ITEM 8(B). CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY
CBD/SBSTTA/26/7

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The current marine and coastal biodiversity programme of work continues to be relevant, especially in light of several complementary marine and coastal biodiversity decisions. There is, however, an urgent need for the recommendations contained within the programme of work to be implemented to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

- WWF recommends that the Annex of CBD/SBSTTA/26/7 (on the gaps and areas in need of additional focus under the Convention to support the implementation of the GBF) should include the need to better assess and understand the functional role of blue carbon ecosystems.

- Furthermore, WWF recommends that the mainstreaming of biodiversity should cover all marine sectors not yet covered by previous decisions and should not be restricted to ‘emerging’ sectors.

BACKGROUND

The current Programme of Work under the CBD on marine and coastal biodiversity as reflected in CBD decision VII/5 (2004), complemented by decision X/29 (2010) and supported by all other COP decisions on marine and coastal biodiversity, provides important guidance and recommendations for Parties, other Governments and competent organisations for the implementation of the Convention as well as the GBF. These recommendations continue to be relevant, and there is an urgent need for them to be implemented. Therefore, WWF recommends that such a notion be included in the text of CBD/SBSTTA/26/7 (see text recommendations below, in paragraph 4, as well as a proposed additional para 4bis).

These decisions, as well as guidance from other relevant organisations, if implemented, will significantly contribute to the implementation of the GBF. However, the gaps contained in the annex of document CBD/SBSTTA/26/7 merit further attention. WWF welcomes the list contained in this annex, but proposes two edits, namely:

1. The current marine and coastal biodiversity programme of work continues to be relevant, especially in light of several complementary marine and coastal biodiversity decisions. There is, however, an urgent need for the recommendations contained within the programme of work to be implemented to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

2. WWF recommends that the Annex of CBD/SBSTTA/26/7 (on the gaps and areas in need of additional focus under the Convention to support the implementation of the GBF) should include the need to better assess and understand the functional role of blue carbon ecosystems.

3. Furthermore, WWF recommends that the mainstreaming of biodiversity should cover all marine sectors not yet covered by previous decisions and should not be restricted to ‘emerging’ sectors.
In paragraph 1(f) in reference to blue carbon ecosystems, it is recommended that the functional role of blue carbon ecosystems be better assessed and understood;

In paragraph 1(l) it is recommended that the term ‘emerging’ be deleted as biodiversity mainstreaming should be addressed for all marine sectors not yet covered by previous decisions and not be limited to only emerging sectors.

TEXT PROPOSALS

WWF welcomes the draft recommendation outlined in document CBD/SBSTTA/26/7 and calls on SBSTTA-26 to consider the inclusion of the following proposed text changes in the final decision.

New text proposed by WWF is in red, bold and underlined.
Text that WWF proposes to delete is in strike-through.

Conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

(...)

VI. Recommendations

31. The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice recommends that the Conference of the Parties adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Conference of the Parties,

Recognizing the importance of marine and coastal biodiversity as one of the key cross-cutting elements of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework1 and as critical to achieving the 2050 vision for biodiversity,

Recalling paragraph 8 of its decision 15/4 of 19 December 2022, in which it decided that the Framework should be used as a strategic plan for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity2 and its Protocols, its bodies and its Secretariat over the period 2022–2030,

Recalling also its decisions IX/20 of 30 May 2008, X/29 of 29 October 2010, XI/18 of 19 October 2012, XII/23 of 14 October 2014, XIII/9 of 17 December 2016, XIII/10 and XIII/11 of 13 December 2016, XIII/12 of 17 December 2016, 14/8 of 29 November 2018, 14/10 and 14/30 of 29 December 2018 and 15/24 of 19 December 2022 with regard to cooperation and collaboration with relevant global and regional organizations and initiatives,

Recognizing the need to strengthen cooperation and collaboration with competent intergovernmental organizations, including organizations with competence in areas beyond national jurisdiction, in support of the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity, applying the ecosystem approach and the precautionary approach,3 and using the best available science and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities, with their free, prior and informed consent,4 within the jurisdictional scope of the Convention and its Protocols,

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1 Decision 15/4, annex.
3 Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.
4 “Free, prior and informed consent” refers to the tripartite terminology of “prior and informed consent”, “free, prior and informed consent” and “approval and involvement”.
Acknowledging the importance of science for decision-making, and welcoming the work undertaken under the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration,

Acknowledging also that, through the programmes of work on marine and coastal biodiversity and on island biodiversity, the Conference of the Parties has provided valuable guidance on a wide range of issues that is essential to the implementation of the Convention and the achievement of the 2050 vision for biodiversity, and that the guidance should continue to be referred to in efforts to implement the Framework,

Considering that valuable guidance also emerges from the work of other competent intergovernmental organizations, which complements guidance provided by the Conference of the Parties and should be used by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations in their efforts to implement the Framework,

Welcoming the capacity-building, experience-sharing and partnership activities facilitated by the Secretariat to support the implementation of the Framework, including through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative, at the national, regional and global levels, in collaboration with Parties, other Governments, subnational governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, and women, youth and other relevant organizations, and expressing its gratitude to donor countries and many other partners for providing financial and technical support for the implementation of activities under the Initiative,

Welcoming also the collaborative efforts of the Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, the International Maritime Organization, the International Seabed Authority, regional seas conventions and action plans, regional fishery bodies, large marine ecosystem projects and programmes and other relevant United Nations bodies, international organizations and regional initiatives to strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation on a regional and global scale in order to accelerate progress towards the Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals, including through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies,


2.  **Recognizes** that the programmes of work on marine and coastal biodiversity and on island biodiversity, together with relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties, still correspond to global priorities and contain guidance that provide essential support for the implementation of the [Convention](#), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and other relevant international instruments;  

3.  **Notes** that there are certain elements of the targets of the Framework for which there is limited guidance available under the programmes of work on marine and coastal biodiversity and on island biodiversity and which may require enhanced action and attention to implement the Framework, as listed in the annex to the present decision, and that such work may take the form of new guidance, where needed, the synthesis of best practices and experiences, capacity-building and development on the areas concerned and an invitation to competent organizations to expand their work in those areas;  

4.  **Stresses** that there are many areas of the programmes of work on marine and coastal biodiversity and on island biodiversity as well as of other CBD CoP decisions on marine and coastal biodiversity that have not been fully implemented and for which enhanced capacity-building and development, in particular for least developed countries and small island developing States, are needed;  

4 bis **Urges** Parties and invites other Governments and competent organizations to implement the recommendations contained in the decisions referred to in paragraph 4 above as a means to support implementation of the Framework;  

5.  **Invites** relevant global and regional organizations to enhance their work on the issues listed in the annex to the present decision, in support of the implementation of the Framework, recognizing that many other organizations have mandates and are conducting work on issues relevant to the implementation of the Framework;

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6. **Requests** that the Executive Secretary, with regard to the issues listed in the annex to the present decision, in collaboration with competent international organizations, and subject to the availability of resources:

(a) Enhance cooperation and collaboration with intergovernmental organizations and processes with competence related to those issues;

(b) Compile and make available relevant guidance and experiences on those issues from Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations and stakeholders;

(c) Integrate those issues, as appropriate, into relevant capacity-building and development efforts undertaken under the Convention, including through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative;

7. **Notes** the areas of work conducted under the Convention outlined in document CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/8 and summarized in paragraph 26 of document CBD/SBSTTA/26/7 that may be used to support the planning and implementation of the Agreement, and requests that the Executive Secretary continue the cooperation with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, and competent organizations, as appropriate and subject the availability of resources;

8. **Requests** that the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, convene an expert workshop, in collaboration with relevant global and regional organizations, on opportunities for scientific and technical work conducted under the Convention to inform the implementation of the Agreement, noting the modalities for collaboration and cooperation with relevant global and regional organizations in the context of the Agreement that are contained in document CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/8 and summarized in paragraph 27 of document CBD/SBSTTA/26/7, and provide the results of the workshop for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice before the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

9. **Also requests** that the Executive Secretary:

(a) Continue to facilitate capacity-building and partnership activities under the Sustainable Ocean Initiative in order to support the implementation of the Framework, including its monitoring framework, with regard to marine, coastal and island biodiversity;

(b) Continue to collaborate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, the International Maritime Organization, the International Seabed Authority, regional seas conventions and action plans, regional fishery bodies, large marine ecosystem projects and programmes and other relevant United Nations bodies, international organizations and regional initiatives to strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation on a regional and global scale in support of the implementation of the Framework, including through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies;

(c) Enhance cooperation and synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements, global and regional organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities as rights holders, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples⁶ and international human rights law, women, youth and other relevant stakeholders with regard to various thematic issues related to marine and coastal biodiversity in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁷ and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Annex**

**Gaps and areas in need of additional focus under the Convention on Biological Diversity to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework with regard to marine, coastal and island biodiversity**

1. With regard to marine and coastal biodiversity, further efforts are needed:

   (a) To enhance ecological restoration in marine and coastal areas, building on experiences across various ecosystems and sectors and on different scales (most relevant to Target 2 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework);

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⁶ General Assembly resolution 61/295, annex.
⁷ General Assembly resolution 70/1.
(b) To improve the use of area-based conservation measures, in particular other effective area-based conservation measures in various sectors active in marine and coastal areas, ensuring that such measures deliver tangible outcomes beneficial for biodiversity (most relevant to Target 3);

(c) To minimize human-wildlife conflict in marine and coastal areas, in particular with regard to threatened, endangered and vulnerable species (most relevant to Target 4);

(d) To monitor the genetic diversity of marine and coastal species (most relevant to Target 4);

(e) To improve understanding of marine and coastal biodiversity in mesopelagic systems, including with regard to linkages across benthic and pelagic ecosystems, in support of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in mesopelagic areas (most relevant to Targets 3, 4 and 5);

(f) To assess and minimize the cumulative impacts of various types of pollution when they co-occur in marine and coastal areas (most relevant to Target 7);

(g) To assess and minimize the impacts of light pollution on deep-sea ecosystems (most relevant to Target 7);

(h) To better assess and understand the role of blue carbon ecosystems and manage blue carbon ecosystems effectively in order to enhance their role in climate change mitigation and adaptation without undermining the range of other ecosystems services that they provide (most relevant to Target 8);

(i) To conserve and use sustainably biodiversity in sea ice ecosystems, and improve understanding of the impacts of changing sea ice extent on marine ecosystems (most relevant to Targets 2, 3, 4 and 8);

(j) To manage aquaculture in marine and coastal areas sustainably, with a focus on minimizing impacts on habitats and ecologically-important species (most relevant to Target 10);

(k) To improve understanding of the contribution of marine and coastal blue spaces to healthy functioning ecosystems and to human health and well-being, and to use blue spaces to support inclusive and sustainable urbanization and coastal development (most relevant to Target 12);

(l) To mainstream biodiversity into emerging marine economic sectors that have not been referred to under previous decisions, while also addressing collaboration across relevant intergovernmental processes (most relevant to Target 14);

(m) To understand and avoid the negative impacts that harmful subsidies in fisheries and other sectors have on marine and coastal ecosystems (most relevant to Target 18);

(n) To integrate gender considerations in the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity, including through the implementation of the Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030)\(^6\) in the context of specific marine sectors and ecosystems (most relevant to Target 23);

2. With regard to island biodiversity, further efforts are needed:

(a) To increase levels of ambition in terms of the percentage of degraded terrestrial, inland water and marine and coastal ecosystems under effective restoration and the percentage of terrestrial and inland water areas and of marine and coastal areas to be conserved by 2030 (most relevant to Targets 2 and 3);

(b) To promote ecological restoration in island ecosystems, focusing on ecosystems that can contribute to disaster risk reduction and resilience to various pressures (most relevant to Target 2);

(c) To engage various sectors and stakeholders in area-based conservation, ensuring that any sustainable use is consistent with conservation objectives (most relevant to Target 3);

(d) To identify islands and certain sites within island ecosystems as priority sites and areas for eradicating or controlling invasive alien species (most relevant to Target 6);

(e) To improve understanding of pollution risks on islands and levels of pollution that are harmful to island biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, taking into account food security and livelihoods (most relevant to Target 7);

(f) To assess and minimize the cumulative impacts of various types of pollution when they co-occur in island ecosystems (most relevant to Target 7);

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\(^6\) Decision 15/11, annex.
(g) To improve understanding of the impacts of ocean acidification on island ecosystems and enhance the resilience of ecosystems that are highly vulnerable to those impacts (most relevant to Target 8);

(h) To enhance the use of nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches across a variety of ecosystem-types and consider the full range of potential impacts of climate change (most relevant to Target 8);

(i) To enhance the use of sustainable intensification, agroecological and other innovative approaches in the agriculture sector, thereby contributing to food security and avoiding negative impacts on ecosystems (most relevant to Target 10);

(j) To mainstream biodiversity into sectors that have not been explicitly referred to in the programme of work and decisions related to island biodiversity (most relevant to Target 14);

(k) To improve understanding of multiple values of biodiversity across islands, in particular with regard to indigenous peoples and local communities, and integrate those values into planning and decision-making (most relevant to Targets 14 and 21);

(l) To integrate gender considerations in the conservation and sustainable use of island biodiversity, including through the implementation of the Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030) (most relevant to Target 23).