Tackling the 3 Global Crises – A focus on biodiversity

Policy Statement from A Rocha to the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

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Executive Summary

We are facing a three-fold crisis like no other previously experienced in the history of humanity. Fundamentally, these issues are driven by humanity's over-consumption and are leading to the rapid loss of our planet's biodiversity, climate change and a rapid increase in the global average temperature, and increasing inequality and poverty. There are five clear drivers feeding these crises: our over-demand for food, water and energy; built infrastructure; waste and pollution. If we are to tackle all three of these crises, the drivers must be addressed.

However, in recent times biodiversity has often been considered to be of lesser importance - or even a luxury - when compared to other challenges we are facing. As this paper argues, if we are to tackle climate change, poverty and inequality, biodiversity must all be seen as of equal importance. To overcome the biodiversity crisis, we need to see serious political commitment to achieving biodiversity targets, long-term, sustainable and diverse funding solutions, and creative incentives that favour biodiversity-friendly decision-making, alongside enforcement of nature protection from local to national to global scales.

About A Rocha

A Rocha is a Christian organisation seeking to live out a faith by undertaking scientific research, environmental education and community-based conservation projects. Founded in 1983 as a Christian conservation organisation, A Rocha aims to give practical expression to the conviction that it is a completely normal part of the Christian life to care for the environment.

A Rocha has five distinctive commitments, known as its 5 Cs:

1. **Christian**: Underlying all we do is our biblical faith in the living God, who made the world, loves it and entrusts it to the care of human society
2. **Conservation**: We carry out research for the conservation and restoration of the natural world and run environmental education programmes for people of all ages
3. **Community**: Through our commitment to God, each other, and the wider creation, we aim to develop good relationships both within the A Rocha family and in our local communities
4. **Cross-cultural**: We draw on the insights and skills of people from diverse cultures, both locally and around the world
5. **Cooperation**: We work in partnership with a wide variety of organizations and individuals who share our concerns for a sustainable world

A Rocha bases this policy statement to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity on these five commitments.

Where do we work?

Today, A Rocha is a worldwide family of over 20 organizations which undertake scientific research, environmental education and community-based conservation projects. In 2019, we engaged with over 69,000 people through our environmental education activities and theological teaching programmes, supported the conservation of 97 species listed as threatened of the IUCN Red List of Threatened species, and helped manage over 175,000 hectares of natural habitat.

Below are two cases studies from A Rocha organisations in the UK and Kenya, to illustrate the types of work we undertake.

Case Study 1: Eco-Church

At its heart, Eco Church is an award scheme for churches who want to demonstrate their faith in God through caring for His creation. Initially developed by A Rocha UK, the Eco Church concept aims to help churches assess their impact on the planet and their response to the environmental crisis through an awards scheme and accompanying resources. It encourages churches to think about how they care for their buildings and land, how they engage with their local community and other global campaigns, and how individuals' personal lifestyle choices might be impacting the planet. Churches can collect this information and register themselves for a prestigious 'Eco Church Award' and, depending on the scale of their work, may be given a bronze, silver or gold award.

In recent years, we have seen the Eco Church concept developed in the UK being applied in other countries. A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand has launched its own version of Eco Church[1], with many other nations where A Rocha works also taking an interest. Whilst the scheme will need to be adapted to suit different contexts, the desire to see churches thoughtfully engage with their impact on creation is one of A Rocha's key ambitions.

Case Study 2: Dakatcha Woodland

The Dakatcha Woodland is located around 150 km north of Mombasa, Kenya, roughly 25 to 50 km inland from the coast. It is an important water catchment area in a water-scarce landscape, protecting the fragile soil from erosion and moderating the local climate. It is also a designated Key Biodiversity Area (KBA and forms part of the East African Coastal Forests Hotspot). Covering an area of 465,070 acres, the Dakatcha Woodland is home to 13 globally threatened species, including four classified as 'Endangered' in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

However, a large and growing human population depends on resources from the forest for its energy and construction needs. At present, just under 50% of the area remains as woodland or forest, with the other half used for agriculture. In the last few years, A Rocha Kenya has begun to purchase land in order to create a nature reserve and safeguard this indigenous forest from being destroyed. In particular, the rapid expansion of pineapple plantations has become one of the most urgent threats to the habitat. A Rocha Kenya, which has been working in the Dakatcha Woodland for over a decade, has now purchased 200 acres of forest to create the Kirosa Scott Reserve. We hope to see this area expand as more land becomes available to buy.

Why write a policy statement?

[1] *Eco Church, A Rocha NZ.* https://www.ecochurch.org.nz/

A Rocha notes that there has been no significant Christian input to previous COPs of the CBD, despite the explicit mention of the importance of faith-based organisations as essential in the successful achievement of biodiversity targets. For this reason, A Rocha has decided to articulate a distinctively Christian voice in support of the need for much greater ambition in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

The Biodiversity Challenge

Numerous authoritative and internationally agreed scientific assessments confirm that our world is facing a crisis unlike any other in its history[2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10]. These reports cover different aspects of the challenges we face, but collectively they tell the same story. Over-consumption by humans (which can be linked to political ideology, consumerism and economic systems), especially in wealthier countries, is making unsustainable demands on the planet in terms of food, water and energy with enormous consequences for the biosphere. In addition, rapidly expanding infrastructure (including human habitation, mines, roads, dams, etc) is destroying and fragmenting habitats, whilst waste and pollution are the by-products of careless human activities. Collectively, these five drivers (food, water and energy over-demand, built infrastructure and waste/pollution) have caused and are driving three closely interlocked, major global crises: 1) biodiversity loss; 2) climate change; and 3) poverty and inequality. Unfortunately, each of these three crises then impacts negatively on the other two: biodiversity loss drives climate change and poverty and inequality; climate change drives biodiversity loss and poverty and inequality; and poverty and inequality can have negative impacts on biodiversity loss and climate change because the poorest are forced to prioritise short-term survival over longer-term sustainability. However, it is important to mention here that it is the over-consumption by wealthier societies that is fundamentally driving biodiversity loss and climate change. The result of all this is the negative global spiral – a vortex – in which we are now seemingly trapped, and which will have catastrophic results for all life on earth unless we can break out of it.[11] The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how tightly linked apparently different issues are – specifically that human, animal and environmental health cannot be completely separated from each other. We need multisectoral approaches if we are to succeed.

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2 *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. https://www.iucnredlist.org.

3 IPBES (2019) *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.383167.

4 Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2020) *Global Biodiversity Outlook 5*. https://www.cbd.int/gbo/gbo5/publication/gbo-5-en.pdf.

5 Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (2017) *Global Land Outlook, first edition.* https://knowledge.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2018-06/GLO%20English_Full_Report_rev1.pdf.

6 Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. (2018). *Global Wetland Outlook: State of the World's Wetlands and their Services to People*. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b256c78e17ba335ea89fe1f/t/5ca36fb7419202af31e1de33/1554214861856/Ramsar+GWO_ENGLISH_WEB+2019UPDATE.pdf.

7 United Nations (2015) *First Global Integrated Marine Assessment – "World Ocean Assessment I"*. https://www.un.org/regularprocess/content/first-world-ocean-assessment.

8 IPCC (2018) *Global Warming of 1.5°C.* https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/.

9 UN Environment Programme (2019) *Global Environmental Outlook 6 – Healthy Planet, Healthy People*. https://www.unep.org/resources/global-environment-outlook-6.

10 Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General (2019) *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development.* *https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24797GSDR_report_2019.pdf*.

11 Rockström J. et all, (2009) "Planetary boundaries: Exploring the safe operating space for humanity", *Ecol. Soc. 14*, 32. http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss2/art32/

Because of their interlocking nature, it is not possible to address any of these crises (biodiversity, climate, poverty and inequality) on their own. We have to address all three together. However, the biodiversity crisis has received much less attention than the other two from the world's governments, and a step change is therefore needed to reprioritise biodiversity conservation in terms of policy reforms, allocation of funding and building of capacity. Too often major decisions are taken – for example in agriculture, mining, electricity generation, infrastructure development, or even climate change – without any serious consideration of the impacts of the decisions on biodiversity; or if biodiversity is considered, it is often considered to be of lesser importance – or even a luxury – compared with other challenges facing humanity. But we will not break out of the ecological vortex in which we find ourselves unless the needs of biodiversity are front and centre in our priorities and decisions.

Related to this, is the tendency for governments and the private sector to regard biodiversity as being handled solely by ministries of environment. However, all economic sectors have impacts on biodiversity, and decisions in all of them are still routinely taken without serious consideration of biodiversity. Every day we learn of new plans to mine in places with unique species occurring nowhere else, or building dams in protected areas, or roads through pristine forests. If we are to bend the curve of biodiversity loss so that nature is recovering from 2030 onwards, such project ideas should not even be allowed to proceed beyond the initial concept stage, and yet today they are still going ahead in most parts of the world. Governments and the private sector need to wake up to the fact that reversing the decline of biodiversity loss will mean that many cherished projects can no longer be implemented, and approvals for development that are based on inadequate or often spurious offset structures should similarly be rejected.

In recent centuries, both the human population and the global economy have grown at the expense of biodiversity. Clearly this cannot continue for much longer. A growing body of evidence suggests that there is much scope for shifting the basis of the economy so that instead of plundering nature, it restores nature in order to support human wellbeing. For example, one recent study suggests that more sustainable agriculture coupled with forest protection could deliver significant and lasting economic benefits, which subsequently could result in lasting low-carbon economic growth from a reformed economy[12]. While Christians will want to question whether endless economic growth is truly compatible with human and ecological flourishing, we need to ensure the needs of all people – especially the poor – are met, and do so in a way that is compatible with ecological limits. In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on finding 'nature-based solutions'[13] to societal challenges such as biodiversity loss, poverty, climate change and food security, and there is some evidence that radical reforms to the underlying basis of the global economy might help to achieve this. A well-publicized initiative to develop new economic systems that enable us to live within "planetary boundaries"[14] is "Doughnut Economics"[15].

The Christian Basis for our Concern

For Christians, the basis for caring for the Earth runs even deeper than the need to break out of the vortex. Our first motivation is based on God's concern for life on earth in all its variety. This concern

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[12] The Global Commission on the Economy and Climate (2018) The New Climate Economy. https://newclimateeconomy.report//2018.

[13] IUCN (2020) *IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions*. https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2020-020-En.pdf.

[14] Rockström, J. *et al.* (2009) A safe operating space for humanity. *Science* 461: 472-475,

[15] Doughnut Economics. https://www.kateraworth.com/doughnut/

is woven into the central themes of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation[16]. In Genesis 1, God's delight in trees, other plants, fish, mammals, birds and 'creeping things' is repeated, culminating in God declaring 'all that He had made' to be very good. Psalm 24:1-2 tells us that the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it. He created and sustains all life and, although God allows us to make use of nature, the earth and its creatures remain His, and we are answerable to God for our use or abuse of them.

Biodiversity is also at the heart of God's plan for redemption and renewal[17]. Throughout Genesis, we continually see God sharing the task of caring for creation with humanity, instructing them to join His work of sustaining and renewing life on earth. In Genesis 7, the saving covenant that follows the flood is crucially not only with humanity, but also with 'every living creature on the earth'; and the final chapters of the Bible show creatures of all kinds worshipping God (Revelation 5:13), with a vision of eternity where animals and humans live peacefully together.

There are, of course, many other motivations for caring for God's creation that there is not space to cover here. However, the understanding that we are made in the image of God, and that we have been asked to steward and tend what He has made, is a clear instruction to humanity from Genesis to Revelation.

And yet, despite this clear and comprehensive focus, Christians have historically been quiet on the imperative to care for nature in all of its diversity and beauty. There has been no significant Christian input to previous COPs of the CBD, but we note that the first draft of the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework explicitly mentions in Paragraph 15 that faith-based organisations are an enabling condition required for successful achievement of the targets. For this reason, A Rocha has decided to articulate a distinctively Christian voice in support of the need for much greater ambition in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework than was the case in the previous targets agreed by the CBD. We do this in the hope of stimulating much greater Christian leadership in driving an ambitious biodiversity agenda forwards – an agenda totally linked with those on fighting climate change, and on ending poverty and inequality. In this regard, among other recent developments, we are encouraged by the 2015 Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* by Pope Francis[18], and by recent Christian engagement (for example by Tearfund, World Vision, Christian Aid and CAFOD) in the 2020 Bond Development and Environment Group Report[19]. Given that Christianity has so many adherents, strong commitment from Christians for the recovery of nature across the world could greatly help in bringing about the enormous changes and improvements that are needed.

Achieving Biodiversity Conservation Targets

Over the past nearly 20 years, we have seen the world's governments come together from time to time to agree targets for conserving biodiversity. In 2002, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted a target to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. We didn't reach that target – not even close. So, in 2010, the governments agreed a 'strategic plan for biodiversity', including the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, to be achieved by 2020. We didn't get close

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[16] Bookless, D. (2021) 10 reasons why extinction matters to God. *A Rocha Field Notes* 64:12-13. https://www.arocha.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Field_Notes_issue64_2021_WEB.pdf.

[17] A Rocha International, World Evangelical Alliance and Lausanne/WEA Creation Care Network (2020) *An Evangelical Call to Action on Biodiversity*. https://www.weacreationcare.org/call-to-action-on-biodiversity.

[18] Vatican (2015) *Encyclical Letter* Laudato Si' *of the Holy Father Francis on Care for our Common Home*. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

[19] Bond Development and Environment (DEG) Report (2020) *Addressing the Triple Emergency: Poverty, Climate Change, and environmental Degradation*. https://www.bond.org.uk/news/2020/06/the-triple-emergency-environmental-degradation-climate-change-and-poverty.

to achieving the Aichi Targets either. And in any case, because of limited ambition the Aichi Targets were not for the most part about actually stopping loss and bringing about recovery. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, cover nature conservation needs better than the Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2000 (indeed, biodiversity underpins 14 of the 17 SDGs[20]), but the bottom line is that we need a much higher level of implementation than has been the case so far. The world's governments are now negotiating a new Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework under the CBD, and, after nearly a 2-year delay, this is due to be adopted at CBD COP15 in Kunming in May 2022. Time is running out to take the necessary measures to avoid a global catastrophe, and COP15 might represent one of the last chances to take the bold decisions that are needed[21].

However, experience tells us that governments have set worthy targets for biodiversity before, but then have not been serious about implementing them. This partly stems from the lack of serious political commitment at a high level to achieving biodiversity targets, which is reflected in the voluntary, non-binding nature of most biodiversity commitments. A balance between enforcement and incentives is no doubt needed, but a biblical understanding of human nature, and of human-created institutions, is that though we might sign up to lofty ideals, for much of the time we then sacrifice these higher ambitions in the interests of short-term and often selfish gains. A Rocha's view is that not only does a radically ambitious Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework need to be adopted by CBD COP15, but that it needs to be backed up and enforced by legal measures and independent oversight in each country so that all sectors of human society are held accountable for its implementation. In particular, powerful economic interests must not be allowed to push agendas that are negative for biodiversity, especially when these are also damaging for climate change and undermine the rights, wellbeing and livelihoods of the poor and marginalised.

Despite the deteriorating state of biodiversity, there is also growing evidence that conservation actions really do work[22,23,24]. For the most part, the problem with conservation is not that it doesn't work, but rather that we don't do anything like enough of it. In fact, the amount spent on biodiversity conservation worldwide is extraordinarily small – so small that many countries could dramatically increase their conservation spending without it having a significant impact on their public finances. According to one recent study[25], 'current spending on biodiversity conservation is between US$124 and US$143 billion per year, against a total estimated biodiversity protection need of between US$722 and US$967 per year. This leaves a current biodiversity financing gap of between US$598 billion and US$824 billion per year', though this could well be a significant underestimate. Nevertheless, a ten-fold increase in funding is well within the capabilities of the public and private sectors and global philanthropy – it is simply a matter of commitment. However, it is not just a matter of increasing funding, but also funding in smart ways. For example, there is an urgent need to move away from supporting short-term (often three-year) projects that often do little to bring about lasting improvements. Conservation is fundamentally about bringing about long-term ecological and social changes, and these don't happen in three years or even 10 years. We need to see new forms of innovative, long-term, sustainable financing. Unfortunately, some of the

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[20] International Institute for Sustainable Development (2020) A Place for Nature at the High-Level Political Forum. http://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/guest-articles/a-place-for-nature-at-the-high-level-political-forum/.

[21] Schellnhuber, H., Rahmstorf, S. & Winkelmann, R (2016) "Why the right climate target was agreed in Paris", *Nature Clim Change* **6,** 649–653. https://doi.org/10.1038/nclimate3013

[22] Hoffmann, M *et al.* (2015) The difference conservation makes to the extinction risk of the world's ungulates. *Conservation Biology* 29: 1303-1313.

[23] Sodhi N.S. *et al.* (2011) Conservation successes at micro-, meso- and macroscales. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 26: 585–594.

[24] Garnett, S. et al. (2018) *Recovering Australian Threatened Species – A Book of Hope*. CSIRO Publishing, Canberra.

[25] Deutz, A. et al. (2020) *Financing Nature: Closing the Biodiversity Financing Gap*. https://www.paulsoninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FINANCING-NATURE_Full-Report_Final-with-endorsements_101420.pdf.

longer-term sources of revenue for conservation – for example funding from ecotourism and zoos – have suffered greatly during the COVID-19 pandemic, thus underlying the importance of diversifying types of funding. Another example of smarter funding is investing in building the capacity of locally-based community-focused conservation groups that are often best-placed to work in a cost-effective manner and with a lasting commitment to particular places. However, the key message here is that because biodiversity conservation has been shown to be effective, we can be confident that a dramatic increase in financing, if allocated in a smart way, will yield significant benefits to species and ecosystems.

It is also worth noting that whilst more needs to be spent, we cannot continue to grow indefinitely. Perhaps a key issue is not spending more money on conservation, but rather also spending and generating less money elsewhere, therefore reducing global economic growth. As David Attenborough writes in his book, A Life of Our Planet, "We have arrived at this moment of desperation as a result of our desire for perpetual growth in the world economy. But in a finite world, nothing can increase forever." One of the ways in which we can strive to counter act the loss of nature is by reaching economic sufficiency in wealthier countries.

What Needs to be Done for Biodiversity Now

A Rocha has prepared the table below which summarizes, from our perspective, the key components of the comprehensive, ambitious and long-term plan that is needed to stop the ongoing decline of nature, so that it is recovering from 2030 onwards:

Types of Actions to Save and Restore Nature	**Essential Targets to be Reached**
Space for nature and people	● More protected areas, better managed, in the right places ● The world's remaining large areas of wilderness kept intact ● All built infrastructure is designed and implemented to ensure the recovery of nature ● Agriculture is reformed to best effect for nature, climate and people
Water for nature and people	● Connectivity and water-flow in rivers is maintained or restored, where necessary through the decommissioning of dams and barrages ● Agriculture is designed to be less demanding of water and harmful agro-chemicals ● Strict controls on the release of all pollutants into the aquatic environment are tightly enforced
Legal and sustainable use of nature	● All use of wild species, including marine and freshwater fisheries, is managed within sustainable limits ● National and international rules on the use and trade of species are adhered to and enforced
Emergency action for nature	● Carefully planned, emergency actions to save all species on the brink of extinction are implemented ● Solutions for the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification on species and ecosystems, especially coral reefs, are developed and implemented ● Invasive species that threaten species and ecosystems are removed, and the release of potential new invasives is prevented

	• Solutions to combat wildlife disease, especially emerging diseases with no currently available cure in the wild, are developed and implemented
Humans for nature	• Local communities, and especially indigenous peoples, are empowered to implement conservation measures in the territories where they live • Opportunities for poor, marginalized and disempowered people to derive long-term benefits from conservation are developed and implemented • Agriculture is revolutionized so that it feeds more people on less land, and is less dominated by livestock • Greatly increased awareness and appreciation of nature in all societies throughout the world • Even more ambitious commitments than those already agreed are implemented and enforced to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change • Strict controls on the release of all pollutants into the environment are enforced
Governance for nature	• Funding for biodiversity conservation increased at least ten-fold by 2030, with a focus on sustainable, long-term, flexible funding models • Strengthened governance frameworks in place in all countries to ensure and, where necessary, enforce effective implementation of agreed actions, to require biodiversity needs to be factored into public and business decision-making, to improve knowledge and monitoring, and to track progress • Increased bilateral and multilateral cooperation between countries to achieve shared biodiversity goals, for example conservation of migratory species, or transnational sites

If these actions and targets really were implemented by 2030, we would see a massive positive change in the outlook for biodiversity. Another important consideration is that biodiversity is distributed very unevenly across the globe. This means that conservation actions in particular places can yield disproportionate benefits in terms of saving species and ecosystems. Conserving such Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)[26,27] is an essential component of stemming the tide of biodiversity loss[28]. There has been much discussion in conservation circles about the percentage of the earth's surface that should be protected in order to achieve a recovery in biodiversity[29,30], and without doubt we need a large expansion of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures. However, it is not just about the amount of land or water protected; it is also about protected areas being in the right places (often KBAs), as well as maintaining ecological connectivity across

[26] IUCN (2016) *A Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas*, Version 1.0. https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/a_global_standard_for_the_identification_of_key_biodiversity_areas_final_web.pdf

[27] *World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas* http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org

[28] Butchart, S.H.M. *et al*. (2012) Protecting important sites for biodiversity contributes to meeting global conservation targets *Public Library of Science ONE* 7(3): e32529. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0032529

[29] Dinerstein, E. *et al*. (2019) A Global Deal for Nature: Guiding principles, milestones, and targets. *Science Advances* DOI:10.1126/sciadv.aaw2869.

[30] Visconti, P. *et al.* (2019) Protected area targets post-2020. *Science Advances* DOI:10.1126/science.aav6886

landscapes and seascapes, and securing the rights and livelihoods of local communities in and around these places.

In our categorization above of the types of actions needed to save and restore nature, we have included 'emergency measures' for species and their habitats[31]. This need is something that is often overlooked in international negotiations. As a result of human mistreatment of the planet, many species are now so rare and threatened that they cannot be saved from extinction simply by removing the threats that they face. Such species require tightly-focused, proactive recovery measures – such as captive breeding and reintroduction – in order for their populations to recover[32]. There are also some threats – for example, coral bleaching due to rising ocean surface temperatures, and novel infectious diseases such as chytridiomycosis in amphibians – for which we currently have no remedies that have been proven to work in the wild. In such cases, research is needed to come up with new means to address these threats, but in the meantime, various intensive management techniques (often in captivity) will need to be employed to buy time, as we cannot be certain that solutions will be available to be used in the wild before it is too late. A Rocha is therefore advocating an 'Emergency Measures Agenda' to save the most threatened species on the planet. To date, such emergency measures have generally been funded and implemented by zoos, aquaria and botanic gardens, often with little publicity and recognition. Such institutions need much more support to carry on their vital work.

Specific Proposals to CBD COP15

The member governments of the CBD are currently negotiating the content of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The key document under discussion has been the so-called 'Zero Draft'[33]; a not greatly changed 'First Draft' was released on 12 July 2021[34]. A Rocha is pleased to note that many of the types of actions and results that we call for above are already included in the First Draft. However, we emphasize that the content of the finally agreed Framework will only be of value if the level of political commitment, the clarity of the targets, and the degree of enforceability of what is agreed, is much greater than was the case when the CBD agreed previous biodiversity targets in 2002 and 2010.

A Rocha is a member of IUCN – the International Union for Conservation of Nature, which is the global umbrella body of the conservation movement. As regards specific proposals for amendments to the draft Framework, we align ourselves with the thorough and detailed comments made by IUCN[35]. Essentially, the draft Framework proposes a Vision, Mission and series of Goals to halt biodiversity loss by 2030, with significant recovery by 2050. To achieve this, 20 Action Targets have been developed. As IUCN notes, a significant concern with the draft is that it lumps the outcome goals for species, ecosystems, and genetic diversity into a single, amorphous "biodiversity" target which is very hard to "slice up" into clear actions. Those sectors and actors (for example a city, or a

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[31] Williams, B.A. *et al*. (2021) A robust goal is needed for species in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. *Conservation Letters* https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12778.

[32] Bolam, F.C. *et al*. (in press) Preventing extinctions post-2020 requires recovery actions and transformative change. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*.

[33] Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2020) *Update of the Zero Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework*. https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/3064/749a/0f65ac7f9def86707f4eaefa/post2020-prep-02-01-en.pdf.

[34] Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2020) *First Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework*. https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/abb5/591f/2e46096d3f0330b08ce87a45/wg2020-03-03-en.pdf.

[35] IUCN (2021) *IUCN Position on Updated Zero Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework*. https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/iucn_position_on_the_updated_zero_draft_of_the_post-2020_global_biodiversity_framework_-_april_2021.pdf.

corporation, or a community) responsible for halting biodiversity loss and bringing about its recovery will need more specific, measurable and attainable targets if they are to succeed. IUCN also emphasises that it is essential that the collective implementation of all these Action Targets really does add to achieving the vision of halting biodiversity loss and bringing about its recovery. For the previous CBD strategic plans (in 2002 and 2010), this seemingly obvious requirement was not in place. In particular, cooperation will be needed between countries to ensure that the various national biodiversity targets that will need to be developed add up to achieving the global vision. If this is not done, it is hard to see how the global vision will ever be reached. Mechanisms will need to be developed to ensure that the necessary inter-country discussions take place; such mechanisms are not currently in place.

A Rocha emphasises the following key points for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework:

1. It is critical that the measures needed to address the three overriding global crises – biodiversity loss, climate change, poverty and inequality – are implemented synergistically through cross-sectoral approaches. In doing so, it is essential that biodiversity is no longer treated as the poor third cousin in terms of the priority that it receives.
2. IUCN's comments on the draft Framework include many important elements with which we agree.
3. The implementation of the Framework is unlikely to be sufficient if it is left merely to voluntary commitments. The agreed targets need to be legally enforceable in each country, and subject to independent oversight. Previous voluntary commitments have failed to bring about change and be able to compete with shorter-term interests.
4. Major development projects – such as mining, roads, dams – should not be permitted where these compromise the goal of ending biodiversity loss, and bringing about its recovery.
5. Funding for biodiversity conservation remains pitifully small. Not only should the level of funding be greatly increased – ten-fold across the next decade would be a good starting point – but funding mechanisms should be improved, with a move away from time-limited projects and towards longer-term, more flexible funding, with a particular focus on growing local-level, community-oriented conservation groups.
6. The engagement of churches – and Christians more generally – is critical in helping to achieve success in implementing the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. In addition to implementing conservation actions (as A Rocha already does), Christians should be actively holding their governments and the private sector to account to help ensure that the implementation of the Framework is sufficient and effective.
7. Local communities and Indigenous Peoples should be seen as key stakeholders for delivering conservation on the ground. This will require approaches that empower these people and seek to secure their livelihoods and rights.
8. As protected areas are expanded, it is important that the uneven distribution of biodiversity is taken into account. Special attention should be given to conserving KBAs and other critical sites for biodiversity conservation.
9. An 'Emergency Measures Agenda' should be agreed and implemented, focused on those species that need intensive recovery actions in order to be saved, and to address those threats for which we have no solutions in the wild. For some of these threats – such as novel infectious diseases and coral bleaching – research to develop new management options is a top priority. Without a focused 'Emergency Measures Agenda', we are very unlikely to see any reduction in the extinction rate by 2030.