Policy Brief: Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework and Agriculture

Background: What is Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework?

Being the United Nations' custodian organisation for biodiversity, the United Nations Convention for Biological Diversity developed the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) through activities at the national level, with supporting actions at the subnational, regional, and global levels. The Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework is the new strategic plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) that is **being developed** and **will be adopted** at the 15th CBD Conference of the Parties (COP15). The post-2020 global biodiversity framework builds on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and sets out an ambitious plan to implement broad-based action to bring about a transformation in society's relationship with biodiversity and to ensure that, by 2050, the shared vision of humanity living in harmony with nature is realised. The framework is being designed to galvanize urgent and transformative action by Governments among other stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, civil society, and businesses, to achieve the outcomes the framework sets out in its vision, mission, goals, and targets.

The First draft of the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, released in July 2021 building on the Zero draft (released in July 2020). To contribute to the review process, various stakeholders from across the globe have reviewed the first draft and provided policy recommendations for consideration in the framework that will be adopted at the 15th CBD Conference of the Parties (COP15) set to hold in Kunming, China. Within this context, ISNAD-Africa has reviewed the First Draft of the Framework and published a series of Policy Briefs to make suggestions for consideration in the framework that will be adopted at the 15th CBD Conference of the Parties (COP15) set to hold in China.

Introduction

Agriculture is crucial to eradicating hunger and malnutrition globally. Moreover, the agricultural sector is key to many economies, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), generating a 32% of GDP and employing 65% of the population in sub Sahara Africa(World Bank, 2019)[1]. Despite its positive contributions, the sector, coupled with the unprecedented population increase, is considered a huge contributor to biodiversity loss in Africa and across the globe. Forest, and other ecosystems are being converted to agricultural land, thus constituting a threat to habitats and contributing to a reduction in the number and abundance of species (Perrings & Halkos, 2015) [2]. According to UNEP, agriculture has been identified as a threat to 24,000 (86%) of the 28,000 species that are at risk of extinction[3].

Moreover, the increasing demand for foods, fuels and fibre induced by the unprecedented growth of human population have stimulated the intensification of agriculture in Sub Sahara. According to Dudley & Alexander (2017), agricultural expansion at the expense of habitat for wild living species has been a common human survival approach among low income countries, hence, the declining

[1] World Bank. (2019). Kenya Economic Update: Transforming Agricultural Productivity to Achieve Food Security for All. World Bank. https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kenya/publication/kenya-economic-update-transforming-agricultural-productivity-to-achieve-food-security-for-all

[2] Perrings, C., & Halkos, G. (2015). Agriculture and the threat to biodiversity in Sub-Saharan Africa.

[3] https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/our-global-food-system-primary-driver-biodiversity-loss

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quality and quantity of habitat available[4]. For instance, freshwater wildlife has been impacted negatively by agriculture through water extraction and the reduction in water quality resulting from soil and farm chemical run-off. Therefore, it is imperative to reconciling food demands and the need for other ecosystem services or biodiversity conservation.

There are different schools of thoughts on the reconciliation of biodiversity conservation and development. Some conservationists push for land sharing which concentrates intensive agriculture, cities, and other developmental activities into small areas, and leaves maximum space for conservation. Others call for land sparing which focuses on practicing less intensive agriculture or intensifying through sustainable production approaches to increase biodiversity on farmland and reduce impacts elsewhere. However, research considers neither approaches to be perfect hence resulting to proposition for a mixture of protection, management, and restoration to reduce land degradation, achieve more effective biodiversity conservation and regain environmental services.

The Aichi biodiversity targets, particularly target 7; "*By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity"*, called for sustainable agriculture. However, the failure of the Aichi targets has particularly increased the global interest in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the crucial stake it holds in reconciling agriculture and biodiversity conservation. Therefore, this brief presents the overview on Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework on Agriculture and Biodiversity conservation and recommendation to the post 2020 GBF.

Global Biodiversity Framework and Agriculture

The post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) is the new strategic plan for the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) that will be adopted on the 15th CBD Conference of the Parties (COP15). The first draft of the framework was released in July 2021 and it promotes agriculture into the conservation of biodiversity.

Goal B of the post 2020 GBF draft proposes that the "*Nature's contributions to people are valued, maintained or enhanced through conservation and sustainable use supporting the global development agenda for the benefit of all"*[5]. The goal calls for land sharing for sustainable use of resources to ensure biodiversity conservation, however, this does not highlight conservation of wildlife. Moreover, target 10 of the post 2020 GBF call for effort that *ensures all areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, increasing the productivity and resilience of these production systems*. This focuses on for land sharing approached which attracted criticisms from different conservationists. According to Dobie et al., (2021)[6] 'Sustainable use" in terms of agriculture implies intensification of yield production with less consumption of land, water, and fertilizer which has more negative ecological footprints compared to integrated production. Therefore, Dobie et al., (2021) recommends Target 10 should to be "*ensure all areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are*

[4] https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/2021-02-03-food-system-biodiversity-loss-benton-et-al_0.pdf

[5] https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/abb5/591f/2e46096d3f0330b08ce87a45/wg2020-03-03-en.pdf

[6] Dobie, P., Gassner, A., & Vidal, A. (2021). https://www.globallandscapesforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Opportunities-to-maximize-the-role-of-agricultural-ecosystems-in-biodiversity-conservation-in-the-Post-2020-global-biodiversity-framework.pdf

managed sustainably while contributing to biodiversity conservation in particular through integrated land use systems, increasing the productivity and resilience of these production systems".

Moreover, Target I to "*ensure that all land and sea areas globally are under integrated biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning addressing land- and sea-use change, retaining existing intact and wilderness areas"* excludes the multi-use mosaic landscapes agriculture, woodland, grassland, waterbodies, and wilderness[7]. Therefore, the reference to land and sea use change reduces the aspiration of this target to limiting additional biodiversity loss rather than also improving management of existing modified ecosystems[8]. According to Dobie et al., (2021), Target 1 should be as follows; "Ensure that all land and sea areas globally are under integrated biodiversity inclusive spatial planning retaining existing intact and wilderness areas and increasing connectivity between them".

The framework also recognises various aspects of agriculture in biodiversity conservation either indirectly or directly:

- reducing nutrients lost to the environment by at least half, and pesticides by at least two-thirds, and eliminating the discharge of plastic waste;
- Nature-based contributions to global climate change mitigation efforts of least 10 GtCO2e per year, and that all mitigation and adaptation efforts avoid negative impacts on biodiversity;
- Redirecting, repurposing, reforming or eliminating incentives harmful for biodiversity, in a just and equitable way, reducing them by at least USD 500 billion per year;
- A USD 200 billion increase in international financial flows from all sources.

Recommendation

The promotion, adoption, and practice of agriculture is crucial to biodiversity conservation in Africa and across the globe. For the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and future national policies and practice in Africa, ISNAD-Africa supports;

- **the inclusion of 2030 Milestones in the post 2020 GBF. These milestones need to be S.M.A.R.T, easily communicable and define the outcomes we need to achieve by 2030 to reverse biodiversity loss and put the world on track to achieve the 2050 Vision. They are crucial to improve measurability of outcomes needed by 2030. We recommend that Parties refine and complement the milestones provided in the 1st draft GBF to ensure they help focus the attention and actions of key decision makers, stakeholders and sectors on what needs to be achieved by 2030. In order to avoid confusion, we need to be clear that while milestones focus on outcomes, all targets should focus on the transformative actions needed to achieve the 2030 Mission.**
- alignment of future investment and development policies around the agreements that promote nature-based solutions for agriculture. This is in recognition of the fact that if agriculture is not prioritised in the Kunming decisions, then national policies will follow suit, thus, limited resources will be allocated to conserve biodiversity[9].

[7] https://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/articles/AGassner2001.pdf
[8] https://www.globallandscapesforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Opportunities-to-maximize-the-role-of-agricultural-ecosystems-in-biodiversity-conservation-in-the-Post-2020-global-biodiversity-framework.pdf
[9] https://www.globallandscapesforum.org/publication/opportunities-to-maximize-the-role-of-agricultural-ecosystems-in-biodiversity-conservation-in-the-post-2020-global-biodiversity-framework-glf-live-white-paper/

*This policy brief is developed within the **EcoKnowledge Derivative**, an initiative of the **International Support Network for African Development (ISNAD-Africa), Ibadan, Nigeria** with support from the **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)***

- embrace land sparing policies and strategies where more land is protected and set aside for nature protection. There is need for policies that will prohibit the conversion of land earmarked for biodiversity conservation and nature protection purposes to agricultural land. This is in recognition that the greatest gains for biodiversity will occur when we preserve or restore the entire ecosystems[10].
- push for agrobiodiversity targets on the GBF in the shape of crop varieties, livestock and fish breeds and their wild relatives.
- agriculture is starting to undergo a transformation that recognizes the importance of circular or regenerative agriculture and opportunities are being seen to introduce biodiversity conservation into the transformed practices. It is imperative that the post 2020 GBF moves with the times and sends out policy signals that ministries of agriculture have a central role to play in the conservation of biodiversity.

About EcoKnowledge Derivatives

The reconciliation of economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development for green growth represents a new paradigm in development thinking, concept, policy, and practice. Thus, there has been an increasing publication of new knowledge products including reports, tools, and frameworks to define, facilitate, and catalyse the path to green growth. However, the low level of awareness, lengthy and technical nature of the knowledge products limit their readership and uptake for policy, practice, and advocacy.

EcoKnowledge Derivative (EKD) is a strategic mechanism that employs active and non-conventional strategies for effective dissemination of green growth knowledge using policy briefs and social media platforms to catalyse the use, uptake, and implementation of green growth knowledge as well as promote the effort of stakeholders who are generating knowledge for green growth. EKD analyses, harmonises, synthesises, and condenses knowledge products into policy briefs and enhanced social media contents (knowledge derivatives) in simple, reader-friendly, and non-technical formats that can be easily understood by specialist and non-specialist stakeholders. The knowledge derivatives are disseminated using conventional media organisations, relevant global mailing digests and social media platforms using a multimedia approach that leverage the unique and comparative advantages.

With support from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), EKD builds on ISNAD-Africa's Africa4Nature Health Initiative (A4NHI), a public awareness and policy advocacy initiative for a new deal with nature and people that was implemented in response to nexus of COVID-19 and nature. A4NHI, which was implemented for 19 weeks, reached about 6.2 million people in Africa while the policy recommendations it proffered were reported in twenty (24) news stories in leading newspapers within and outside Africa.

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[10] https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/our-global-food-system-primary-driver-biodiversity-loss

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