31 August 2010
Wetlands International
[city, country]

Dear [name],

Key Recommendations for CBD 2020 Targets

Wetlands International is pleased to share with you our recommendations for the tenth Conference of Parties (CoP10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). We hope that you will be able to consider these recommendations ahead of this important meeting and to share and recommend our proposals to your colleagues dealing with the COP.

Wetlands International believes that the Convention needs to give more attention to water in relation to biodiversity requirements - and to the role of biodiversity and ecosystem services in safeguarding freshwater supplies and flows. We are calling for a more central position for water within the Strategic Plan of the CBD. Wetlands International proposes a new target that addresses the interdependence of healthy ecosystems and water security.

In addition, we propose a sharper target regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions caused by ecosystem loss. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and saving biodiversity goes hand in hand.

Thank you for your interest and support. Please do not hesitate to contact us before or during the COP. We would be most interested in your views and advice.

[name of the Head of Office and contact details and person of your office]

Global focal point and contact person present during the COP:
Kemi Seesink
Senior Policy Officer
Tel: +31-318-660922
Mobile : +31 6 3003 9208
Email: kemi.seesink@wetlands.org

ISSUE: Biodiversity and the global water crisis

Wetlands International Recommendation A:
New, stand alone target on water

Proposed text:
Ecosystems are conserved and restored so that freshwater flows and water stocks are maintained at least at current levels to provide for biodiversity and basic human needs.

Rationale for this proposed target
For the CBD Strategic Plan to be relevant to broader sectoral interests and to fully reflect the importance of biodiversity to water security, it must incorporate a specific, explicit target referring to water. It is critical that the role of biodiversity in supporting water and vice-versa is stressed. There is a significant evidence base showing that there is a deepening global water crisis, causing "water-stress" in an increasing number of countries and catchments, in turn placing limits on human development and health and triggering political conflicts. These impacts are worsened by the loss of critical ecosystems. There is also significant evidence that the status of biodiversity is strongly impacted by growing water scarcity and reduced freshwater flows in most regions of the world.

The in-depth review of the Programme of Work on the biological diversity of Inland Water ecosystems highlighted the need for a stronger reflection of the importance of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for [water security]. In addition, a distinct recommendation that "*a goal or target is developed and included to reflect this*" is clearly stated within the recommendations within **UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/14/L.3**. on the Inland Waters programme review.

Wetlands International Recommendation B:

Proposed revision of draft CBD Target 14

- *Proposed changes in Target 14*: By 2020 ecosystems that provide essential services, **particularly water** and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being are safeguarded and/or restored and equitable access to ecosystem services is ensured for all, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities and the poor and vulnerable.

Rationale for the proposed changes in target
With reference to our rationale for the proposed water target, it is justifiable to pay particular attention to water when talking about 'essential services' provided by ecosystems. It can be argued that water is the most essential ecosystem service for the needs mentioned in this target, and is for many other services the primary condition. Making this emphasis explicit strengthens the target.

ISSUE: Biodiversity and climate change

Wetlands International Recommendation C:
Proposed revision of draft CBD Target 15:

- *Proposed changes in Target 15*: By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to **climate change mitigation and adaptation in line with the goals of UNFCCC** has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration~~, including restoration of at least 15%~~ of degraded **lands and inland water, coastal, and marine** ecosystems, thereby **also** contributing to ~~climate change mitigation and adaptation and~~ to combating desertification.

Rationale for the proposed changes in target:

- Under the negotiations regarding the Kyoto Protocol, mandatory or voluntarily accounting for the emissions from all land use activities under article 3.3 and 3.4 and, in addition, for wetland management are in the draft texts. Also for non-Annex I countries options to address the large emissions from ecosystem loss and degradation exist (CDM) or are under development. The Copenhagen Accord refers to the Fourth Assessment report of IPCC by demanding a global reduction of 25-40% by 2020 compared to 1990. It is clear that the emissions from ecosystems can and should take a share in this; logically a larger share as these reductions are cost effective. *At least 50% reduction by 2020* is an ambitious first step to come to a situation as needed for both biodiversity and for climate change (80-90% emission reduction to prevent irreversible climate impacts, according to IPCC).
- The ambition in the original draft target to just restore 15% of degraded areas is in fact a step back compared to the current Kyoto negotiations and Copenhagen accord. 15% means for instance that 85% of the current annual peatland emissions will continue; much less compared to the overall ambitions.

- Adding an *emissions reduction target* to this goal makes the final outcome (reduced carbon emissions) measurable rather than only the means. It will also trigger more attention for the carbon storage function of ecosystems.

- Annually, approximately 6 gigatonne of carbon dioxide is emitted through deforestation and forest degradation (4.4 Gt) and peatsoil degradation (1.8). The loss of these two ecosystems is equivalent to an estimated 17%[1] of all global carbon dioxide emissions and needs to be addressed as a crucial element to address climate change. Additional are the emissions from the loss and degradation of other ecosystems like mangrove forests, sea grass and barrier lakes. For including these ecosystems, we do not want to limit this target to land areas. Therefore, we explicitly propose to include (marine and inland) waters.

[1] 15% from deforestation, forest degradation globally and peat degradation in Southeast Asia. Werf van der, G.R. et al. 2009. CO2 emissions from forest loss. Nature Geoscience, vol. 2.
Complemented by peat emissions from outside South-east Asia from Joosten, H., 2009. The Global Peat CO2 Picture. Peatland status and drainage related emissions in all countries of the world, commissioned by Wetlands International, totalling about 17% of all CO2 emissions world wide.

Key considerations for development of milestones under this target:

- Proposed emission reductions under the UNFCCC should be strengthened and extended within CBD, with prioritization for protection and restoration of ecosystems with rich carbon stocks and high biodiversity value. Emissions due to forest fires or peatland fires are generally caused by poor maintenance of these ecosystems. Natural systems are generally far less fire prone.
- Prioritisation of activities:
  - The conservation of natural forests and peatsoils, peatlands (and other carbon rich ecosystems) to maintain their carbon stocks.
  - Enhancing carbon storage by restoring degraded ecosystems to functioning ecosystems.
  - Not only halting deforestation, but also forest degradation as well as conversion of relatively intact natural forest to other categories of forest or land included planted or seeded forests (as defined by FAO).
  - Despite priority for protection and restoration for certain ecosystems, other natural habitats with high biodiversity and carbon conservation value should have milestones as well, such as grasslands, savannas, other non-forested wetlands and peatlands, rivers, marine, arctic and alpine habitats.