UN questions related to SDG 15 (Life on land)

Before specifically addressing the three questions, I would like to note that biodiversity is an environmental, economic, social and development issue, of equal importance as human-induced climate change, and most of what I will say in my short presentation could have been said 10-20 years ago – we know what needs to be done, we lack the political will to do it.

1. **What are the changes in policy and implementation that could help reduce incentives that lead to biodiversity loss and increase biodiversity investments?**
   - The main issue is **mainstreaming** the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into multi-sectoral policies, plans, programs, strategies and practices of public and private actors, with more proactive, focused and goal-oriented environmental action, including quantitative goals at the national level, regional and global level – everybody needs to be accountable. - the environment must not be viewed as a separate sector
     - Mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services in the development plans, programs, and actions in different economic sectors (e.g., trade, transport, energy, tourism, etc.,) will ensure investments in biodiversity beyond the environmental sector.
   - **Define policy objectives** that take into account the ecological, economic and sociocultural needs of the range of different stakeholders - this requires strengthening the participation of affected actors in the decision-making
     - Policy design and mixes of policy instruments are essential to support effective, efficient and equitable policy and decision-making and are most effective when taking the spillover/leakage effects into account caused by international trade.
   - **An ensemble of legal/regulations, economic/financial incentives, socio-cultural/rights-based approaches and behavior change** is needed to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity, where no one shoe fits all – the ensemble of actions will be highly context specific
     - **Legal/regulatory** mechanisms include protected area legislation, land tenure legislation, indigenous and community conservation areas, technologies to control pollution, and ecosystem restoration
     - **Socio-cultural/rights-based** approaches include community-based water-shed and natural resource management, access and benefit sharing
     - **Economic/incentive measures** are critical for mainstreaming. Therefore, there is a need to:
       - Develop and implement policies to decouple economic growth from ecological degradation.
       - increase environmental taxes to account for the full costs of ecological damage within commodity prices for renewable goods
       - measure national welfare beyond economic metrics only (e.g. GDP) – the wealth of nation should be viewed in terms of built, natural, social and human capital, therefore implementation of natural capital accounting,
       - eliminate trade distortions, e.g. elimination of agricultural production subsidies that encourage intensification, often leading to over-use of agro-chemicals, (hence, adverse effects on biodiversity), or fisheries policies that encourage over-fishing.
       - introduce disincentive measures like user's fees, polluter pays, enforcement quotas, etc., can help discourage unsustainable use of natural resources that leads to biodiversity loss.
       - payments for ecosystem services,
       - enforcement of fisheries quotas
       - ecological compensation

        - market-based instruments such as voluntary sustainability standards and certification schemes for sustainably produced materials and food, i.e., eco-certification
    - **Effective governance processes** are critical (partnerships and participatory deliberative processes that recognize the rights, values and needs of indigenous peoples and local communities and people in vulnerable situations)
        - promote inclusive participation (including formal incorporation) of indigenous peoples and local communities in environmental governance and management
        - The fragmentation between sectors/administrative departments responsible for land management and impacts on the land needs to be reduced given it is often the root cause of policy gaps and perverse incentives. Responsibility is typically split between authorities responsible for land management (agriculture and forestry) and authorities responsible for environment biodiversity, parks, etc). Often there are others involved, e.g., local government, water, built infrastructure, finance. Therefore, put landscape front and center, rather than the sector, i.e., we need cross-sectoral policies developed and implemented by a consortia of government departments working together with the private sector, and civil society, including indigenous and local peoples.
    - **Behaviour:** There is a need for society to change its consumption habits concerning renewable resources, i.e. behavior change given conservation and sustainable use of natural resources is a shared responsibility.
        - There is a need to radically change the way in which our quality of life and social status are promoted on the basis of material consumption
    - **Raise awareness** through education for equity and sustainability, cultivate awareness and wonder in nature, so that recognition of its contributions are internalized in individual decisions
    - **Investments:** Multiple partnerships between public, private and civil society and across sectors can increase investment in biodiversity conservation. Examples include payment of ecosystem services, carbon offsets, and REDD-plus.
    - Biodiversity investments in agricultural landscapes can be linked to increased yields, profits, and stability form farms growing pollinator-dependent crops, and this should especially be a focus of policy in parts of the world with high pollination value
    - Community-based management (CBM) of protected and shared natural areas increases human capital investments, particularly in terms of using indigenous and local knowledge of communities. Moreover, the participation of rural communities (esp. those who get their food and livelihood from these areas) in CBM promotes sustainable use of resources and reduces biodiversity loss.

2. Which are the most critical interlinkages with other goals and targets in terms of co-benefits or trade-offs? How can they be leveraged towards progress?

- Biodiversity and land degradation have strong, mainly synergistic links with goals 6 (water), 12 (consumption), 13 (climate), 2 (food security), 1 (poverty), 11 (cities) and 7 (energy).
- All goals link either directly or indirectly with goal 15, but with varying likelihood of achieving synergies, or causing trade-offs. However, even for goals that would tend to cause trade-offs, there are alternative methods/approaches of working towards them that can generate synergies. So these alternative approaches should be actively sought and prioritized.
    - For example, SDG 3 (good health and well-being) and goal 6 (clean water and sanitation) have been identified to have a high level of synergy with SDG 15, since healthy ecosystems are

essential for human health in diverse aspects such as clean air and water provision, diverse and nutritious dietary sources, pharmaceutical resources, human immunity development, regulation of pests and pathogens, as well as interactions with nature that improve psychological and physical health. On the other hand, some goals such as SDG 2 (zero hunger) and goal 8 (decent work and economic growth) could become strong drivers against achievement of goal 15, due to the fact that they can exacerbate large-scale land conversion, indiscriminate agrochemical inputs, changes in consumption patterns, which compromise the conservation of life on land. However, even in these examples, there are approaches towards achieving these goals that still have high potential for synergies, such as integrated pest/nutrient management, agroforestry and sustainable pastoralism, or traditional sustainable agricultural systems.

- There are critical trade-off in terms of multiple goals. For example, reducing intensification of food production in developed countries would have local biodiversity benefits, but likely lead to the need to import more food (because of lower productivity), and thus the biodiversity impacts are simply displaced to other parts of the world. Hence, a conundrum. Co-benefits include Carbon sequestration (climate regulation and increasing productivity), ecological restoration improving biodiversity status, but also opportunities for recreation, protecting ILK has social and biodiversity benefits.
- Links to other SDGs relevant to pollinators include goal 3 (good health and well-being) through access to sufficient nutritious food (highly dependent on pollinators) and goal 8 (decent work and economic growth) as 1.4 billion people work in agriculture.

3. How can the post-2020 global framework for biodiversity that will be developed under the CD, in follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, be more effectively linked to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its implementation?

- Every IPBES regional and the land degradation and restoration assessment concluded that with business-as-usual there is little hope that the SDGs will be achieved by 2030, so the SDGs need to think about a longer, and continuous time process, rather than just pick a new set of goals for after 2030, rather like what happened when SDGs replaced the MDGs. The other conventions are also thinking beyond 2030, so there needs to be some coherence here.
- The key is recognizing the interlinkages among the SDGs, which is currently not the case. It is much more likely that progress will be made with one, unified set of global and national objectives than with several.
- It would seem like the necessary step would be to focus on the areas of potential trade-offs between biodiversity conservation and SDGs (such as SDGs 1,2,7,8,9,11), and then to set targets to prioritize the alternative, win-win approaches, over conventional, trade-off-causing approaches.
- Biodiversity targets in a post-2020 Strategic Plan on Biodiversity would be more effective if they: take into account the availability of existing indicators and the feasibility of developing new ones; have clear, unambiguous, simple language, with quantitative elements; take greater account of socioeconomic and cultural contexts; take into account climate change impacts and responses; and integrate insights from the full range of academic and non-academic stakeholders– these would then be easier to link to SDGs 14 and 15, and other SDG targets
- The Convention on Biological Diversity in concert with experts, needs to develop better measurable targets and meaningful indicators reflecting on the experiences in a series of IPBES assessment, given experts involved in IPES assessments found it extremely difficult to quantitatively measure progress. Some indicators were measurable but do not effectively represent the trends towards the target. I

know that CBD successfully advocated the inclusion of several indicators of Aichi Targets into the indicators for relevant targets of SDGs in the course of a series of stakeholder negotiations, but it would not really make good sense if the indicators are not measurable, or do not effectively represent the theme expressed by each of the Aichi Targets.

- There is a need to clarify both the synergistic and trade-off-causing linkages between each of the Biodiversity Targets and SDGs - various ecosystem goods or services (or NCP) support the progress towards different SDGs. Trade-off arises in the area where the progress towards SDG acts as the underlying or direct drivers of the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- The Aichi Targets are structured: A: underlying causes; B: direct pressures; C: status of biodiversity and ecosystems; D: enhance benefits; and E: implementation. With a view to strengthening the linkage between biodiversity targets and SDGs, following formulation can be suggested:
    - C: directly connected to SDG 14 and 15.
      D: reformulate the targets so as to highlight the areas where biodiversity can make significant contributions to other SDGs or vice versa, e.g. 1 (no poverty); 2 (zero hunger); 3 (good health and well-being); 6 (water security); 7 (energy); 9 (resilient infrastructure); 11 (sustainable cities and communities); 12 (SCP) and 13 (Climate action)
      A and B: highlight the need of actions in the areas where the trade-offs are highly likely to occur, e.g. climate change mitigation and ecosystem degradation, and suggest (particularly under A) integrative actions to avoid trade-offs and enhance synergies between biodiversity goals and SDGs;
      E: promote the integration of SDGs into NBSAPs and LBSAPs.