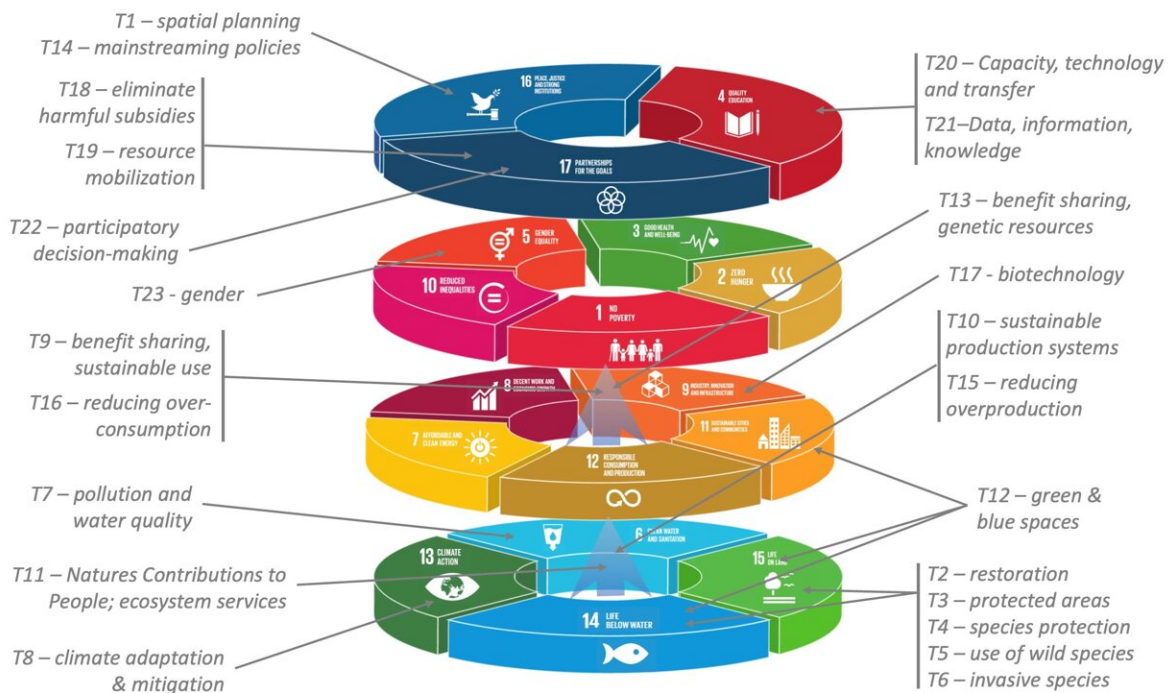


Can the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework fulfill its transformative potential?

February 17 2023



The 23 targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework are spread across most domains across the Sustainable Development Goals. These include conservation actions that address direct drivers of biodiversity loss (bottom layer, "nature"), and actions that address indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, including on economic goals (second layer, "economy"), social goals (third layer, "society") and the means to achieve success (top layer, "means of implementation"). Credit: Future Earth

With the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework now set, attention turns to its potential for implementation and achieving its 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature.

In a commentary published in the journal *One Earth* on February 17, 2023, marine and sustainability scientist Dr. David Obura of CORDIO East Africa and the Earth Commission dissects the scope of the agreement, and its potential to mark a turning point in international policy.

The commentary argues that the agreement contains all the ingredients for success, i.e., to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and achieve sustainability for all, but to do this countries and actors will need to overcome some particularly challenging and entrenched North-South divides. Without accountability for historic and [current trends](#), nor full commitments to close the funding gap for proposed actions, the agreement could risk the same failed fate as the Aichi Targets of 2010–2020.

The commentary reflects on experiences surrounding the adoption of the framework at COP 15, and in the preceding 3.5 years of layered negotiations. Obura concludes that in the coming years the [global community](#) needs to transform and fully adopt equity principles that remedy centuries of extraction and capital accumulation by imperialist-colonial-capitalist economies. Dr. Obura identifies three persisting challenges that if not addressed will undermine success of the new framework:

- The drivers of biodiversity decline must be brought within planetary boundaries as a prerequisite for success;
- Actors must fully finance the [framework](#). This means transforming away from the imperial-colonial-capitalist tradition that dominates today and externalizes most biodiversity impacts,

to circular sustainability-oriented principles that fully internalize all impacts into the costs of doing business.

- Putting relationships between Global North and Global South countries on a fully equitable footing, and acting to assure the rights and agency of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in conservation.

"Far from this being a radical take on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, all the elements needed to overcome these challenges are contained within its text," said the author, Dr. David Obura, "so the test will be if countries and leading actors fully adopt these and transform, or pay lip service to them and stay within their comfort zones, just with a bit more money on the table, and with strings attached."

"It boils down to the Global North acknowledging the just needs of the Global South and at the same time realizing the funding required is not aid or charity, it is unpaid dues for unjust historic appropriation of [biodiversity](#), resulting from their economic growth to date. The answers for the future are to specifically account for damage from the past."

More information: David Obura & colleagues, The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: Business as usual or a turning point?, *One Earth* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.oneear.2023.01.013](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2023.01.013). [www.cell.com/one-earth/fulltext ... 2590-3322\(23\)00041-6](https://www.cell.com/one-earth/fulltext/S2590-3322(23)00041-6)

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