



JOINT STATEMENT

Why BIODIVERSITY must be prioritised within the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) in the new EU Budget

The new European Union (EU) Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) can act as powerful tools to strengthen the EU's role in addressing the many, interlinked challenges facing the world today, such as environmental degradation, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, deforestation and climate change, which contribute to growing inequalities and instability. Addressing such challenges through the joint implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the objectives of the Paris Agreement, and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will promote inclusive sustainable development for Europe and its partner countries.

The next EU Budget and NDICI will be an important element of the EU's recovery plan and green transition post-COVID-19, and must reconcile economic development with nature protection, in line with the objectives of the EU Green Deal. On 20 May 2020, the European Commission published the **EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030**, a comprehensive strategy that provides the foundation for ambitious action to tackle the biodiversity crisis. While there is much to applaud in this communication, in particular the statement that the *“EU is ready to continue working with its partners and further increase its support post-2020”*, it is concerning that it does not mention any concrete, quantitative financial commitment for supporting global biodiversity conservation. This is a missed opportunity as the NDICI is currently being negotiated and that the Commission announced it would spend at least €20 billion a year on nature within the EU.

Climate change, ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss and the unsustainable and illegal wildlife trade, if left unmitigated, will undermine economies, societies, peace and security, and human well-being, including health. The emergence of zoonotic diseases like COVID-19, that spread from wildlife to humans, provides a stark demonstration of the dramatic societal and economic costs that can result from the destruction of nature. Addressing these inter-linked and critical issues constitutes the biggest global challenge of this century.

Recommendations

The EU as a global player has a responsibility to act and contribute to reversing these trends. It is at the heart of the EU's values, objectives and interests to continue to show leadership in promoting the sustainable management of natural resources, biodiversity protection and ecosystem resilience. The new NDICI provides the perfect opportunity to implement this important component of the Green Deal and demonstrate global leadership by providing significant, transparent and long-term funding to support healthy people and the planet.

As resource mobilization is critical for the success of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and a review of the current Strategy for Resource Mobilization, as well as an estimation of resources needed to implement the post-2020 framework will be released soon, we call onto the EU to come forward with precise commitments to support partner countries in protecting the world's nature.

We therefore recommend that the EU dedicates a high proportion of its future NDICI to addressing these challenges, in particular:

- *An **increased 50% target for climate AND environment relevant spending** should be set across future External Financing Instruments, to deliver actions with clear and identifiable **co-benefits across sectors**.*

This new 50% target for climate and environment relevant expenditure will enable investments to be stepped up in biodiversity and ecosystem health through the protection, restoration and sustainable management of natural resources, including the funding of nature-based solutions. Investing in healthy ecosystems effectively contribute to achieving climate adaptation and mitigation; strengthening resilience, including to natural disasters; and delivering multiple environmental, social and economic benefits, such as food and nutrition security, clean water, health and sanitation, economic development, jobs and sustainable livelihoods, peace and human security.

- *Within this 50% target for climate and environment relevant spending across future External Financing Instruments, a specific **window of 10% for biodiversity** should be defined. This will allow funding to be channelled directly to biodiversity and natural resource related priorities in support of partner countries' efforts to pursue their own commitments under the CBD and related multilateral agreements, and to contribute to global public goods.*

It is partly due to long-term EU support that some of the world's most significant wildlife and wild places remain in Africa, and this type of approach should continue through the new NaturAfrica initiative as identified in the EU Green Deal, and should be prioritised under the new EU Africa strategy.ⁱⁱ In this context, particular attention should be given to implementing the recommendations of the 'Larger than Elephants'ⁱⁱⁱ strategic approach to wildlife conservation in Africa and the study on the links between security and wildlife trafficking in Sub-Saharan Africa.^{iv} Lessons can also be learnt for EU support to other global regions, through the implementation of the 'Larger than Tigers' strategic guidance document for biodiversity in Asia^v, and a forthcoming similar study "Larger than Jaguars" commissioned by DEVCO for Latin America and the Caribbean.^{vi}

The EU should also step up its efforts to address environmental crime, including wildlife trafficking, fighting corruption and promoting good governance of natural resource, to which will also enhance stability, resilience and human security, including through the revision of the EU action plan against wildlife trafficking. We welcome the commitment in the EU Biodiversity Strategy to enhance EU support to global efforts to apply the One Health^{vii} approach, which recognises the intrinsic connection between human health, animal health and healthy, resilient natural systems. A better protection of natural ecosystems, coupled with efforts to reduce wildlife trade and consumption^{viii} will help prevent and build up resilience to possible future diseases and pandemics. Protecting ecological integrity^{ix} should also be a priority action within any comprehensive plan to avoid future zoonotic outbreaks.

Protecting ecological integrity should include enhanced EU support to combat deforestation and forest degradation, as outlined in the EU Communication to protect and restore the world's forests^x, including through the adoption of EU Forest Partnership Agreements^{xi} with priority countries and regions. This type of integrated approach can help to address the root causes of deforestation, including poverty, weak forest governance and land tenure issues, and help achieve a number of linked objectives including biodiversity conservation, climate mitigation and adaptation, while providing socio-economic benefits to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

-
- ⁱ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1590574123338&uri=CELEX:52020DC0380>
- ⁱⁱ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/communication-eu-africa-strategy-join-2020-4-final_en.pdf
- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/b4life/wiki/african-wildlife-conservation-strategy>
- ^{iv} <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/53ed0515-de76-11e9-9c4e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>
- ^v <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/93b375bc-4769-11e8-be1d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>
- ^{vi} https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/brochure-jaguars-summary-20191014_en.pdf
- ^{vii} www.who.int/features/qa/one-health/en
- ^{viii} www.wcs.org/get-involved/updates/wcs-issues-policy-on-reducing-risk-of-future-zoonotic-pandemics
- ^{ix} www.wcs.org/get-involved/updates/wcs-issues-report-on-links-between-ecological-integrity-and-human-health
- ^x https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/eu-communication-2019-stepping-eu-action-protect-and-restore-worlds-forests_en
- ^{xi} <https://brussels.wcs.org/Portals/0/Brussels/Briefing%20-%20Forest%20Partnerships.pdf?ver=2020-06-23-121136-807>