



**CBD Informal SBSTTA24 Virtual Session
17-19 and 24-26 February, 2021**

February 17 - 18, 2021

Agenda Item 3. Post-2020 global biodiversity framework

CBD Women Caucus Statement

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The CBD Women's Caucus appreciates the efforts of the co-chairs to find ways to acknowledge and integrate our comments and feedback on the Post-2020 global biodiversity framework. For the framework to be effective and powerful in delivering its ambition to address the major health, biodiversity and inequality crises - **it needs to make sure women, Indigenous Peoples and local communities hold secure governance rights and access to land and natural resources on which their livelihoods depend.** This way, efforts to protect biodiversity and address climate change will not only be more successful but will contribute to a more equitable and just distribution of benefits derived from the use of biodiversity.

Secure legal tenure and governance rights, access to resources and inclusion in decision making—particularly of women, youth, Indigenous peoples, local communities, and other marginalized populations—as well as recognition of inclusive governance approaches, are foundational to achieving the goals of the post200 gb. **We feel that the Framework does not go far enough in this regard, and we believe that stronger recognition for a rights based approach in the post2020 gb must be made.**

Further, we believe that **gender equity and equality** must also be included throughout the gb in order for the Framework to enable true transformative change.

SDG target 5.c highlights the need to adopt and strengthen sound policies and legislation to advance gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels. The GBF Target 20 could be strengthened to better articulate the type of rights referred to in regards to 'ensur[ing] rights over relevant resources.'

Indicators and targets will benefit from including **stronger sex-disaggregated information.** Language on protection of access to land, forest and water for women, indigenous peoples, and local communities needs to be **included consistently throughout the framework, besides other relevant elements and indicators as proposed in our submissions.** There is also scope to use the language of gender equality and women's empowerment and inclusion (besides participation) throughout the GBF which would contribute to a more effective integration of a Rights based approach and implementation of the post2020 Gender Plan of Action and to better respond to the overall 2030 Agenda.



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Rights-based and ecosystem-based approaches provide a foundation for **transforming the conservation paradigm, and for transforming human economies through a genuine phasing out or redirection of perverse incentives and investments that could harm biodiversity. This also requires a profound governance reform to ensure rightsholders rather than corporations are at the heart of biodiversity governance.**

Part of the paradigm shift for building back better is the formal recognition of, and support for, the contributions of IPLCs, including youth and women to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and equitable sharing of benefits for ensuring that everyone has a right to a healthy environment and food sovereignty - right to wellbeing and right to living in harmony with nature.

In ending, we would also encourage Parties to take reference to the Issue brief (January 2021) prepared by UN Women and UNEP-WCMC on Integrating a gender perspective in the post-2020 GBF.

THANK YOU, CHAIR



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Agenda Item 4. Synthetic Biology

Synthetic biology is a new and emerging Issue for the CBD, is developing at a rapid and unprecedented rate, and calls for strong precautionary regulations.

We need to act now with extreme precaution and declare an immediate global moratorium on any release of gene drive organisms into the environment. We reiterate the paramount importance of free prior informed consent of all potentially affected peoples. Development of organisms containing engineered gene drives is progressing, with claims of release plans, ahead of urgently needed international contained use regulations.

In addition to concern about the impacts of gene drives, we call on parties to insist that free and prior informed consent be obtained before any release of synthetic biology organisms, components or products that may impact traditional knowledge, practices, livelihoods and use of land, resources and water.

We strongly support the establishment of a Multidisciplinary Technical Expert Group (MTEG) to ensure that SBSTTA discussions include the needed early analysis. The MTEG should include expertise from women, indigenous people and local communities. It should also include technology assessments that are participatory, as this will help assessments about health, socioeconomic, and cultural impacts.

The most recent AHTEG on Synthetic Biology flagged concerns about new transient modification biotechnologies, such as gene silencing RNAi sprays, and how they should be governed given their novel risks. We urge parties to request work exploring both the risks and governance of transient modification and other emerging new biotechnologies.

Before any organisms, components and products of synthetic biology are approved for release into the environment or market, developers should be required to develop additional detection, identification and monitoring tools. Currently, these tools are inadequate and insufficient.

Thank you, Chair.



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Agenda Item 5. Risk Assessment and Risk management of Living Modified Organisms

On behalf of the CBD Women Caucus, we would like to draw attention to certain aspects identified by the AHTEG groups in hopes that they will be strongly taken into consideration, considering LMOs application and rapid development.

A precautionary approach must be adopted and relevant and appropriate guidance be developed on risk assessments to ensure protection of the lives and health of IPLCs who might be more directly impacted and bear the costs of potential irreversible damage not only to biodiversity but also peoples'. The history of science and technology is rich with examples of well-intentioned advances having unintended consequences. The lives and health of approximately 476 million Indigenous Peoples worldwide, in over 90 countries - should matter, half of who are women and youth.

Living Modified Fish

The AHTEG has acknowledged many specific challenges related to the risk assessment of living modified fish. We urge Parties to take serious note of them, including what experts have underscored on the **importance of many wild fish species for the livelihoods and food security to indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) based on a strong and unique bonding and mutual reliance between them and biodiversity.** We urge Parties to take note of the suggestion made, for the **need to consider socio-cultural impacts related to adverse effects on native fish populations resulting from a release of living modified fish, and the need to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, including their FPIC.**

We agree with the AHTEG members for the need for clear guidance on risk assessment to be developed on living modified fish. This is especially critical in consideration that that living modified fish have the potential to spread across national borders, besides other challenges identified, and the implication it could have on biodiversity and for the livelihoods of IPLCs, including women and youth.



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Agenda Item 5. Risk Assessment and Risk management of Living Modified Organisms

LMO and engineered gene drive:

We call attention to the AHTEG report of the **importance of proper assessment of potential risk from the release of organisms containing engineered gene drives.**

LMOs containing engineered gene drives have the potential to impact indigenous territories and significant places, biocultural and subsistence resources, and traditional and customary practices. It can have cascading effects on ecosystem flora and fauna on which indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) depend for subsistence and cultural identity, including women and young. Because of their intimate and historical relationships to resources and landscapes, these communities possess knowledge that should be respected and considered.

Support including **financial resources should be mobilised for capacity building and knowledge management tools** on these issues, which are very technical and scientific - to ensure for the full, meaningful and effective participation of IPLCs, women and youth- and make space at the table - at all levels of planning and decision making.

Governments, organizations, and scientists must adopt a proactive approach to creating policies and guidelines which incorporates potential trans-boundary effects and unintended consequences. The creation of these policies and guidelines must engage IPLC, women, youth and other relevant rightsholders - and have an **extended articulation of FPIC that attends to greater degrees of research transparency, iterative community-scale consent, and shared power of decision-making in the design and potential deployment of engineered gene drives, while involving Indigenous peoples, local communities, researchers, and technology developers.**

The future of life on Earth depends on our collective efforts to safeguard biodiversity - together.

Thank you, Chair



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Agenda Item 6. Marine and Coastal Biodiversity

Statement of the CBD Women's Caucus

In the document (CBD/SBSTTA/24/6) prepared for the formal session of the SBSTTA24, on **ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs)** we welcome the recommendations in Annexes 1-XIV, informed by the Brussels workshop (February 2020) in giving recognition to collaborations with the holders of traditional knowledge and we hope it is further strengthened. Indigenous peoples and local communities continue to play a crucial role in the conservation, governance, management and knowledge of marine, coastal areas and islands that today are crucial for all to live in harmony with nature - **and women are an essential part of it**. We encourage CBD and Parties give due gender consideration in ensuring that the collaborations are inclusive, equitable and meaningful and further enhanced to ensure collective efforts in the identification, modification and description of EBSAs, including FPIC.

Further, there is a need to address and reflect this work more visibly in the various elements, components of the Goals and Targets of the new post2020 GBF monitoring framework, including the relevance of and the contributions that possible 321+ EBSAs worldwide could assist (number that we assume will only grow in the coming years).

Creating synergies would be an important aspect of and within the various areas of work within the Convention in mainstreaming some common elements of work to support the review, monitoring, reporting and implementation of the gbf (e.g PASS, OECMs, IAS, LMO besides others) – considering that they are interlinked to assess the ecological and biological and livelihood significance of marine and coastal areas and territories,

Marine and coastal biodiversity conservation

There is an urgent need to protect oceans and safeguard livelihoods of millions of coastal and island communities from threats like plastic pollution, overfishing, ocean heating, acidification and anthropogenic marine noise, which has doubled in some areas of the oceans for the past 70 years. Seabed mining and marine geoengineering entail additional and incalculable risk to marine biodiversity, life in the water as on land, food security, planetary health and peace.

The [United Nations estimates](#) that as much as eighty percent of all global marine pollution originates from land-based activities. We call on you to find global solutions to the impacts of chemicals, including endocrine disrupting chemicals, as well as pesticides and radioactive pollution on sustainability and health of marine, coastal and island biodiversity including on wellbeing of peoples'.

Despite important support for the conservation of the ocean, the historical achievements of IPLCs sustainable use and conservation of their marine areas and territories of life have not been recognized as crucial models of governance to be replicated. A Rights Based ecosystem approach will help ensure the recognition and restitution of tenure and access rights, provide equal opportunities and



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adequate resources for coastal and island communities, including for women and youth. The recognition of the duty to obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of IPLCs is an important minimum precautionary standard.

Sustainable fishing and biodiversity

Oceans and associated cultures are vital to the planetary life support systems. We encourage Parties to give special consideration to small-scale fisherwomen and fishermen from coastal and island communities in processes related to sustainable use, conservation and management of marine resources, including in marine spatial planning ensuring holders of all knowledge are part of transparent, inclusive and equitable partnership - the whole of society.

We also call for the inclusion of indicators that measure in this regard including, the Implementation of the FAOs Voluntary Guidelines for the sustainability of small scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication (approved during COFI-FAO 2014).

In ending, we encourage parties to strengthen synergies and systematically integrate and prioritize biodiversity and food security considerations in all ocean-related governance processes, including UNFCCC, BBNJ and International Seabed Authority (ISA), including other processes (UNEP, SAICM other MEAs).

Thank you, Chair.



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Agenda Item 7: Biodiversity and Agriculture

Statement of the CBD Women's Caucus

The Report on the State of Knowledge of Soil Biodiversity, and the FAO Report on the progress on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors did not adopt a systemic (or integrated) and gender-responsive approach in their analysis. We feel that this is a lost opportunity for bringing in and ensure the mainstreaming of gender concerns throughout the programmes of work of the Convention. Therefore, if decision-making processes as well as studies linked to agriculture and biodiversity, are not gender responsive, nor recognise the unique role of women in agriculture, not only do they risk overlooking women's specific needs and roles, but they will also fail to ensure the inclusion of valuable knowledge important for enabling sustainable soil biodiversity practices.

First of all, we need to acknowledge that the soil is a living organism made up of millions of diverse microorganisms. This biodiversity is the basis of a healthy and productive soil, which in the meantime is reflected in the production of healthy and nutritious food. Indigenous people, especially women, are aware of the living nature of the soil -as the way they name the soil as 'mother earth' can reflect it. They are also aware of the interdependency of the soil biodiversity with other living ecosystems such as forest, wetlands, and agroecological practices. Therefore it is key to include IPs' and women's knowledge and wisdom in the management and recovery of soil biodiversity damaged by industrial and mono-crop farming because of the indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, which kill the soil biodiversity.

As all of us know, Industrial and mono-crop farming sustains the present global food system and the concentration of economic power in the hands of agri-multinationals. The [report of IPBES on Biodiversity and ecosystem services](#), exposes the role of the global food system as the principal driver of accelerating biodiversity loss, and explains how food production is degrading or destroying living ecosystems, contributing to species extinction. Without reform of our food system, biodiversity loss will continue to accelerate, threatening our ability to provide healthy food to human populations.

A shift to more balanced diets has to be based on support for agroecological practices instead of support for industrial fake meat and dairy production. Currently, 78% of all agricultural land is used for meat and dairy production while it produces only 18% of global calorie supply and 37% of global protein supply - most of which is consumed by wealthy elites in society, with men consuming significantly higher amounts of meat than women.

Industrial and mono-crop farming practices pose a significant risk to biodiversity, healthy ecosystems and human health and wellbeing. Stemming from the intensification of agriculture, apolitization of agricultural technology, increase of perverse incentive for agriculture, and top-down gender neutral decision-making have led to global inequalities across society with regards to resource distribution, lack of security to rights of land tenure, and increase of pandemics, such as COVID.



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These issues disproportionately impact rural communities, small-scale farmers, Indigenous Peoples and Women, who are often cast as passive recipients to policy-change as opposed to key actors enabling sustainable use and management of healthy soil biodiversity.

Harmonizing biodiversity and agricultural production thus requires, first and foremost a redirection of perverse incentives and harmful investments that continue supporting monocrop farming and industrial livestock production and consumption and other forms of agro-industry, and associated infrastructure. [Dasgupta review](#) estimates that humanity spends between 4 and 6 trillion dollar per year in subsidies that harm biodiversity, a majority of which supports agro-industrial production.

Thanks chair



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Agenda Item 10: Invasive Alien Species

Statement of the CBD Women's Caucus

Invasive alien species (IAS) threaten ecosystems, habitats and species, causing extensive environmental and economic harm. The most vulnerable people to the impact of IAS are poor communities who live in rural areas and depend on agriculture and natural resources for their livelihood.

Gender related impacts of IAS arise out of the gender differences that are found in other natural resource management contexts: differences in ownership and access to assets and resources; access to justice; access to power; division of labour; access to education, research, development facilities, knowledge and information; and decision-making norms and practices.

The perceptions of risks and immediate effects of species invasions can be experienced in different ways by men and women, which ultimately has implications in their participation in IAS' management and control.

A gender sensitive approach should be at the centre of any strategy, policy and practice to prevent, manage and control IAS, to provide appropriate support to men and women. Understanding and responding to the gender dynamics within and among economic systems helps to increase effectiveness in preventing and controlling IAS, while contributing to social equality.

Until now, much of the research and actions on IAS's prevention and management have been gender-blind, because women have not directed the research. Women, whose livelihoods are affected by IAS, should be leading the research, reporting and practical responses.

Women are thought leaders, seeking and identifying replacement for food and medicines when IAS have weakened or extinguished biodiversity. Building on women's community-based work, official responses should promote women's leadership, at all levels, to identify and label IAS.

Women in ecological communities are often the first to identify IAS or to propose methods for mitigating current or future risks. Women have more access to power in ecological economies than in financial economies. Thus, women of ecological communities often lead responses through consensus decision-making, allocating ecological resources. Official responses, at all levels, should respectfully integrate women's ecological traditions to prevent negative land use changes and avoid natural disasters, including climate changes. This requires financial leadership to collaborate with women's ecological leadership, dismantling patriarchal institutions.

As many Indigenous Peoples have a gender sensitive approach, valuing women's words and work, we ask Parties to respect Indigenous Peoples' rights and agreements on access to their lands and ecosystems, which have prevented the ingress of IAS since time immemorial.



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Agenda Item 10: Invasive Alien Species

We welcome the text of the suggested recommendation on IAS in which Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations are invited to “*more explicitly include diverse social and cultural values of biodiversity across communities at the national level, including those of indigenous peoples and local communities, women, and youth, when assessing the costs, benefits and prioritization of management of IAS...*”

We also welcome references to IPLCs in the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on IAS.

We regret there are no references to women nor the need to integrate a gender perspective in any of the provided elements of technical guidance on management measures on IAS. We, therefore, call for stronger wording in that regard; particularly in elements of guidance a) c) and d) to contribute to the much-needed incorporation of gender sensitive approaches to strategies on IAS.

Thank you Chair.