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A Call for Parties to Commit 1% of GDP to Biodiversity Conservation

Statement to the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Submitted on behalf of the Society for Conservation Biology Europe Region to the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Yerevan, Armenia, 19–30 October 2026

1. Background

The Society for Conservation Biology Europe Region is a network of professionals working for the conservation of biological diversity across Europe. SCB Europe has over 350 members representing more than 28 countries. We submit this statement to the Parties gathered at COP17 to urge a significant upscaling of the resources allocated to the conservation of biodiversity, in conjunction with the first Global Review of collective progress under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

2. The Financing Gap Remains the Limiting Factor

According to the draft UN CBD report (July 2026), countries are falling short on 22 of the 23 targets for 2030, and there is now an estimated shortfall of US\$1.263 trillion (BloombergNEF 2026), which has more-or-less doubled since the 2020 estimate of US\$700-942 billion (Deutz *et al.* 2020). Target 19 commits Parties to mobilizing at least US\$200 billion annually by 2030, while Target 18 calls for the reform or repurposing of at least US\$500 billion per year in subsidies that are harmful to biodiversity. Without significant progress in achieving these specific targets, there will be no possibility of achieving the remaining 21 targets, which would seriously undermine the relevance of the GBF. Global GDP is currently estimated as US\$126.3 trillion (IMF 2026), which means that an allocation of 1% to the conservation of biodiversity could raise US\$1.263 trillion, which is very close to the current estimate (BloombergNEF 2026) of the deficit for implementation of the GBF.

Two GBF cycles have now elapsed without significant progress towards the establishment of financial commitments to address this deficit. The Stern report (2010) proposed allocating 1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) globally to cover the cost of the green transition, and a coalition of developing countries proposed for developed countries to allocate 1% GDP to fund nature conservation at COP15. Each passing year without effective financial commitments, results in a further increase in the funding deficit to safeguard biodiversity. SCB Europe Region concludes that the most pressing challenge to achieve the GBF targets is the lack of adequate funding, and the lack of appropriate benchmarks.

3. Our Proposal: A 1% of GDP Benchmark

SCB Europe Region invites Parties to adopt a national benchmark of allocating at least 1% of GDP *per annum* to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, to be reached progressively by 2030 at the latest, and reported through National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plans (NBSAPs), national reporting under GBF Target 19.

This benchmark is intended as a domestic resource mobilization floor, not a ceiling, and is proposed for the following reasons:

- *Comparability across Parties:* a GDP-based target scales automatically with national income and economic capacity, avoiding the fixed-dollar disputes that have hindered agreement on international finance targets, and is preceded by comparable benchmarks used in other



multilateral commitments (e.g., official development assistance and defence spending targets, commonly expressed as a proportion of GDP).

- *Closing the domestic half of the gap*: with an estimated US\$200 billion *per annum* required by 2030, and roughly half of this derived from domestic public budgets, rather than international transfers, a 1% GDP benchmark applied across national economies would represent a significant material contribution towards Target 19, without displacing the separate international financial commitments to developing country Parties under Target 19(a).
- *Alignment with subsidy reform*: a domestic spending benchmark should be pursued alongside, not instead of, the Target 18 commitment to reform environmentally harmful subsidies, so that increased conservation spending is not offset by continued harmful expenditure elsewhere in national budgets, but rather harmful subsidies reallocated to support the achievement of target 19.
- *Auditability*: expressing the commitment as a fixed share of GDP, reported annually through existing national accounting and NBSAP reporting mechanisms would give the CBD Secretariat, national governments, and independent scientific bodies, a consistent and verifiable metric for tracking progress at each COP.

4. Request to the Parties

SCB Europe Region respectfully requests that Parties at COP17 to:

- Recognize that domestic resource mobilization has been the most persistent shortfall in delivering Target 19, and that clearer national benchmarks are essential to resolve this issue.
- Invite Parties to adopt a national target of allocating at least 1% of GDP to biodiversity conservation and restoration, phased in progressively and reflected in updated NBSAPs.
- Request the CBD Secretariat, in cooperation with the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, to develop guidance for consistent national reporting of biodiversity-related public expenditure as a share of GDP, to support comparability across Parties.
- Ensure that any such domestic benchmark is treated as additional to, and not substitute for, existing international finance commitments to biodiversity conservation in developing country Parties under Target 19(a) and the Cali Fund.
- Invite Parties to develop a mechanism for international financial solidarity to protect the global biodiversity hotspots

5. Closing

Both the scientific evidence on biodiversity loss, and the economic evidence on the returns on conservation investment, clearly indicate that the cost of inaction substantially exceeds the cost of action. SCB Europe Region stands ready to support Parties, the Secretariat, and the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, with science-based information to develop and track a financial benchmark. We look forward to continued engagement throughout COP17 and the intersessional period that follows.

Society for Conservation Biology Europe Region

Laura Bosco
President of SCB Europe

Stephen Venn
Chair of SCB Europe Policy Committee