

Contributions of the Conservation-enabling Hierarchy to the post-2020 CBD framework

RECALLING that Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) requires that “biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development... and planning processes” by governments and other stakeholders;

FURTHER RECALLING that the IUCN Policy on Biodiversity Offsets supports the rigorous implementation of a mitigation hierarchy for biodiversity impacts, and states that this can contribute to positive biodiversity outcomes;

RECOGNISING that economic development is often necessary for enhancing human well-being, particularly in less industrialised or poorer nations;

NOTING that CBD Parties will adopt a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, driving action for the conservation of biodiversity for the next decade;

FURTHER NOTING that this framework is planned to reflect the means by which governments, businesses and stakeholders at all levels “have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption”;

ALSO NOTING that it is hoped that this framework will recognise that actions to avoid loss and to minimise impacts, and remedial and compensatory measures to offset unavoidable losses, count as progress toward desired outcomes;

NOTING that the IUCN Global Inventory of Biodiversity Offset Policies shows over 100 countries to have policy machinery in place or under development that makes provisions either implicitly or explicitly for a mitigation hierarchy;

STRESSING that the most important step in the mitigation hierarchy is avoidance of biodiversity loss, which requires exploring multiple development options in the earliest phases of planning, in order to avoid areas of high environmental or socio-cultural importance; and

AWARE of emerging evidence that policies incorporating a mitigation hierarchy for biodiversity impacts of development can, given necessary conditions, result in neutral or positive net biodiversity outcomes;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, at its session in Marseille, France:

1. ENCOURAGES the Director General, Commissions and all Members to work, as appropriate, with their national-level and other counterparts engaged in the CBD to encourage them to consider the following elements in its discussions, advocacy and advice relevant to the adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework through the CBD:

a. explicit mention of those irreplaceable and/or culturally indispensable biodiversity features that are vitally important to protect (for example, sacred sites);

b. explicit reference to the Conservation-enabling Hierarchy of sequentially preferred actions (avoid, minimise, remediate, offset, additional conservation actions) as an operational structure for assessing biodiversity losses and gains from human activities, with the aim that the latter outweigh the former (i.e. seeking net gain); and

c. a requirement that conserving existing wildlife and natural habitats should be prioritised, and that any biodiversity losses due to economic development should be addressed in order of sequentially preferred actions and at least compensated for by comparable biodiversity gains, consistent with IUCN's Biodiversity Offsets Policy;

2. INVITES all public-sector, business and civil society entities to work to ensure that the post-2020 global biodiversity framework be adopted at CBD COP15 (Kunming, China), including the aforementioned elements; and

3. INVITES the relevant donors to support implementation of the Conservation-enabling Hierarchy by governments and other entities, including through funding associated capacity-building and the development of monitoring and reporting mechanisms.