



## 50/50 - The Plan to Save Life on Earth

### Context and rationale

In the past few decades animal populations have declined 60%, one-fifth of the Amazon rainforest has been destroyed, and we've lost half of the world's coral reefs<sup>1</sup>. Only about 15% of the world's lands and 5% of the world's oceans are now formally protected, and over half of the planet has now been converted from its natural state by human exploitation<sup>2</sup>.

We are eroding nature's capacity to provide food, water, and security to billions of people. In response, scientists are calling for a simple solution -- 50/50<sup>3</sup> -- **half of the planet spared from harmful activities and the other half of the planet shared with nature**. It's an inspirational plan to restore balance between our ecosystems and our economy, and ensure *all* life has a chance to flourish.

Our best shot at landing this vision is in 2020 when governments will meet for the 15th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biodiversity to set new targets to protect, restore, and conserve nature. **Avaaz, the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, National Geographic, several prominent scientists, dozens of indigenous groups, and hundreds of civil organisations are calling for COP15 to deliver a Global Deal for Nature<sup>4</sup> that contains 50/50 as a clear long term goal for nature.**

Given its focus on making connections between Nature and Climate, **the Secretary General's Climate Summit, can be a force multiplier for COP 15 by generating mass political support for a global deal for nature and for the solution of 50/50**. In addition the summit can be used to solicit actions that underpin and signal a global move towards rebalancing our relationship with nature -- like commitments to remove harmful subsidies, phasing-out of pesticides, or delivering zero deforestation.

### An overview of the contribution

In April 2019, scientists published a paper<sup>5</sup> explaining why protecting half the planet is needed, and how if embedded in a Global Deal for Nature it could promote increased habitat protection

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<sup>1</sup> Living Planet Report 2018:

[https://www.panda.org/knowledge\\_hub/all\\_publications/living\\_planet\\_report\\_2018/](https://www.panda.org/knowledge_hub/all_publications/living_planet_report_2018/)

<sup>2</sup> Half the world's ecosystems at risk from habitat loss:

<https://theconversation.com/half-the-worlds-ecosystems-at-risk-from-habitat-loss-and-australia-is-one-of-the-worst-64663>

<sup>3</sup> The Global Deal for Nature: <https://www.globaldealornature.org/science/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.globaldealornature.org/>

<sup>5</sup> A Global Deal For Nature: Guiding principles, milestones, and targets:

<https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/5/4/eaaw2869/tab-pdf>

and restoration, national and regional conservation strategies, and to empower indigenous peoples to protect their sovereign lands.

The paper builds upon several scientific papers for protecting key biodiversity areas and the latest climate science, to conclude a **milestone of at least 30% of lands protected by 2030 with an additional 20% of ecosystems in key climate stabilization areas either restored, protected, or under sustainable management**<sup>6</sup>.

As we saw in Paris, successful agreements need apex goals - ambitious, clear targets that inspire everyone, from citizens, to governments, and businesses to act. In that sense with the right support 50/50 could be the conservation equivalent of 'Net Zero'.

### **How the contribution leverages living natural systems as a solution to avert climate change? And what is its contribution to other UN agendas like the SDGs.**

- The Paris Climate Deal cannot be made real without a Deal for Nature. Climate models assume carbon sinks from intact natural land, we cannot afford to lose sinks through land conversions if we want to keep below the 1.5C target. In fact we need to restore and regenerate to get there.
- According to Natural Climate Solution - nature could have 37% of the mitigation contribution on climate<sup>7</sup>. So protection of half the planet is a crucial part of the mitigation and adaptation solution.
- A paper in Nature shows, restoring natural forests is the the most effective way to cut carbon emissions<sup>8</sup>, and the IPCC suggests that restoring the world's forests could store around 25% of the atmospheric carbon necessary to limit global warming to 1.5 °C<sup>9</sup>.
- The economic impacts of nature's collapse are also clear. The latest IPBES report finds Pollinator collapse could put \$577bn of crop output at risk<sup>10</sup>.
- Scientists have shown that through 50% protected will we be able to feed people and have adequate water resources as our population rises<sup>11</sup>. Others have shown how agriculture needs can be met with the protection of half the earth<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> To solve climate change and biodiversity loss, we need a Global Deal for Nature:

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/4/22/18511164/climate-change-2019-biodiversity-global-deal-for-nature>

<sup>7</sup> Natural Climate Solutions: <https://www.naturalclimate.solutions/the-science>

<sup>8</sup> Restoring natural forests is the best way to remove atmospheric carbon:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-01026-8>

<sup>9</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Global Warming of 1.5 °C (IPCC, 2018)

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<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/06/human-society-under-urgent-threat-loss-earth-natural-life-un-report>

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Balmford FRS, Professor of Conservation Science, Conservation Science Group, Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge, How to Spare Half a Planet, Space for Nature Symposium, 28 Feb, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> Watson, James E. M., and Oscar Venter. "A Global Plan for Nature Conservation." *Nature*, vol. 550, 5 Oct. 2017.

- Strategy 4 of the Eat Lancet Commission states: “This implies feeding humanity on existing agricultural land i.e. by implementing a zero-expansion policy of new agricultural land into natural ecosystems, and adopting a "Half Earth" strategy for biodiversity conservation<sup>13</sup>.

**Which countries and organisations are involved in the contribution? How does this contribution build upon examples of experience to date? How does the contribution link with different ongoing initiatives?**

- At its recent Montreal Nature Summit, the Government of Canada launched a nature champions agenda. The declaration<sup>14</sup>, also supported by Costa Rica, Colombia, France, Germany, Uganda and the UK, clearly states the need to increase protected areas.
- Several prominent scientists, NGOs and Indigenous groups have launched a campaign for a Global Deal for Nature.
- Over 2.3 million people from every country on earth have signed the Avaaz petition calling on leaders to protect half the planet<sup>15</sup>.

**How have stakeholders (for example local communities, youth and indigenous peoples, where applicable) been consulted in developing the contribution?**

- Traditional Indigenous Territories encompass up to 22 percent of the world’s land surface and they coincide with areas that hold 80 percent of the planet’s biodiversity. As the Avaaz/COICA report<sup>16</sup> shows Indigenous-led conservation areas must be created, indigenous land rights defended, and full participation ensured.

**Where can the contribution be put into action? How the contribution will be delivered? How will different stakeholders be engaged in its implementation? What are the potential transformational impacts?**

- A Global Deal for Nature must be built in a “common but differentiated way” that encourages governments to develop National Nature Action Plans which create the policy changes needed to shift our economic behavior.
- It’s must also be supportive. Most of the world’s biodiversity and key biodiversity areas are in the global south. Any deal must establish a Nature fund to support poorer

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<sup>13</sup> The Eat Lancet Report:

[https://eatforum.org/content/uploads/2019/01/EAT-Lancet\\_Commission\\_Summary\\_Report.pdf](https://eatforum.org/content/uploads/2019/01/EAT-Lancet_Commission_Summary_Report.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Nature Champions Call to Action:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/04/nature-champions-call-to-action.html>

<sup>15</sup> Avaaz 50/50 petition: [www.avaaz.org/nature](http://www.avaaz.org/nature)

<sup>16</sup> Avaaz COICA Indigenous Report:

<https://avaazimages.avaaz.org/EN%20Version%20-%20Indigenous%20Peoples%20and%20Biodiversity.pdf>

countries and experts are looking into new approaches for financing conservation<sup>17</sup>. One of the more innovative schemes is debt relief for protection of nature. The Paris Group swapped debt for protection of the 400,000 square kms of marine area around the Seychelles.

- It's inclusive - it doesn't mean we put a fence around protected areas. Depending on a region, the protection plan will vary. But to work, they'll need to be developed with the support of those who know best: scientists, local communities, and indigenous peoples. Businesses and philanthropists can and should also all play a role here too.

**Is this initiative contributing to other Climate Action Summit workstreams (industry transition; energy transition; climate finance and carbon pricing; infrastructure, cities and local action; resilience and adaptation; youth and citizen mobilization; social and political drivers; mitigation strategy)?**

- Youth and citizen mobilization - Avaaz is already mobilising its membership around 50/50 and along with several partners we are talking to youth climate leaders and networks around collective mobilisation.

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<sup>17</sup> To save life on Earth, here's the \$100 billion-a-year solution:  
<https://phys.org/news/2019-04-life-earth-billion-a-year-solution.html>