



High Level segment of the opening session of the 15th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biodiversity

Mr. Chairman, your excellencies,

True structural and transformative change is needed to address the root causes of biodiversity loss. Increasing evidence shows that the main challenge is to align all financial flows, that is, public and private investments as well as all incentive measures, with CBD objectives and commitments. We cannot allow 4 to 6 trillion USD to be spent annually on biodiversity destruction. This requires stringent global and national regulatory arrangements.

Recent experiences with the UN Food Systems Summit have shown that the corporate capture of international policy processes is a major stumbling block to securing legally binding commitments to reform destructive sectors like the industrial livestock sector. Reversing corporate capture also requires rejecting public-private partnerships and other forms of blended finance for biodiversity that create financial dependencies of public sector actors on private sector commercial interests and thus prevent the fundamental reform of our global financial architecture.

Area-based conservation will continue to be important for reversing biodiversity loss but rights-based, equitable governance needs to be at the center of any action for conservation, sustainable use and restoration of nature. This requires full respect for the territorial rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), women, youth and peasants who are rights-holders, as well as legal, political and financial support for territories and areas conserved by IPLCs.

We reiterate our concerns about the use of the term “Nature-based solutions”, including by the Secretariat, despite the objections raised by many Parties and observers. This ambiguous term equates natural ecosystems, such as forests, with plantations of fast-growing trees.

Carbon offset markets that are promoted as “nature-based solutions” to “net zero” approaches mainly provide a solution to those who fail to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, allowing them to escape their responsibilities to address the climate crisis.

“Nature-based solutions” are not synonymous with the Ecosystem Approach that complies with the sustainability obligations under the CBD. Accepting this contested term in decisions of the CBD without clear definition is like writing a blank cheque.

We call again for a specific target on gender mainstreaming; a new mechanism that addresses participatory technology horizon scanning, assessment and monitoring in a manner that respects the rights of IPLCs; a benefit sharing solution for DSI that includes an international fund to support IPLCs; and caution against the corporate capture of the current CBD mainstreaming process.

Last, but not least, a strong human rights framework for biodiversity requires the realization of the rights to participation, information, access to justice and ensuring the safe and effective inclusion of all rights holders in biodiversity policy- and decision-making, including the protection of environmental human rights defenders. The challenge of the biodiversity crisis cannot be met without the full recognition of the leadership and the territorial and resource rights of IPLCs, peasants and fishers, women, and youth, and their collective conservation contributions.

The CBD Alliance, as facilitator of the NGO Major Group, welcomes the current discussions, but reiterate that they should not prejudge the outcomes of the negotiations on the post-2020 GBF as virtual meetings do not allow for equitable participation of all Parties and rights-holders.

Thank you very much.