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Invitation to provide further comment on the CBD Zero draft of the post 2020 global biodiversity framework – matters relevant to marine

The New Zealand Marine Sciences Society (NZMSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide further comment on the CBD Zero draft of the post 2020 global biodiversity framework. Our submission covers issues related to the marine environment. We have attached our previous submission, dated 10 January 2020, for your reference. That submission provided comment on the marine thematic area.

We generally support the concept of “Theory of Change” identified in the Zero draft. We also note that a number of our concerns have been addressed in the monitoring frameworks appended to the Zero draft.

The following specific comments refer to the monitoring frameworks for the 2030 and 2050 goals, and, the Action targets.

Preliminary draft monitoring framework – 2030 and 2050 goals

Goal 1 – in order to achieve the goal, substantial resources will be required to understand what marine ecosystem integrity comprises, before a figure can be identified that ensures ecosystem resilience. The suggested marine indicators are very limited and we suggest that technical advice is sought to identify meaningful and practical indicators for all elements that make up the marine realm.

Goal 2 – we suggest the indicators are expanded to include species that are threatened with becoming regionally or locally extinct. This will also assist with preserving genetic diversity at the population level (as per Goal 3). For example, fishes and invertebrates may become regionally or locally extinct due to unsustainable fishing practices, pollution or invasive species.

Preliminary draft monitoring framework for 2030 action targets

Reducing threats to biodiversity

Target 1

- We suggest that the indicators include mention of important temperate marine habitats such as the cover of seagrass and kelp forest. As mentioned above, we consider it important that technical experts identify the most important key marine indicators for reducing threats to marine biodiversity.

- We support the suggestion for spatial planning and that biodiversity needs to be adequately integrated. We suggest that spatial planning includes both the coastal marine area and the deep sea within jurisdictions.
- With regards to understanding the change in rate of habitat degradation and restoration, we suggest including indicators that measure the proportion of undisturbed/relatively undisturbed and recovering seafloor/seabed habitats in addition to the suggested indicator of 'Ocean Health Index'.

Target 2

- It is not clear what the rationale is for the % targets identified for land and sea, or for strict protection. We suggest that technical experts be consulted to provide advice on the area of the marine environment that should be under protection.
- We suggest that the proposed connectivity index indicator be tested for relevance and applicability in marine ecosystems.

Target 4

- We suggest that sediment runoff/sediment derived from marine infrastructure development is specifically included as a source of pollution. It is a major pollutant of nearshore marine habitats, smothering native biodiversity and preventing its re-establishment. Indicators of change include reduction in runoff/sedimentation over time/area and proportion of native biodiversity re-establishing.

Target 5

- We consider the indicators for the suggested element 'change in the health of fisheries' do not go far enough. We suggest that the indicator for healthy fisheries incorporates ecosystem-based management principles to properly take into account the impacts of fishing on other species, including seabirds, marine mammals, sharks and seafloor dwelling organisms. This element is treated in isolation as it currently stands and fails to take into account the many interactions between fishing and marine biodiversity. Further, there should be a clear distinction made between commercial fishing, artisanal or subsistence fishing, and recreational fishing.

It is not clear what the proposed indicator 'Inland fishery production' means.

Target 6

- We suggest that kelp cover, water quality and sediment parameters be used as indicators of 'Trends in the restoration of degraded ecosystems'.

Tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming

Target 18

- We suggest that an indicator that refers directly to research on marine biodiversity is included. There is still a vast amount that is not known about the marine realm. Often, poor decision-making about the use of its resources and whether to provide protection, is the result of a lack of knowledge, which in turn is reflected in a lack of sufficient funding for research.

We note the following gap in relation to marine farming or marine aquaculture. This activity was not clearly identified in any of the targets. Yet this activity will become increasingly significant with the need to provide protein for the world's population. However, there are potential conflicts stemming from marine farming, including spatial allocation, impacts on native marine biodiversity (through competition and spread of invasive species) and pollution from rubbish and processing waste.

We further suggest that the CBD provides guidance for implementing the action targets, when these have been finalised to help jurisdictions move towards achieving the 2030 and 2050 goals/vision.

In conclusion, NZMSS reiterates our view that, in order to achieve the CBD 2050 vision for New Zealand, new global marine biodiversity targets should, as a minimum, cover the following activities:

- Documenting the marine biodiversity of the entire marine realm comprising New Zealand's Territorial Sea, EEZ and extended continental shelf
- Implementing ecosystem-based management (EMB) including sustainable uses of marine resources (including fisheries) and a comprehensive network of functioning no take marine protected areas
- Understanding the impacts of invasive species, fishing, climate change and ocean acidification/deoxygenation on our marine biodiversity, habitats and ecosystems
- Ensuring there are no species extinctions or population declines resulting from human impacts and that threatened or endangered species are prioritised for protection to encourage recovery from past impacts
- Understanding the ecosystem services that our marine environment provides
- Incorporating mātauranga Māori
- Implementing marine spatial planning across regions and the EEZ
- Enabling a nation-wide focus, understanding of and appreciation for the marine environment.

Further, we consider it critical that there be substantial investment into science, research and capacity building to underpin implementation of the above-mentioned activities for New Zealand's marine environment.

NZMSS thanks the Ministry for this further opportunity to comment on the post 2020 global biodiversity framework and request that we remain involved in the development of global targets for marine biodiversity. As mentioned in previous submissions, our membership comprises a wide range of marine science, policy and management expertise, which can be drawn upon to assist with developing the post 2020 marine biodiversity targets. Please contact me at the email address provided below.

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