What a Target to Protect at least 30 Percent of the Planet Must Include to be Successful

Based on the best available science, the Campaign for Nature (CFN) believes that the Convention on Biological Diversity should significantly increase and strengthen its target for global terrestrial and marine protection when it adopts a new 10-year strategy at the 15th Conference of the Parties in October 2020 in Kunming, China to halt and reverse species decline, and revive ecosystems services that are critical to humanity’s survival. In addition to helping address the biodiversity crisis, scientists have noted that such a target is also needed to help achieve the goals of the Paris Climate Accord.

Specifically, the CFN supports establishing a new spatial target to protect at least 30% of the planet - land and sea - by 2030 as an interim goal toward protecting half of the earth. This should be a global target, as it is not something that all countries will be able to meet within their own borders, but all countries do have a role to play and should develop a shared understanding of the different responsibilities related to advancing conservation in highly populated areas, open areas with lower population, and large areas with high ecosystem integrity and wilderness values, including indigenous lands. The CFN also recognizes the link between nature and culture and strongly supports taking an approach to conserving biodiversity that fully integrates and respects indigenous leadership and indigenous rights, including in the process of formulating and implementing a spatial target. Importantly, there must be more requirements to meeting a spatial target than to simply cross a numeric threshold.

The world’s most biologically important areas have been prioritized. In satisfying a new spatial target, nations must use systematic conservation planning or other science-based approaches and partnerships with Indigenous Peoples to prioritize conserving the areas that are the most important for biodiversity, including ecosystems that are still intact and key biodiversity areas. Conservation should support landscape connectivity and ecosystem resilience, and should be pursued globally, helping to ensure that the planet’s system of protected and conserved areas is fully representative of our planet’s diverse nature, habitats, and ecosystems, and maintains species diversity and abundance.

Indigenous Peoples’ rights are recognized and promoted. Indigenous Peoples must be central partners in the development and implementation of a new spatial target. Nations must work with Indigenous Peoples to ensure free, prior and informed consent in the formation of protected areas and in recognition of Indigenous and local community conserved areas. Additionally, through all subsequent actions that nations take to meet that target, Indigenous Peoples’ rights must be respected and promoted, recognizing the tenets of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Only areas with demonstrable long-term conservation outcomes should be included. In other words, protected areas need to be properly designed in full partnership with Indigenous Peoples, clearly defined geographical spaces, equitably governed, and effectively managed through legal or other effective means to achieve the long term conservation of nature associated with ecosystem services and benefits for people's cultures and livelihoods. On the land, these include existing or newly established formal Protected Areas (government-managed or privately managed) as well as Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs, including Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas, ICCAs) that ensure at least equivalent conservation outcomes. In the ocean, these are highly or fully protected areas (MPAs) and OECMs that ensure at least equivalent conservation outcomes. The above should all contribute to the topline numeric goal, but there must be implementation measures in place to ensure that each designated area is in fact being managed for its intended conservation goals.

There must be resources to support long-term conservation outcomes. The 2020 agreement must contain a commitment to successfully finance and implement the spatial target. An interim target of protecting at least 30% of the planet will be unachievable until there are sufficient financial resources to ensure long-term conservation outcomes for each of the areas reported as protected or otherwise effectively conserved.