



SECURE AN EQUITABLE AND NATURE POSITIVE, NET ZERO EMISSIONS WORLD

Non-State Actors' Call for Governments to Strengthen the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

ABOUT THE CALL TO ACTION:

The [Non-State Actors' Call to Action](#) for an equitable, nature-positive, net-zero emissions world is a multi-stakeholder initiative, which was launched on 7 September 2021 during the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille. It urges governments negotiating the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) to step up action and increase ambition ahead of the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) COP15 meeting which will take place in 2022, and set a global framework to govern our relationship with nature for decades to come.

Themes

This initiative calls for an inclusion of a nature-positive mission for 2030 into the GBF text, i.e. a “global goal for nature”; for ensuring that rights-based approaches are central to GBF implementation; and, for directly tackling the drivers of nature loss, such as overexploitation of natural resources, industrial agriculture and food systems, forestry, fisheries, extractive and infrastructure practices that are not in line with the needs and realities of humanity, peoples' livelihoods, and the care and preservation of Mother Earth and her ecosystems. Therefore, this call to action urges governments to strengthen action on nature, while guaranteeing Indigenous Peoples' collective rights, gender equality, and inter-generational equity, and while ensuring women's, indigenous peoples', and youth's effective participation in biodiversity projects and decision making. **Any activities that undermine action on climate change mitigation and adaptation, promote the increase of fossil fuels, or potentially harm human rights are not part of this call to action.**

Process

So far, this call to action gathered over 170 signatories from across society (conservation, development and humanitarian NGOs, youth groups, faith-based organizations, human rights NGOs, Indigenous Peoples' networks, climate groups, academia, artists, women's organizations, cities and private sector coalitions). As part of the drafting process, civil society representatives from Planetary Health Alliance (PHA), World Vision (WV), Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), Indigenous Women Biodiversity Network from Latin America and the Caribbean, RMIB-LAC, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Parliament of the World's Religions, and the Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS) came together to ensure multi-stakeholder perspectives are as much as possible adequately and appropriately reflected. Other supporters of the call to action include Oxfam International, Save the Children, CARE, Conservation International, Birdlife International, World YMCA, World Organization of the Scout Movement, Buddhist Tzu Chi, Anglican Communion, International League of Conservation Photographers and others. Please see a full list of supporters [here](#).

NATURE POSITIVE: GLOBAL GOAL FOR NATURE

What is the Global Goal for Nature?

The **Global Goal for Nature** defines the outcome of halting and reversing the [catastrophic loss of nature](#). It is supported by a number of organizations that ask governments to adopt the goal at the international level, which each country, the private sector, IPLCs, women and youth communities and others can contribute to achieving at local, national and regional levels.

A global goal for nature embraced at the highest levels will drive ambition in governments, business and society, to inspire and enrich the Convention on Biological Diversity [Post-2020 framework process](#), as well as create the opportunity for links between biodiversity and other conventions/agreements such as climate, ocean and land degradation.

Why is a global goal for nature needed?

Human activities are destroying nature at a rate much faster than it can replenish itself. The COVID-19 pandemic is a warning sign that the decline of nature is destabilizing society. A continued loss of nature threatens not only over [half the global GDP](#), but more importantly human lives, cultural diversity and wellbeing, with the poorest and most vulnerable hit first and hardest. As the climate crisis is deeply linked to the nature crisis, both need to be addressed simultaneously in a holistic and intercultural way and to drive a swift transition to a nature-positive, net-zero emissions future.

With climate, we have the clear goal of societal carbon neutrality, articulated in the target of net-zero emissions by 2050, with the objective of keeping global warming below 1.5°C. A similar measurable time bound goal is needed for nature, to ensure we halt and reverse biodiversity loss at the pace necessary, for people and in support of climate action and the Sustainable Development Goals.

A Global Goal for Nature - in parallel to the goal to halve emissions by 2030 and reach “net-zero” emissions by 2050 - would commit governments to be nature-positive by 2030 by taking urgent action to halt nature loss now, with the participation of all social actors, including IPLCs, women, and youth.

We need to halt and reverse nature loss measured from a baseline of 2020, through increasing the health, abundance, diversity and resilience of species, populations and ecosystems so that by 2030 nature is visibly and measurably on the path of recovery.

By 2050, nature must recover fully so that healthy ecosystems and nature-based solutions continue to support future generations, the diversity of life and culture, and play a critical role in avoiding the worst impacts of climate change.

The non-state actors’ call to action urges governments negotiating the Global Biodiversity Framework to secure a nature-positive world by 2030, for the future of both people and the planet. **Please note that while this call to action demands an equitable net-zero emissions world, it does not encourage offsetting that promotes the increase of fossil fuels (please see the two sections below).**

NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS (NbS)

What does NbS mean?

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are [defined by IUCN](#) as “actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits”. As the world strives to emerge from the current pandemic, NbS can act as an important ally in addressing societal challenges, such as climate change, food and water security, disaster-risk reduction, etc. In addition, the systemic environment in which NbS are implemented often finds structural barriers that can jeopardize local communities' epistemologies, and therefore, key enabling conditions should be considered for the successful implementation of NbS. The [Powering Nature report](#) explores both the structural barriers and enabling conditions required to ensure high quality NbS for people, nature, and climate.

What are the concerns?

There are many misconceptions about the NbS, especially when they are promoted without using adequate standards, criteria, and metrics. This is specifically the case where actions or goals to offset emissions are not coupled with prioritizing rapid emission reductions, aligned to the Paris Agreement 1.5°C trajectory. Another big concern is in relation to human rights safeguards, especially with IPLCs, which raise a flag with regard to inclusivity, accountability, benefit sharing, and the recognition of plural valuation with all stakeholders. It is in these cases where misinformation and the use of NbS as a greenwashing tool can take place. At the same time, common criticism of NbS often does not reference well recognized definitions, principles or standards made by [IUCN](#), [WWF](#), [the NbS Initiative led by the University of Oxford](#) or the [European Commission](#) in which local stakeholders, including indigenous communities' views and engagement, are paramount for successful implementation of NbS.

How to address these concerns?

For the first concern, companies striving for credible climate change strategies should follow a robust [mitigation hierarchy](#) - focused on real and Paris-aligned carbon emission reductions and maintaining ecological integrity and ecosystem functions first - and invest for climate change mitigation and nature positive impact to address remaining emissions. NbS is only one of many solutions. A good example is a [partnership that WWF has signed with HP](#) which aims to ensure paper printed with an HP product or service will help restore, protect, and improve the health of forests by 2030. In this context, WWF and BCG [recommend](#) that companies: (1) Account and disclose their emissions across the value chain (2) Reduce value chain emissions, in line with an ambitious science-based target pathway (3) Make a financial commitment that internalizes the external costs of any remaining GHGs, and disclose all assumptions, including the implicit carbon price (4) Invest the financial commitment on a menu of potential high-impact climate change mitigation and nature positive actions. These solutions could include NbS, new emissions capture technologies, and even business innovation and transformation efforts that can further society's move toward a net-zero emission economy. With regards to ensuring human right-based approaches, **NbS must always be considered as context-specific** interventions. We encourage the use of the [IUCN's Global Standard of NbS](#) for designing, upscaling and verifying an intervention which include governance of NbS and safeguards to nature and people as highlighted in the [Global Youth Position Statement on NbS](#); and, the use of [guidelines](#) for NbS for climate change that include an imperative that NbS are not a substitute for the rapid phase-out of fossil fuels, and are designed in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, respecting their right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

NET-ZERO EMISSIONS

What does net-zero emissions mean?

Net-zero emissions mean deeply decarbonizing the current industrial system and then balancing the amount of remaining greenhouse gases produced and removed from the atmosphere. The only viable pathways to net-zero include drastic reductions in emissions by about 90% of 2020 baseline year emissions. The IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C demonstrates that net emissions must be reduced to zero (i.e. net-zero emissions) in order to stabilize global temperatures at 1.5°C and avoid the most catastrophic impacts of climate change on people and nature. Global human-caused emissions of carbon would need to fall by at least 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net-zero' around 2050.

What are the concerns?

According to [Oxfam](#), using land alone to remove the world's carbon emissions to achieve 'net-zero' by 2050 would require at least 1.6 billion hectares of new forests, equivalent to five times the size of India or more than all the farmland on the planet. Furthermore, critics say that net-zero pledges for decades in the future risk delaying meaningful reductions in greenhouse gases in the short term, and provide cover to those unwilling to take immediate steps to limit emissions. Corporations have been accused of using 'net-zero' to block putting effective climate policy in place now and greenwash their image while maintaining business-as-usual.

How to address these concerns?

The definition of net-zero itself, as well as the path to get there, is interpreted in different and often inconsistent ways. Getting net-zero right involves immediate action to reduce emissions in line with a pathway based on sound climate science and Indigenous Peoples knowledge systems. Without this, distant 2050 goals will not be met. To avoid confusion and accusations of greenwashing, companies should adhere to the Science Based Targets initiative's (SBTi) net-zero standard and have their climate targets validated by the SBTi.

The Science Based Targets initiative's [Net Zero Corporate Standard](#) clarifies that science-based corporate net-zero targets require companies to take rapid action over the next 5-10 years and to achieve deep decarbonization of 90-95% before 2050.

At that point, a company must neutralize - through carbon removal - any residual emissions that are not yet possible to cut. However, the SBTi sets clear parameters that these residual emissions cannot exceed 5-10% of a company's emissions depending on its sector. This means that companies may only be able to use NbS for a small amount of residual emissions, and they have first done as much as possible to cut their emissions. Further guidance on neutralization will be developed by the SBTi in the coming years. External verification of corporate net-zero targets and annual progress reporting is also important to ensure action is truly in line with a 1.5°C future.

To help companies take the steps needed to truly address the climate crisis and help stop nature loss, WWF and Boston Consulting Group have also produced '[Beyond Science-Based Targets: A Blueprint for Corporate Action on Climate and Nature](#)'. This corporate climate mitigation blueprint aims to help companies develop a holistic approach that prioritizes Paris-aligned reductions and unlocks future opportunities for innovation.