



The ninth Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity
Trondheim, Norway, 2-5 July 2019

Making biodiversity matter

Knowledge and know-how for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

Report of the Co-Chairs – Summary and key points

UNDERSTANDING WHERE WE ARE HEADING AND WHAT THIS IMPLIES

There are very real concerns over the impacts of loss of biodiversity, and such concerns are increasing. Meanwhile both biodiversity loss and climate change are accelerating due to human expansion, with strong impacts on each other. Despite limited time to respond, there is a strong determination to succeed in halting biodiversity loss, as well as halting global warming and achieving sustainable development. There is a good knowledge base on which to build, both from science and the wealth of experiences – both good and bad – in addressing Aichi Biodiversity Targets over the previous decade.

- Scientists warn that we are heading for fundamental change in Earth systems as a result of changes in the biosphere
- Concern over biodiversity loss is becoming more and more central and important to the global debate
- The cost of inaction makes biodiversity loss an issue of importance to all sectors and stakeholders
- Action requires better understanding of the direct and indirect drivers of change, and of how to respond to them
- There is an increasing recognition of the importance of “nature-based solutions” that address needs across sectors
- Effective action requires full and effective engagement with stakeholders at all levels and in all relevant sectors

Using and building on the available knowledge base, including local and indigenous knowledge, is essential for guiding policy and practice, and assessment processes and reports are particularly valuable in compiling and synthesising available knowledge. The wide sharing of assessment findings and discussion on them increases understanding of the findings and their implications for policy development and implementation, including for development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Importantly, the assessments cover not only status and trends, but also response options.

- It is widely accepted that biodiversity underpins and sustains human quality of life, providing basic materials that support human livelihoods, cultures and economies
- The effects of drivers of change have accelerated during the past 50 years to levels unprecedented in human history
- Most internationally agreed policy goals and targets for biodiversity will be missed by most countries under business as usual scenarios

- Plausible scenarios, which include transformative change, are compatible with achievement of both the SDGs and the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity
- There is a range of options already available for implementing sustainable pathways to achieving the 2050 Vision
- While all assessments show benefits from biodiversity and ecosystem services, and impacts on them, benefits and impacts are not distributed evenly

There is clear evidence of the relationship between biodiversity and other key areas of concern for human wellbeing. This reinforces and builds on the increasingly repeated message that there needs to be greater coordination in addressing the different international agendas. It is important both to recognise the roles that biodiversity and ecosystem services play in issues such as climate change and underpinning food security, and the potential impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services resulting from actions in those sectors.

- There are close links between the biodiversity and climate agendas, and it is well understood that a temperature rise of 1.5°C will have impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem function and services
- Efforts to reduce global warming can go hand-in-hand with achieving other goals, but there can also be unintended impacts if not done carefully
- Biodiversity is essential for agriculture and food production, yet biodiversity for food and agriculture is on the decline
- However, use of management practices and approaches favourable to the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity for food and agriculture is increasing
- We use the ocean and its biodiversity in many more ways than most people are aware of, and every single use has been increasing over the past two or more decades
- Understanding of interlinkages is critical to being able to respond in meaningful and sustainable ways to environmental change

FURTHER DEVELOPING THE VISION OF WHERE WE NEED TO BE

Our vision for biodiversity, adopted in 2010, is of a world *“living in harmony in nature”*, where *“by 2050 biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people”*. We need a better understanding of what this means in concrete terms, and what is necessary to get there.

- While our vision is one of *“living in harmony with nature”*, globally we are certainly not living in harmony with nature at present
- Meanwhile land and water use changes, are very significant drivers of change, exacerbated by the effects of climate change
- We need to move to a situation where we can ‘bend the curve’ of biodiversity loss while simultaneously addressing development issues and inequalities
- Scenario and model analysis tells us that we can bend the curve of biodiversity loss with ambitious efforts in conservation and sustainable use
- For example, by 2030 we could aim for zero loss of natural habitats, zero extinction of species, and to halve the ecological footprint of production and consumption
- However, to achieve such changes, and get the necessary actions underway, people must be at the centre of, and part of the decision making
- Meanwhile, in order to prevent environmental risk and damage, actors, both state and non-state, need to be accountable for their actions in a transparent way

There are multiple possible pathways to achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, involving different approaches to production systems, land use planning, regulation and consumer choices. These

possible pathways can be investigated through scenario analysis and consideration of ‘nature futures’, and through relating them to the different perspectives of ‘nature for nature’, ‘nature for culture’, and ‘nature for society’. This was addressed through the first of three interactive sessions.

MOVING AWAY FROM BUSINESS AS USUAL

There have been frequent calls for transformative change to address previous lack of progress in addressing biodiversity-related targets. Participants were asked to consider the conference as a ‘transformative space’, helping them to conceptualise change and the potential disruption that was an inevitable part of transformative change. Reference was made to the “rationally articulated despair” of earlier sessions, while calling for creative ideas to help set us on a pathway to the level of change necessary for achieving the 2050 vision for biodiversity.

- It is already recognised that transformative change is needed, so it is important to understand what this means, and what the implications are

Recognising the need for change, there are already examples of actions that are being taken to try to move away from ‘business as usual’. It is important to review, learn from and build on these very real efforts to drive change. This includes efforts by governments, scientific organizations, the private sector and indigenous peoples and local communities.

- One of the main strategies for delivering change already embraced by Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity is that of mainstreaming
- In order to achieve change through mainstreaming, key activities to strengthen are inter-sectorial coordination, capacity building and communication
- Halting land degradation and restoring degraded land is a solution common to multiple agendas, including biodiversity loss
- Using the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 as a driver of change provides impetus for massively scaling up restoration of damaged ecosystems
- Information tools can be used to identify those areas where restoration effort can yield maximum return on investment across multiple agendas
- Information tools can also be used as a basis for setting land use policy that takes account of the needs of multiple agendas while maintaining the essential ecological functions
- The “[Business for Nature Coalition](#)” aims to facilitate a united voice from business to help reverse the loss of biodiversity and to restore the planet’s vital systems
- The private sector has the potential to significantly increase its profile with respect to protection for the environment, including biodiversity and ecosystem services
- In a range of countries, approaches are being developed for increasing the engagement of indigenous and local peoples in effective management of biodiversity and ecosystem services
- There are also lessons that can be learnt from other sectors about moving away from business as usual

BIODIVERSITY AS PART OF THE SOLUTION

It is clear that it is important to get multiple actors involved, and to consider how best to develop a coherent and integrated approach to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the context of full understanding of the multiple values of biodiversity, and how it is relevant to multiple agendas. This was addressed in a panel discussion engaging those with experience of other sectors.

- Nature-based solutions are an important approach for addressing multiple agendas
- Sustainability rests on environmental, social and economic pillars, and is not simply an ecological issue

- It is important to think about biodiversity as a solution, rather than to focus on biodiversity loss
- Population growth combined with urbanization is a major challenge for biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Water security is essential to agriculture, energy and human wellbeing, and wetland management is key strategy
- Biodiversity is similarly important for health
- All of these issues, and all of these interlinkages, will become more challenging in the years to come
- It is important to find the levers for change, both for taking positive action and for reducing negative action
- There is a need for workable solutions that meet multiple aims, recognising and involving key players and building partnerships for addressing shared solutions
- Critical to change is the need to develop reciprocal communication, understanding, and move for change

BUILDING ON GOOD PRACTICE

Drawing on experience can be a valuable way to learn about what works and what does not work, so the second interactive session focused on lessons learned, and in particular lessons learned with respect to actions, tactics and approaches that would set us on the pathway to achieve the 2050 vision. This was a very participatory exercise, with participants themselves deciding on what needed to be addressed, and what lessons there were to be learnt.

BUILDING ON THE EXPERIENCE FROM THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

There is already significant experience in implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity, and it is important to draw on this experience in developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Much of this experience will be drawn on directly through the process established by the Convention to develop the framework, but it will be important to ensure that all relevant input is taken into account, including that from other processes.

- Information on the process for development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework is provided on the CBD website at www.cbd.in/post2020
- In developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, it is important to be aware of the experience of Parties in interpreting the Aichi Biodiversity Targets for use at the national level
- It is also important to take into account lessons learnt through the assessment processes addressed earlier, and to consider recommendations from the scientific community
- The ability to track implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework is essential
- It is important to consider aspects of equity when developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

RESPONDING TO SOCIETY NEEDS

There have been repeated calls for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to provide a holistic framing of biodiversity-related goals, targets and/or milestones, responding to broader economic and societal needs. There is therefore a need to consider how diverse stakeholder actions could help build greater ambition and how this could be promoted and facilitated through a post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

- In June 2019, a consultative workshop was convened with the aim of increasing ownership of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework by engaging with other convention and processes

- At the national level there is a need to find ways to increase coherence in implementation of the Rio Conventions
- It is also important to build on and strengthen regional and sub-regional cooperation
- Perceptions on environment-related risks have increased significantly in recent years, affecting the ways that world leaders in governments and the private sector think
- As business sees it, current approaches are not delivering global sustainability, and something extra is required fast
- There are strategies and strategy process in other sectors where there are biodiversity-related impacts and dependencies, and interlinkages need to be addressed and experience shared

IDENTIFYING WHAT WE NEED TO ACHIEVE THE 2050 VISION FOR BIODIVERSITY

The third and final interactive session considered in more detail what actually needs to be included in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in order to deliver the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity. This was considered in the context of: addressing thematic issues that may warrant particular attention; the relationship with the SDGs, protocols, and other conventions; how to embed transformative change within the framework; building on the existing framework of NBSAPs and other national commitments; continuing to reflect the diverse perspectives; and strengthening communications.

PROMOTING AND FACILITATING ACTION

When the post-2020 global biodiversity framework is adopted in 2020, Parties to the Convention will also be considering the means for promoting and facilitating action. Putting in place the necessary enabling activities – resource mobilization, capacity-building, technology transfer, technical and scientific cooperation – will be essential. Also essential will be the engagement with multiple stakeholders ranging from governments to NGOs, from IPLCs to the private sector, and from youth to academia.

- It is absolutely essential that all parts of society develop a better understanding of the real values of biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services
- In all decision making processes it is important to understand both cost and benefit, and this must include full recognition of all environmental costs
- In order to plan resource use more efficiently at the national level, it is essential to have a full understanding of the resources available
- NGOs have an essential role to play in creating a public force for action and facilitating public participation
- Effective communication is critical to achieving an improved understanding of the multiple benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Most effective is the use of storytelling, and linking the message to things that people readily understand, such as the food on their plate
- Good businesses recognise that there are environmental problems, and want to take action to reduce their impact and increase their contribution
- In many parts of the world, indigenous peoples and local communities are – or should be – a key player in managing the environment
- Youth has an unexpectedly powerful voice, as it is increasingly recognised that unless significant action is taken now our current youth will be living in an impoverished world
- The view from youth on transformational change is that it requires a refocusing of our core values and principles

IMPLICATIONS OF CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS FOR CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Two topics that are essential for effective implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will also be addressed during discussion on post-2020 and as separate agenda items in Kunming, resource mobilization and capacity-building. While these were not the intended focus of discussion at the Trondheim Conference, they were topics of great concern to participants, coming up again and again throughout the conference. Therefore the key messages arising will be communicated to those working on these topics. Also considered were the implications of conference discussions for future research needs.

MAKING BIODIVERSITY MATTER

During four days of presentations and both formal and informal discussion, a broad range of views were expressed relating to the form and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and on the measures for enabling implementation of that framework. The overarching message was that action is urgent for a whole range of different reasons, and that action to date has been insufficient. As a result there is a clear understanding that the post-2020 global biodiversity framework must promote and facilitate a step change in action on the ground to address biodiversity loss and the associated disruption to ecosystem functions and services. This is essential for realising our vision of living in harmony with nature.