MESSAGES FROM MEMBERS OF THE FRENCH WATER PARTNERSHIP

14th CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY SHARM EL-SHEIKH, 17-29 NOVEMBER 2018

AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY IS SEVERELY UNDER THREAT WORLDWIDE. Biodiversity is currently suffering from the impacts of the Anthropocene. It is undergoing its sixth mass extinction and it is scientifically established that it is the result of human activity: soil sealing, habitat fragmentation, introduction of invasive alien species, water pollution... In some regions, anthropogenic pressures are exacerbated by the impacts of climate change. Many signs worldwide have set alarm bells ringing about the major threats to biodiversity and are predicting a bleak future for both nature and mankind.

- Since 1900, 64 % to 71 % of wetlands worldwide have disappeared, resulting in the disappearance of 76 % of freshwater species (Nick C. Davidson¹, 2014).
- Since 1980, 44 % of waterbird populations are decreasing globally (UNESCO, 2017).
- Today, **75** % of the global reserves of wild fish are under threat (FAO, 2017).
- By 2050, up to 90% of corals will suffer severe degradation (IPBES, 2018).
- Generally speaking, the Aichi Targets, SDG 6.6 on the protection and restoration of freshwater ecosystems and SDG 15.1 on the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems will not be met by 2020.

THE FRENCH WATER PARTNERSHIP'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The 190 members of the French Water Partnership wish to draw the international community's attention towards the necessity of protecting, conserving and restoring freshwater ecosystems to increase resilience, improve climate change adaptation and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). According to the French Water Partnership, particular attention ought to be paid to the synergies between and coherent implementation of the different international agreements: Aichi and post-Aichi targets for biodiversity, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the 2030 and post-2030 agenda for SDGs.

french water partnership

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Messages prepared and carried out by the members of the French Water Partnership at COP-14, 17-29 November 2018, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt



¹ Former Deputy Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention

PRESERVING FRESHWATER BIODIVERSITY AS WELL AS COASTAL AND MARINE BIODIVERSITY VIA A SOURCE-TO-SEA APPROACH

MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY IS ON THE AGENDA OF COP-14, BUT FRESHWATERS ARE NOT. The erosion of freshwater biodiversity is clearly underestimated despite the key role aquatic ecosystems play worldwide on an ecological and economic level. The conservation of freshwater biodiversity must be regarded with as much importance as that of coastal and marine waters, particularly since their interactions are significant.

The pressures exerted from upstream on coastal and marine waters are important. Freshwater, costal and marine areas are connected on different levels: through sediment transportation, pollutants (micro and macro waste), living organisms (flora and fauna) and ecosystem services...

The interactions between fresh, coastal and marine waters must be better understood. A paradigm shift, a legislative framework and territorial actions are necessary. The integrated management of these waters must be implemented nationally and internationally, through a multi-sectoral and multistakeholder approach.

PROMOTING NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS IN FACING CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY

Climate and biodiversity are in constant interaction. Nature-based Solutions² (NbS) can simultaneously help increase resilience and contribute to biodiversity conservation. For example, wetland restoration can limit the impact of flooding, mitigate drought, act against urban heat islands, limit coastal erosion and act as carbon sinks, whilst providing habitat for species.

Particular attention should be drawn to the links between climate and biodiversity in strategic documents. The National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) submitted under the CBD and the Nationally Determine Contributions (NDCs) submitted under the UNFCCC in the context of the Paris Climate Agreement must encourage the implementation of Nature-based Solutions as a type of action contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The French government plan for biodiversity (July 2018) aims at reinforcing implementation of NbS throughout its territories to increase their climate and flood resilience.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN NATURE AND SOCIETY

Local populations are the first concerned by biodiversity conservation. They must be taken into account and involved in decision-making and planning processes as well as in project implementation. This must be made possible through systems of participatory and decentralized governance.

Local knowledge and skills related to pastoralism, water uses, natural resources and land planning are fundamental for such governance systems to exist. Civil society organizations can play a key role in representing local communities and in facilitating dialogue with decision-makers.

Taking into account local and social perceptions of projects is particularly important in implementing Nature-based Solutions for climate change and flood risk resilience. NbS are "determined by site-



² "Actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits." (IUCN, 2016)

specific and cultural contexts" and must be based on the creation of local and intersectoral partnerships.

IMPROVING THE LINKS BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND DECISION-MAKING

Supporting international bodies such as the IPBES³ who work to better the links between scientific knowledge and decision-making is essential. Standardization, sharing and dissemination of collected data on freshwater and costal biodiversity (including wetlands such as ponds, lagoons, bogs...) must be carried out with civil society organizations and biodiversity observatories.

The regional reports of the IPBES published in March 2018 sent out warnings on the impacts of global climate change on biodiversity. In this context, data and knowledge on the capacity of freshwater habitats to adapt to climate change as well as on the impacts of climate change and other changes (habitat fragmentation and pollution...) on watershed biodiversity must be reinforced.

MOBILIZING THE FINANCIAL RESOURES NECESSARY TO MEET THE AICHI TARGETS

The current financial resources available to meet the Aichi Targets are largely insufficient. Insuring cost-benefit analyses for actions relative to biodiversity conservation as well as economic evaluation of aquatic ecosystems and highlighting the multiple ecosystem services they provide (surface water quality regulation, aquaculture...) are all tools that can help raise the awareness of decision-makers and funders and *in fine* mobilize the necessary funding.

Environmental and water taxation carried out at national and territorial level must better take into account biodiversity. In France, since the 2016 Act on reclaiming biodiversity, nature and landscapes, water taxation now includes biodiversity and wetland conservation.

The available funding sought out through water taxation must be complemented by sector-specific funding (risk prevention, landscape and territorial planning, tourist infrastructure...), which can be made available through the implementation of Nature-based Solutions.

REINFORCING PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND ERADICATION OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

Invasive alien species are one of the major causes for biodiversity loss worldwide. Since certain invasive alien species can carry diseases, they can also have economic and health impacts. This is the case for the tiger mosquito, which can be found in French overseas territories of the Indian Ocean, such as Mayotte and Réunion.

Resilience and resistance of habitats to biological invasions are weakened by artificialization of and anthropogenic pressures on habitats. Aquatic ecosystems are particularly impacted. Management of water ecosystems must take into account the risks of biological invasions and must assess the impact of invasive alien species on water ecosystem services (on fishing and river navigation, on indigenous species, on sediment transportation...).

In order to face these challenges, public policy must be developed at local, regional, national and international level.

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³ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

Learn about the French Water Partnership's work on aquatic biodiversity and Nature-based Solutions on our website <u>page</u> and on the <u>WaterExpertiseFrance platform</u>.



french water partnership pfe partenariat français pour l'eau The French Water Partnership is the go-to platform for all the public and private French water stakeholders, operating at international level. For more than 10 years, the FWP has been advocating for water so that it becomes a real priority in sustainable development policies worldwide. The FWP also stands as a facilitator for exchanges between the french and international water know-how.

Members of FWP develop projects that directly contribute to SDGs. For more information and details on these projects, visit the Water Expertise France website. www.water-expertise-france.com