



Support for UN-Water’s input on freshwater biodiversity interlinkages: Response to the CBD Zero Draft of the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

21 February 2020

We draw your attention to the recent UN-Water technical input paper, submitted in response to the Draft Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The recommendations set forth in the technical input paper have been endorsed by UN-Water and as such the paper represents the collective position of UN-Water’s 32 Members and 41 Partners.

We fully support the Open Ended Working Group as it meets with Parties to set out and review the Strategic Plan under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and formulates a global biodiversity framework that will include new goals, targets and indicators for 2030 and 2050.

The UN Water technical paper specifically focusses on freshwater biodiversity given that freshwater species populations have fallen by 83% since 1970. This is more than twice the decline as terrestrial or marine populations. Despite this, no global framework exists to guide policy responses commensurate with the scale and urgency of the situation, and the existing targets and indicators, including current Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which are simply not adequate to deliver the ambitious framework needed to motivate international action.

The UN Water technical paper proposes detailed suggestions on the new goals and targets of the CBD framework. It recommends coherent monitoring and reporting on all targets and indicators related to freshwater and biodiversity between the SDG and the new CBD frameworks. Moreover, the paper proposes that other actions should be strengthened, including addressing the drivers of freshwater biodiversity loss, developing capacity-building activities, reforming the governments’ responses to challenges, improving financial and technical resources, and enhancing public-private partnerships.

Emerging scientific consensus is pointing the way towards principal areas of action for protection and recovery of freshwater biodiversity, on implementing environmental flows, improving water quality, protecting and restoring critical habitats, managing over-exploitation of freshwater species and materials, preventing and controlling invasive species, and safeguarding and restoring habitat connectivity. These areas of action can form the basis of improved targets and indicators.

We strongly encourage the Open-Ended Working Group to reflect on the state of freshwater biodiversity loss, and consider these recommendations outlined within the UN-Water advisory paper and the priority actions under the Emergency Recovery Plan (ERP) for Freshwater Biodiversity. The technical paper and ERP represent the collective views of many organizations that call for better protection and management of our freshwater systems for people and nature.

(List of signatories below)

1. Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith University
2. Cardiff University
3. Fish Ecology and Conservation Physiology Lab-Carleton University
4. French Water Partnership
5. Freshwater Life
6. IHE Delft Institute for Water Education
7. IUCN
8. IUCN Commissions – Species Survival Commission, Species Survival Commission
Freshwater Conservation Committee, World Commission on Protected Areas Freshwater
Specialist Group
9. Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries
10. Riverfutures Ltd
11. UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
12. University of Washington
13. Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
14. Wetlands International
15. Worldwide Fund for Nature

Note that this letter is submitted without prejudice to any of the organizations' final positions on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.