



acba
African CSOs
Biodiversity Alliance



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Introduction

The African Civil Society Organisations Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA) presented a Policy Statement at the opening session of the CITES/CBD Conference that highlights our priority to assure implementation of the CBD COP15 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and related CITES COP19 decisions are driven locally, to assure the rights and access to benefits of all people. Here we expand on that policy statement and include tangible steps to embed implementation of the GBF and CITES in local contexts.

In this technical document, we emphasize the holistic nature of the Sustainable Development Goals that provide a framework for discussing the Targets within the GBF

and critical outcomes of CITES COP19. Besides addressing the overarching challenge of climate change, the CBD GBF section of this document address five main focal areas for action and investment (See figure 1). ACBA proposes that the National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans (NBSAPs) be the main gateway for implementation of both GBF and CITES outcomes.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) is based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), presenting a biodiversity strategy for all, to halt and reverse biodiversity decline, support the sustainable use of biodiversity and equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits by all people. In doing so, it supports sustainabil-

ity from local to global levels, and delivery of the SDGs. This is taking place within the context of climate change.

In an African context, the emerging challenges are to support indigenous peoples, local communities and all citizens to have sustainable livelihoods and prosper into the future and provide for future generations.

In this document we present this call from African Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) for locally driven implementation of the GBF and the outcomes of CITES COP19. This approach is necessary for successful implementation and we present mechanisms for the local grounding of these efforts.

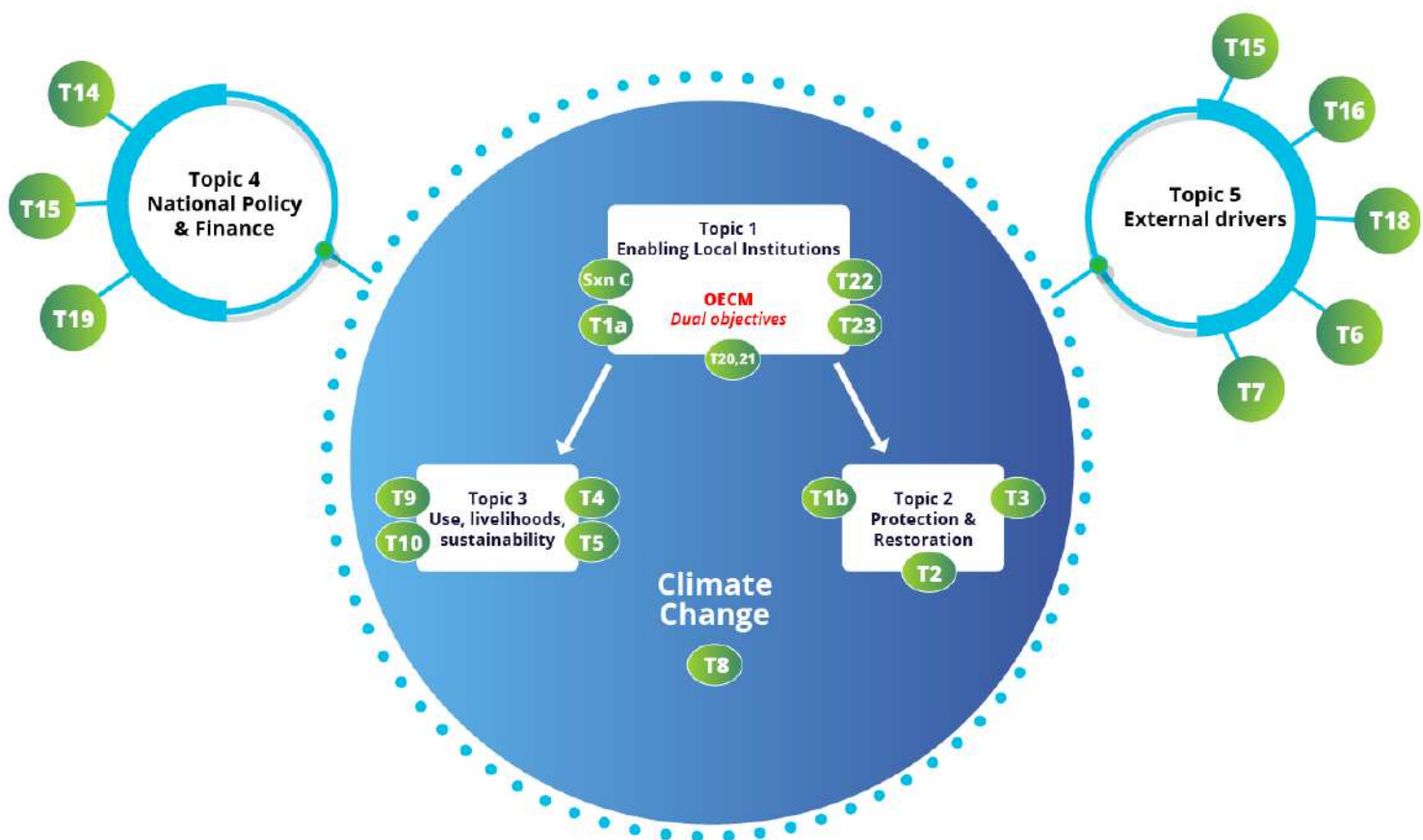


Figure 1. The five key issues for African governments to consider while implementing the GBF in an inclusive and participatory manner with non-state actors.

Implementing the outcomes of CBD COP15

The GBF Preamble “Reaffirms its expectation that Parties and other Governments will ensure that the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities are respected and given effect to in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework”.

Target 19 of the GBF elaborates on this point: (f) “Enhancing the role of collective actions, including by indigenous peoples and local communities, Mother Earth centric actions and non-market-based approaches including community based natural resource management and civil society cooperation and solidarity aimed at the conservation of biodiversity”.

All countries and actors adopting the GBF have thus committed to implementation in a manner that includes and respects the rights and roles of non-state actors. Here, we focus on five key issues and the overarching challenge of climate change that African Parties to CBD can work on to implement the GBF in line with their commitments towards IPLCs and in collaboration with civil society.

Climate change (Target 8)

Africa’s biodiversity and people are highly vulnerable to climate change, a global threat for which the African continent is least responsible. It will shift the boundaries for conservation and sustainable use over time, and undermine all investments. At the same time, Africa’s biodiversity is a core asset for the continent’s adaptation to climate change and for mitigation of climate change globally. GBF Target 8 focuses on climate change mitigation and reducing impacts on biodiversity. Its implementation in Africa requires a stronger focus on societal vulnerability and accountability for the drivers of climate change, as follows: “Minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience through mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solution and/

or ecosystem-based approaches, while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity”.

Priority A) Minimising the impact of climate change on Africa’s people by supporting adaptation and ecosystem-based nature-based solutions that include:

- Restoration of degraded ecosystems
- Sustainable forest management
- Agroforestry, agroecology and other sustainable production systems
- Pastoralist Systems

Community forest management entities, where they exist, can deliver these nature-based solutions if they are sufficiently resourced and supported by government and CSOs. Where biodiverse community forests have yet to be established, exchange visits between state and non-state actors between countries that have functional community forests and those that do not can facilitate intra-African learning of this community-led approach.

Priority B) Fostering adaptation and resilience of biodiversity to climatic changes by addressing threats such as migration, community/assemblage shifts, food and water insecurity, among others include:

- Adopting agroecological farming systems and food sovereignty
- Supporting community-based renewable energy and community conservation of biodiverse ecosystems
- Securing land and tenure rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

These actions require a whole-of-society approach. Agriculture, biodiversity conservation and land rights frequently fall within the mandates of different government ministries, supported by civil society organisations with different priorities or focal areas. Creating platforms for discus-

sion and planning that breaks down these siloes will lead to progress on all of these priority issues simultaneously.

Priority C) Mitigating climate change through climate actions with positive impacts on biodiversity and on people in Africa should be supported. Approaches to do this include:

- Appropriate resource transfers following the polluter pays principle
- Holding drivers of climate change accountable to minimise future greenhouse gas emissions
- Developing accountable, locally driven climate mitigation projects that link IPLCs with global carbon markets
- Improving understanding of how carbon markets are supposed to work versus how they are currently working and whether carbon markets provide reliable and adequate climate finance

Building stronger resilience enables individuals, households, communities, cities, institutions, systems and societies to prevent, resist, absorb, adapt, respond and recover positively, efficiently and effectively when faced with a wide range of risks, while maintaining an acceptable level of functioning and without compromising long-term prospects for sustainable development.



1. Enabling local institutions (Section C, Targets 20, 21, 22, 23)

Section C (paragraphs 7-25) of the GBF provides an essential framing for implementation with relation to the rights and diverse values of nature held by IPLCs. Local institutions and communities – both indigenous and others – need to be fully included and integrated in conservation planning and implementation, and in many cases as primary drivers particularly for IPLCs. Taking an approach to implementing the GBF that is in line with Section C is thus essential in terms of the agreement and critical for reaching most of the Targets. Specific elements in section C include:

- Contribution and rights of indigenous peoples and local communities
- Different value systems
- Whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach
- Collective effort towards the targets
- Human rights-based approach
- Gender
- Inter-generational equity

The GBF enables the strengthening of local institutions through four targets that can be implemented in the following ways:

- Target 20 (capacity and technology transfer) by strengthening the current capacity within Africa by funding higher learning institutions and promoting dialogue between practitioners and researchers to drive an African research agenda.
- Target 21 (data and knowledge) by improving monitoring and evaluation capabilities of community-based organisations through implementing systematic record keeping procedures that are developed in collaboration with these communities.
- Target 22 (participation) by creating policy space and support for communities to define their relationship with their territories and resources in ways that are formally recognised by government and therefore included in decision-making processes.
- Target 23 (gender) by using local institutions developed in line with Target 22 to include women's voices through locally appropriate mechanisms (e.g., formation of Women in Conservation groups).



2. Protection and restoration (Targets 1, 2, 3)

Targets 1 (spatial planning), 2 (restoration) and 3 (protection) cannot be achieved without including IPLCs as key partners in planning, restoring and protecting biodiversity on their lands.

Target 3 identifies Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) as a key tool for expanding protected areas. These can also play a role in implementing Targets 1 and 2 by reducing the loss of biodiverse areas and restoring degraded ecosystems, respectively. OECMs will be the primary mechanism for embedding the GBF in local contexts outside formal protected areas. National, sub-national and local levels of government, donors and CSO partners investing in conservation in Africa need to prioritise the following:

- Supporting a continental engagement with IUCN to formalize and update existing OECM guidelines and criteria to facilitate their implementation and improve their fit to African contexts.
- Ensuring the two complementary objectives of OECMs for local communities are clear and mutually supportive: 1) sustaining livelihoods and 2) protection or restoration of biodiversity.



3. Sustainable use (Targets 4, 5, 9, 10)

Sustainable use is an important approach for both CBD and CITES. It is a positive holistic approach that speaks to community ownership that addresses conservation, local livelihoods and fair and equitable benefit sharing.

For sub-Saharan countries, sustainable use is not a theoretical concept but lies at the core of local and national economies. It supports cultural and religious beliefs and livelihoods. It powerfully embraces conservation and benefit sharing, as neither is viable without the other. Further, it is a tool for empowerment of IPLCs especially in Africa where the majority of the population is rural. These rural populations understand the complexity of living with and managing biodiversity. In a globalised world where economic volatility is exacerbated by climate change, the legal, sustainable and safe use of biodiversity is a vital safety net, especially for rural communities.

The GBF addresses elements of sustainable use in four targets that can be implemented in the following ways:

- Target 4 (species conservation) by focusing efforts on mitigating human-wildlife conflict with threatened species, including sharing benefits derived from these species with affected communities and households.
- Target 5 (wild species use) by involving communities in decision-making on the sustainable use of species, especially through CITES mechanisms (see CITES section of this document for details).
- Target 9 (benefits) by creating equitable benefit sharing mechanisms in collaboration with recognised community-based organisations (see Target 22) and ensuring that access to resources and land is equitable.
- Target 10 (managed spaces) by taking a holistic or whole-of-society approach to land and water-body management, planning of production sectors (agriculture, forestry, fishing and aquaculture) and biodiversity conservation, engaging government ministries and non-state actors, particularly small-scale food producers.



4. National policies and finance (Targets 14, 15 and 19)

Implementing the GBF will require both financial resources and political will. While external funding will be important for Africa's developing countries, internal policies and resource allocation could make the difference between success and failure. Under the right national policy conditions, community-based organisations and civil society can jointly leverage substantial social capital, indigenous knowledge and expertise to ensure substantial return on investment.

The GBF addresses these issues under three Targets, which can be implemented as follows:

- Target 14 (mainstreaming policies) by aligning relevant policies using NBSAPs that are formulated in a participatory and inclusive manner with non-state actors, especially affected IPLCs and CSOs.
- Target 15 (property rights) by ensuring that African and multinational companies operating in Africa adhere to policies relating to Access and Benefit Sharing legislation under the Nagoya Protocol.
- Target 19 (financing) implementing clause (f) will ensure that resources obtained through the other finance mechanisms mentioned in this target are used effectively and efficiently to deliver outcomes on the ground.



5. External drivers

(Targets 6, 7, 15, 16, 18)

Many of the drivers of biodiversity loss within Africa are global in nature, and like climate change some impacts felt in Africa are driven by external factors. African states can therefore address these issues through diplomacy and trade agreements, but also taking local action where required (e.g., clearance of alien invasive species, reducing pollution). Due to rapid urbanisation on the continent, many of these issues are growing threats that must be addressed by creating sustainable cities and encouraging sustainable consumption patterns.



Four of the GBF Targets focus on these external factors, which can nonetheless be addressed by African states in the following ways:

- Target 6 (alien invasive species) by channelling resources and technical support to the local level to control alien invasive plants and animals where required. Manual removal of invasive plant species, for example, can be a source of employment in rural areas that reaps benefits for agricultural production and water provision.
- Target 7 (pollution) by creating and enforcing policies that hold businesses accountable for polluting the environment, and by mobilising communities within and beyond urban areas to clean up their local areas.
- Target 15 (production impacts) by ensuring that African and multinational companies operating in Africa adhere to policies relating to environmental and social impact minimization.
- Target 16 (sustainable consumption) by finding innovative ways that reduce consumption and the costs of living, especially in urban areas.
- Target 18 (harmful incentives) by using diplomacy and trade deals with developed countries that reduce harmful subsidies and increase available financing for biodiversity conservation.



Implementing the outcomes of CITES COP19

CITES was set up to make sure that international trade does not threaten the conservation status of wild fauna and flora species, thus fitting within the GBF Targets related to sustainable use. The purpose of CITES is not to prohibit trade, but to regulate international trade in wildlife to promote sustainability.

Like CBD, CITES promotes sustainable use of wildlife as a means to respond to human and conservation needs. The preamble of the CITES Convention recognises that citizens and States are and should be the best protectors of their own wild fauna and flora. This statement recalls the need for African Member States to work hand in hand with communities to conserve wild species and natural habitat and to implement the convention decisions effectively.

Implementing the CITES convention has many implications for the CBD GBF. Here, we highlight enabling local institutions, sustainable use, and protection and restoration as key points of contact between the two multilateral environmental agreements.

1) Enabling local institutions

The GBF recognises the importance of including IPLCs, particularly those engaged in Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) in global biodiversity conservation efforts. While the CBD has established mechanisms for IPLCs to be directly involved in negotiations alongside State actors, CITES has not yet established a similar mechanism of inclusion and consultation.

To address this oversight, a Rural Communities Working Group was established at CoP17 to guide CITES on the effective engagement of rural communities, as a result of negotiations on CoP17 Doc. 13 on the Establishment of the Rural Communities Committee of the Conference of the Parties. The working group was re-established at CoP18 and again at COP19. This was followed by Resolution Conf. 16.6 (Rev. CoP18) that calls on CITES Parties to make greater efforts to empower and engage with rural communities in relation to CITES decisions and implementation.

This resolution marked an important step but it focuses on the national level without providing a mechanism for rural communities to engage directly with CITES. The Rural Communities Working Group has not provided substantive guidance for CITES to take this next step.

Several AU Member States are participating in this working group. These States must work together to find a common position on the inclusion of IPLCs in CITES decision-making processes, which they can take forward into the working group.

2) Protection of species and ecosystems

Many OECMs or potential OECMs in Africa are community-run and are managed using the principles of community-based natural resources management (CBNRM). CBNRM is a suitable approach for meeting GBF Targets 1, 2 and 3 throughout the continent, as it touches on issues of spatial planning, ecosystem restoration and area-based conservation. Communities that engage in CBNRM generate income to support their conservation efforts through the sustainable use of wildlife, which includes regulated hunting of CITES-listed species.

CITES is under increasing pressure to impose more restrictions on wildlife use, which will be counter-productive for reaching these three GBF Targets. Without benefiting in a fair and equitable way from biodiversity under their stewardship including from animal and plant use, many community-based organisations will no longer be able to fund their conservation efforts, thus losing their status as 'effective' area-based conservation measures.

African Parties to CITES should stand in solidarity with community-based organisations that generate livelihoods and income from sustainable use and resist pressure from external actors to restrict sustainable international trade during CITES negotiations.

3) Sustainable use

Within Africa, the sustainable use of high-value and abundant species at a local level is prevented by decisions made at CITES based on the threats these species face in other parts of Africa or the world. Such a one-size-fits-all approach undermines the implementation of the CBD GBF by limiting sustainable use options.

Sustainable use of CITES-listed species has implications for Targets 4, 5, 9 and 10 of the GBF, in that wild plant and animal species are used to support rural livelihoods through benefit generation, mitigate human-wildlife conflict, and thus incentivise wildlife conservation on managed landscapes where livestock, crops and wild animals share the same space. Where sustainable use is well managed, both

used and non-used threatened species have been shown to increase in number and range.

Since CoP13 in 2004, CITES has formally recognised that the sustainable use and associated legal trade in wildlife has potential benefits both in terms of conservation and livelihoods for local communities (Res Conf 8.3 (Rev. CoP13)). In practice, however, the principle of sustainable use is undermined by CITES decisions to up-list species and thus place greater restrictions on the use of plants, animals and their products. To further address the issue of considering the impacts of CITES decisions on livelihoods, the Livelihoods Working Group was re-established during COP19.

Several AU Member States are participating in this working group. These States must work together to find a common position on how livelihoods considerations can be incorporated in CITES decision-making processes, which they can take forward into the working group.

Conclusion

As AU Member States take on the task of implementing the outcomes of CBD COP15 and CITES COP19, it is important to reflect on how the goals of these conventions overlap and reinforce or undermine each other.

The first point of contact between CBD and CITES is sustainable use of wild species, which is a key issue within the African context that is a foundation for livelihoods and rural economies across the continent, and has the potential to unlock economic and environmental prosperity. Sustainably using the full range of biodiversity is a cornerstone for communities everywhere, and in the case of high value species beyond the boundaries of formal protected areas, can support livelihoods and generate benefits while simultaneously conserving threatened species and ecosystems.

The second point of contact is the role of IPLCs in conservation and the need to fully include communities in planning, implementing and evaluating progress related to both conventions. To reach their full potential, communities need resources and support to create local institutions that can drive conservation at the local level. Government enabling policies, CSO technical support and financial resources are required to expand and strengthen the concept of CB-NRM that allows IPLCs to take the lead in conservation. OECMs will be a key mechanism in supporting this progress and full engagement of communities

and African states in maturing the OECM guidelines is recommended.

The final point of contact is the overarching Sustainable Development Goals that bring these conventions together. The combination of sustainable use and IPLC empowerment to make decisions and take responsibility for conserving the environment should deliver on several SDGs simultaneously. The way forward and potential actions suggested in this document can bring these international agreements into an African context and thus achieve these goals using the knowledge and expertise available on the continent.



