

A ROCHA

UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP15) Response

After four years of negotiations and nearly two weeks of intensive talks in Montreal, Canada the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was successfully adopted at CBD COP15. We applaud this momentous commitment from nations around the world to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

Highlights from the Kunming–Montreal [Global Biodiversity Framework](#) targets for 2030:

- Scale up the conservation of species, the preservation of remaining intact ecosystems and the large-scale restoration of what has already been depleted. Importantly, the species component mandates action to halt extinctions of known threatened species starting now, and a tenfold reduction of extinction risk of all species by 2050. The role of nature-based solutions in achieving conservation is emphasized.
- Protect 30% of Earth's lands, oceans, coastal areas, inland waters, with emphasis on areas of particular importance for biodiversity. This also recognizes indigenous and traditional territories and practices.
- Reduce harmful government subsidies that destroy biodiversity by at least \$500 billion
- Increase biodiversity finance by at least US\$ 200 billion
- Reduce to near zero the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity
- Cut global food waste in half
- Secure at least \$200 billion per year in domestic and international biodiversity finance from all sources – public and private
- Take effective measures to ensure international sharing of benefits that arise from the use of genetic sequence information
- Reduce the risk posed by pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by half

These targets fulfill four overarching global goals for 2050, which seek to (A) preserve and restore ecosystems and halt human induced extinction of known threatened species, (B) sustainably use biodiversity, (C) fairly and equitably share the benefits of genetic resources, and (D) ensure adequate means of implementing these goals for all parties.

While we applaud these targets and goals, there are some places where the framework falls short:

- Of the \$200 billion committed to biodiversity finance, only \$30 billion per year by 2030 is set to flow from developed to developing countries. This is much too low if the laudable goals of the GBF are to be achieved.
- The GBF lacks quantitative timelines to achieve its goals by 2030. This suggests a lack of political commitment and urgency by at least some governments. If the goals of the GBF are to be achieved by 2050, urgent action cannot wait until after 2030.
- In Goal A, there is no mandate to halt the loss of the area covered by natural ecosystems, nor to reduce the risk of ecosystem collapse.
- While businesses are asked to disclose how they affect and are affected by nature loss, such reporting is not mandatory.
- Baseline data against which to measure restoration progress was not agreed upon.

Other news from the conference:

- A Special Trust Fund ('GBF Fund') is to be established under the Global Environment Facility to help implement the Global Biodiversity Framework.
- The Government of Canada pledged to fund Indigenous-led conservation projects totaling over \$800 million and establish a national Indigenous Guardians Network.
- Faith-based groups from almost every major faith tradition came together in 'Faiths at COP15' to jointly advocate for biodiversity.

Prior to the CBD COP15 talks, A Rocha International released a position statement outlining 10 priorities for the talks' outcomes. In the statement, A Rocha explains a Christian basis for involvement in discussions on biodiversity:

'Despite [a] clear and comprehensive [biblical] focus on God's love for all that He has made, Christians have historically been quiet on the imperative to care for nature. A Rocha hopes that through articulating a distinctively Christian voice in support of the need for greater ambition in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, greater Christian leadership in driving an ambitious biodiversity agenda forwards will be stimulated.

Given that Christianity has so many adherents, strong commitment from Christians for the recovery of nature across the world could greatly help in bringing about the enormous changes and improvements that are needed.'

Highlights from A Rocha at CBD COP15

A Rocha Canada's Conservation Science Director, Paul Simonin, took part in a multi-worldview panel discussing ocean conservation and protected areas. He shared about the linkages between marine biodiversity, poverty, gender and climate change in the context of fisheries-based livelihoods.

Later, Paul participated in a panel discussion about water quality and conservation of aquatic species in the Fraser River Estuary. This estuary is an important bird and biodiversity area in British Columbia which is threatened by industrial development, including the possible development of a new Roberts Bank shipping terminal.



Seth Appiah-Kubi from A Rocha Ghana presented on the [positive financing of nature-based solutions in the case of the Atewa Forest Reserve](#). Illegal mining, logging and farming, and government-initiated bauxite mining is threatening the reserve's biodiversity and rich ecosystem services.

Sarah French of A Rocha International spoke for environmental education at the 'Holistic approaches for raising awareness and changing behaviour' event. Connection, skill-building, and knowledge inspires care for creation that impacts communities and makes change at higher levels.



A Rocha hosted 'Vitamin Nature: Environmental Education for a Nature Positive Future,' displaying some of our environmental programming around the world, including Canada and Peru.

We also led an interactive activity, 'Council of all beings,' in which participants took on the perspective of an other-than-human being. These beings then share their perspective with each other and with humanity about their plight and the ways humans interact with them.



Avinash Krishnan of A Rocha India – and member of the IUCN Asian Elephant Specialist Group – spoke on his work addressing human–elephant conflict.

Daryl Bosu of A Rocha Ghana spoke on ['Innovations to better integrate biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction: the case of population in forest zones of West Africa'](#) at the Canada Pavilion. In particular, he shared about innovative environmental DNA tools they are using to better measure biodiversity along with the deployment of community–led monitoring frameworks.



Climate scientist, Chief Scientist of The Nature Conservancy and friend of A Rocha, Katharine Hayhoe moderated the 'Natural Climate Solutions: Nature – and Climate Positive Economy' panel at the Canada Pavilion. The conversation included representatives from Indigenous, farming, forestry, NGO, banking and government groups and focussed on opportunities to better integrate carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation policies.

COP15 was an inspiring opportunity to meet folks from around the world who are committed to conserving biodiversity. We applaud the ambition of the GBF, and now the challenge is to successfully implement its targets in a way that is fair, inclusive and equitable. We at A Rocha look forward to being a part of this process alongside the communities where we live and work.