

Africa Union Experts Meeting on CITES and CBD: Closing Statement from Representatives of Civil Society

Date: 21 May 2022

Location: Gaborone, Botswana

Hon. Minister,
Distinguished delegates,
All protocols observed

Statement from representatives of the civil society present here:

1. ACBA
2. AWF
3. Conservation International
4. IFAW
5. TRAFFIC INTERNATIONAL
6. WCS
7. WWF – Africa Regional Office

It has been 3 days of deliberations. Once again we thank the AUC for inviting us to participate in the discussions in Gaborone. A lot has been achieved and much more remains to be done.

We have convergence on the fact that we are experiencing rapid deterioration and decline of biodiversity and ecosystems and that urgent action is needed to reverse this loss for the benefit of people and the planet.

We also agree that reversing biodiversity loss is complex and that the one group that understands this complexity are the IPLCs and hence the need to recognise and support their contributions in this regard.

The 4th meeting of the Open Ended Working Group in Nairobi remains an unmissable opportunity to raise the ambition of the post 2020 global biodiversity framework ahead of the CoP 15 later on in the year. This ambition must be reflected across the 3 objectives of the convention and also across all the elements of the framework and should include;

- An ambitious 2030 mission to reverse the loss of biodiversity
- Robust targets, including on direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss
- A comprehensive package for financing biodiversity conservation between now and 2030 that comprises a significant increase in levels of financing from all levels, reorienting financial flows to support biodiversity conservation and eliminating or repurposing harmful incentives, including subsidies
- Support mechanisms, key among them capacity building and appropriate technology transfer, commensurate with the ambition in the framework.

Taking urgent action to reverse the loss of biodiversity will require conserving species and ecosystems, maintaining or enhancing ecological integrity and connectivity of natural and semi-natural ecosystems, restoration of degraded ecosystems and sustainable management and use of biodiversity. Further, we must ensure that all benefits accruing from the use of genetic resources in any form or formats are shared in a fair and equitable manner and that all these actions are implemented in a whole of government and a whole of society approach.

Since NBSAPs will be the approach for parties to implement the framework, we call upon African parties to agree on a robust and effective implementation, review and reporting mechanism. The mechanism, should be transparent, participatory and reflect the ambition needed on both the targets of the framework as well as the financing and other means of implementation support

As CSOs, we stand ready to support African Governments in providing the science and analyses of different options being proposed in the negotiations to ensure that the positions being advanced are backed up by sound science and are applicable in an African context.

We commit to reporting on our efforts to implement the post 2020 GBF in the countries we are working in. We believe that in addition to the NBSAPs, the AU will devise a mechanism for non-state actors to report on the efforts being made in supporting African countries to achieve the commitments through these MEAs.

We take note that we leave Gaborone with a lot of work to be done to agree on a common but robust position for Africa. Yet Nairobi is only 21 working days away. We call upon the co-leads for the various sections to spring into action immediately to ensure no momentum is lost. Madam Chair, as CSOs, we avail ourselves to support the negotiators wherever necessary.

Some of the delegates from the Gaborone discussions will be joining the Ministerial meeting on CITES in Hwange, Zimbabwe next week. We hope that some of the Gaborone outcomes will also inform the ministerial dialogue.

We look forward to Nairobi with hope and reiterate our commitment to work with you to make Nairobi an impactful milestone in the journey towards a Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to help the global community and each citizen take action to address the biodiversity crisis with the urgency required.

This concludes our closing statement. We wish all delegates safe travels.