

Why it is urgent to have a Global Deal For Nature

Introduction

Earth's biodiversity is under dire threat. We've accelerated species extinction to 1000 times the natural rate, essentially taking a chainsaw to the web of life that sustains all species. Man-made climate change is the key driver of mass biodiversity loss as well as: habitat stress; overexploitation and unsustainable use of natural resources; poaching; and air, land and water pollution.

The IPBES reports released in March 2018 and Dinerstein et al's scientific report from 2017 found exploitable fisheries in the world's most populous region – the Asia-Pacific – are on course to decline to zero by 2048; freshwater availability in the Americas has halved since the 1950s; and 42% of land species in Europe have declined in the past decade. Global population numbers of forest vertebrates have declined by half since the 1970s, and there's been an 80% decline globally in freshwater populations during the same period. The world has lost over 130m hectares of rainforests since 1990, and scientists warn that two-thirds of wild animals will have vanished by 2020.

Why biodiversity is important

The collapse of biodiversity is not just about the annihilation of plant and iconic animal species. This crisis, like climate change, is also a human extinction threat -- a fact very few know.

Human destruction of nature is eroding the world's capacity to provide food, water, and security to billions of people. Without a diversity of plant and animal species, key ecosystems will collapse, threatening the resources upon which human civilization relies.

Healthy ecosystems capture and distribute rainwater, irrigate crops, and provide drinking water. They also absorb enormous quantities of carbon dioxide in what are termed carbon sinks. Without intact ecosystems, atmospheric carbon would be more than double what it is today, making the planet largely unsuitable for human habitation.

Ecosystems are delicately-balanced, complex systems. Like the climate, they can remain resilient to shocks for a period, and then suddenly collapse. We've seen ecosystem collapse in large sections of the planet, where the land or sea can no longer sustain significant life, from the Aral Sea area of central Asia to the Pacific dead zone.

But the planet itself is also a connected ecosystem. The pressures we are placing on it could result in us hitting tipping points and crossing a "planetary boundary" after which Earth's 'ecosystem security' is threatened. That is why we must get to work now.

What is the Convention on Biological Diversity

The U.N.'s Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is a legally-binding treaty consisting of 193 members or "Parties" (192 governments plus the European Union). It was set up at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and came into force in December 1993. Its stated aims are to conserve and sustain biodiversity while trying to promote a "fair and equitable" sharing of benefits made from plant and animal life.

The most recent strategic plan has been adopted in Nagoya (Japan) and contains a long-term vision for 2050, a midterm mission statement for 2020 and is structured into five strategic goals which contain a total of 20 concrete targets, the so-called "Aichi Targets".

What's the situation right now and what is the opportunity of COP 14

The Aichi process has in many ways been a missed opportunity. The targets have been too numerous to be enforceable and held accountable, and Aichi hasn't successfully reached outside of the biodiversity and conservation bubble to inspire political leaders, citizens, or business leaders, or compel them to act.

COP 14 provides an opportunity to make clear we cannot continue with business as usual, and instead take advantage of the chance to learn lessons from the high-level political, business, and citizens engagement at the UNFCCC climate talks that led up to the agreement in Paris in 2015.

The business community and the public are already waking up to the need for action, but they urgently need to be offered solutions. It is now up to key countries from the global north to join forces with the megadiverse countries to support the Egyptian and then Chinese Presidencies to prioritise diplomatic engagement to unite scientists, political leaders, business leaders, citizens, communities in biodiversity-rich areas, and indigenous people around ambitious and accountable goals with powerful infrastructure to reach a Global New Deal for Nature by 2020, with a strong post-2020 framework, and an inspiring 2050 vision.

The need to restore half the Earth and run sustainably the other half

Central to this deal is an Apex goal -- a north star based in science, that captures the public imagination, and becomes a lightning rod for mobilisation. **Top scientists agree if we restore and conserve half the earth by 2050, and sustainably manage the other half, nature can regenerate. This will ensure humans and 80% of species survive.** This long-term goal is like the net-zero goal for climate and it is interrelated -- if we don't act on land use, forests and carbon sinks, we'll not keep below 1.5 degrees

Without functioning ecosystems we do not have functioning watersheds or food security. Restoring and protecting half our planet and making the other half sustainable is our best way to ensure water and food supplies. Some estimates say that by 2050 the world's fisheries could collapse. Empty oceans would mean billions starve. But oceans rebound quickly once placed under formal protection. A new study shows the "spillover effect" from closing 50% of the world's oceans would increase fishery yields by 7x, feeding even more people than today.

This proposal is viable. A recent [study](#) done by Dinerstein et al. shows that roughly 15.5% of the world's lands are currently under some form of protection, and another 31% are in a natural or semi-natural state. The aim of this goal is to properly protect these key bioregions and restore and protect at least another 4% focusing on key 'biozones' of high biodiversity value. This deal will also require a transition away from pesticide-based industrial agriculture and overfishing, and will need subsidies and taxes to act as carrots and sticks.

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has advocated for the proposal of [50% protection and sustainably managing 50% by 2050](#) as a post-Aichi framework. Nearly 1.7 million people (and counting) have signed an [Avaaz petition](#) calling on the EU and governments worldwide to agree to a Global Deal for Nature. And public opinion polling in Europe and North America shows about 70% support protecting half the earth.

Financially, experts are looking into new systems for making protection beneficial to countries. One of the more innovative schemes is [debt relief for protection of nature](#). The Paris Group swapped debt for protection of the 400,000 square kms of marine area around the [Seychelles](#). Avaaz is currently assessing how this scheme can be scaled so countries with critical biozones could have their international debt swapped for protection schemes.

The estimates on how much this conversion of our planet will cost vary from 25 billion a year ([see source](#)), to \$100 billion a year ([see source](#)). But the truth is the loss of Biodiversity could have a tremendous impact on our economies. One study says Biodiversity loss in Europe alone costs the continent about 3% of its GDP, or €450m (or £400m), a year. Also, the services provided by ecosystems are estimated to be worth trillions of dollars – double the world’s GDP. Taking that into account the cost-benefit analysis for action becomes quite clear.

Lastly, the beauty of this long-term goal for nature is that it compliments and will make real other international efforts, like the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ultimately this is about restoring harmony between humanity and nature so that both can thrive. The public and private sector must come forward with deeper determination, higher aspiration, and clear ideals about the half earth goal to save our planet -- the alternative is to witness the collapse of our ecosystems, our climate, and our planet.

Avaaz is bringing the voices of people from every country on Earth to the COP14 to demand:

- * *Ambition to agree on a new Global New Deal for Nature in 2020.*
- * *A strong 2050 Vision for Biodiversity with a north star to restore and protect half the earth, and sustainably manage the whole planet.*
- * *Creation of a High-Level Panel, like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) High-Level Panel (HLP) to ensure the highest political attention is brought to this crisis.*
- * *Support for the CBD Secretariat in its appeal for a Heads of State Summit for Nature at the 75th UNGA in 2020.*
- * *Innovative finance solutions to ensure the most bio-rich regions can address the collapse of biodiversity.*

Our global [petition can be seen here](#)

AVAAZ

WORLD LEADERS: PROTECT HALF OUR PLANET

To world leaders:

"We global citizens are deeply concerned by scientists warning that ecosystems critical to sustaining life on Earth could collapse in our lifetimes. We call on you to meet existing targets to protect biodiversity, forge a new agreement so that at least 50% of our lands and oceans are protected and restored, and ensure our planet is completely sustainably managed. This must take into consideration the needs of human development and have the active support of indigenous peoples. This long-term goal for nature can restore harmony with our home."

By 2020, two-thirds of wild animals will be gone. Life is being extinguished as fast as when the dinosaurs disappeared -- and it's happening because humanity is taking a chainsaw to the tree of life.

Unless we stop this tragedy, the Earth's delicate biodiversity could completely collapse, leaving our planet deathly silent and uninhabitable for humans. But there's hope - **top scientists are backing an ambitious plan to put half our planet under protection** and restore harmony with our home.

They say if we do it wisely, in a way that protects indigenous people from exploitation and land grabs, **we can save 80-90% of all species!**

Let's make this solution so famous, our leaders can't ignore it. **Join the resounding chorus of human voices behind the plan to stop the mass extinction before the Earth falls silent.**

Photo: Chris Bray

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1,656,582 / 2,000,000

1,656,582 have signed. Let's get to 2,000,000

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19 minutes ago Rosterd, Venezuela
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