

RCEN Biodiversity Caucus

**Civil society consultation on issues related to COP-10 of
the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):**

Preliminary analysis of the Draft Strategic Plan of the CBD



Submitted to Ole Hendrickson
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From
The Canadian Environmental Network

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I. Introduction

1. In February the Draft Strategic Plan for the Period 2011 – 2020 was released as Annex I in the Executive Secretary note from the Convention on Biological Diversity “UPDATING AND REVISION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE POST-2010 PERIOD”. (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/3/3 17 February 2010) The Note also included Annex II which is the “Indicative Framework of Targets, Activities and Indicators for Implementation and Monitoring”. The Draft Strategic Plan puts forward the synthesis from some 50 submissions and 20 meetings that provided input into the draft. The Draft Plan builds on and improves the 2002 – 2010 Strategic Plan in many ways and particularly seeks to improve the areas of more carefully articulating the Mission and Targets, addressing the root or underlying cause of continued losses in Biodiversity and ecosystem services, and creating the reference by which Nations can become effective in implementing the main objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

2. The purpose of this brief is to consider the draft Strategic Plan through the lens of Canadian Environmental Non Government Organizations (ENGOS). In preparing this brief, relevant Secretariat documents were reviewed, as well as comments from observers and countries as posted on the Convention on Biological Diversity website. A face-to-face meeting and teleconference served to gather views from Canadian Environmental Network members on the draft Strategic Plan. Additionally, selected organizations were contacted and requested to provide feedback focusing on the strengths, weaknesses and gaps of the draft Strategic Plan, especially as it relates to section IV Strategic Goals and the 2010 Headline Targets, and section V Implementation, Monitoring, Review and Evaluation. The draft was circulated to the Canadian Environmental Network members for feedback before completing this final version.

3. The goal of the Strategic Plan is to translate the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity into action at all levels, while providing provisions for multiple actors or sectors to participate. The Strategic Plan will form the basis for work between 2011 and 2020. A reference in developing the Strategic Plan, the Global Biodiversity Outlook 3 (GBO 3) has identified continued alarming trends around species loss and ecosystem degradation. While not yet publicly released, GBO 3 paints a bleak global picture but also does note some gains. The Strategic Plans seeks to turn the potential consequences outlined in GBO 3 into calls for action, to multiply the gains identified across the globe through a more robust framework for National participation and to mainstream Biodiversity within all sectors and actors. The global 2010 Target to significantly reduce the rates of Biodiversity loss has not been attained. Over the last few years, extensive consultation on Targets post 2010 has been taking place. While not the specific focus of this brief, and well deserving of deeper analysis, the suggested 2020 and 2050 Targets that are the culmination of the consultation have been captured in the Strategic Plan draft, and should be fully integrated in the Strategic Plan.

4. The importance of the Strategic Plan cannot be overstated. This document establishes the fundamental root system by which we will collectively move towards a more sustainable approach that pulls Biodiversity back into the centre, where it needs to be to ensure a secure future. It needs to be visionary, but operational, allowing everyone to see how they fit into the picture. From a Canadian ENGO perspective, there is a need to ensure all aspects of the plan are accessible to the broader ENGO community to encourage Canadian ENGOS as well as all of Canadian civil society to take more concrete actions – we all have a stake, a role and a responsibility to do so. In order for this to happen, the Strategic Plan, once completed, needs to

be “translated” into plain language with a simpler format that inspires action, including a definition of Biodiversity that is easy to understand and to relate to. Before beginning our review, we would like to draw your attention to the following points which we feel do not necessarily fit into the Strategic Plan but should be emphasized. There needs to be a mechanism for discerning and ensuring that the roles and responsibilities of Party and non-Party states/countries are participating within the spirit and intent of the Convention on Biological Diversity, especially as it relates to negotiations. There also needs to be a thorough review of funding, participation and communications mechanisms, especially as they relate to promoting civil society representation not only from the global south, but also from the global north.

II. Note By Executive Secretary

5. The note section of the document includes both background synthesis and the suggested recommendation to the Governing body of the Convention on Biological Diversity for ratification in October. The distillation of the comments is well articulated in most areas and flows to a large degree into the draft Strategic Plan. However, we have some concerns regarding weaknesses in some areas of the note. Paragraph 9 does not include the concept of people being part of nature and takes a very anthropocentric view of Biodiversity. We have commented on this weakness within the body of the Strategic Plan’s Vision section. It is also troublesome that the concept of equitably sharing the benefits of Biodiversity does not fall within the Vision sentiment. This shortcoming is also explored in our comments on the Vision. As this brief is limited in scope, we offer the following general comments on the Note, most of which are further developed within our draft Strategic Plan comments.

6. For Biodiversity mainstreaming to occur in earnest, there should be more signaling to other civil society actors through specific wording within the Strategic Plan. This is a more common practice in other United Nations bodies and has been particularly successful in the Commission on Sustainable Development documents which highlight how civil society is implicated and can participate. The inclusion of a transparent mechanism that civil society can access and input into to ensure that countries, especially where there are ample resources, are meeting the expectations and requirements of the Strategic Plan would also be beneficial. This should be considered in the multi year programme of work (MYPOW) of the Conference of the Parties.

7. Within the MYPOW there needs to be consideration of how all the thematic areas and cross cutting issues are included if they are not implicit in the Strategic Plan. Other suggested considerations to enhance the Strategic Plan include greater integration of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Commission on Sustainable Development and identifying additional major groups implicit in the Convention on Biological Diversity for which focal points within the Secretariat would be identified. In terms of specific language within the draft Recommendation:

- 3 (c) should include the word **sustainable** before “...national development and poverty reduction ” (line 2) as we believe that this is the correct term (i.e. “...**sustainable** national development and poverty reduction”
- 3 (d) should read “... action plans in accordance with **this** Strategic Plan...” to clarify that said Strategic Plan is the Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity
- Wording should be added to 11 (a) to establish direct links to local level governance: “... including through regional and/or sub regional workshops **in which local governments are encouraged to participate** on updating and revising...”

III. Draft Strategic Plan for Period 2011 - 2020

Rationale for the Plan

8. The Draft Strategic Plan is an encouraging document and is generally well thought out with adequate descriptive direction that can be prescribed within a National and sub-national setting. The purpose and rationale for the plan are well articulated and generally sound, providing a substantial foundation for the Plan. The listed entry points include many of the critical elements needed to address the root causes of ecosystem degradation and habitat and species loss. This consideration of multiple entry points is vital for different sectors of society to adopt more sustainable approaches to biodiversity use and to promote biodiversity conservation.

9. Appropriately, the draft Strategic Plan specifies that a separate Strategic Plan will be developed for the Biosafety Protocol. This text within the Strategic Plan helps to signal the importance of the Protocol as an implementing mechanism for the Convention. It is worth noting that an International Regime on Access and Benefit Sharing is expected to be ratified in October, and that additional protocols may be introduced within the life of the Strategic Plan. In order to strengthen the Strategic Plan, a provision should be included within this section with reference to other Protocols that may be incorporated into the Convention on Biological Diversity.

10. It is our understanding that the Convention on Biological Diversity will be thoroughly reviewed at the Rio +20 Summit slated to occur in 2012 in Rio de Janeiro , Brazil. While it is expected that the three objectives of the Convention will remain unchanged, it would be prudent to refer to “the objectives of the Convention” as opposed to a specific number (“the three objectives”) in the event that additional objectives result from the Convention’s review. This would ensure that any reference to the Convention’s objectives in the Strategic Plan would remain valid regardless of the number of objectives.

11. The importance of entry points to reflect the goals of the Strategic Plan cannot be understated. Engagement, education and awareness-raising are fundamental, but must go hand in hand with laws and policies to significantly reduce the current rate of Biodiversity loss. Governments are the only institutions able to put in place policies and laws that are enforceable. This must be recalled in the Draft Strategic Plan in a way that calls upon governments to do so. It would also be beneficial to include a call to review state policies and laws to determine those that are incompatible with or that derail progress towards stemming Biodiversity loss, as well as to identify if new policies or laws are needed to move towards achieving state commitments within the Convention on Biological Diversity. Currently, the draft Strategic Plan is silent in this area.

12. In entry point 10 (b) water must be included as part of the natural resource sector, especially as it relates to service provision in a municipal setting. Agriculture should also be specifically mentioned as it is a key natural resource sector. While there is mention of the importance of ecosystem services and provisions (especially as they impact most at-risk populations through poverty) there is also no specific mention of an entry point linking economics to Biodiversity. In 10 (d) there could be a direct reference to the economic values of Biodiversity. However, it would be preferable to include an additional subsection (f) to highlight Biodiversity’s economic values such as the payment for ecological goods and services, Natural Capital and the economic

value of resilient ecosystems. From an anthropocentric perspective, Biodiversity as Natural Infrastructure needs to be considered within the global infrastructure paradigm. This shift could lead to an increased financial mechanism for Biodiversity.

Vision

13. The Vision in the Strategic Plan is becoming clear and the work done to date is commended. In our opinion, the Vision put forward still needs to include the sentiment that Biodiversity is essential for all species survival as well as underscoring the necessity of benefit sharing. As such we put forward the following wording which incorporates the missing sentiment: “ Living in harmony with nature, Biodiversity is **recognized as necessary for all species survival** and Biodiversity is conserved, **shared**, restored, and wisely used sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people”.

Mission

14. To distill the Mission for the Strategic Plan is indeed a formidable task. Given that this Strategic Plan has a strong emphasis on bringing Biodiversity out of the back rooms of policy negotiations, halls of academic institutions, or boardrooms around the world, the concept of mainstreaming needs to be placed within the Plan’s Mission. Additionally, the need to recognize the values of Biodiversity and the fair sharing of Biodiversity’s benefits is not articulated. The following wording to strengthen the Mission in these areas is suggested: “Urgent action to **mainstream Biodiversity and** halt the loss of Biodiversity, and by 2020 to: reduce the pressures on Biodiversity; prevent **human caused or accelerated** extinctions; restore ecosystems; **recognize the inherent value of ecosystems**; and enhance ecosystem services, while **enabling sustainable use of Biodiversity in a way that ensures equitable sharing of the benefits of Biodiversity**, thus contributing to human well-being and poverty eradication, and to have provided the means for all Parties to do so.”

15. It is our opinion that this wording enhances and deepens the Mission. By including the suggested wording the Mission will encourage broader uptake among all sectors of civil society. A final comment on the Mission is around the definition of “Parties”. If “Parties” in this context means only those countries that are members of the Convention, the final sentence of the Mission needs to be adjusted to include all levels of government, including those of non-member countries, as well as all civil society actors and organizations.

16. The pairing of Strategic Goals with Headline Targets is effective in creating a manageable set of targets within a nested approach. However the Goals and Mission are somewhat confused - understandably. Currently some elements of the Mission flow through to the Goals while others do not. In contrast, an element suggested for inclusion in the Mission in paragraph 15 above is currently a part of Goal A. In its current form, Goal A contains a “means” by which to achieve the Goal. We recommend that this confusion be addressed for consistency between the Goals and the Mission. A suggested approach is to use a Mission similar to the one suggested in paragraph 15 above. There would then be seven Strategic Goals from which each of the targets could be developed. In many instances, the existing targets could be redistributed under the Strategic Goals, allowing for the same number of targets. This would yield the following Strategic Goals:

Strategic Goal A. Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss

(Compared to the current wording: *Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society*)

Strategic Goal B. Mainstream biodiversity across government and society

(Note: this would become a separate goal)

Strategic Goal C. Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity

(Compared to the current working: *Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use*)

(Note: sustainable use incorporated into Goal F)

Strategic Goal D. Safeguard ecosystems, species and genetic diversity

Strategic Goal E. Enhance the promote the benefits from biodiversity and ecosystems

Strategic Goal F. Ensure sustainable use and equitable sharing of the benefits of Biodiversity

(Note: this would be a new goal based on “Enhance implementation through planning, knowledge management and capacity development, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources”)

Strategic Goal G. Enhance implementation through planning, knowledge management and capacity development

(Note: this would be a new goal based on “Enhance implementation through planning, knowledge management and capacity development, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources”)

If an approach similar to the above is accepted, it may be appropriate to bundle Goals A and C together as both are relative to the root causes of Biodiversity loss and degradation.

17. A provision for countries to add additional Strategic Goals as they see fit should also be incorporated into the Strategic Goals section. This would encourage countries to “make the Strategic Goals their own” while ensuring there is a common framework by which to measure and compare performance globally.

Targets

18. The redistribution of the Targets to align with our suggested approach to the Goals could be a fairly straightforward exercise. It may also be possible to combine Targets to allow space for inland waters, and at least one Target that links Biodiversity to economics, which needs to be reflected in the Strategic Plan. For the Water Target, the development and implementation of Integrated Water Resource Management could be considered for inclusion. A Target around increased efficiencies and water footprints might also be relevant, as would a Target focusing on water efficiency specific to human use. A Target that could integrate economic value must be approached cautiously as such a Target must underscore and relate the inherent value in species and function without turning them into commodities.

20. A critical urban Target has been overlooked and must be included in the Strategic Plan. Global population numbers are on track to reach 7 billion in 2011, just 12 years after reaching 6 billion. Consider the unprecedented urban growth and migration in recent decades, with 50% of the world population living in urban areas in 2008, a projected 70% of the population living in urban areas by 2050 and the fact that many countries have all ready met the 2050 prediction. This reality makes a Target for Biodiversity in an urban or cities context absolutely necessary. Such a Target would underscore the importance of Biodiversity with which at least half of the world population is in direct contact but would also allow for enhanced participation at the landscape level, and include a potential mechanism for connectivity to the natural world. This is particularly important to people who spend most of their time in a manufactured landscape, as there is a propensity to un-learn the values of, and need for Biodiversity. An urban Target is also relevant to poverty alleviation as the urban poor have less access to the free goods found in nature. Potential urban Targets could include percentage goals related to restricting permanent land use change that destroys ecosystem function and species diversity, to reducing ecological footprint and/or water quantity, and to water quality and water efficiency measures.

21. Target 10 is somewhat problematic as the wording could lead to focusing only on coral reefs and impacts of climate change in an oceans context. Suggested wording could be “Target 10: By 2020, manage the multiple pressures on **vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change, especially coral reefs, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning**” rather than the current wording: “Target 10: By 2020, manage the multiple pressures on coral reefs and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change and ocean acidification so as to maintain their integrity and functioning”.

Implementation, Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

22. The Implementation, Monitoring, Review and Evaluation signals the importance of countries to take the needed steps to enshrine implementation within a National and sub-national context. It strongly encourages transboundary collaborative work and knowledge transfer for successful implementation. This should be encouraged and fostered not just between neighbouring countries but also internationally. Countries have much to learn from each other about best practices and international collaboration (the global south helps the global north and vice versa) is a key area for work. The signaling of the importance of partnerships at all levels is applauded since Biodiversity and matters of the Convention are relevant to everyone, in all facets of their lives. The reporting by Parties and Review by the Conference of the Parties elaboration is also much applauded as important elements of the 10-year plan.

23. If the Convention on Biological Diversity is indeed reviewed in 2012, there should be careful consideration of including Cities or Urbanization as a programme of work, or at the least as a cross-cutting issue. The value of this, as mentioned in the Target section, is that it would shift the current urban paradigm to include consideration for Biodiversity as fundamental to decision-making.

24. The concept of Partnerships underpins the work of the Convention. Partnerships at the site or landscape level are necessary for successfully reversing the degradation of ecosystems and

species loss. It is important to enable not only national and international organizations, but also to recognize the value and work at the local level. Sub-national and local level civil society actors should be included in the wording of this section. In this way, these actors would see that they have an important role to play as recognized by the international community.

25. In the Partnerships section it would be appropriate to directly identify the need to promote a systems approach to land use planning or landscape change in which Biodiversity is considered through an economic lens so as to reflect the many values of ecosystems and species.

26. Country reporting by Parties would be strengthened by systematic civil society engagement. A mechanism for multi-stakeholder participation in country reporting would encourage greater participation and transparency. While this would be particularly important at the national level, the above holds true at all political levels.

Support Mechanisms

27. The Support Mechanisms section provides a good overview of the different types of support needed at different scales and according to different levels of country development.

28. It is worth noting that civil society actors could play a valuable role in capacity development. Involving people at the landscape level will create jobs, articulate specific roles and encourage a sense of responsibility toward – and ownership of - the Strategic Plan. Enabling the participation of civil society will allow them to embrace the Mission of the Strategic Plan. Furthermore, the recognition of the value of local actors to increase effective national action should be specifically mentioned.

29. The development of a Knowledge Network for Biodiversity as part of the Clearinghouse Mechanism is an exciting direction. This Network should include space for traditional and local knowledge, as well as practitioners and other interested parties, including those of the most marginalized people. Perhaps a Partnership section, similar to that of the Commission on Sustainable Development, is warranted. This Partnership section would have Type I and Type II partnerships, allowing for recognition of voluntary efforts to enhance the Strategic Plan.

IV. Conclusion

30. The draft Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity is generally a well developed and forward looking document that seeks to distill the complexity and multiplicity of the vast needs and scope of Biodiversity into something that all can embrace. It stresses the need for countries, and all actors, to engage and take action to sustain life on earth. It is a promising document, provided it is implemented collaboratively and across all lines. You will note that we did not delve deeply into the Targets or Annex II sections. While this would have been useful, it is an exercise that requires a more in-depth review and additional consultation. We felt that the suggested Targets, while not perfect or reflective of the comprehensive work of the Convention, do provide the framework for the sub-targets and indicators that will be necessary for Canada's implementation of the Strategic Plan.

31. Canadian ENGOs are keen to ensure that the Strategic Plan provides for indicators that reflect the indirect drivers of Biodiversity loss. This approach will facilitate progress in the thematic areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention on Biological Diversity. In starting to consider how to bring forward the Strategic Plan within a Canadian context, we offer the following key starting points:

1. Canadian implementation of the Strategic Plan needs to enshrine a cross-sectoral approach across government ministries and agencies. The Federal Government should move quickly to enable a multi-stakeholder working group to begin work on implementing the Strategic Plan within a Canadian context. A core responsibility of this group would be to review all Targets on a biannual basis, once the Canadian Targets were determined. This Working Group must include both technical and non-technical sub-groups. This Working Group could be modeled after the Voluntary Sector Initiative, which was a shared process between government ministries, rather than housed solely in one department. The Federal Government should also encourage a mirrored process in the Provinces and Territories and assist the local authorities to implement the Strategic Plan at the local level.
2. In considering the Targets in a Canadian context, ensuring keystone species survival is an appropriate and necessary Target. It is puzzling why this was not included in the Targets of the draft Strategic Plan. The use of an emergency prioritization approach which places Biodiversity as a security issue may be prudent.
3. As noted above, there needs to be a decoupling or drilling down into the Target to create the necessary indicators reflective of that Target. While certainly a daunting task, we caution the Federal Government to not get stuck in a debate over what is the best indicator. Our forward momentum must be guided by a constant feedback mechanism to ensure that the indicator is measuring what we wanted to measure with respect to the Target. If better or more accurate Targets are discovered throughout the process, there needs to be an ability to adjust toward better Targets. The use of an adaptive management process would therefore be most appropriate. There also needs to be a way to incorporate the concept of citizen science into the mix to foster mainstreaming of Biodiversity. A discussion needs to take place on how or if multiple Targets and associated indicators from civil society should be considered. The more space that is provided for broad-based civil society contributions, the more likely we are to mainstream Biodiversity.
4. Developing measurable and credible Targets, as well as evolving policies to keep the Canadian landscape moving forward, will increase the likelihood of slowing Biodiversity loss in Canada.
5. Data management needs to be articulated. The experiences with the Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network (EMAN) could provide a useful basis for a central

repository. EMAN has also been working on meta- data analysis. This approach will be needed in analyzing the indicator results.

6. In terms of implementing the Plan in a Canadian context, the language needs to be similar to that of recovery plans for endangered species, and there needs to be a clear and present distinction between the roles of science and policy. The Precautionary Principle should be used when needed. If Canada can determine how to use the Precautionary Principle it could share this with other countries. Vigilant work around defining roles and responsibilities will be important, as will working toward a constant strengthening of implementation with clear lines around compliance and sanctions when there is a purposeful disregard for the Target that results in a further threat to Biodiversity.
7. We need to constantly be thinking about how to make Biodiversity relevant to all people at all scales in all aspects of their lives. We need to find ways to ignite passion and imagination and make Biodiversity relevant on a personal level. The First Nation's traditions in Canada have much to teach us about this from a personal to a country-wide level. Youth have a strong role to play in shaping and supporting Biodiversity work in Canada as well. We need to reach out, embrace their wisdom and ask for their help, ask them why this work is important. Lastly, we need to think about the opportunities for creating green jobs through implementation of the Strategic Plan in Canada.
8. In preparing this brief, it became evident that there is a real interest in the Canadian ENGO community to help to implement the Strategic Plan both within Canada and globally. The ENGO community can play a substantial role in implementing all aspects of the Strategic Plan and can help to bring the Plan to life across all sectors and levels of government. The ENGO community is eager to work with Government and other stakeholders to make sure Canada meets and exceeds all requirements. In fact, we are looking forward to it.