



*International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty*

*Working Group on Agricultural Biodiversity*



## **Statement on the Zero Draft, made by Tammi Jonas**

We, the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) are here this week as organizations of small-scale farmers, small-scale fishers and fish workers, and indigenous peoples.

Our first comment on the Zero Draft is that while our people grapple with the worst impacts of the climate crisis induced primarily by industrial agriculture and extractive industries, this draft strategy to protect & conserve biodiversity in perpetuity is utterly lacking in ambition. While the draft itself acknowledges the need for transformative change, it fails to deliver the ambitious goals and targets needed to achieve this.

We note a concerning silence on the issue of human rights in the text, and ask the parties to apply a human rights lens to your deliberations over the coming week, acknowledging and recognising the individual and collective rights of all peoples, but especially Indigenous peoples, who have distinct rights guaranteed in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and small-scale producers, who have distinct rights recognized in the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, with particular regard for women and youth. Progress cannot be made unless we bring an end to the criminalization and repression of those who defend biodiversity and territories. People must be allowed to live in rural areas in harmony with nature, as indigenous peoples and local communities do.

One example of the lack of ambition in the draft is the reference to 'no net losses' – at a time when we are losing the very biodiversity on which our lives depend, this draft proposes that industries may still choose to wipe out biodiversity in one forest so long as somewhere else somebody is planting trees. We call on parties to reject this weak approach to securing the aims of the Convention to conserve biological diversity, and instead to set targets for no losses. We further note that this is emblematic of the growing movement to put a price on nature – such as so-called 'nature-based solutions', with the attendant damaging practices of speculating within new markets around carbon and soon perhaps, biodiversity, to its detriment.

The world's indigenous peoples and small-scale producers are the enduring and best custodians of biological diversity, and our control over our territories and right to land have been disappearing in parallel with the global decline in biodiversity. This is no coincidence. The zero draft fails to address issues of land tenure in an adequate way. The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework should set a target to strengthen the legal recognition and protection of local communities' and indigenous peoples' tenure rights and systems, in particular those currently not protected by law.

The draft purports to address the drivers of biodiversity loss, yet fails to name the most significant actors – industrial agriculture and extractive industries – and in failing to name them, many of the targets float aimlessly without clarity of who must be responsible for truly transformative systems change. We note that the Global North is disproportionately responsible for the destructive practices directly causing both the biodiversity crisis and the climate crisis we are in – the impacts of which are disproportionately borne by the Global South – and urge all parties to stand more boldly and support the radical changes needed. We recall that governments are duty bearers under the CBD as well as the international human rights framework, which are accountable to the rights holders. This includes to put in place public policies that regulate non-state actors.

We call upon parties to ensure that the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework reaffirms the precautionary principle and contains concrete guidance to parties about how to protect biodiversity and

IPLC's rights in the context of technologies, in particular biotechnologies and digital technologies. This should include, in particular, to implement effective measures at national level to identify, prevent and manage any potential or real adverse impacts effects of biotechnology and new and emerging technologies on biodiversity, taking also into account risks to human health.

The industrial food system is one of the main causes of biodiversity loss and the destruction of ecosystems. A transition to more diversified and sustainable systems of food production is therefore urgent. Through agroecological production and management, peasants, fishing communities, livestock farmers, pastoralists, and indigenous peoples preserve and enhance biodiversity. In a recent decision, the FAO Council acknowledged the importance of agroecology to preserve and enhance biodiversity and social justice, based on many years of concentrated thematic work. In this context, we would like to remind delegates that agroecology is based on our rights as small-scale food producers, indigenous peoples and communities, in particular our rights to seeds and biodiversity, as well as our knowledge, innovation and practices. Agroecological systems feed three quarters of the world with just one third of the land already, so we cannot help but question what vested interests make it so difficult to include agroecology from the world's strategy to preserve biodiversity.

We ask parties to ask some hard questions of what is not in the draft as much as what is in the draft, and act in the genuine interest of a sustainable and prosperous future for all. We small-scale producers and indigenous peoples here this week have concrete proposals to help parties enact truly transformative change – just ask us.