

Updated (OEWG-5) Multi-Faith Response to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

OVERALL MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We, as faith-based organizations, have welcomed the opportunity to engage in the negotiations of the current draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). As we prepare for OEWG-5 and COP15, we understand that much work remains to be done for an ambitious GBF to be adopted and we sincerely hope that State Parties will continue to work to achieve an ambitious GBF and attend the CBD COP15 at the highest level to send a signal of the highest ambition.

We have updated our [multi-faith policy response document](#) (table) based on the [latest round of negotiations \(OEWG-4\)](#) held in Nairobi, also taking into account the streamlined [text proposals from the Informal Group report](#).

We support and align with many of the key priorities and recommendations from the other caucus groups, including the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, the Women's Caucus, the Global Youth Biodiversity Network, and the NGO caucuses. In this context, we would like to share our vision for a world living in harmony with nature as well as the following key messages and recommendations towards OEWG-5 and COP15. While this multifaith response document gathers key faith priorities for the GBF, we recognize that faith groups are diverse and may have specific positions on particular elements of the framework.

Our vision: The Web of Life

As people of faith, who believe in the sacredness of all life, we believe the text needs to reflect the worldviews which are grounded in **interconnectedness, interdependence and relationship** and speak to the sacred wisdom and experiences of many people including Indigenous Peoples, spiritual communities and faith groups.

Ambition

Given the recent launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the importance of restoration in moving towards living in harmony with nature, we are encouraged that the **2030 mission** considers taking urgent action across society **to halt and reverse biodiversity loss**. Additionally the GBF needs to reflect the current and impending biodiversity crisis and increase ambition **by addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss, in a fair and equitable way for the benefit of present and future generations and all life on earth**. We believe that genuine transformative change is needed at all levels **to achieve living in harmony with nature** and an **equitable rights-based nature positive world**.

Rights-Based Approach

We believe that the framework will not and cannot succeed without the knowledge, expertise, and active participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) and other historically marginalized groups. The framework must ensure IPLCs are recognized and empowered as active partners and decision-makers, not just as participants, in this process and that their rights to land, water and other resources are respected and protected. The Framework must center **the goals of sustainable use and equitable rights-based governance and management of ecosystems**.

Integrating a rights-based approach within the framework will need to be clearly defined so that it addresses the issues of power imbalances between different groups and furthers rights of all living beings and the accountability of duty bearers.

- We are concerned by the trend to want to move several human rights based approaches and safeguards language from the targets to the section B.Bis, as a cross cutting issue. Although **it is important to have a strong B.Bis section** with fundamental principles, **it is equally important that human rights safeguards remain in the targets**, and be fully part of the implementation mechanism. We emphasize the importance of maintaining this language to ensure that implementing the biodiversity framework does not adversely impact IPLCs and other vulnerable communities in the name of progress.
- The **GBF should fully respect, protect and fulfill human rights** in alignment with State obligations under accepted human rights conventions and declarations, including ILO169 and UNDRIP (which uphold Indigenous rights) and **integrate the newly recognised right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment** (UNGA Resolution 76/300).
- It is particularly important to keep strong **rights-based conservation and restoration targets**, with **Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)** as well as **land tenure rights** in T1 (Planning), T2 (Degraded Ecosystems) and T3 (Conserved areas), and to recognize customary sustainable use in T5 (use of wild species) and T9 (Benefits). It is also very **important to keep human rights safeguards in T15 (Business)**.

Cross-Cutting Issues

An **integrated approach**, such as the One Health Model, is required to address the complex nature of the biodiversity crisis. Solutions that are not holistic are incomplete and unsustainable.

We recognize that there are other related and convergent mechanisms that have within them biodiversity goals. We therefore underscore the **need for policy coherence and synchronization of programmes across interconnected processes, such as National Adaptation Plans and Nationally Determined Contributions in the climate change regime**.

In particular, we urge that the framework's mission, goals and targets be coherent with climate change, pollution policies and others, as agreed by parties through other international instruments.

Production & Extraction

Targets should be strengthened to incentivize the just transition of industries which rely on the production and extraction of natural resources towards living in harmony with nature and systems imbued with the sacred rights of people and planet.

The GBF needs to better reflect and address the overwhelming impact that industrial agriculture, food systems and fossil fuel industries have in driving the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem destruction. It is important to include **agro-ecology in T10 (agriculture and forestry)** for instance.

The benefits of the **ethical utilization of genetic resources** must be shared fairly and equitably, to ensure that the development of such technology does not cause harm to the very populations it intends to serve.

An **ethical and holistic response to living in harmony with nature cannot occur without addressing the existing economic systems** in place that must prioritize the wellbeing of people and the planet over short term financial profit.

Implementation Mechanism

More details on the implementation mechanism is needed to guide member states as they set out on raising their ambition and integrating the framework into their national conservation plans. The mechanism should allow **tracking of progress** and the **ability to increase action if sufficient progress is not made**.

The **implementation mechanism should be agreed upon at COP15** to ensure implementation can start immediately.

Recognizing the positive dimensions and contributions of faith based organizations, which motivate many to act for the betterment of the environment, we are encouraged to see the recognition of the role faith based organizations play in cultivating an enabling environment for the implementation of the global biodiversity framework through a **participatory and inclusive whole of society approach**. We were concerned by the lack of transparency in the Informal Group gathering at the end of September 2022 and we hope that the participatory and inclusive whole of society approach will determine the next steps towards the adoption of the GBF.

A full financial gap analysis must be completed in parallel with targets to avoid delays in implementation. Resources that are raised must be distributed to the places and people that most require them. Subsidies that are harmful to the environment (such as fossil fuels, industrial animal agriculture, and mining) must be repurposed or eliminated on as ambitious a timescale as possible recognizing the importance of a just transition.

List of signatories:

A Rocha International

ACT Alliance

Anglican Consultative Council

Atisha Dipankar Peace Trust Bangladesh

Bahá'í International Community

Bahu Trust

Bhumi Global

Brahma Kumaris world spiritual university

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA)

Center for Earth Ethics

Columban Missionaries

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace

Danmission

Deignan Institute for Earth and Spirit at Iona University

Développement et Paix

Dominican Leadership Conference

Eco Dharma Network

Faith & the Common Good

Fast For the Climate

Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada

Fondazione Proclade Internazionale-onlus

Footsteps - Faiths for a Low Carbon Future

GLOBAL ONE 2015

Global Peace House Brahma Kumaris

Govardhan Ecovillage

Green Hope Foundation

Hazon

International Environment Forum

International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Islamic Foundation for Ecology & Environmental Sciences

Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)

KAIROS- Canada

Laudato Si Movement

Martha Justice Ministry, Sisters of St. Martha, Antigonish

Ministry for Social Justice, Peace, and Creation Care - Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto

New Humanity

Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity/ Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth

Office of Religious Congregations for Integral Ecology (Canada)

Parliament of the World's Religions

Quaker Earthcare Witness

Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary

River Above Asia Oceania Ecclesial Network (RAOEN)

Shambhala Touching the Earth Collective

Sisters of Charity Federation

Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership

Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership

Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill

Soka Gakkai International

Temple of Understanding

The Episcopal Diocese of California

The Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development

UISG-USG JPIC Commission

United Religions Initiative

World Evangelical Alliance