Position Paper
Prepared for the Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
4 - 17 December 2016
Cancun, Mexico

Summary

Conservation International (CI) calls on Parties to:

● Ensure the full recognition of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation, mitigation, and disaster risk reduction across Conventions.
● Consider approaches to ecosystem restoration that minimize the use of exotic species.
● Invest in protected areas planning and management, including of indigenous and community-owned and managed lands, to counter the effects of climate change and habitat degradation on existing protected areas.
● Take actions that will maintain protected area effectiveness in the face of climate change, including by recognizing tools for tracking Protected Area Downgrading, Downsizing, and Degazettement (PADDD) in decision text.
● Ensure the value of biodiversity is integrated and internalized across economic sectors through mainstreaming to increase capacity to achieve the Aichi Targets.
● Strengthen the monitoring of biodiversity integration across sectors, including ensuring mechanisms are in place to drive national-level coordination between government bodies.
● Strengthen reporting and information sharing on biodiversity-related international financial flows to developing countries and verification of these flows.
● Foster integrated ocean and coastal zone management, focusing on participatory stakeholder engagement.

The conservation of biodiversity and natural ecosystems is inextricably linked to the goals of sustainable development, addressing climate change, and combating desertification, as nature-based solutions are often cost-effective, sustainable, and integrally linked with improving human well-being. Recent milestones in sustainable development—including the adoption of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals—demonstrate political will for increased action, and it’s crucial that the CBD integrate its work with these processes to strengthen considerations of the role of nature in all fields. CI applauds current mainstreaming efforts of the CBD and calls on Parties to take prompt and ambitious action in meeting the Aichi Targets.
CI highlights opportunities for action in the following topic areas:

**Biodiversity and Climate Change**

Ecosystems provide significant contributions to climate mitigation and adaptation (including disaster risk reduction). This can be accomplished through maintaining and restoring ecological infrastructure such as wetlands systems, riverine buffers, and coastal defenses (mangroves and dunes), as well as supporting the resilience of both men and women and their communities and livelihoods in the process. CI welcomes the recognition of ecosystems in the Paris Climate Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and notes opportunities for further collaboration between the CBD and the UNFCCC in the context of biodiversity and climate change.

CI advocates for ecosystem-based approaches to be integrated into all local, provincial, national, and transboundary planning. As Parties to the CBD discuss biodiversity and climate change we urge them to fully recognize both the role of biodiversity in increasing climate resilience and the linkages to existing processes, such as the inclusion of specific ecosystem-based actions in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement and any complementary national climate strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CI recommendations regarding biodiversity and climate change under Item 10 in UNEP/CBD/COP/13/2/Rev.1:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● As ecosystem-based approaches are already recognized as effective, CI recommends wording in paragraph 3 be adjusted to “Recognizes that ecosystem-based approaches are can be technically feasible, politically desirable, socially acceptable, economically viable and beneficial and that implementation and investment into these approaches are, in general, increasing at the international and national levels;”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● CI recommends updating paragraph 8 (I) to read: “To promote platforms for the exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices, including those of indigenous peoples and local communities on ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and, mitigation, and disaster risk reduction in a holistic and integrated manner;”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ecosystem Restoration**

Action on ecosystem restoration needs to include the recognition of the different impacts of natural versus exotic species restoration and opt for the former where possible. Ecosystem restoration must avoid becoming an excuse for ecosystem conversion, which is also acknowledged in one of the environmental safeguards in the Cancun Safeguards of UNFCCC (UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16 Appendix 1, para 2). To this end, the principles on ecosystem restoration stated in the section’s annex (“Short-term Action Plan on Ecosystem Restoration” Annex, Section III, “Principles”) should be reflected in the decision text so that they are common understanding.
CI recommendations regarding ecosystem restoration under Item 10 in UNEP/CBD/COP/13/2/Rev.1:

- In the preamble, CI proposes the addition of the following: “Recalling the urgency to enhance efforts to achieve targets related to restoration by 2020, recognizing that ecosystem restoration is a complement to conservation activities and that it is not substitute to conservation nor is it a conduit for allowing intentional destruction or unsustainable use,”

- To avoid the use of exotic species, CI proposes the following addition after paragraph 4: “Urges Parties and other Governments and relevant organizations to make distinction between degraded ecosystems and natural ecosystems, and encourage the restoration of the former using native species, while keeping the latter undisturbed or unconverted.”

- In paragraph 5, CI recommends further inclusion of coastal ecosystems by adjusting text to say: “Encourages Parties to consider ecosystem restoration in reef and coastal ecosystems in the action plans, where relevant, to ensure that marine and coastal environments are sustained;”

Aichi Targets 11 and 12: Protected Areas

The window for establishing new protected areas is coming to a close throughout the tropical world, due to accelerating habitat conversion. This closing window affects the ability to conserve all biodiversity, to protect biodiversity as climate changes (as climate change can cause species and ecosystem ranges to change), and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through REDD+-CI recommends acceleration of protected areas establishment, inclusive of legal recognition of lands already under management of indigenous peoples and local communities, in excess of the Aichi targets where possible, to take advantage of opportunities for new protection in locations that compensate for species and ecosystem losses in existing protected areas.

CI recommends investment in protected areas planning and management to counter the effects of climate change and habitat degradation on existing protected areas. The GCF and GEF should help Parties plan protected areas systems in the face of climate change, and to implement these plans, including through the addition of new protected areas, legal recognition of lands already under management by indigenous peoples and local communities, and enlargement of existing areas to include landscapes and seascapes that will be critical future habitats as climate changes. We encourage Parties to take national-level planning and management actions to secure the benefits that protected areas provide even as the climate shifts.

As the scope for new protection closes, threat processes will intensify around existing protected areas, making Protected Area Downgrading, Downsizing, and Degazettement (PADDD) a growing concern. Accurate documentation of the true dynamic of protected areas governance and management is
fundamental to conservation success, including documentation of both gains and losses in area and changes to the level of protection offered to biodiversity within their boundaries. The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) has been the main platform for documenting existing and newly created marine and terrestrial protected areas.

However, WDPA does not currently track key dynamics and drivers such as Protected Area Downgrading, Downsizing, and Degazettement (PADDD), a longstanding and widespread phenomenon that may undermine progress towards the CBD Strategic Plan in particular to Aichi Target 11 and to the global climate targets.\(^1\) CI recommends the reporting of proposed and enacted PADDD events to a recognized, legitimate authority (e.g., WDPA, PADDDtracker.org).

CI recommendations regarding Aichi Target 11 under Item 10 in UNEP/CBD/COP/13/2/Rev.1:

- CI proposes adjusting paragraph 5 to read: “Invites Parties to work with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre to work with Parties and other Governments in the reporting of degazettements, reductions and expansions of protected area extent, changes to IUCN category, and decreases in legal restrictions on the number, magnitude, or extent of anthropogenic activities inside protected areas, to update the World Database on Protected Areas and also to contribute to the assessment of progress in the implementation of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11;”

Mainstreaming of Biodiversity

Natural systems support our food production, clean our water, regulate our climate and safeguard the Earth’s diverse species – and by doing so, support our development ambitions. Mainstreaming is necessary to ensure that the value of biodiversity is integrated and internalized across economic sectors, from agriculture and fisheries to poverty reduction and sustainable development. Highlighting nature’s contributions to human economic activities, on land and in the ocean, is an entry point for mainstreaming biodiversity concerns.

We must mainstream biodiversity into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure that the environmental foundation of development is intact. The SDGs recognize the close connections between environment and development by bringing environmental, social and economic objectives together in an agreed and integrated global framework. Ensuring biodiversity is considered in national action plans around the SDGs and through parallel revisions to NBSAPs is a crucial step for ensuring this integrated approach is maintained. Additionally, ensuring stable funding for these mainstreaming activities is critical for the success of biodiversity-related actions. By working across the Conventions and enhancing

\(^1\) Opportunistically collected data suggests that, to date, more than 3,153 enacted PADDD events have affected 2,500,000+ km\(^2\) of protected lands and waters globally. Another 1,300 PADDD events have been proposed, potentially affecting 900,000+ km\(^2\) of protected lands and water. (Source: PADDDtracker.org)
coordination, activities that serve multiple objectives can be identified as priority investments, ensuring that funding is flowing to cross-sectoral implementation and investments are aligned with the Aichi Targets.

CI recommendations regarding mainstreaming of biodiversity under Item 10 of UNEP/CBD/COP/13/2/Rev.1:

- **CI recommends adjusting the preamble to read:** “Recognizing the following: (c) That agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, among other sectors, depend heavily on biodiversity and its components, as well as on the ecosystem functions and services that they underpin, that these sectors also impact on biodiversity through various direct and indirect drivers, and that the consequent loss of biodiversity can impact these sectors negatively, potentially threatening food security and the provision of ecosystem functions and services that are vital to humanity;”

- **CI proposes adjusting paragraph 1 to read:** “Urges Parties, and invites other Governments to strengthen their efforts to mainstream conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity within and across various sectors, including by involving relevant stakeholders, including vulnerable groups such as women, and by taking into account relevant standards and best practice guidance related to biodiversity in these sectors;”

- **CI recommends strengthening Paragraph 10 to read:** “Urges Parties, when implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to ensure the environmental foundation of sustainable development is maintained by mainstreaming biodiversity in the implementation of all relevant Sustainable Development Goals, thus promoting linkages between efforts to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans and Sustainable Development Goal strategies and plans;”

- **CI advocates adding a new section after 13(a) to read:** “13(b) To prioritize cross-sectoral integration as an approach to mainstreaming that simultaneously helps meet commitments under other international agreements such as the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals and to ensure adequate flows to these efforts, in part by increasing coordination among the Conventions;”

- **CI recommends adjusting paragraph 25 to read:** “[Encourages Parties and invites other Governments to promote and support, as appropriate, the sustainable and ecological intensification and diversification of agriculture and agro-ecological approaches, including the enhanced use of a diverse range of well-adapted crops and livestock, and their varieties and breeds, and of associated biodiversity in agricultural systems, including pollinators, pest-control organisms and soil organisms that promote nutrient cycling, thereby reducing or replacing the need for chemical inputs;]”

- **CI proposes adjusting paragraph 36 to read:** “Recognizes the role of forest biodiversity and ecological integrity and the importance of primary forests for the maintenance of
ecosystem functions that contribute to sustainable development, poverty eradication and human well-being, including through the provision of food, feed, clean water, wood, fibre, fuel, medicine, recreation, as well as the mitigation and adaptation to climate change;”

- **CI advocates adding a new paragraph after paragraph 38 to read:** “Also recognizes the particular role of primary forests in protecting biodiversity and critical ecosystem services and the need to give greater priority to their protection;”

- **CI recommends adjusting paragraph 43 to read:** “Encourages Parties and invites other Governments to give due consideration to biodiversity when implementing actions set out in Article 5 of the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Sustainable Development Goal 13;”

- **CI recommends adjusting paragraph 45 to read:** “Further encourages Parties and invites other Governments to strengthen efforts to enhance the awareness of all stakeholders, recognizing men and women as unique stakeholders, and their involvement in the development and implementation of policies and strategies for sustainable forest management, including on measures for the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity, recognizing the importance of the practices of indigenous peoples and local communities and the role of natural regeneration in living systems;”

### Resource Mobilization

Sufficient, sustainable, and accessible flows of finance are crucial for developing, implementing, and maintaining strategic conservation activities, including activities that yield important co-benefits for human well-being. This is one of the most important areas where we need strong, ambitious, and bold commitments.

CI highlights the current lack of resources for implementation of cross-sectoral integration and scaling up of integrated ecosystem-based approaches to climate change. In line with this session’s focus on mainstreaming biodiversity into productive sectors as outlined in Item 10 and in the spirit of decision XII/6, CI calls for increased funding for these mainstreaming activities to ensure effective cross-sector integration. Coordination among Conventions should also be increased in order to strengthen biodiversity-related activities that are relevant to all Conventions and therefore drive investments and actions to achieve the Aichi Targets.

Resource mobilization will require strengthened reporting and information sharing on biodiversity-related international financial flows to developing countries and verification of these flows, as noted in resource mobilization paragraphs 11 and 12. In addition to the notable need to invest in developing national capacities to assess and report on funding flows, we need to see more concrete action on many of the funding commitments and verification systems. In particular, processes for sharing national
methodological guidance are necessary to improve transparency and enable replicability for biodiversity finance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CI recommendations regarding resource mobilization under Item 11 of UNEP/CBD/COP/13/2/Rev.1:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● CI proposes adjusting the preamble to read: “Recognizing the importance of biodiversity mainstreaming for resource mobilization and the effective use of financial resources, because it allows for more efficient use of existing resources,”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● CI recommends adjusting paragraph 4 to read: “Urges Parties that have finalized the revision and update of their national biodiversity strategy and action plans to identify their funding needs, gaps, and priorities, on the basis, as appropriate, of the revised national biodiversity strategy and action plans and other complementary information, and to develop their national finance plans for the effective implementation of revised national biodiversity strategy and action plans, as a matter of priority, and to report thereon by 1 July 2017 where feasible,”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● To highlight the need for regular and accurate financial reporting, CI recommends Parties retain paragraph “2 quater. Takes note with concern of the limited progress made by reporting Parties in reporting their funding needs, gaps and priorities, pursuant to target 1 (c), and in reporting their national finance plans, pursuant to target 1 (d);”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● CI recommends retaining paragraphs 11 and 12 on transparency and methodological guidance as an initial step in strengthening information sharing and reducing reporting burden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● CI recommends adjusting paragraph 19 to read: “Requests the Executive Secretary to compile and analyse relevant information and provide guidance, including the information submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 above as well as relevant studies from international organizations and initiatives, including an analysis of how the implementation of Aichi Biodiversity Target 3 also contributes to the implementation of Target 20, and to submit the compilation and analysis to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation for consideration at its second meeting;”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Under “Guidance to the financial mechanism,” CI strongly supports retaining language on cross-sectoral activities and recommends strengthening paragraph 3 to read: “Encourages the Global Environment Facility to continue and further strengthen integrated programming and increase funding for such programming as a means to harness opportunities for synergy in implementing and meeting the objectives of related multilateral environmental agreements as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Sustainable Development Goals 14 and 15;”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Marine spatial planning and training initiatives**

CI calls on Parties to establish dedicated funding mechanisms for the continuous implementation of marine spatial planning (MSP) at multiple scales of management, as well as for the integration of MSP information into decision-making across the range of human activities in the ocean and coastal domain. Additionally, CI recommends supporting the implementation of market-based approaches for managing biodiversity in marine environments, focusing on expanding full-cost accounting practices to include marine biomes.

**CI recommendations regarding marine spatial planning and training initiatives under Item 15 in UNEP/CBD/COP/13/2/Rev.1:**

- CI recommends expanding paragraph 3 on marine spatial planning on page 128 to include:
  - “(d) To engage with relevant stakeholders and sectors as well as indigenous peoples and local communities in the development and implementation of marine spatial planning and to establish multidisciplinary task forces with robust long-term mandates to promote the sustainable use and management of ocean and coastal resources;”
  - “(f) To foster the development of ocean and coastal natural capital accounting, ecosystem valuations and market-based approaches to conservation, and actively integrate this information into short and long-term decision-making at multiple scales of management;”
  - “(g) To create funding mechanisms dedicated to foster integrated ocean and coastal zone management, focusing on participatory stakeholder engagement;”