversity. Additionally, we consider that terms such as “protected areas” should be defined so that all countries are aiming for the same target. Moreover, we believe that the current targets are too complex and that this has constrained success, and we recommend that future targets are simplified so that there is only one measurable action per target. We also believe that simplifying the strategic goals so that they are clear and easy to convey (similar to the SDGs) would also promote understanding and facilitate robust action.

Make targets more measurable

In addition to being specific, in our view every target should be measurable and have a specific indicator to track progress, and targets and their associated indicators should be identified at the same time the goal is adopted. We recommend that Parties should work with groups developing indicators to ensure that each goal has at least one measurable indicator to ensure progress towards the goal can be tracked from the beginning. We anticipate that this will also help establish better baseline data. Since the Aichi Targets were adopted, a great deal of effort has been directed towards developing indicators; therefore, we believe that previously developed indicators should be reviewed and re-used wherever possible.

U.S. Submission of Initial Views on the Scope and Content of the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework

Habitat-based objectives

Finally, we suggest that the next round of targets should focus on habitat-based objectives, which are more easily measured and achieved. For example, rather than targets focused on species, we could have targets about conserving a certain percentage of different habitat types. We also suggest the inclusion of freshwater ecosystems in the targets and indicators, as current targets focus mostly on terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

Sources of knowledge

In conclusion, we believe that targets should be more measurable, realistic, and specific, should have specific indicators to track progress from the start, and should be more habitat-focused. We also believe that to be most effective and efficient, especially in light of the time constraints ahead, that Parties should draw on multiple sources of knowledge as a baseline for the post-2020 biodiversity framework. The IPBES assessments are a valuable source, but should not be the only sources consulted. National level assessments, work on Essential Biodiversity Variables from GEOBON, reports from other biodiversity-related conventions, and scientific literature on lessons learned from the Aichi Targets can also provide important and valuable information.