



## PRESS RELEASE



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African CSOs  
Biodiversity Alliance

**CORDIO**  
East Africa

## Integrating biodiversity targets from local to global levels

*A shared earth and ocean approach linking biodiversity and people  
– for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework*

*Supporting policy brief for SBSTTA 24/3 Statement from Africa CSO Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA)*

Embargo lifting – Thursday 12 August, 15:00 hrs Eastern Standard Time  
(22:00 East Africa Time/21:00 South Africa/Central European Time)

An unprecedented increase in ambition is needed this decade to reverse the decline in nature. With most of the world's people spread across half of the land surface in 'shared spaces', such as agricultural and pastoralist systems, a new paradigm is needed for conservation action that is both nature-positive and people-centred.

In this study to be released on Thursday 12 August in the journal *Science*, a group of African scientists, conservationists and community leaders present a 'shared earth' framework to guide repair of humanity's relationship with nature. They focus attention on connecting people with nature in the places where they live. In these places, natural spaces should be retained or restored to cover 20% of all area locally, in order to benefit people fully, as well as contribute to global conservation targets.

In 2021/2022 the Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity will finally be adopted by the 198 member states at the Convention's 15th Conference of Parties in China – and a vast increase in effectiveness will be needed compared to the last decade, to succeed in its ambitions.

“We have seen conservation action focused in only the most intact and pristine locations, in Africa and across the globe, but neglecting the places where many people need it most – around their farms and homes”, said lead author David Obura, Director at Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO East Africa) and a member of the Earth Commission. “While we need intact and untouched nature in as much area of land and ocean as possible, the neglect of natural systems in ‘working’ or ‘shared’ land and seascapes has led not only to avoidable losses, but also to great hardship to millions of people, many of them poor, who lose access to basic benefits such as water filtration, pollination for their crops and wild plants and animals their cultures traditionally used and valued”.

The study calls for conservation to fully take on a human face. Legacies of inequitable impacts of protected areas on local and indigenous communities have made many countries in the Global South and varied communities distrustful of global conservation targets and initiatives they feel are thrust upon them and don’t address their local needs and contexts.

“Local and indigenous communities have lived with nature for centuries and even millenia, and hold rights to parts of the planet and nature that have often been usurped in recent decades”, said David Obura. “They know better than anyone that a better balance and greater sustainability is needed at all levels on our planet, but they have not driven the decline in nature and should not have to bear an unfair burden to conserve nature where it is still intact. This framework will help put local communities in charge where they live, recognize their local conservation practices and link their efforts as well as the need for resources to national and global networks for restoring balance between people and nature”.

The ‘shared earth, shared ocean’ framework provides guidance for consolidating and upscaling existing conservation successes, through focusing on the local context. New recognition of ‘other effective conservation measures’ will add to the potential of Protected Areas, in large part because of the legitimacy and commitment that full involvement of local people and institutions will bring to decision-making on conserving nature.

In many ‘shared spaces’ restoration of natural areas will be essential to reach the 20% target. In cities and intensively farmed areas a smaller proportion of area under natural habitat may be all that is possible, focusing on values of green spaces to people in densely populated areas.

The study builds on a wide scientific literature both on conservation and meeting peoples’ needs, and mirrors structure of the new Global Biodiversity Framework and its foundations in the Sustainable Development Goals. The authors (or quote from a UN/CBD top official??) note 3 preconditions for success. First, the commitment of the full level of finance and material support needed, from both public and private sources, to avoid the insufficient impact of conservation to date. Second, the unsustainable economic and societal production and consumption practices that have driven nature to its current state must be transformed to circular or zero impact models. Third, climate and other global changes are transforming the planet, and these need to be minimized to assure the local conservation commitments made under this framework will have the best chance of success into the future.