



International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty

Working Group on Agricultural Biodiversity



Don't let agribusiness take over the Post-2020 Biodiversity Strategy

IPC declaration on its participation at the Second Open Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held in Rome, from 24 to 29 February 2020.

The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) participated at the Second meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework with a delegation of small-scale food producers. It was the only group present at this important meeting with such a large group including small farmers, indigenous peoples and small-scale livestock keepers, who are key players in increasing global biodiversity but are not normally taken into consideration.

Agricultural biodiversity is guaranteed by the women and men of the world who are peasants, small-scale farmers, livestock farmers, pastoralists, 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 collective rights of the Indigenous Peoples, guaranteed in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and small-scale producers, recognized in the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP), with particular regard for women and youth, are recognized and protected. Indigenous Peoples and local communities' tenure rights on their territory must be put in place to allow them to live in rural areas in harmony with nature, as they have done for millennia.

While peoples grapple with the worst impacts of the climate crisis induced primarily by industrial agriculture and extractive industries, the Zero Draft strategy¹ to protect & conserve biodiversity of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in perpetuity worryingly lacks 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.

The references to “**no net losses**” explains this lack of ambition: at a time when we are losing the very biodiversity on which our lives depend, the Zero 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 secure the aims of the CBD to conserve biological diversity, and instead to set targets for *no* losses. During the meeting, the IPC further noted that this is emblematic of the growing movement to put a price on nature – such as the 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 Zero Draft fails to address issues of land tenure in an adequate way. The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework should set targets to strengthen the legal recognition and protection of peasants' and indigenous peoples' tenure rights and systems. In particular, the CBD post-2020 strategy should reverse the colonial structures that reinforce oppression and death.

¹ To see the Zero Draft text please follow the link: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/>



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The IPC Working Group on Agricultural Biodiversity calls upon parties to ensure that the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework will reaffirm the precautionary principle and will contain concrete guidance to countries about how to protect biodiversity and peasants' and Indigenous Peoples' rights in the context of technologies, in particular biotechnologies and digital technologies. Countries should 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. Parties with powerful biotechnology interests asserted that the Framework should recognize the alleged positive benefits of biotechnology, when the only demonstrated benefit of biotechnology is the profit allocation for few hands.

The IPC stressed that neither the CBD nor the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework specifically acknowledge the rights and roles of peasants², as defined in the UNDROP, in spite of the fact that they produce 70% of the world's food on 30% of its land, playing a key role in preserving and enhancing biodiversity.

The industrial food system, from production to 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 genetic resources management, peasants, livestock farmers, fishing communities, pastoralists, and indigenous peoples preserve and enhance biodiversity. Agroecology is based on the recognition of the rights of small-scale food producers, indigenous peoples and communities, in particular their control over seeds and biodiversity. The IPC questioned what special interests have made it so difficult to include explicit recognition of agroecology in the zero draft of the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework.

During the meeting in Rome, many Parties recognized 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, revitalizing the hope. It is also urgent to recognize the unique role of small-scale food producers in the management and sustainable use of biodiverse ecosystems.

The recent devastation of over 16 million hectares of Australian forests and farmlands, shed the light on the negative effects of industrial food production. 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 the best way to reverse the biodiversity losses the world is currently suffering. Peoples relies on governments to show the vision needed to deliver a biodiverse and sustainable future for all.

Finally, the IPC sadly must highlight how difficult it was for non-English speaking peoples to actively participate in the whole post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework process, where the future of their land, rivers, and seas was addressed without interpretation.

²For the purposes of the present Declaration, a peasant is any person who engages or who seeks to engage alone, or in association with others or as a community, in small-scale agricultural production for subsistence and/or for the market, and who relies significantly, though not necessarily exclusively, on family or household labour and other non-monetized ways of organizing labour, and who has a special dependency on and attachment to the land. <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents>



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IPC will ask that Parties and other actors in this process, who have been similarly excluded from the work of the Contact Groups, to join in demanding interpretation at all future meetings to ensure full participation of all countries and civil society in this critical work for peoples' future.