



WG2020 2

Rome, Italy 24 - 29 February 2020

Closing statement

Distinguished co-chairs and all participants,

I am speaking on behalf of the IIFB. We would like to express our appreciation for the strong support from Parties and observers that have explicitly recognized the rights of indigenous peoples to our lands, territories, and resources and our contributions to the conservation of Biodiversity.

As the original stewards and owners of the lands and waters on this planet, our message throughout our discussions this week is that "Cultural intelligence working with nature is the best way forward." Halting the loss of cultural diversity goes hand in hand with reversing biodiversity loss. We have continuously promoted a framework with solutions that are guided by evidence in the IPBES global assessment report - specifically the contribution of Indigenous governance to conservation. We need a framework that is sufficiently ambitious yet flexible enough to inspire action to transform and restore our relationship with Mother Nature.

To get us to the 2050 Vision of "Living in Harmony with Nature", the Mission and goals need to recognize the co-evolution and interlinkages of biological and cultural diversity, such as referred to in the Sharm el Sheikh Declaration on "Nature and Culture". It is critical for the elements in the goals to highlight indigenous peoples and local communities' contribution to biodiversity, conservation and its sustainable use. The goals should enhance nature and people's interdependent well-being instead of exclusively focusing on benefits provided by nature to people.

Promoting the rights of Indigenous peoples to our lands, territories, resources and governance systems, implementing ecosystem-based and culture-based solutions, as well as mainstreaming and integrating these solutions into natural and human-modified landscapes and seascapes will be vital to addressing both the biodiversity and climate crisis. In addition, ensuring our rights to customary sustainable use - especially food sovereignty - is essential for achieving all three objectives of this Convention. As rights-holders and knowledge-holders, benefit-sharing should include biological resources and ecosystems services.

We would like to remind Parties that the Convention compels them to respect, preserve and maintain our indigenous and local knowledge to biodiversity, conservation and its sustainable use. To embrace the principle of free, prior and informed consent, indigenous peoples need to be recognized and treated as a legitimate part of the Post-2020 Framework to facilitate our valuable contributions to the work of the Convention. Loading global targets with "subject to national legislation" phrasings will **not** galvanize the urgent action and transformative change that is required to get us to the 2050 Vision.

In closing, we encourage all Parties to transform their support of the rights of indigenous peoples and environmental defenders into strong wording that enables the true recognition and respect of our rights. Together, with your ambition and commitment, we can reverse this biodiversity crisis. Thank you.