IUCN’s comments on the Proposed Goals and Targets on Sustainable Development for the Post-2015 Development Agenda (the ‘Zero draft’ document released by the Co-Chairs of the Open Working Group on SDGs on 2 June 2014)

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) welcomes the Zero draft prepared by the Co-Chairs of the Open Working Group. We highly commend the work of the Co-Chairs and the secretariat in preparing this document building on the discussions undertaken in the different sessions of the OWG and on the numerous inputs made by many Member States and other stakeholders.

In continuity with our previous submissions to the OWG and the interventions made during the sessions of the Group so far, IUCN wishes to offer the following comments aimed at assisting the work of the OWG in order to strengthen the proposed package of proposed goals and targets to ensure a good integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interconnectedness between various proposed goals.

Strong points.

As an organization dedicated to conservation of nature for sustainable development and human wellbeing, IUCN welcomes the inclusion of a number of goals pertaining to ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services both on land and in the marine environment, especially as illustrated in the proposed goals 14 (conservation of sustainable use of marine resources, oceans and seas) and 15 (halting all biodiversity loss and protection and restoration of terrestrial ecosystems) and the various targets related to them. We also welcome the inclusion of targets that speak to the recognition of the crucial role of biodiversity and ecosystem services in other key goals such as: goal 1 (ending poverty), goal 2 (food security and sustainable agriculture), goal 6 (water and sanitation security), goal 8 (sustainable economic growth and decent work for all), goal 11 (sustainable cities and human settlements) and goal 12 (sustainable consumption and production patterns), among others.

Suggested improvements:

From a biodiversity and ecosystem services entry point, IUCN noted some gaps in the proposed targets under a number of goals and we would like to suggest the following to address this:

i) While we are delighted with the efforts made to reflect the three dimensions of sustainable development in proposed goal 15, we note with concern that this goal lacks a target that reflects the role of terrestrial protected areas in ensuring conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and the contribution of these areas to livelihoods. Aichi Target 11 set a target of achieving the conservation of at least 17% of terrestrial and inland water areas especially those
of particular importance to biodiversity and ecosystem services. We recommend the reflection of such a target in goal 15, either as a new target (which could read as: **by 2020, conserve at least 17% of terrestrial and inland water areas especially areas of particular importance to biodiversity and ecosystem services**, or in combination with current target 15.1 (which could be reformulated to read as: **by 2020, halt the loss of all biodiversity, and protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species including through the establishment of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures covering at least 17% of terrestrial and inland water ecosystems especially areas of ecological and biological significance**).

**ii)** We would also like to propose a target related to restoration which would merge current target 15.2 (restoration of degraded ecosystems) and target 15.5 (reforestation) by focusing them on a target already endorsed by several governments and other stakeholders under the “Bonn Challenge on forest and landscape restoration”. The new alternative formulation would read as: **by 2020, restore 150 million hectares of deforested and degraded lands and another 150 million hectares by 2030**. This formulation has the merit of making the target expressed in millions of hectares more easily measurable than if expressed in x% of reforestation.

**iii)** In proposed goal 6 (secure water and sanitation), we note that there is no timeline proposed for target 6.8. We would like to suggest the following slight rewording “**by 2030, provide adequate facilities and infrastructure, both built and natural, for all everywhere, for safe drinking water and sanitation systems for productive uses of water resources and for reducing the risks of water-related disasters**”. The current formulation was referring to mitigating the impacts of water-related disasters as if we would wait for the impacts first and then act.

**iv)** In proposed goal 2 (food security and sustainable agriculture), we commend the inclusion of the concept of resilience in the targets (e.g. target 2.5) but we believe also that this goal would be further strengthened by the inclusion of a target related to land degradation neutrality as already agreed by States through the “The Future we Want” at the Rio conference in 2012. The formulation could be: **“By 2030 all countries achieve land degradation neutrality.”** This target is closely related with target 15.6 on land degradation under proposed goal 15 but introduces the concept of zero net land degradation in the context of food security and sustainable agriculture while target 15.6 situates the issue in the context of restoration of ecosystems.

**v)** With regards to **Goal 7 on Energy**, IUCN proposes to make also reference to a commitment to eliminate, phase out or reform incentives and subsidies that are harmful to biodiversity, as proposed in Aichi Target 3. This could be introduced in the current target 7.5 which could be reformulated as follows: **by 2020, phase out inefficient fossil fuels subsidies that are harmful to biodiversity and/or encourage wasteful consumption with solutions that aim to secure affordable energy services for the poorest.**
Other considerations:

- Proposed **Goals 8, 9, and 10** are closely related and many of their targets overlap, and as such, they could be merged into one goal (sustainable economic growth and decent work for all).

- IUCN believes that **climate change** is a crucial and cross-cutting problem, and as such, it should be flagged in the SDGs document. However, it would be addressed more efficiently through inclusion of climate-related targets in relevant goals such as energy, food security, water, biodiversity and ecosystems which offer opportunities to build synergies with the discussions happening under the UNFCCC process and the commitments that may derive from the negotiations thereof.

- IUCN welcomes the inclusion of the goal related to **governance, the rule of law and accountability**

- Finally, IUCN is looking forward to the further elaboration on the proposed goal 17 (means of implementation) which at the moment seems to overlap with the other proposed goals and targets without being specific enough on its added value.

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