

ON THE ROAD TO FAILURE - NEW UPDATE OF THE ZERO DRAFT OF THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Brussels, 7 September 2020

The new update of the zero draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework¹ unfortunately seems to confirm a strong focus on doomed market-based approaches to biodiversity:

- The draft calls to “*internalize the value of nature*”, states that “*biodiversity is valued, nature is valued through green investments, ecosystem service valuation in national accounts, and public and private sector financial disclosures.*”
- One of the main goals is that “*nature’s contributions to people (one of the new names of ecosystem services devised by IPBES²) have been valued, maintained or enhanced.*”
- The theory of change behind the draft calls for “*net improvements by 2050,*” “net” being usually the codeword for offsetting, as is the case with “Net zero emission targets” and “No Net Loss” / “Net Gain” of biodiversity policies.

The 20 action-oriented targets for 2030 raise serious concerns and questions:

- Does target 1 calling to restore X% of degraded freshwater and marine ecosystems mean to include water quality trading (a market for tradable credits to pollute rivers and other waterways)?
- How is target 2 calling to protect at least 30% of the planet – a target similar to EU’s new target to protect 30% of Europe’s lands and seas³ – to be implemented? A new regulation

¹ Convention on Biological Diversity, update of the zero draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, 17 August 2020 <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/3064/749a/0f65ac7f9def86707f4eaeafa/post2020-prep-02-01-en.pdf>

² “In January 2018 30 global experts associated with the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) suggested a move away from the term, and towards ‘Nature’s Contributions to People’. They argued the latter was a more inclusive term that bypassed perceived failings of the ecosystem services framing.”

Natural capital coalition: No One Wants To Put A Price On Nature, But We Do Need A Better Understanding Of Its Value. Online. Available at: <https://naturalcapitalcoalition.org/no-one-wants-to-put-a-price-on-nature-but-we-do-need-a-better-understanding-of-its-value/>

mandating the restoration of X% of degraded land is indeed all that is missing to create the demand for an international biodiversity offset market, similar to the failed Kyoto carbon offset markets but with much more conceptual issues.⁴ Incidentally, such a target has also been found to be potentially very problematic for indigenous communities, due to a high risk of land-grabbing and human rights violations.⁵

- Does target 7's call to "*increase contributions to climate change mitigation adaption and disaster risk reduction from nature-based solutions*" mean to allow tree planting and other restoration activities only IN ADDITION TO curbing fossil fuel emissions and biodiversity destruction - by disclosing destruction and restoration separately - or INSTEAD OF them - by mixing both together within net zero targets?

- Target 13 calls by 2030 to "*integrate biodiversity values into policies, regulations, planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts at all levels, ensuring that biodiversity values are mainstreamed across all sectors.*" Yet, the main frameworks to value nature in monetary terms have been shown to have unsolvable conceptual issues and to value only some ecosystem functions.⁶ Producing meaningless monetary figures on something that is not even biodiversity could lead to the wrong policy decisions with potentially irreversible consequences.

We fear that the current trajectory fostering a neoliberal and market-based approach to nature is very likely to fail from an environmental and social perspective, based on academic findings and the track record of similar initiatives. We hope that future versions will change course (but we are not holding our breath).

³ European Commission, Questions and Answers: EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 - Bringing nature back into our lives, 20 May 2020 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_20_886

⁴ See Green Finance Observatory, 50 shades of green part II: the fallacy of environmental markets <https://greenfinanceobservatory.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/50-shades-biodiversity-final.pdf>

⁵ Survival International, UN plan to protect 30 percent of the planet by 2030 could displace hundreds of millions, NGOs and experts warn, 2 September 2020 <https://survivalinternational.org/news/12455>

⁶ Green Finance Observatory, supra