



# Environment and Climate Change Committee

## Oral evidence: COP15: the international biodiversity conference

Tuesday 15 June 2021

11.15 am

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Members present: Baroness Parminter (The Chair); Baroness Boycott; Lord Browne of Ladyton; Lord Cameron; Baroness Chalker; Lord Colgrain; Lord Lilley; Lord Lucas; Baroness Northover; The Lord Bishop of Oxford; Lord Puttnam; Lord Whitty; Baroness Young of Old Scone.

Evidence Session No. 2

Virtual Proceeding

Questions 10 - 15

### Witnesses

[I](#): Professor Sandra Díaz, Professor of Community and Ecosystems Ecology, National University of Córdoba; Dr Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, former Executive Secretary, UN Convention on Biological Diversity; Friedrich Wulf, International Nature Campaigner, Friends of the Earth Europe.

## Examination of witnesses

Professor Sandra Díaz, Dr Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias and Friedrich Wulf.

Q10 **The Chair:** Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the second session of our inquiry into COP15. In this session we will be exploring the lessons learned from the Aichi targets. I am thrilled to be able to welcome our three witnesses. Professor Sandra Díaz joins us from Buenos Aires. Dr Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias joins us from Brazil. Friedrich Wulf joins us from Switzerland. We are very grateful to you, given the difficulties with time zones. We look forward very much to hearing what you have to say to us.

I remind all attendees that a transcript will be taken and made public. The witnesses will have the chance to review it before it is published. The session is webcast live, and it will be made available subsequently on the parliamentary website.

With the housekeeping notes out of the way, I will ask the first question. What is your assessment of the current state of biodiversity globally, and why does that matter? Perhaps we could turn first to Professor Díaz.

**Professor Sandra Díaz:** Thank you. The global decline of biodiversity we see today is unprecedented in human history. In the global assessment, we found diminishing trends in all the major facets of nature. At the level of ecosystems, for example, about two-thirds of the surface of the oceans and three-quarters of the surface of terrestrial ecosystems have been directly altered by humans. At the species level, animals and plants are becoming extinct at rates at least tens to hundreds times faster than the natural rates. This is faster than the average in the past 10 million years. Even genetic diversity within species is decreasing fast, both in animals and plants, and in domesticated as well as wild organisms. This global decline in nature is not simply the result of a slow accumulation of losses over the history of humanity; it has accelerated significantly over the last 50 years.

**Dr Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias:** I think Sandra provided a good summary. In general, humans have short memories. We tend to look back just a few years, but we have been impacting on nature for quite a long time. As Professor Sandra Díaz pointed out, this has been accumulating, so we are in a very difficult situation. One good analysis is the so-called planetary boundaries concept, which indicates that, on biodiversity loss, pollution by chemicals such as nitrogen and phosphorus, and increasingly on climate change, we are already beyond safe boundaries for the sustainable development of the planet, so the situation we are in is quite alarming.

**Friedrich Wulf:** Professor Díaz has already made the most important points. I agree with what Braulio said. Maybe I can give a few additional examples to underline the situation.

The global deforestation rate is still at 4.7 million hectares a year, according to the forest resources assessment. In Europe as a whole,

despite efforts by the Natura 2000 network, an increasing percentage of habitats that were assigned community importance have unfavourable conservation status. In the period 2007 to 2012, 28% were in a bad state; now it is 33%. For species, the situation is similar. In Switzerland, with which I am a bit more familiar, 48% of habitats are on the red list; 95% of dry grasslands vanished in the last century; the glaciers are vanishing; and areas are becoming built up. It is very clear that the situation is bad; indeed, it is even accelerating.

**Q11 Baroness Boycott:** Thank you all very much for being up in the middle of your night, as Baroness Parminter said. You painted a very bleak picture so deftly just now. I have three questions.

First, what is driving biodiversity losses globally? How much of that role is played by our consumption patterns in developed countries? How do you expect those patterns to change? I am particularly interested in how the food system has so negatively impacted on biodiversity loss. Maybe we could start again with Professor Díaz and run through the other members of the panel.

**Professor Sandra Díaz:** We did an extensive quantitative review of the evidence. Globally, over the past 50 years the direct proximal drivers of biodiversity loss are, first, land use and sea use change, including deforestation and land clearing for agriculture and coastal development; and, secondly, the direct extraction of organisms, such as by fishing, hunting and selective logging. Then, still very significant drivers, but not as important as the other two over the past decade, come climate change, pollution and invasive alien species.

Underpinning those direct drivers are a number of socioeconomic, political and governance factors, technically called indirect drivers. Those are the real root causes of nature's decline because they propel the direct drivers. Among these indirect drivers, global trade and consumption patterns, particularly in the most affluent countries and sectors, are quite prominent. Over the past 50 years, the global population has doubled, but at the same time per capita spending increased thirteenfold and global trade increased by about 900%. This global trade happens between places of production that are very far from the places of consumption, and the trade is negotiated between actors of very unequal power. Often, there are very serious hidden social and environmental costs at the places of production.

All of that taken together means that if we try to tackle only the direct drivers—for example, by banning deforestation or increasing the number of protected areas—it will work as an emergency solution for some time, but the only thing that will stop nature's decline, or significantly slow it down, is to go for the indirect drivers that constantly feed the direct drivers.

**Baroness Boycott:** You are saying that we have to change the consumption patterns that drive this never-ending cycle. The 900% increase statistic is one I have not heard and it is really chilling. Thank

you. Would it be possible to get Dr Braulio to comment on those issues?

**Dr Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias:** We need to pay more attention to the underlying causes of biodiversity loss. Population growth is the main driver. It is expected that we will have another 2 billion people on earth in the coming three decades, so we will need to produce more food and extract more water, timber, fish, et cetera, particularly in developing countries. The trend is increasing very quickly in Africa and especially in parts of Asia, but also in Latin America.

Trade is global. Most global companies still do not account for their environmental impact through their supply chain, so that is a major flaw we need to correct. For example, Germany is now establishing a requirement for due diligence for German companies throughout the world. It does not matter where the goods are coming from; German companies will have to do due diligence to ensure that supply is coming from sustainable sources and is not contributing to deforestation and nature degradation. This shows that we need many more economic instruments to correct the situation.

We have terrible problems with subsidies throughout the world. Many of them were implemented many years ago and they continue even though they are no longer required. Many of these economic subsidies provide perverse consequences for the environment. A key area to look into is how to correct that and to review all the subsidies and economic incentives, reduce and remove those that have perverse impacts and use that money to provide positive incentives for nature conservation, restoration, et cetera.

Of course, all this is linked to consumption. It is not only the companies; every one of us is a consumer. It is not easy, but we need to change people's behaviour. We need to do much better work on that. Companies can respond quickly when they perceive that consumers have changed and are demonstrating more concern about the sourcing of the goods they are consuming. We need to provide much better information for consumers.

The traceability of the source of the goods we consume is becoming more critical. We need to be clear about where things come from, how they are produced and the impacts not only on nature but on indigenous people, local and traditional communities, et cetera. We are making progress in those areas, but we need to do much more.

**Baroness Boycott:** Thank you. Finally, perhaps Dr Wulf would comment. Specifically, will the question of the huge subsidies that determine the kind of crops that are grown, especially the subsidies that Dr Braulio says are no longer even necessary, be tackled at the CBD? Are you optimistic?

**Friedrich Wulf:** I very much agree with what my two predecessors said. There is not much I can add, except perhaps to illustrate the dimension of the problem. The so-called global footprint in developed countries is usually more than three times as high as the capacity of the country to

produce those resources, so we are really living on debt; we are indebting our future generations, and consumption is a key problem.

I am involved in the process of Agenda 2030 in Switzerland. Two years ago, there was a public consultation on the most important aspects to tackle. There was agreement on the role of consumption. That was seen as the most critical issue to tackle, so that gives you a flavour.

I apologise. Would you repeat the question? It just escaped me.

**Baroness Boycott:** I asked whether the issue Dr Braulio brought up about subsidies, often for food stocks, would be tackled at the CBD and sorted out.

**Friedrich Wulf:** There is wide agreement that it is a key issue. It is one of the main funding instruments addressed in the strategy for resource mobilisation and it has been widely discussed. I very much hope that there will be agreement on it in the end.

There are also caveats. For example, target 17 proposed in the global biodiversity framework talks about tackling only the most harmful subsidies and not all of them. I do not think that is the level of ambition we want to have. This item was already among the Aichi targets. There was agreement 10 years ago and very little has happened, so it is important to look into it now and take action.

Many countries did not work on it very much at national level. In Switzerland, we have now commissioned and published a study looking into all the details. We found 160 subsidies that are harmful for biodiversity costing in the region of 40 billion Swiss francs. It is much, much higher than the actual spending that is done in favour of biodiversity, but it is difficult to find ways to remove and redirect those subsidies because they are a major source of income for farmers and so on. You have to pay farmers for other things than you paid for previously. Taking money away from them will cause other problems.

**Baroness Boycott:** Thank you. That is very interesting.

**Dr Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias:** Perhaps I might recognise the role that the UK is playing on this with the release of the Dasgupta report on the economics of biodiversity. That is quite important.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that.

- Q12 **Lord Lilley:** My question was to be about how well the drivers of biodiversity losses are understood, and whether there are enough resources and processes in place for monitoring their impacts on the state of biodiversity, but that rather overlaps with the question Baroness Boycott asked, which has already been answered. Could I ask you to focus on the extent to which the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, as you describe them—namely, the increasing prosperity of people—can or cannot be separated from their impact on biodiversity, or do we all have to make ourselves a lot poorer?

**Professor Sandra Díaz:** I think the impacts of indirect drivers on biodiversity are much less understood than the impacts of the direct drivers, but, as my colleagues said, global consumption patterns in which one place affects many other places around the world are probably among the most important and least understood. It is not impossible, but it is tricky to track them. I think the greatest effort has to be made there.

What really needs to be done is to try to track within any country the flows of goods and services all the way back to the places they come from, and look at the biodiversity impacts there. We have the technology and science to do it; it is just a question of a global commitment, and it is also a question of including a global biodiversity footprint indicator in the CBD obligations of countries. Countries could have global biodiversity footprint indicators to track their impacts on diversity everywhere and report them in a consistent way. That would be a major improvement in the CBD toolkit. I honestly do not believe that looking at the consumption impacts on biodiversity necessarily has to make us all poor; it is a question of how the consumption is made and distributed around the world.

**Dr Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias:** We have to take into account that we live in a very uneven world. Developing countries face huge challenges because of population growth. They want more development, to create more jobs and alleviate or eradicate extreme poverty. All of that pushes the limits on the utilisation of natural resources and land and water use. That is very difficult to tackle, and we have to keep it under consideration as we strive to make a deal at COP15. It is a deal that cannot be based just on the standards in developed countries; you have to consider the situation of developing countries.

One important way out is to increase the use of science and technology to increase productivity. It has been demonstrated that we can increase food production significantly in a sustainable intensification pattern, but many developing countries do not have that technology. There is a need for more global co-operation, and technology transfer and capacity-building in developing countries, so that they can utilise existing science and technology to produce more with less. That is one of the big challenges. The financial system can also play a big role in supporting more sustainable initiatives, especially in developing countries. We need to push for more support from the financial sector, both public and private.

There are some answers, but the challenges are big. One possibility is to deal with compensation. Where there is a need to increase the use of natural resources and nature, there could be a commitment to compensate, so that you can restore nature. Net impacts on nature are being discussed as we move towards COP15.

We need to make much better use of science, technology and finance, especially in international co-operation. That is an area where the UK has a tradition, but we need much more international co-operation to support

developing countries in particular so that they can face the challenges without further destroying nature.

**Friedrich Wulf:** Looking in greater detail at the root causes has been recognised as a key issue to tackle. Currently, as far as I know, at the IPBES meeting there are outline discussions on expertise in a report on transformative change. Everybody is looking to know more about the details of which avenues to take.

It is quite clear that as long as we have the concept of economic growth, and we are not entirely able to decouple it from the impact on resources, its impact will grow and grow. We are sure that there is no unlimited growth on a limited planet. That has also been raised by scientists such as Johan Rockström in the context of planetary boundaries. It is quite clear. To some extent, we can do something by being more efficient—for example, by reusing or recycling things rather than throwing them away. Much more potential exists than is actually used. We also need to look at our standards and way of living and ask ourselves whether everything we take into account is really needed, especially in developed countries. This indeed is something to look into more closely.

**Baroness Chalker of Wallasey:** For years, I have worked with the WTO. We now have a very farsighted leader in the WTO in Dr Okonjo-Iweala. I wonder whether we should be talking to her about not upping, if you like, the anti-environment measures that the WTO often encourages for developing countries to enable them to trade with some of the more developed nations. If we are to press for developed nations to be more environmentally sensitive, there should be no incentives for less developed nations to get into bad habits, if I may put it in those terms.

**The Chair:** Professor Díaz is nodding. Perhaps you would like to come in.

**Professor Sandra Díaz:** Yes. There are a number of actions and measures we can take collectively, but the really transformative ones, which will make a difference and will not be just emergency aid, are those that tackle the indirect drivers. For example, WTO trade legislation and regulation have a huge impact on what does and does not get done, and what is good business and therefore gets done and what suddenly becomes bad business and is not done any more. To me, that is the place where most of the action has to be.

My colleagues mentioned incentives. About £400 billion every year worldwide is paid for activities that are harmful to nature, not only in food production but subsidies to the transport industry, the energy industry, urban development and infrastructure development that are not really necessary and are very bad for nature. The first thing I would do in this respect would be to drastically reallocate all the incentives for activities that are not absolutely indispensable and are bad for nature, go to activities that are nature-positive.

Q13 **Lord Whitty:** My first question relates to what you expect to come out of the CBD and COP15. More than a decade ago, we had the Aichi targets.

They were multiple and varied, but it was not at all clear how they would be delivered. The reality is that they have not been delivered, and some have gone seriously backwards. What kind of outcome do we expect or hope for from the conference this year that makes it clearer what countries, consumers and companies are expected to do, and makes it easier for the public and the electorates of both developed and developing countries to understand what we are doing? How much of what was in the previous Aichi-based programmes do we need to retrieve to do that, and how much can we simplify it?

**Professor Sandra Díaz:** As you say, there are a number of things that were okay in the Aichi targets; for example, the formulation of the targets, although in some cases it was difficult to trace some of the drivers. They were just very difficult to trace in terms of footprint indicators.

The major failure of the Aichi targets was not so much to do with formulation of the targets per se; it was because countries did not come up with the investment needed to make them happen. A major outcome of the new global biodiversity framework would be, for example, if I can put it bluntly, that countries put their money where their mouth is, which they did not do in the Aichi targets. If this time the investment does not change dramatically, no matter how good or precise the new targets are, they will fail again.

**Dr Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias:** I would not label the progress on implementation of the Aichi targets a failure. I think we had good progress in many countries on many of the targets, but overall we failed to deliver completely what was agreed. There are a number of causes.

First, in the UN context, under the CBD, all decisions are made by consensus. It is very difficult to negotiate with almost 200 countries. Although the countries had agreed that we would like to see SMART targets for all the Aichi targets, in the end, many of the targets that were agreed were not outcome targets, but rather process targets, which are much weaker. That was not a mistake; it was a result of the negotiations. Many countries resisted having clear outcome targets. That is a problem.

Another problem is that global targets have to be translated into national targets. A major problem we have seen is that the national targets for biodiversity are, in general, much weaker than the global Aichi targets. If you added up all the national targets, even if they were fully implemented, they would not deliver fully what was agreed in Nagoya in 2010.

The same happens in climate change with the NDCs for the Paris Agreement. If you add up all the national commitments, you do not reach the agreed global target to keep global warming below 2 degrees Celsius, and preferably below 1.5 degrees Celsius. That is a major problem. Each country tries to reduce its commitment. That is a reality. We need, first, to increase the incentives. We need to provide more financial support for developing countries. We need to enhance the monitoring system. That is

also a problem. For many of the agreed targets, we did not have, and still do not have, good monitoring systems.

A major failure of the Aichi targets was insufficient attention to the issue of mainstreaming. Traditionally, the CBD has been dealt with as an environment convention, but it is more than an environment convention because it deals with social and economic issues. The tradition has been for all sectors in government to leave environment ministries to deal with the implementation of the Aichi targets, but the environment ministries are not the ones causing the problems. Unless we can engage all the economic sectors, both within government cabinets and in the business community, we will continue to fail.

The mainstreaming of biodiversity in the economy is a critical issue. It did not receive sufficient attention in Nagoya in 2010. Although it is recognised in the current discussions for COP15, there are quite a lot of difficulties in getting a real commitment for mainstreaming. Ideally, all economic sectors would have to understand and recognise how dependent they are on nature and natural resources, and how much they are responsible for the overexploitation and degradation of nature. Unless we get that understanding and commitment, we will not see transformative change. This is quite critical.

We now have a much better process of engagement of the business community—for example, the Business for Nature initiative. World Economic Forum reports increasingly acknowledge the risks for business associated with nature. That is all good, but still the commitment to change is not there. We are hopeful. This time, the new global strategy that will be agreed will be for 30 years, not just 10 years, even though, for the first 10 years, until 2030, it will have much more detailed attention not only on the overarching objectives and goals but on specific implementation targets.

Having a 30-year agenda will perhaps provide us with a better opportunity to make the much-needed transformations. These transformations cannot happen overnight; they take time. A lot of that depends on the financial system. London is well placed for this discussion. A lot of it relates to trade, as was mentioned. It is quite critical. Agriculture is perhaps the most significant economic sector that impacts on biodiversity, and has been doing so for ages. There is increasing awareness in the agriculture sector that it needs to change. We will have to see whether or not that really transforms into action.

**Lord Whitty:** May I come back with a question that relates to what was said in reply to Lord Lilley and Baroness Chalker? Effectively, you are asking the populations of the world to ignore the fact that trade has increased prosperity, and are trying to alter the direction of trade and the direction of consumption, particularly in the richer countries and, to a degree, among rich people in the poorer countries. That is a tremendous change of mindset. We have half achieved it in relation to climate change because there is a single target, and national targets are supposed to follow it. We are not very far down that road, but at least it is a political

imperative.

Is there a similar political imperative to look, for example, at the World Trade Organization, to increase trade and remove subsidies? Could the World Trade Organization, or nations as a whole, begin to ban things, begin to put taxes on bad things, as well as reducing subsidies on bad things, so that the normal economy absorbs the kinds of targets you want to get out of the CBD? We have sort of achieved that step change in relation to climate change. We have not delivered it, but we have made a change. Is there a similar change that you want to see in international organisations' and countries' approach to trade and consumption?

**Dr Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias:** For biodiversity, it is more complex because we do not have a single measure for biodiversity, as we have for climate. The CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent is quite convenient. Biodiversity is a much more complex phenomenon. It is a global issue, but it manifests itself in different ways in different parts of the world. It is not easy.

There is a lot of work going on to measure biodiversity for the business community. I hope that will develop into more unified standards for the business community to comply with, but we need pressure from Governments to see that happening. We also need pressure from consumers. Producers always respond to public policies and to the needs of consumers. We need to work on those two fronts. I think it is doable, but it is more complex and more difficult. We need to strengthen our efforts to see it happen.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that. Perhaps we could now move on to Lord Colgrain, if he is able to participate. He is struggling with his tech. If we can come back to him, we will. Lord Browne, perhaps you could ask your question.

Q14 **Lord Browne of Ladyton:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you to our witnesses. When committees such as ours report, it is traditional for us to make recommendations to government, so this is your opportunity to influence the recommendations that we make to our Government in particular.

The question is focused on the issues that need to be resolved to ensure an effective post-2020 framework from COP15, one that can be agreed and implemented. It is a very open question. Where do Governments, but especially the United Kingdom Government, need to adjust their positions and related policies and resources to ensure that objective? You probably have a number of recommendations, but if you have a favourite one, if there is an ultimate priority, tell us what that priority is because that will really help us. I will do this in reverse order from what has been established, so I will come to Mr Wulf first and then to you, Dr Braulio and Professor Díaz.

**Friedrich Wulf:** Thank you very much for those questions. I will link them to the previous question on why the Aichi targets have not been as successful as we would all have liked them to be. It is very clear that this is a question of implementation at national level. If you look at the

resolution of countries, none of the countries has done much better than others. I think there is almost no country that, across the board, has achieved more than one or two of the Aichi targets. It is a cross-cutting issue. I support Braulio in saying that it has been an issue of mainstreaming. There is a demand on the table that we very strongly support.

It is clear that the whole discussion needs to come out from the corner of environment ministries. It is really clear that it has to be tackled at Head of State level. All the different ministries and all public governance need to be involved—transport ministries, housing ministries, et cetera; they all have to pay sufficient attention and do their part in the implementation of the strategy. That is probably one part of the advice I would give the UK Government, and to any Government: all the ministries need to do their fair share in implementing the future global biodiversity framework. If that works out, we are already on another page. That is one point.

Of course, we need to ensure that the global biodiversity framework has at least the quality of the previous targets. At the moment, we are quite worried that it may turn out the other way around. We are afraid that the targets now will be softer and less helpful than the Aichi targets.

The Aichi targets, in some cases, were really well crafted, because they formulated the expected outcome they desire. One of the targets was that pollution should be at a level that is not detrimental to biodiversity. It does not contain a number, but it is a clear criterion you can measure against. The new targets have come up with some X% values in relation to the state we have now. We do not know if they will work or if they will not work, even if they are achieved. Those are just a few glimpses. Having followed the last six weeks of negotiations in CBD, I would flag that there is a strong worry in civil society that the new targets will be weaker than the old ones.

To get more precisely into your question with some suggestions on what can be better, there are two concepts that are currently being discussed that are highlighted or hyped, and very much seen as positive, where we, from the Friends of the Earth perspective, are more critical. One is the concept of nature-based solutions. If you have solutions, you also have a problem you need those solutions to compensate for. A prime example is increased climate change and fossil fuel reduction. You look at putting forests somewhere, or plantations, if it is a bad case, as a solution. Our call would be to look at the problem in the first place and ensure that it does not happen, rather than patching it up with something else. That is one thing you should look at more closely. If you have a nature-based solution, at least make sure it is not a compensation measure that enables you to go on with your business as usual and make nature pay for it.

Another issue we have is the whole no net loss/no net gain debate. We strongly advise giving priority to ensuring that the valuable biodiversity

that exists gets conserved before looking at ways to restore somewhere else. Both are necessary, but there needs to be a clear priority.

I have some other points. It is clear that there is a role for business, but that has to be guided because businesses will always do what is financially best for them; that is their purpose. Businesses need to produce income, they need to produce money, et cetera, and they will do as a priority what enables them to flourish. If it costs them much more to do something that is bad for the environment than something that is good for the environment, they will be tempted to follow that avenue. We see a clear role for Governments to come up with rules that make products that are environmentally friendly also economically more feasible. It is not just the WTO, as was suggested, but Governments.

It is also important to have an inclusive process, to enable all players to engage, including civil society, to implement things. I think those are the most important points. I do not want to go on a monologue. I could add more, but I will stop there.

**Dr Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias:** I agree with Friedrich that there is a risk that the new set of global targets to be agreed at COP15 could be weaker than the Aichi targets. That is a real danger. Now that the UK is out of the European Union, you have more independence to raise your voice internationally. As I mentioned, the CBD decisions have to be agreed by consensus. The UK can raise its concerns and refrain from agreeing to adopt weak targets. That is something Governments can do, especially the UK Government.

The UK has an important role globally in finance, as I mentioned, and trade, but it also has global relevance for science. The whole issue of monitoring has been done by UK universities and research institutions for some time. Perhaps that is an area where you could consider making a recommendation to reinforce the role that the UK plays globally to monitor biodiversity globally and help capacity-building in developing countries.

The UK plays a unique role for the oceans because of your overseas territories. That is quite relevant. The UK has a potential role to play, as a leading nation, in promoting conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity in the global seas, starting with its overseas territories. That is an area that you could look more into.

The challenges are many, and it is hard to see a single solution that we should be pushing. The lead that the UK has provided so far in having an independent committee to advise the Treasury is a unique arrangement that we do not see in other countries. The Dasgupta report, as I mentioned, is a major contribution from the UK. You could consider following up on that and seeing how the UK can further develop the idea of the economics of biodiversity, and look at economic mechanisms, incentives, and the whole issue of the metrics of biodiversity. I think there are a lot of things that the UK has been doing, and you could

continue to do, to increase your efforts in these areas and contribute globally.

One thing we are not good at is measuring and monitoring the implementation of global commitments. We still have difficulties doing better modelling. Sandra can speak more on that. On climate change, the work that the IPCC has been doing co-ordinating with research organisations in the UK and elsewhere has been critical for the progress of the climate change agenda, to really enhance the modelling on climate, and have a better understanding of potential future scenarios and their impacts. We do not have a similar development for biodiversity. We are many years behind having better modelling to construct potential scenarios for biodiversity.

People will change their behaviour, and we will see a transformation of investments, only if people understand the consequences. It is not good enough to say we will save these percentages of species and ecosystems. What are the real implications for the people's livelihoods? What are the implications for economic development? We are talking about the role that nature plays, that biodiversity plays, for maintaining ecosystem service. We all depend on water. We all depend on the production of oxygen by plants and algae. We all depend on our food. We all depend on medicines. All of that comes from nature. We need a much stronger understanding of what has been called the nexus. What is the nexus between the biodiversity agenda and the water agenda, the energy agenda, the food security agenda and the health agenda?

We have only to consider the current pandemic of Covid-19 to understand that there are strong linkages. As you know, this pandemic comes from zoonotic diseases, diseases that attack animals, in this case bats. It is because of illegal wildlife trade and nature degradation that we see more and more pandemics coming up. We cannot totally prevent the coming of new pandemics. There have been recent studies showing that the economic impact of just this big pandemic is 100 to 1,000 times higher than the cost of caring for nature. We need to take that into account and balance these things. Having a much better understanding of that nexus is one thing you can work on.

**Lord Browne of Ladyton:** Thank you. You have both given us a number of things to think about. Professor Díaz, do you have anything to add? You were nodding your head quite a lot, but if you have anything to add, this is your opportunity. I think we need to be a bit conscious of time as we come to the end of this session.

**Professor Sandra Díaz:** I fully agree with my colleagues as regards the importance of mainstreaming. I also agree that the business community can help, but the leading role here is for Governments. They are the ones who should look after everybody's well-being.

I would like to add a couple of things. One of the reasons why some of the Aichi targets could not be properly tracked was that it took a long time to agree on and implement proper indicators. This time, in the new

global biodiversity framework, we need to have the indicators agreed at the time of adoption, so that they can be quantitatively assessed and the progress of the targets can be tracked.

Among those indicators, I would go back to my global biodiversity footprint indicator, which is the footprint of a country on biodiversity all over the world, domestically and through its consumption demands, and through its investments. The UK is in an excellent position to think of this indicator because most of the UK's impacts on biodiversity are elsewhere, and they are mostly through global trade.

Going back to the point my colleagues made, that we do not want a new global biodiversity framework being weaker than the Aichi targets, there has been tension over time between having very few targets or many targets. I think that we have a risk in that tension. In the very first draft of the global biodiversity framework, the different facets of nature—ecosystems, species and genetic biodiversity—each had an explicit goal. Later in the process, they were all lumped into one. I think those different facets deserve separate goals. Why? Because although they are obviously related to each other, they are not neatly nested in each other.

An excellent goal for one of those facets—say, ecosystems—does not necessarily go into looking after everything that is important for species, and for genetic diversity. By trying to lump them all into one goal, we risk being weaker in looking after all the facets. As my colleagues have said, nature is multidimensional. We cannot easily pack it in one facet. Nature is more than ecosystems, nature is more than species, and nature is more than genetic diversity. We need them all in the goals. That is all I have to add, thank you.

**The Chair:** We now need to ask the last question because I have to bring the session to a close at 12.30.

Q15 **Baroness Chalker of Wallasey:** How should international avenues beyond the CBD address biodiversity losses, and how can the UK Government continue to contribute to that? I believe they are already trying to do it, but we need to know what else we need to do.

**Professor Sandra Díaz:** I would mention two key things. The first has to do with incorporating biodiversity considerations and standards in all the major international conventions beyond the CBD. I am thinking of the World Trade Organization, the conventions that deal with the oceans, desertification, transport, et cetera. Making the conventions address how they can be more positive for nature, or at least less harmful, would be a really important way.

The other prominent issue is the need to co-ordinate very closely the international regulations and agreements on climate and biodiversity. There was an excellent report less than a week ago, the first ever between the IPPC and IPBES, showing that, unless the conventions dealing with the various aspects of climate, the atmosphere and biodiversity co-ordinate their actions, we will not get there.

**Dr Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias:** We have recognised over the years that we have weak global co-ordination on nature conventions. We need to enhance that. There have been efforts to better co-ordinate the so-called biodiversity-related conventions. There are seven of them. There are also the so-called Rio Conventions, which include the CBD, climate change and the convention to combat desertification.

One thing is to make sure, as we adopt COP15, that we make a clear call for all the other conventions to see the new global biodiversity framework as a framework for all, going beyond the CBD. The CBD is the body where the negotiations are taking place, but the biodiversity agenda is much broader. There should be, in the decisions at COP15, a clear call for the new global framework to be adopted by all the other global conventions. We need support from all the other conventions and bodies to deliver on whatever is agreed at COP15.

I agree with Dr Sandra Díaz that it should go beyond the environment agreements and environment bodies, to trade, finance, energy, transportation, et cetera. All those other sectors need to contribute; otherwise, we will fail. Let me remind you that in a month's time we should be seeing a new revised draft for the new global biodiversity framework. This week, the CBD COP bureau might decide to postpone COP15 because of the pandemic. That is something you should look at.

**Baroness Chalker of Wallasey:** Thank you. May I ask Friedrich Wulf an additional question? I have a feeling that the agenda we are setting ourselves will succeed or fail very much on educating adults. We have to do it without making them angry by the actions that some of us who care very deeply about the whole range of issues have taken up. May I ask Friedrich to consider that in his answer, please?

**Friedrich Wulf:** Evidently, education in capacity-building and information is always very important. It is important not to have policies in an ivory tower, but to raise awareness wherever you can. However, I feel that you can achieve a lot, and I want to highlight this, by strengthening the whole implementation procedure in the CBD. It is very weak on implementation. The new framework could gain most by having very clear aligned rules for setting up the national biodiversity strategies and action plans, with a standardised format so that you can compare them with each other, and to have a synchronised and standardised review process so that you know where you are. It is an issue. In the whole procedure up to now, countries have been reporting and highlighting the nice projects they have been doing, but you have no idea where you actually are. I am going beyond the question, I am sorry. I hope that is okay. One high hope I have for the next global biodiversity framework is that the CBD will have a stronger implementation mechanism.

I agree on the rest, on the different international instruments. They are all key. I highlight that Agenda 2030 has a whole goal, with different targets on biodiversity that should be taken into account and reflected in the GBF as well, because they already exist. They need to be prolonged to 2030, and of course the new GBF targets have to be compatible.

The last point I would like to make is that trade definitely has a huge role to play. If you do international trade agreements—free trade agreements, for example, which at Friends of the Earth we do not really favour, but if you do them—you have to have strong environmental safeguards. In general, it is important to have biodiversity-proofing for every policy, to have an idea what it will mean for biodiversity.

A final important element on trade policy is the ongoing discussion on the UN treaty on business and human rights. This is a key instrument to ensure that the actions of multinational corporations, with their subsidiaries in other countries, do not do harm to biodiversity and human rights. I am not aware of the situation in the UK, so I apologise for that, but it would be great if the UK could be favourable to such an agreement, in the sense of having more due diligence and liability for actions taken elsewhere. That would also be very helpful for biodiversity. We get a lot of feedback from our partner organisations in the global south. They have a very bad opinion of international corporations because, in their view, those are the key drivers that enforce biodiversity loss in their countries.

**The Chair:** Thank you for all those remarks. In closing, I thank all three of our witnesses for your engagement with our work. We really appreciate it. In so doing, I formally bring this session to a close.