

AU Meeting of Experts on Wildlife and Biodiversity
19 May 2022 || Gaborone, Botswana

COLLECTIVE STATEMENT FROM SELECT AFRICAN CSOs

CHAIR,

First, we would like to applaud the African Union Commission for convening African experts on wildlife and biodiversity and to thank you for creating a space for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to take part in these important discussions. Africa's successes in conserving biodiversity are arguably greatest when diverse actors harness the range of their perspectives and approaches to advance a common agenda and African priorities.

Second, we highlight that this statement is presented on behalf of:

- The African Civil Society Biodiversity Alliance – ACBA, which represents over 80 biodiversity CSOs from all regions of Africa;
- The African Wildlife Foundation – AWF;
- Conservation International;
- TRAFFIC; and
- The World-Wide Fund for Nature – WWF (Regional Office for Africa).

Third, we wish to articulate the following collective perspectives of these CSOs on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in the Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and the work of the expert group on wildlife:

Convention on Biological Diversity

We commend the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) on Biodiversity for their representation of the African voice in the CBD, especially in the recently concluded meetings in Geneva.

We offer the following perspectives on the key issues related to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF):

- African parties need to reinforce commitment to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030. Key drivers that must be effectively managed include: ever-increasing economic growth, unsustainable production and consumption patterns, corporate capture, and decontextualized technology-driven approaches to solving Africa's problems;
- Sustainable use and management of biodiversity is key to conserving Africa's biodiversity and supporting livelihoods and addressing poverty. Therefore, as the negotiations continue, it must not be undermined and the Post-2020 GBF must ensure a balance between the 3 objectives of the Convention;

- The ability of African and other developing country parties to address the biodiversity emergency is hampered by inadequate financing and other means of implementation. Securing adequate, predictable and sustainable financing from a variety of sources, efficiently using existing resources, and redirecting or halting public and private financial flows that are harmful to biodiversity is therefore essential to nature-positive outcomes across all sectors;
- We emphasize that there must be fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources in any form and format. Therefore, Digital Sequence Information is urgent and is linked to resource mobilization. Consequently, it should be addressed in the forthcoming Post-2020 GBF to guard against the growing menace of biopiracy.
- Further, capacity building should be prioritized and made accessible to Parties and stakeholders vulnerable to biodiversity loss and fundamental to stronger conservation outcomes- women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and others.
- The UNFCCC COP 27 being held in Egypt in November 2022 is a chance for effective and stronger participation by African countries and to ensure coherence, safeguarding against any action aimed at climate change having unintended adverse impacts on biodiversity and people and that they prioritize African-relevant solutions for the climate and biodiversity emergencies.
- A robust mechanism for reviewing and reporting in a timely manner should be agreed as an integral part of the Post 2020 GBF.
- We recognize the important role of area-based conservation in halting biodiversity loss and urge African parties to prioritize effective management of existing Protected and Conserved areas (PCAs). Any further expansion of such areas should be informed by the African context, respecting for the rights of IPLCs given the significant biodiversity outside protected areas. It is important to note that protected areas must be complemented by the 100% sustainable management of other productive ecosystems

Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Fauna and Flora

- We commend the African Union Commission for convening this meeting which should lay the foundation for greater dialogue between African experts on CBD and Wildlife. We believe that dialogue between conventions is necessary and can enhance their complementarity and enable African countries to strengthen outcomes for biodiversity.
- Under the CBD and UNFCCC conventions. The African Group of Negotiators have been pivotal in mobilisation African priorities and facilitating formulation of common positions. We urge the African countries to explore the possibility of creating an AGN for CITES.

Expert group on Wildlife

- We commend the African Union Commission (AUC) for its leadership in the development and adoption of the African Strategy on “Combatting Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa”. We recognise the importance of this overarching strategy in combating illegal wildlife trade and the role of the AUC in driving its implementation in a collaborative manner.
- We further appreciate the AUC on its effort in guiding and supporting regional bodies and member states to effectively implement the strategy through their sub-regional and national strategies.

In Conclusion;

We look at this meeting as an indicator of commitment to strengthen engagement and cooperation and offer our support to this end.

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