

IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas Position Paper inputs to IUCN for CBD Submission December 15, 2018

Kathy MacKinnon, Chair WCPA, Harvey Locke, Chair WCPA Beyond the Aichi Targets Task Force and Stephen Woodley, WCPA Vice Chair for Science and Biodiversity Conservation, November 28, 2018

Background Context:

Globally, the state of biodiversity is declining and in crisis, yet the objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity is for humanity to live in harmony with nature. Three concerted actions are necessary to improve the situation: (i) more of nature needs to be better protected as well as (ii) production practices and (iii) consumption practices across the world must become more sustainable. The IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas is focused on the first of these solutions which requires area-based conservation.

A foundational solution to this crisis is to significantly scale-up both the quality and quantity of a well-designed, interconnected mosaic of protected and conserved areas, on land, freshwater and sea. Such a planned system is essential to protect, conserve and restore biodiversity and its many benefits to humanity. A holistic approach is required whereby protected and conserved areas are better connected and integrated into surrounding landscapes. Ecological integrity of all remaining primary ecosystems should be maintained, further fragmentation avoided, and ecological connections restored where areas have been fragmented. This is necessary to achieve to the 2050 vision of the CBD:

“By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.”

The WCPA Beyond the Aichi Targets Task Force was created at the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawaii to address two matters: (i) to answer a scientific question: what is needed for us to not only halt biodiversity loss, but also to achieve the basic goal of conservation of biological diversity so humans can live in harmony with nature? and (ii) develop and implement an engagement strategy to build support for such a solution within IUCN and beyond to influence the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In this submission we address our Scientific findings to date, percentage targets, enabling global targets though the Three Global Conditions for Biodiversity Conservation and Restoration Framework, new area-based target composition, and some other considerations.

Scientific findings to date

The Task Force has been very actively consulting experts all over world for the last 18 months. This has included formal consultation meetings in Europe, Africa, Australia, China, Latin America, and North

America and many other in-person conversations around the world. A wide literature review has been commissioned and should be completed soon. The Task Force also participated in the design and reporting of the Space for Nature Symposium in London in February 2018 where there was extensive discussion about area-based conservation (see CBD/COP 14 Inf 25, Nov 1, 2018).

In 2017-18, the Task Force conducted a large global survey of conservation scientists on area-based conservation. The survey was conducted in English, French and Spanish, with 363 respondents from 81 countries (Survey attached). The findings from the Scientists Survey show high levels of agreement across continents and language groups. There is very strong agreement on the importance of area-based conservation for species and ecosystems, as well as broad agreement on the need to scale up conservation using large area-based targets. Scientists agreed on keeping the existing qualitative elements of Aichi Target 11 and on adding to them new elements including: interconnected conservation networks, a focus on protecting species at risk of extinction, and protecting existing wilderness (large areas with ecosystem integrity). There was also wide agreement that percentage targets for protected and conserved areas are valuable.

Protected areas remain the foundation of nature conservation. The concept of Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) can supplement protected areas and help deliver greater ecological representativeness and improve connectivity across protected area systems. In addition to the need for more protected and conserved areas, there is great interest in strengthening restoration and connectivity to ensure there are deliberate ecological networks to reduce and mitigate fragmentation. There is also widespread agreement on the need to retain the current ecosystem integrity of the large blocks of wild areas of the world which are already inherently connected.

Achieving more ambition and an enhanced focus on the qualitative elements currently in Target 11, plus the three new elements identified by the scientific survey, will require more emphasis on a broader range of protected and conserved areas under different governance and management regimes in terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems. OECMs also provide an opportunity to recognize and engage a broader range of stakeholders and partners in conservation management.

Management effectiveness and financing of existing PAs is also major concern. Greater efforts to ensure effective management and governance are needed. Management effectiveness assessment should be a standard part of PA management along with adaptive management strategies. These could be measured through the use of tools such as the IUCN Green List and PAME (Protected Areas Management Effectiveness). Mobilizing substantially increased financial resources and developing new financial mechanisms to generate funds from governments and private sources specifically to support effective management of protected and conserved areas is critical if we are to achieve the goal of effectively preserving biodiversity.

More ambitious, evidence-based targets are recommended going forward. While there has been good progress on expanding coverage of protected areas, it is clear that much more needs to be done to address the other elements of Target 11 especially connectivity, areas important for biodiversity and ecological representation. All of these elements would benefit from measurability and from having specific numerical targets. But there is a clear challenge that one size does not fit all as the state of nature varies widely across the world. This affects both the question of what percentage should be in the target and also what conservation strategies are appropriate where.

Percentage Area Targets for Area Based Conservation

There is widespread agreement that the percentage target for area-based conservation in Aichi Target 11 has been very useful to drive parties to action and that percentage targets should be retained. There is also widespread agreement that any percentage targets should be ambitious and linked to measurable quality elements to ensure that areas designated are actually of importance to biodiversity and that they are effectively managed for biodiversity conservation. Indeed no one has ever argued that quantity absent quality is desirable.

There is also widespread agreement that the current targets for protected areas and OECMS have been useful but are not sufficient at their current levels of 10% marine and coastal and 17% land and freshwater.

There is no discernable rationale for different targets in the marine and terrestrial realm. IUCN already has a resolution calling for at least 30% protection of the marine realm. At a minimum, the target should be at least 30% across land, sea and freshwater. The Task Force process is ongoing to see if there is a consensus for a number greater than these minimums.

One global target adapted to national conditions

Regardless of the percentage set in a global target, there is a need to adapt that target to actual conditions at a national level.

The objective of the CBD is to protect all life on earth and the natural processes on which it depends wherever it occurs. But biodiversity is neither uniformly distributed nor in the same health everywhere. This was recognized in Rio Principle 7 which was explicitly reaffirmed in Article 15 of *The future we want* when the UN Sustainable Development Goals were adopted at Rio +20:

PRINCIPLE 7

States shall co-operate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem. In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.

The Three Global Conditions for Biodiversity Conservation and Restoration Framework

Ambitious area-based conservation goals are achievable but will require different strategies appropriate to local, national and regional situations. We have developed a framework that addresses the three different conditions of the world in a way that would be effective to meet the CBD's objectives to preserve and restore biodiversity wherever it occurs on earth (all premised on effective and equitable governance). These Three Global Conditions for Biodiversity Conservation and Restoration Framework apply to terrestrial, coastal and freshwater systems (we are still exploring its application to the marine realm).

The Three Conditions Framework is designed to enable ambitious action to protect global biodiversity while recognizing that different parties have different conditions and responsibilities. In accordance with Principle 7 of the Rio Declaration described above, this framework calls for *simultaneous action* by all countries across all Three Conditions as part of the requirement for common but differentiated responsibility to protect Earth's ecosystem.

The Three Global Conditions for Biodiversity Conservation and Restoration are:

1. The highly populated, agriculturally fertile, and developed areas: The target in this condition is to preserve all the remaining remnants of an ecoregion, rather than numerical targets. Focus on protecting identified endangered species and ecosystems, active ecological restoration, restoring connectivity, and on ecological processes that are impaired need help such as aquatic connectivity. Area-based conservation must be mainstreamed with appropriate spatial planning and sustainable production and sustainable consumption, maintaining pollinators, reducing nitrogen inputs and providing access to nature. Different sub-strategies are needed for urban and intensive agricultural areas.
2. Open landscapes with lower human population densities and grazing, fishing and some resource extraction and with large existing or potential protected and conserved areas: The target for this condition is to develop systems of protected and conserved areas in an ecologically connected way, consistent with Aichi Target 11's current language of "*ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and OECMs.... integrated into the wider landscape and seascape*". The system should target both areas of ecological representation and areas of particular importance for biodiversity and aim to conserve all existing native species and supporting ecological processes and ensure that the protected areas are effectively managed. Ecological restoration is also important in this condition, especially for connectivity and large-ranging mammals. An ambitious percentage target is appropriate in this condition.
3. Large areas with a high level of ecosystem integrity (wilderness), with low population densities or no humans: The targets for this condition are to protect and conserve the entire natural system as it is now (not a percentage), linear infrastructure such as roads should be minimized, and industrial development should be an exception and subject to the mitigation hierarchy. Indigenous people and communities' governance systems are of major importance in these areas. The ecological aim is to maintain intactness and a very low human footprint in order to maintain all native species and ecological processes. In addition to *in-situ* biodiversity conservation goals, this condition protects global- scale ecological processes including carbon sequestration, regional hydrology, and large-scale meteorological patterns.

The Three Conditions Framework provides a framework for nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and cooperation, which can be expressed in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) under the CBD and in National Climate Change strategies under the UNFCCC. All parties should act according the conditions of their country and integrate protected areas in spatial and sectoral planning. Several large countries have all three conditions. Others may have only condition 1, or conditions 1 and 2 but impact more intact conditions elsewhere through their consumption patterns and could therefore contribute support to others who have conditions 2 and 3.

Loss of biodiversity is driven primarily by 1) habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation, 2) invasive alien species, 3) excessive nutrient loading and 5) other forms of pollution (e.g. ocean plastics), and 5) over-exploitation and unsustainable use (ref GBO3); climate change will exacerbate all of these threats. The Three Conditions Framework allows for addressing these problems where they occur or can be prevented across the landscape. Indeed, it is possible to apply many of the current Aichi Targets across this Framework which reveals different degrees of emphasis for a particular Aichi target by different conditions.

Note: In the marine realm, preliminary conversations indicate that three conditions approach might be relevant but more consultation with global marine experts is underway before we can determine that with confidence.

New Area-Based Target Composition

An overall ambitious target for area-based conservation should have a high percentage for area-based conservation that requires a system of protected and conserved areas that meet the following ecological goals for *in situ* conservation:

1. Ensuring representation of all biomes, ecosystems and habitats in the global protected and conserved areas network
2. Conserving areas of importance for biodiversity, including as appropriate, Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs), and equivalent national priority setting processes.
 - a. Parties will identify KBA, EBSAs and equivalent national priority areas for all higher taxa and ecosystems by 2025
 - b. Parties and others will protect or conserve 100% of known sites of global or national importance for biodiversity by 2030.
3. Conserving intact ecosystems and ecosystem processes wherever they are found, with a special focus on ecosystems with significant carbon stocks.
 - a. Parties will implement no net loss of ecosystems with a high level of ecosystem integrity set against a 2020 benchmark.
 - b. Parties will include Protected Areas and OECMs as part of their national climate change strategies
4. Restoring degraded ecosystems with a special focus on wetlands, inland waters, and coastal features and areas with Red-listed and national priority species and ecosystems in all countries.
 - a. Action plans implemented for restoration of wetlands, inland waters and coastal features.
 - b. Action plans to recover 50% of Red-listed and national priority species and their ecosystems by 2025 and 100% by 2030.
5. Maintain ecological connectivity at landscape and seascape levels.

This ecological target should be achieved through protected and conserved areas that have highly effective conservation outcomes because they were well designed ecologically, are equitably governed, and are effectively managed with adequate budgets.

The Task Force will be exploring the question of whether special conservation targets are needed for special features such as coral reefs, mangroves and primary forests.

Other comments

There needs to be greater linkage between the UN Conventions, notably the Framework Convention on Climate Change, The Convention on Biological Diversity, The Convention on Migratory Species, and the RAMSAR (Wetlands) Convention. Building on the Paris Agreement under UNFCCC which specifies the importance of ecosystem integrity and the conservation of biodiversity to its goals, opportunities exist especially in promoting PAs and conserved areas as nature-based solutions to mitigation and especially adaptation to climate change, water and food security, health, education and disaster risk reduction. IUCN should encourage not only NDCs for biodiversity but incorporation of biodiversity conservation into other sectoral strategies e.g. PAs should be incorporated into Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement as promoted by Red Parques for South America.

While WCPA is primarily focused on Target 11, The Nature for All Task Force of WCPA which is a joint project with the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication calls for a renewed version of Aichi Biodiversity Target 1 (or its equivalent in the Post-2020 Framework) that not only address awareness but also actions to increase connectedness of people from all walks of life with nature in order to inspire significantly enhanced, broad-based public and cross-sectoral action (i.e., mainstreaming) on biodiversity conservation. Such personal connectedness to nature is measurable and should be measured. It is of particular importance in Condition 1.