

FORESTS & BIODIVERSITY CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, COP15 FOREST

KEY DEMANDS

December 2022

1. LIVING WITHIN PLANETARY BOUNDARIES, WITH ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY

The Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) must ensure that the world lives within the planetary boundaries. The framework currently fails to do this. There is no overarching plan to reduce the overall damage to biodiversity and ecosystems.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) needs to guarantee that the targets will actually improve the situation for biodiversity. In order to do so there are a few key points:

- Halting and reversing biodiversity loss needs to be a key factor, which is meant in absolute terms, not in “No Net Loss” terms.
- There should be no regression from Aichi targets.
- Turning 30% of the world into “protected areas” is not the answer. The key point is how these protected areas are managed and governed. Too many protected areas are just “parks on paper” and do not offer real protection for the environment. Too many other areas are set up in ways which undermine the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and therefore undermine biodiversity. (see point 2 below)
- Countries must have clear plans on and commitments to how they will preserve biodiversity. These should include a commitment not to cause biodiversity loss in other countries, for example through their supply chains.

Key demand:

Friends of the Earth International calls upon all Parties in the CBD to set up a framework with real and binding commitments. We will fight continuously for a Global Biodiversity Framework which is built upon environmental integrity.

2. A FRAMEWORK FOUNDED ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FULL RESPECT FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

Indigenous Peoples and local communities are the best guardians of biodiversity. 80% of the remaining biodiversity is in their hands. They need the necessary support to ensure that they can self-govern their territories, managed as Community Forest Management or Indigenous Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs). To conserve biodiversity this way, IPLCs need to have the necessary rights.

IPLCs’ territories within ICCAs must be recognised as such and given protection against destructive development projects.

Protected Areas must be founded on rights for IPLCs. We reject conservation models which separate people and nature. In regions where no IPLCs live, an important role remains for more classically protected areas. Protected areas should always be

oriented towards quality ecosystems with integrity and interconnectivity.

The rights of environmental defenders are paramount for the Global Biodiversity Framework. Year after year hundreds of environmental defenders are killed, often IPLCs who are defending their territories against destructive, corporate “development projects”.

All relevant targets must reflect human rights and Indigenous Rights in their indicators and implementation plans. Environmental defenders must be explicitly included in the framework.

Key demand:

Friends of the Earth International rejects the relegation of rights-related issues to a separate section of the preambular text (for example section Bbis), where they will almost certainly be ignored when it comes to implementation. Human rights including the respect and recognition of rights of indigenous peoples and local communities must be at the core of the framework and therefore we will fight for a framework founded on the same

3. GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF BUSINESS, NOT SELF-REGULATION.

Biodiversity loss is intrinsically linked to an economic system which exploits nature and people. Corporations in particular negatively affect a vast proportion of territories globally, destroying ecosystems, and the lives and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples.

“*Mainstreaming Biodiversity in all sectors*” should require all relevant economic sectors to base their decision-making on biodiversity criteria. This should be led by government-based regulation, internationally coordinated through the CBD. However, the text relating to this (under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation) does the opposite, containing few regulatory aspects but including offsetting, self-certification, self-reporting and self-regulation as “solutions”, none of which have worked historically. This happened because the text was drafted by a small group of countries and organisations, explicitly taking into account the views of corporate actors. This reflects a wider trend of corporate capture in the CBD.

Key demand:

Friends of the Earth International believes governments have a very important role to play in regulating business. The CBD is a multilateral organisation; it brings states together and should therefore ensure their coordinated regulation. Measures must be taken to counter corporate capture in the CBD.

At the national level, this requires a whole-of-government-approach, ensuring the involvement of all ministries and all levels of governance, from local to national. Biodiversity policies are not something for a ministry of environment alone to deal with.

4. KEEP FALSE SOLUTIONS AND GREENWASHING OUT OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK.

False solutions are rife in the current draft of the Global Biodiversity Framework. These proposals oversimplify the complexity of the crises at hand and place the power in the hands of corporations and anybody wishing to continue with business as usual, including many governments.

- **Nature-Based Solutions** is portrayed as a “solution” to the biodiversity crisis. In reality, it makes biodiversity a function of the climate and claims that biodiversity can capture and offset CO₂ emissions. This is often done in biodiversity-detrimental ways, such as monoculture tree plantations, which harbour no biodiversity at all.
- **Offsetting** – Though not explicitly, the GBF is built upon the idea that offsetting is a good idea. The idea that “No Net Loss” or “Net Gain” can save biodiversity is deeply rooted in the GBF. This implies that destroying a piece of nature is acceptable as long as it is compensated for elsewhere. This compensation is often done by conserving another area with claims that it would otherwise have been destroyed. In effect, territories and biodiversity are still destroyed. Alternatively, compensation comes in the form of restoration, which often results in very poor quality of “new ecosystems”, in some cases even monoculture tree plantations.
- **“Nature Positive”** – “is the new buzzword, claiming to be the “biodiversity equivalent of the climate goal of 1.5°”. However, a deeper analysis clearly shows

that the concept is based on “Net Gain” ideas and dodgy measuring methods. The concept justifies the loss of more biodiversity in the short run, on the basis that it might be compensated for in the future.

- **Valuation of nature** – Many proposals are based on the economic valuation of nature, which reduces the complexity of biodiversity, and its multiple values (such as cultural, spiritual, intrinsic, recreational, etc.) into a single number, thereby overlooking the fundamental understanding and appreciation of what biodiversity is and represents.
- **Certification schemes** – A different type of “false solution” is certification schemes. Many corporations want to convince the general public and consumers that their products are not damaging to biodiversity or human rights. They want to persuade policymakers that their actions are sufficient and need no further regulation. So they set up certification schemes, often in collaboration with other corporate actors and big conservation organisations. It is beyond doubt that such certification schemes hide the horrendous realities on the ground for the environment and human rights.
- **Self-reporting and self-regulation:** Companies are increasingly claiming that reporting on the impact of their own activities, and setting up internal regulations is more effective than government-imposed regulations. The Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) is one such very dangerous proposal. Self-reporting and self-regulation do not work.

Key demand:

Friends of the Earth International will continue to expose false solutions that are detrimental to the environment and negatively impact the rights and livelihoods of IPLCs. We will not accept any outcome which includes them, either in the GBF or the mainstreaming text.

5. BIODIVERSITY MUST NOT BECOME A TRADE-OFF FOR CLIMATE.

The climate crisis has often taken priority over the biodiversity crisis. Yet in many ways, biodiversity is in a worse state than the climate. Biodiversity is severely affected by climate change, as well as policies and measures aimed at saving the climate.

There is an expectation from climate policymakers that biodiversity will “save” the climate, mainly through offsetting climate emissions with carbon captured in trees and ecosystems. This is evident in proposals such as “Nature-Based Solutions” (originally called “Nature Based Climate Solutions”) and in the climate pledges by countries to the UNFCCC relying heavily on offsetting – so much so that an unrealistic amount of land is planned for offsetting. The inclusion of an obligation for biodiversity to supposedly “capture” roughly 10GTeq of CO2 emissions in the climate target of the GBF is indicative of the same problem.

Key demand:

Friends of the Earth International believes a CBD climate target should include the following points:

- **A plan to protect biodiversity from increased climate impacts.**
- **Support the conservation of ecosystems which are vital both for climate and biodiversity, thereby ensuring an integrated ecosystem approach.**
- **The rejection of all offsetting measures, particularly Nature-Based Solutions.**
- **Protection against any climate measures that undermine biodiversity, such as Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS).**

6. CHANGE THE AGRICULTURAL MODEL WITH A SHIFT TOWARDS AGROECOLOGY

Industrial agriculture is the main culprit of biodiversity loss, as was clearly identified by the 2019 IPBES global assessment report. Yet the current agriculture target ignores this and proposes many contradictory elements.

The target talks about “sustainable intensification”, “ecological intensification”, “increased productivity” and “innovation”. All these terms indicate technology-intensive agriculture systems which include GMOs, pesticides, synthetic biology, etc. These types of agriculture, mainly based on mono-crop production, are very damaging to biodiversity and reduce agricultural biodiversity to only a few species.

Indigenous and peasant agriculture is based on vast agricultural biodiversity, and their farming systems interact positively with surrounding ecosystems. The current target

does include positive elements such as agroecology and support for farmers' seed systems. But there is a serious risk that these counter views will, in negotiations, result in text which is devoid of real meaning.

Key demand:

Friends of the Earth International believes the CBD must ensure a real shift in global agricultural systems towards systems based upon agroecological principles and Indigenous Peoples and peasant agriculture. Any target falling short of this shift will fail to stop the horrific impacts of industrial agriculture on biodiversity, and therefore endanger people and planet.

7. PROVISION OF FINANCE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GBF

The successful implementation of the GBF depends on the provision of adequate financial resources to developing countries, as without them, they will be unable to realise or implement their commitments under the GBF. Even a great Framework doesn't get implemented if the resources aren't available.

However, the language within the framework on resources including the type and origin of the resources, what for and how they are channelled, is very weak and problematic for developing countries. It undermines the Rio principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Countries also need to stop providing subsidies that harm biodiversity and prohibit banks and corporations from investing in destructive projects.

Key demand:

Friends of the Earth International believes that developing countries must be provided with the necessary resources for implementation and these must be international public financial resources which are new and additional to existing finance, while always acknowledging the Rio principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Offsetting funds should under no circumstances be counted as finance, as this is only compensation for destruction.

IMPROVED IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS ARE KEY

While the Aichi Targets were adequate, they were not implemented at all. It is therefore imperative that the new Global Biodiversity Framework has a proper implementation mechanism. This should involve a compliance mechanism, a full review and follow-up on the commitments of parties. There are currently no consequences outlined for parties who do not implement the framework properly. At the very least a country-by-country peer review should take place. Parties must comply with the CBD. Business self-reporting cannot be part of the official reporting.

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For detailed positions refer to Friends of the Earth International's draft 1 text proposals, and the CBD Alliance's Ingredients for a Successful GBF.

Friends of the Earth International and the CBD Alliance have clearly outlined how to achieve a successful global biodiversity framework. These views still stand as our benchmark for measuring the outcomes of the CBD COP15 and the global biodiversity framework.

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