



International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty

Working Group on Agricultural Biodiversity



Closing statement, made by Marciano Da Silva

The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) is an articulated space representing 6000 grassroots organizations and social movements of Indigenous Peoples and small-scale food producers involved in the conservation, sustainable use, development and governance of agricultural biodiversity, which is the basis for food sovereignty.

Agricultural biodiversity is guaranteed by the women and men of the world who are peasant, farmers, pastoralists, livestock breeders, artisanal fishers, forest dwellers, indigenous peoples and other small-scale food producers who feed the world. The targets of the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework cannot be achieved unless the role and the individual and collective rights of the 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, are recognized and protected. People must be allowed to live in rural areas in harmony with nature, as indigenous peoples and local communities do while enhancing the world biodiversity.

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.

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.

Moreover, 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.

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. We were disappointed to hear parties with powerful biotechnology interests assert that the Framework should recognize the alleged positive benefits of biotechnology, when the only demonstrated benefit of biotechnology has been to create profit for a select few.

We acknowledge that small-scale food producers, also called 'peasants', are defined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas as any person engaged in artisanal or small-scale agriculture but, neither the CBD nor the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework specifically acknowledge the rights of peasants, in spite of the fact that they produce 70% of the world's food on 30% of its land, therefore having a critical role in preserving biodiversity.

The industrial food system, from the production to the consumption, 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. Agroecology is based on the rights of small-scale food producers, indigenous peoples and communities, in particular rights to seeds and biodiversity, as well as rights on knowledge, innovation and practices. make it so difficult to include agroecology from the world's strategy to preserve biodiversity.

We have had renewed hope, having heard many Parties recognize the role of agroecology as the most sustainable means of providing biodiverse, nutritious, and culturally-determined food to millions of people and communities around the world. It is also urgent to recognize the unique role of small-scale food producers in the management and sustainable use of biodiverse ecosystems.

The industrial food system and extractive industries are the primary causes of climate change, biodiversity loss, and the destruction of ecosystems, as witnessed in the recent devastation of over 16 million hectares of Australian forests and farmlands. A transition to more diversified and sustainable systems of food production and a rapid transition away from unsustainable energy, manufacturing, and transport industries is therefore urgent. Setting targets that increase the areas controlled and managed by Indigenous Peoples and small-scale food producers is one sure way to reverse the biodiversity losses the world is currently suffering, and we are relying on all of you here to show the vision needed to deliver a biodiverse and sustainable future for all.

Finally, we sadly must highlight how difficult it has been for non-English speaking peoples to actively participate in the second Open-Ended Working Group for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework processes, where the future of their land, rivers, and seas is being addressed without interpretation.

We ask that Parties to this Convention who have been similarly excluded from the work of the Contact Groups to join us in demanding interpretation at all future meetings to ensure full participation of all countries and civil society in this critical work.