

NGO concerns over the proposed 30% target for protected areas and absence of safeguards for Indigenous Peoples and local communities

1 September 2020

To the Parties to the CBD and the CBD Secretariat:

We are concerned about the 30% target in the 'zero-draft' Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) to:

“By 2030, protect and conserve through well connected and effective system of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures at least 30% of the planet with the focus on areas particularly important for biodiversity”¹

While bold commitments are certainly needed to tackle climate and biodiversity emergencies, we believe this target is counterproductive and could further entrench an outmoded and unsustainable model of conservation that could dispossess the people least responsible for these crises of their lands and livelihoods.

Our principal concerns are:

- The 30% target is being set without a prior assessment of the social impacts and conservation effectiveness of the previous drive for 17% terrestrial protected areas (adopted by the Parties to the CBD in 2010). Protected areas have led to displacement and eviction of Indigenous Peoples and other land-dependent communities, and brought serious human rights abuses by conservation organisations and enforcement agencies. Despite provisions in the current CBD framework and draft post-2020 GBF to include 'Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures' in global conservation targets, experience has shown that state-owned, strict protected areas have often remained the default choice in much of the Global South.
- Based on independent studies of the areas of ecological importance most likely to be put forward as protected areas², we estimate that up to 300 million people could be negatively and seriously affected.

¹ The quoted language is drawn from the Draft monitoring framework for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework circulated in advance of the 24th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice: <https://www.cbd.int/sbstta/sbstta-24/post2020-monitoring-en.pdf>.

² Schleicher, J., Zaehring, J.G., Fastré, C. et al. Protecting half of the planet could directly affect over one billion people. *Nat Sustain* 2, 1094–1096 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-019-0423-y>; RFUK (2020) The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework – How the CBD drive to protect 30 percent of the Earth by 2030

- The current draft GBF targets contain no effective safeguards to protect the lands, rights and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and other land-dependent communities in conservation programmes. This violates UN norms and international law.
- The proposal fails to reflect the findings of the IPBES 2019 Global Assessment that existing protected areas are “not yet effectively or equitably managed” or the emphasis it placed on the need to protect indigenous lands.³

We believe that prior to the adoption of any new protected area targets:

1. The GBF must recognize and protect collective and customary land tenure systems and adopt strong enforceable safeguards for Indigenous Peoples and other land-dependent communities that will apply to all new and existing protected areas. These must adhere to international human rights agreements and guarantee the rights to lands, resources, self-determination and free prior and informed consent. A plan should be adopted for how they will be applied to existing protected areas, and a robust review mechanism established, before any increase in protected areas is considered.
2. There should be an independent review of the effectiveness and social impacts of existing protected areas in order to guide new targets and norms in the post-2020 GBF.
3. A thorough study should be conducted and published on the potential for wider legal designation and protection of Indigenous Peoples and other sustainable community-managed lands to provide the greater conservation of biodiversity that is sought under the post-2020 GBF. Subject to this, the GBF should reflect the principle that the protection and recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ and other sustainable community-managed lands will be the principal mechanism for achieving greater biodiversity conservation in area-based efforts.
4. Scientific justification must be given for the 30% target. This must include an assessment of climate mitigation potential as well as outlines of where such areas are planned, what protection regimes will be applied and what are the expected impacts on people in those areas.

Thank you for considering these proposals.

Signatories as of 1 September 2020:

1. Rainforest Foundation UK, United Kingdom
2. Minority Rights Group International, United Kingdom
3. Survival International, United Kingdom
4. Coorg Organisation for Rural Development (CORD), India
5. KHOJ Melghat, India

could dispossess millions: https://www.mappingforrights.org/MFR-resources/mapstory/cbddrive/300_million_at_risk_from_cbd_drive.

³ IPBES (2019) The global assessment report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services <https://bit.ly/3fHBRcZ>

6. Katiba Institute, Kenya
7. Ogiek Peoples' Development Program (OPDP), Kenya
8. ProDESC, Mexico
9. Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos, Mexico
10. Dynamique Mondiale des Jeunes (DMJ), Cameroon
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13. Kenya Human Rights Commission, Kenya
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16. Actions pour la Promotion et Protection des Espèces et Peuples Menacés (APEM), Democratic Republic of Congo
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18. Pastoral Women's Council (PWC), Tanzania
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26. Wumweri Ghodu CBO, Kenya
27. Sustainable Development Institute, Liberia
28. Narasha Community Development Group, Kenya
29. Nareto Latia Indigenous Peoples' Programme, Kenya
30. Chepkitale Indigenous People Development Project (CIPDP), Kenya
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32. African International Christian Ministry (AICM), Uganda
33. Sengwer Indigenous Peoples' Programme, Kenya
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38. Ethological Society of India, India
39. AIPP, Thailand
40. Amnesty International, United Kingdom
41. Community Land Action Now (CLAN), Kenya
42. Dr. Liz Alden Wily, Kenya
43. ESCR-net
44. Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Nigeria
45. REPALAC, Democratic Republic of Congo

46. Endorois Indigenous Women's Empowerment Network, Kenya
47. End Corporate Abuse, India
48. Due Process of Law Foundation, United States
49. Endorois Women Community Based Organization, Kenya
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55. Robert Moise (Independent anthropologist), United States
56. David Suzuki, Canada
57. Red Mexicana de Organizaciones Campesinas Forestales A. C. (Red MOCAF), Mexico
58. Flourishing Diversity, United Kingdom
59. Plateau Perspectives, Canada
60. Dhaatri Trust, India
61. CIC - International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation, Hungary
62. Forest Trends, United States
63. PowerShift e.V., Germany
64. Reforest the Earth, United Kingdom
65. Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, Philippines
66. Trident Ploughshares, United Kingdom
67. Union of the Committee of Soldiers Mothers of Russia, Russia
68. Fleur Nash (University of Cambridge), United Kingdom
69. The Development Institute, Ghana
70. Rengma Tribal Group, India
71. Kuki Tribal Group, India
72. Bodo Students' Union, India
73. Dimasa Tribal Group, India
74. Bihar Adivasi Adhikar Forum, India
75. Adivasi Dalit Majdoor Kisan Sangharsh, India
76. Sarv Adivasi Samaj Bastar Sambhag, India
77. Shri Ashish Beck, India
78. Pragati Prayas, India
79. Rajpipla Social Service Society, India
80. Adivasi Ekta Parishad, India
81. Nayak Development Sangathan, India
82. PESA Action Group, India
83. Human Development and Research Centre, India
84. Himalaya Niti Abhiyan, India
85. Centre for Mountain Dalit Rights, India
86. Vikas Sahyog Kendra, India

87. Rashtriya Jharkhand Seva Sanstha, India
88. Srijan Foundation, India
89. Bharat Van Adhikar Manch, India
90. Jungle Bachao Andolan, India
91. Karnataka People's Forum for Land Rights, India
92. Kerala Adivasi Forum, India
93. Gondwana Samagra Kranti, India
94. Sanket Sansthan, India
95. Gondwana Mahasabha, India
96. Shramik Adivasi Sangathan, India
97. Kisan Adivasi Sangathan, India
98. Parmeshwaram Welfare Society, India
99. Adivasi Chetna Shikshan Seva Samiti, India
100. Khoj, India
101. Adivasi Chetana Manch, India
102. Jungle Jami Surakhya Committee, India
103. Paribesh Surakya Samiti, India
104. Society of All Round Development, Sirohi, India
105. Adivasi Student Union, India
106. Gondwana Samkshema Parishad, India
107. Adivasi Vanvasi Mahasabha, India
108. Odisha Sabar Mahila Mahasangh and Van Panchayat Sangharsh, India
109. Mahila Kalyan, Sanstha, India
110. Haripal Adibasi Seva Mission, India
111. Ranga Matya Lahanti Jeeban Samity, India
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